LITERACY PRACTICES IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL IN MULTILINGUAL KENYA: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF TANA RIVER COUNTY

By

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), and that I have not previously in its entirety or part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigated the literacy practices in the multilingual context of Tana River County, Kenya. It aimed to understand the types of literacy practices children are exposed to, and engaged in, both in and out of school. The study was guided by the theoretical framework of 'Critical Literacy' (Freire, 1996). Within this broader framework of critical literacy, two specific theoretical concepts were used to understand the specific context, namely 'Multiliteracies' (The New London Group, 1996) and 'Linguistic Citizenship' (Stroud, 2001). The research was conducted in the Tana River County of Kenya, specifically within the Tsana village of the Pokomo language speakers' community. The research used a qualitative design and the methodology used was linguistic ethnography. The participants in the study included teachers, grade 3 students and their parents. Data collection instruments for this included in-depth interviews, observations, documents analysis, children's written narratives, and collection of literacy artifacts and linguistic landscapes. Data were collected over six months and analysed through thematic analysis. Findings from this study revealed that in this community the children are exposed to different literacy practices within the school and the community. The literacy resources in school are available in English which is the language of school. Within the community, the literacy practices are mostly articulated in the local languages. The literacy practices in this community are complex and presented themselves in a way that local languages can be appreciated. While the Pokomo language was missing in the school, it was used extensively for local practices such as village public announcements. In addition, Pokomo was present in the linguistic landscape of the village such as on murals, and traditional artifacts. This shows that the members of the Tsana village still value their local language and showcase it in unique places. The study also revealed that on one hand, teachers were not giving access to all available literacy materials (such as the tablets and mother tongue storybooks) for the learners in the classroom despite their availability in the school. The homes of the children were mostly literacy poor, and there was minimal parental involvement in the learning of the children. Through the children's narrative writing activity, the study also revealed that children are very resourceful. Their relationship in meaning-making has an emotional link to their homes, to their out-of-school literacy experiences, and their relationship to writing is intimately linked to their experiences of schooling. By acknowledging the value of what learners bring from their informal learning from their homes to school, teachers can tap into the strengths of the learners and build them in the classroom as a way of multimodal learning that utilizes local resources.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif het die geletterdheidspraktyke in die veeltalige konteks van Tana River County, Kenia ondersoek met die doel om die geletterdheidspraktyke waaraan kinders blootgestel word en aan deelneem beter te verstaan. Die studie gebruik die teoretiese raamwerk van 'Kritiese Geletterdheid' (Freire, 1996). Binne hierdie breër raamwerk is daar twee konsepte wat gebruik is om die konteks beter te verstaan, naamlik, multi-geletterheid (multiliteracies) (New London Group, 1996) en 'Taalburgerskap' (Stroud, 2001). Die navorsing is uitgevoer in die Tana River County streek van Kenia, spesifiek in die dorp, Tsana met 'n gemeenskap van eerstetaalsprekers van Pokomo. Die navorsing gebruik 'n kwalitatiewe ontwerp en die spesifieke metodologie is taaletnografie. Die deelnemers in die studie het bestaan uit opvoeders, graad 3 leerders en hul ouers. Die spesifieke datainsamelingsmetodes het in-diepte-onderhoude, waarnemings, dokumentanalise, 'n narratiewe intervensie, en die versameling van taallandskapdata en ander geletterheidsartefakte ingesluit. Data is oor 'n periode van 6 maande ingesamel en geanaliseer deur tematiese analise. Die bevindinge van die studie dui daarop dat die kinders in hierdie gemeenskap blootgestel word aan verskillende geletterheidspraktyke binne die skool en die gemeenskap. Die geletterdheidshulpbronne in die skool is hoofsaaklik beskikbaar in Engels terwyl die geletterdheidspraktyke in die gemeenskap in die plaaslike tale beskikbaar is. Die geletterdheidspraktyke in die gemeenskap is kompleks, en die plaaslike tale het waarde vir hul sprekers buite die skoolkonteks. Alhoewel Pokomo weinig aanwesig is in die skool was dit gebruk vir plaaslike praktyke soos dorpsaankondigings. Pokomo is ook aanwesig in die geskrewe taallandskap soos op muurskilderye en ander tradisionele artefakte. Die studie het ook bevind dat hoewel bronne in die skool in die plaaslike tale beskikbaar is, dit nie aan die leerders beskikbaar gestel word nie. In die huise was daar min geskrewe geletterheids of digtale hulpbronne en minimale betrokkenheid by kinders se formele leer deur die ouers en voogde. Deur die geskrewe narratiewe aktiwiteite het dit duidelik geword dat die kinders baie vindingryk is. Hul verhouding teenoor betekenis-skepping toon 'n emosionele band met hul huise en hul buite-skool ervaringe. Verder is hul verhouding tot skryf nou verbind met hul ervarings van skoolgaan. Deur die waarde van wat leerders tot die klaskamer bring te erken kan opvoeders die sterkpunte van die leerders gebruik in die klaskamer as 'n manier om plaaslike kennis in multimodale leermetodes te verweef.

UFUFI WA ṬASINIFU HII

Hi ṭasinifu ni uchunguzi chorora dzuu ya shuuli zizonahusiana na mambo ya kusoma na kwora, kuzimuni mwa Kaunti ya Tana River kwiko na lugha nyinji. Hu uchunguzi uhendegwa kukiwa na lengo ḍya kutsaka kuimuka aina za mambo yeyonahusiana na kusoma na kwora kwa wana wakiwa sukuli na nze ya sukuli. Uṭafiṭi huu uyongozwa ni mufumo wa nadharia ya "Critical Literacy" (Freire, 1996). Kuzimuni mwa hiḍi ṭaro pfampu ḍya "Critical Literacy", kwiwa na dhana mbii kariṭu zitumikiyezo; yani "Multiliteracies" (The New London Group, 1996) na "Linguistic Citizenship" (Stroud, 2001). Hizi zitumika kuweka wazi hiḍi ṭaro kariṭu ḍya ciritical literacy. Huu uṭafiṭi uhendeka kuzimuni mwa kaunti ya Tana River iyo nsi ya Kenya, katika mudzi wiwonahanwa Tsana wiwonaishi wantu weonanena lugha ya Kipfokomu. Uṭafiṭi huu utumia muundo wa uḅora na mbinu itumijweyo nza ethinogirafia ya lugha. Wantu wahusikiyeo katika huu uṭafiṭi ni waalimu, wanafunḍi wa giredi ya hahu na wavyazi wao na mwaalimu jwa sukuli eyenayongweeza drama. Katika ukunsanyaḍyi wa data, kutumika mahoḍyiano maziho yahoreyeo kula sehemu ya hu uchunguzi, uchunguzi wa kuchimiza mambo yeyokuhendekani, uchambuzi wa vyuo na haṭi garagara, haḍisi zyorejwezo ni wana, ubigaḍyi wa picha za kuntu garagara kuorejweko, pfamodza na vija vya kitamaḍuni vivyonanenea mambo garagara. Hu ukusanyaḍyi wa hii data uhendeka kwa zaiḍi ya myezi mihandahu na uchambujwa kuchiiya uchambuzi wa maḍa. Maṭokeo kuyawana na hu uchunguzi yayanga kwamba, kuzimuni mwa ḍyamii hii, hawa wana wapata kumanya aina garagara za shuuli zizonahusiana na kusoma na kwora sukulini na mudzini. Hizi rasilimali za sukuli za kusoma na kwora dza chati, vyuo, na vyuuwo na michoro ya masomo ichorejweo nkutani mwa sukuli zinapatikana kwa lugha ya Kiingerenza, ambayo kwamba ndiyo lugha iyonatumika sukuli. Humu mudzini, mambo yeyonahusiana na kusoma na kwora yanahendeka zaiḍi kwa Kipfokomu na Kitsawaa. Na vinahendeka kwa njia iyonayanga kwamba hawa wenyeḍyi wazithamini hizi lugha zao. Kwa mufaano, humu mudzini, Kipfokomu kinatumika kwa kubiga lalabva, kwora vyuuwo ambu mapicha yeyo na ḍaamisa nkutani mwa madzumba, na kwa vija vya kuelekanya vya kiṭamaḍuni dza nsatsa na maṭoṭo. Haya matumizi ya lugha ya Kipfokomu yekitumika humu mudzini kwa njia nyinji ziizo kariṭu, ela si sukulini. Hii inayanga kwamba hawa wantu wa mudzi wa Tsana amaale waithamini hi lugha yao ya kiasili kwa kuitumia na kuiyanga kuntu kariṭu. Pia, huu uṭafiṭi, kwa njia ingine uyanga kwamba waalimu ntawakwakuziyavyani kwa wanafunḍi hizi rasilimali zonse zizonatumika kwa kusoma na kwora (dza "tablet" za masomo na vyuo vya haḍisi), licha ya kwamba zipfo sukulini. Pia, ṭuri wa walimu wa kumanya kusoma kidijitali, wakuyehani ḍina kwa wanafunḍi kuyongweezwa kuchiiya masomo ya kidijitali. Kwa yupfande jungine, hukuḍe madzumbani mwa ha mwanafunḍi ntawavija vya vyakuṭosa vya kusoma. Ndookomu nao hawa wana wakadzihusishani na hizi rasilimali ṭu za kusoma zizonapatikana hafufi nao. Kwa kwongezeya, haya maṭokeo pia yayanga kwamba hawa wavyazi wanadzihusisha kachuchu muno katika masomo ya wana wao. Pia, kuuḅana na hizi kazi za wana wahendeyezo za kwora haḍisi, hu uṭafiṭi uyanga kwamba hawa wana ni waḅunifu muuno. Hu uḅunifu wao wa kwora haḍisi, uyanga uhusiano wao na mizajo weyonayo na makwao, katika kuyanga mambo weyonadziyongweeza nyumbani, wakitsaawa sukuli. Na haṭa mambo weyo na mazowea ya kuyora, yanatsangia pfakuu na mambo weyonadziyongweeza sukuli. Kwa kuhambuya thamani ya mambo menji ya elimu ya mwanafunḍi eyonadziyongweeza kuyawa nyumbani na kuyayeha sukuli, hawa walimu wanaweza kuzitumia na kuzimbaka kilasini dza njia modza ya kudziyongweeza kuchiiya kwa njia garagara.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my lovely niece, Solace,

my nephews, Baseel and Ethan,

and

all the children of Tana River County.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBC: Competency-Based Curriculum

ECED: Early Childhood Education and Development

L1: First Language

LiEP: Language in Education Policy

LoI: Language of instruction

MLE: Multilingual Education

MoI: Medium of Instruction

MT: Mother Tongue

MTE: Mother Tongue Education

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NLS: New Literacy Studies

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1: LITERACY PRACTICES IN MULTILINGUAL SETTINGS

1.1 Introduction

The primary education landscape in Kenya changed significantly in 2003 when the then National Rainbow Coalition[1] government introduced the Free Primary Education policy for all Kenyans. This policy was the government's strategy to comply with the United Nation's (UN) recommendations on children's rights to education. As enshrined in Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (UNCRC, 1993), education is a fundamental human right and is critical to achieving sustainable development. Therefore, education must be promoted and its quality improved. Goal Four of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) talks about inclusive and quality education for all (SDGs, 2018). Recent reports on the SDGs indicate that there have been significant improvements in literacy skills on a global level. However, despite these worldwide improvements, literacy skills remain low in sub-Saharan Africa (see Gove & Cvelich, 2011; Uwezo Kenya, 2016). For instance, in a national literacy survey that was conducted in Kenya in 2010, Wasanga, Ogle & Wambua (2010) found that more than half of children in grade 3 were unable to understand short passages of text written in English and Kiswahili[2]. A similar survey done in 2016 by Uwezo Kenya[3] found that, on average, only 30 out of 100 grade 3 learners could do grade 2 work. The literacy levels of lower primary school children have remained low since 2009, when the first literacy survey was conducted in Kenya (Uwezo Kenya, 2016). Uwezo Kenya's sixth learning assessment report laments that the question posed in 2009 – "Are Our Children Learning?" – still remains relevant, as results have continued to be poor over the years with no significant improvement in learning outcomes (Uwezo Kenya, 2016, p. 3).

Literacy is critical to the attainment of quality education for all in Kenya. However, this concept is often not defined in policy documents, and thus it remains unclear which theoretical standpoint towards "literacy" the government takes. Traditionally, literacy has been defined as having the ability to read, write, and do arithmetic (Bunyi, 2006). However, literacy in the 21st century has been defined as the capacity to read, understand, and critically appreciate various forms of communication including printed text, spoken language, digital media, and broadcast media (The New London Group, 2000, p.

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1 The National Rainbow Coalition is a political party in Kenya that took power in the government during that time.

2 Kiswahili is the national language of Kenya and has also been made an official language alongside English in the 2010 Kenyan Constitution. Kiswahili is also a compulsory school subject, taught from pre-primary through to high school, and is a widely spoken language in East Africa.

3 According to the Uwezo (2019) webpage, "*Uwezo* means 'capability' in Kiswahili. [It] is an initiative that aims to improve competencies in literacy and numeracy among children aged 6-16 years old in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, by using an innovative approach to social change that is citizen driven and accountable to the public. Uwezo conducts annual large scale, citizen-led, household-based assessments that measure actual levels of children's literacy and numeracy across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania".

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232). As technologies of meanings are rapidly changing, literacy learning must also adapt and change. In today's world, the teacher has to adopt an integrated multimodal teaching method, where the textual is also related to the audio, video, behavioural, and spatial (The New London Group, 1996). This means that educational goals have to switch from creating literate citizens to multiliterate citizens (Zuilkowski et al., 2016). According to Bull & Anstey (2007), a multiliterate citizen has the skills to consume all semiotic systems, which means the person can understand the grammar of a language, sounds, and music as well as moving and still images. The New London Group (1996) asserts that teachers and students must see themselves as active participants in this social change.

In multilingual settings such as that of Kenya, multiliteracies become more complex. In many multilingual countries, the dominant language of instruction (LoI) in schools is often not the dominant home language. For example, the Language in Education policy (LiEP) in Kenya was enacted in 1976 by the Gachathi Commission. As Kenya was a former British colony, this commission recommended the use of English as the LoI in education institutions (Republic of Kenya, 1976). English, however, is often not spoken at home. The goal of many schools is thus for children to become literate in a language that is not their home language. Menken & Kleyn (2010) argue that in a multilingual setting, the teacher has to become linguistically and culturally responsive. This means understanding the role that culture and language play in children's learning. However, disregarding the home language of the child often leads to poorer academic performance. Furthermore, Gacheche (2010) argues that when the teacher uses the first language (L1) of the learners in the classroom, learners can participate in class, express themselves, and develop their intellects as they are able to carry out conversations in a familiar language. The learners can follow what is being taught and can confidently ask questions when they do not understand, hence rates of failure and repetition are reduced. Parents are also able to help their children with schoolwork at home when their children are taught in their home language (Baker, 2014; Benson, 2000; Cummins, 2000; Dutcher, 1996; Hovens, 2002). I will discuss in detail the LiEP of Kenya in Chapter 2.

According to Waldbart, Meyers & Meyers (2006), when parents get involved in the learning process of their child, they play a critical role in the child's education. Children who have books in their homes and whose parents read to them show higher literacy levels than those children without a literacy-rich environment (Wilson, 2013). The materials, experiences, and attitudes pertaining to literacy that a child interacts with at home constitute the home literacy environment (Truesdell & Hill., 2015). Several studies show that children who have acquired successful initial reading skills in their home environment tend to be good readers, while those who experience difficulties in learning to read tend to have reading problems all through their school years (see Cunningham & Stanovich,

1997; Jiménez, 2004). It also shows that the literacy environment of the home plays a crucial role in facilitating both written and oral language skills.

In Kenya, as of 2021, the National Education Policy has not mandated specific literacy teaching methods. Rather, the policy suggests that the teaching methods should meet the needs of the students and the objectives of the lesson (Ministry of Education, 2006). The policy specifies the use of the language of the students' catchment areas as the medium of instruction (MoI) for grades 1 through 3, transitioning from grade 4 onwards to English as the MoI (Ministry of Education, 2006). The language of the catchment area is the language used by the people within the locality of the school. The different regions in Kenya have different dominant languages which are also used within the locality of the school. For example, in the Central region, the dominant language is Kikuyu spoken by the Agikuyu people, and in the Western region, the dominant language is Kiluhya spoken by the Luhya people. In Tana River County, which is the context of this study, the dominant L1s are Kipfokomu, a Bantu language spoken by the Pokomo people, and Kiorma and Kiardei which are the Cushitic languages spoken by the Orma and Wardei people, respectively. For this study, I will focus on the Pokomo community. Considering the current educational context, the demands made on literacy, and the multilingual context of Kenya, my study is specifically interested in literacy practices inside and outside of school in the Tana Delta sub-county.

1.2 Statement of the problem

I chose Tana River County as my study area because there have been few studies done in this context on literacy practices. Literacy practices in this study are defined as "all the activities in which multimodal texts are used to make meaning possible for a reader or receiver" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 6). The limited studies done include that by Graham (2013), which focused on cycles of reading and writing in a resource-poor community in Tana River County, and more recent research conducted by Rashid (2018), which examined the influence of early grade reading assessment on a literacy program among literacy learners in the county. Apart from the limited number of studies within the area, my interest in choosing Tana River County also arose from the fact that some schools in the region offer multilingual education (MLE), which is a key component within my study as many studies on multiliteracies continue to view literacy from the perspective of one language only.

This study therefore first seeks to understand the literacy practices that children are involved in and exposed to in a multilingual context such as that of Kenya (in any of the languages they communicate in). To uncover the different factors which influence literacy development, I took a multi-layered

approach to literacy practices by focusing on the children, teachers, parents, and the broader community. It is envisaged that this study will provide critical new perspectives on multiliteracies in a multilingual context. Secondly, the study will deliver knowledge on the literacy practices that are available for learners in and out of school in a Kenyan multilingual setting. This new knowledge has the potential to not only add to the existing theoretical knowledge on literacy, but I also intend to use the findings to make appropriate recommendations that would assist the Kenyan Ministry of Education on best practices regarding the implementation of support structures for the Children's Education and the Education for All goals. The findings will also be useful for interested stakeholders who wish to intervene to improve education outcomes in Tana River County.

1.3   Research question

The study seeks to answer the following main research question:

What are the literacy practices that are used within the school environment and in the community in multilingual Tana River County?

1.3.1   Specific sub-questions

To answer the overarching research question, the study will seek to answer the following specific research sub-questions:

  i.   What kinds of literacy practices are children exposed to and which do they engage in within the community and in the school context?
 ii.   How do teachers and parents engage in literacy practices with children?
iii.   How do parents and teachers articulate their views and perceptions of literacy practices?
 iv.   What kinds of literacy practices and resources do children bring to a guided storytelling intervention?

1.4   Theoretical point of departure

This study seeks to examine the literacy practices that are available to children and to understand which of these practices these children engage in within different interactional spaces in the community. The study is guided by the theoretical framework of critical literacy. Within this broader framework, two particular theoretical concepts are used to understand the specific context, namely 'multiliteracies' and 'linguistic citizenship'. In the next sections, I will briefly discuss the theories, but they will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

1.4.1 Literacy as a social practice

The debate around the meanings and practice of literacy brought about the idea of "New Literacy Studies" (NLS). NLS is viewed by Compton-Lilly (2009) and Stephens (2000) as ways in which literacy practices are linked with people's everyday lives. The connection is not only associated with the acquisition of literacy skills but rather how people use literacy to fulfil social practices in their everyday lives (Street, 2003). Literacy equips people with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively interact in society. It is an important aspect of people's lives as it gives them the ability to read and write, and enables their verbal and non-verbal communication.

The social aspects of literacy have been given great emphasis, which was rooted in socio-cultural theories (Heath, 1983; Vasquez, 2004). The social aspects of social literacy highlight the use of literacy in terms of literacy practices and events that can be observed and recorded in the general social contexts of literacy (Barton, 2007; Maybin, 2007). These literacy practices can be found in the home and the general community environment (Heath, 1983) – school is just one space where literacy practices occur (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012: 19). Within this context, literacy practices and events are the crucial aspects that contribute to the development of literacy as a social practice (Barton, 2007). Literacy as a social practice is critical to find meaningful ways in which early childhood teachers can support the development of social literacy in young children (Theodotou, 2017).

Education as a powerful institution tends to support dominant literacy practices. These dominant practices "can be seen as a part of whole discourse formation, institutionalized, configuration of power and knowledge that are embodied in social relationships" (Barton & Hamilton, 2012, p. 10). On the other hand, other vernacular literacies which people use in their daily lives are less visible and less supported. This means that some literacy practices are more dominant and influential than others because they are patterned by power relationships and social institutions.

From the NLS perspective, Baynham & Prinsloo (2001) argue that schooling has contributed to a narrow explanation of literacy as something isolated from the social dialogue. However, this does not mean that the NLS practitioners are anti-school, but rather want "literacy to be used to understand children's emerging experiences with literacy in their cultural environment" (Street, 2003, p. 83). Literacy is not only the skill of encoding and decoding words; it can also be seen as a social practice. This implies that literacy is not only entrenched in education but also in social contexts (Street, 2003). Literacy practices are shaped by social institutions and are embedded purposefully in cultural practices (M Baynham & Prinsloo, 2001, p. 84).

1.4.2 Critical literacy

As mentioned previously, my study is embedded within the larger framework of critical literacy. According to McDaniel (2004), critical literacy goes beyond traditional views of reading and writing to include critical thinking, questioning, and transformation of the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life, as an essential part of being literate. In addition, a text is not only linguistic but can be anything that can be read (McDaniel, 2004). Critical literacy partly has its roots in Freire's critical pedagogy, where the emphasis is not only on knowledge acquisition but also on questioning the world and its underlying power structures. Through this, learners can take control of their learning and become active agents, thus enabling them to ask and answer questions that matter to them and the world around them, and empowering them to take control of their lives (Freire, 1996). Critical literacy advocates empowerment in that the teacher provides the learners with the necessary skills that may lead to the development of self-sufficiency, a sense of agency, and confidence in decision-making. Luke (2012, p. 5) adds that critical literacy is "politically oriented to teaching and learning the cultural, ideological and sociolinguistic content of the curriculum. It is focused on the uses of literacy for social justice in marginalized communities". Learners in a critical literacy curriculum "read the world and the word, by using dialogue to engage texts and discourses inside and outside the classroom" (Cadiero-Kaplang & Smith, 2002, p. 377). Two concepts which speak to the underlying principles of critical literacy are 'multiliteracies' and 'linguistic citizenship.' 'Multiliteracies' is specifically concerned with expanding the definition of literacy beyond the linguistic, while 'linguistic citizenship' recognises that speakers express voice, agency, and participation through different semiotic means.

1.4.3 Multiliteracies

Traditionally, literacy has been referred to as the ability to read and write a printed text and do arithmetic for a specific purpose (Foley & Thompson, 2018). Although reading and writing remain important skills, they cannot capture the complex world that learners must navigate and make sense of. With the rise of digital media, communication is increasingly multimodal (The New London Group, 1996). Learners also need to be able to read graphs and pictures, and understand a text which integrates writing, music, visual images, etc. Additionally, in Western contexts, children who are culturally and linguistically diverse are increasingly sharing one classroom. This has been the case in Africa for an extended period, although in most cases colonial languages were used as languages of teaching and learning (see Ansre, 2013; Kamwangamalu & Tovares, 2016; Khejeri, 2014; McGlynn, 2013). In post-colonial contexts, African countries have mostly opted to retain these as languages of

education, but some countries such as Kenya have opted for multilingual LiEPs. These policies have mostly been implemented unsuccessfully. The need to create a more inclusive classroom led to the creation of 'multiliteracies', a concept proposed by a group of academics, The New London Group, in 1996. The prefix "multi-" in "multiliteracies" implies the key elements of the changing concepts for literacy in education: the multiple ways of being in the world, and the multiple modes of representation available (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

"Multiliteracies" therefore describes the new approach to literacy pedagogy that takes into consideration the changing social environment that students face (The New London Group, 1996). According to Makin, Diaz & McLachlan (2007), in today's rapidly advancing world, children are exposed to new forms of literacy and communication that are increasingly multimodal. The pedagogy of multiliteracies has expanded the traditional views of literacy to include the various multimedia forms available. These include visual, audio, spatial, and gestural semiotic codes integrated with textual modes within social and cultural contexts. Multiliteracies produce learners who can communicate, collaborate, make connections, and who can think critically and creatively.

1.4.4   Linguistic citizenship

As stated earlier, multilingualism has not always been successfully employed in schooling contexts in Africa. One reason put forward for the failure of these programs is a lack of instructional materials to teach content in local languages as a result of their purportedly being "too many languages in Africa" (Gacheche, 2010; Kosonen, Young, & Malone, 2006; Rubagumya, 2009); another reason is the lack of sufficient teachers to use local languages as MoI (Fasold, 1984; Thomas, 2009). Stroud (2001) coined the term "linguistic citizenship", which denotes a transformative model of language policy and planning because he was not entirely satisfied with these explanations. Linguistic citizenship refers to "cases when speakers exercise agency and participation through the use of language, registers or other multimodal means in circumstances that may be alongside, embedded in, or outside of institutionalized democratic frameworks for transformative purposes" (Lim et al., 2018, p. 4). The key to this notion of 'linguistic citizenship' is voice. Blommaert (2005) describes voice as the ability to make oneself understood and argues that linguistic inequality is often not a result of language but of voice. In this view of linguistic citizenship, language is seen as "a site of struggle" (Stroud, 2001, p. 348). This perception portrays linguistic citizenship as being gained when speakers can use language to exercise voice and agency through the multiple resources that they have to hand. Speakers do this to be

understood in different contexts, hence enabling them to participate effectively in socio-political processes and thus enjoying services as citizens[4].

Stroud (2001) suggests that minority language communities, such as the Pokomo of Tana River County, do not necessarily have to wait for the state to determine their language use and right. Rather, they can "seize power over the discourses and representations of language that define them" (p. 249). Since the focus of this study is not only on institutionalized spaces but spaces outside the school environment, linguistic citizenship allows for these kinds of foci as it essentially views language policy and planning as a bottom-up process. This study is not only theoretically engaged with linguistic citizenship but will also highlight examples of what is already being practiced on the ground, in other words, how minority language speakers in a multilingual context are already living out their linguistic citizenship.

1.5 Methodology

This study used a qualitative research strategy and ethnographic approach to collect data. As Reeves, Kuper, and Hodges (2008) point out, ethnography is the study of human interactions, insights, and behaviours that occur within groups, communities, and organizations. Ethnography allows observers to immerse themselves in the daily lives of the participants to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' views, behaviours, and ways of making meaning of the world and themselves. By collecting detailed interviews and observations, ethnography aims to provide a rich, holistic insight into people's actions and views as well as the audio and visual aspects of the spaces in which they live. Participant observation allows the researcher to understand the familiar, and also to "make the strange familiar" (Reeves et al., 2008, pp. 512-514). Copland and Creese (2015a, p. 37) state that "linguistic ethnography views language as a communicative action functioning in the social context in ongoing routines of people's daily lives". By looking at how people use language, we can gain more knowledge about wider social structures, constraints, and ideologies. This is achieved by investigating the linguistic phenomenon open to not only translation and interpretation but also based on convention, beliefs, and earlier patterns of social use (Copland & Creese, 2015b). Details of linguistic ethnography will be discussed in Chapter 5. For the data collected, the study used triangulation. I used different data collection methods which included in-depth interviews, observation, collection of linguistic landscape data and artifacts, children's written narratives, and

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4 Here, Stroud is not referring to legal citizenship, but citizenship in the sense of being able to participate in democratic and human rights matters, such as education, health services, etc.

document reviews. Data collected using one method was complemented with another to ensure the validity of my research findings, as recommended by Flick (2008).

As mentioned above, the data of this research was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with the parents, teachers, and grade 3 learners of Tsana Village in Tana River County. The in-depth interviews were designed to obtain information on the participants' views on literacy. In addition to the interviews, observations were made to complement the in-depth interview data. Linguistic landscapes used in public spaces and linguistic artifacts were also observed (Copland & Creese, 2015a; Gorter, 2006; Gorter & Cenoz, 2017). I was interested in the choice of languages and how they were used to communicate messages in these spaces. Observations were also made in the classrooms as teaching was going on in order to capture the different literacy practices used within the classroom. I also observed various extra-curricular activities.

In addition to the abovementioned data, I also engaged the learners in a story-writing activity to collect written narratives as a source of data. This data aimed to investigate the creativity and imagination that the children possess. I analysed all the data using Thematic Analysis, which I introduce briefly in the next section and expand upon in detail in Chapter 5.

1.5.1 Data management and analysis

I transcribed the interview recordings directly after the sessions, as recommended by Holloway and Wheeler (2010). I then translated the transcripts of the interviews and the children's narratives into English since they were mostly in Kipfokomu and Kiswahili. I started analysing all my data as soon as I finished transcribing and translating it, and continued throughout the data process and beyond. The process involved reducing the huge amount of data into manageable portions that I could interpret and discuss while using related literature to support my findings, as recommended by authors such as Braun & Clarke (2014), Bryman (2012), and Meadows (2012). The themes that I identified will be discussed in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 concerning current sociolinguistic theories.

1.5.2 Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the whole dissertation, giving the general background of the study, the objectives, and the research questions that guided the study. The theoretical framework is also introduced, highlighting the approach of the study. An overview of the methodology and data management and analysis is given. Lastly, the definitions of key terms used in the thesis is given.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 present the literature of the study. An overview of the sociolinguistic situation, education reforms, and language policies are discussed. An investigation of literacies is presented, focusing on the different types of literacies. In these chapters, the theoretical framework that guided this study is also discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the methodology of the study. This chapter describes the methods used for data collection and data analysis, and justifies the choices for the data collection method. The chapter also describes the context of the study and the participants of the study, and how the latter were recruited.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 present the interpreted data and the discussion of the findings in relation to the research objective on literacy practices in the multilingual context of Tana River County.

Lastly, in Chapter 9, summary findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research are discussed. This chapter answers the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. A summary of the findings from the study is also presented, and proposed practical recommendations are also shared.

1.5.3   Definitions of key concepts

Although in this dissertation I try and incorporate other understandings of language and linguistic practices, much of the regularly used terminology is still stuck in modernist assumptions of language. In addition, policy documents rely heavily on established terminology. My definitions of the key concepts are thus an attempt to mediate this tension and sometimes I will not be all that successful in going beyond established concepts.

Critical literacy: the ability to read and write a text, and analyse it in a reflective way to understand the social injustices, inequalities, and power that prevail in the world.

First language (L1): for this study, a first language is the language one is chronologically exposed to first from birth.

Indigenous language: the native language in a region spoken by the indigenous people of the same culture.

Language of a catchment area: the language of people within the locality of a school.

Linguistic citizenship: "cases when speakers exercise agency and participation through the use of language, registers or other multimodal means in circumstances that may be alongside, embedded in, or outside of institutionalized democratic frameworks for transformative purposes" (Lim et al., 2018, p. 4).

Linguistic landscape: the visible presence of written language in billboards, commercial shops, road and safety signs, graffiti, and other kinds of inscriptions in public spaces.

Literacy: the capacity to read, understand, and critically appreciate various forms of communication including printed text, spoken language, digital media, and broadcast media.

Literacy events: when a written text provides an occasion for reading and interpretations around the text.

Literacy practices: "concrete human activities" involving what people do with literacy, what they make of what they do, and how they construct the ideologies and values that surround it.

Mother tongue (MT): Mother tongue is a contentious concept that has been rightly criticized for being essentialist. However, this term is still widely used in policy documents by influential organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). For my purposes, I use it to refer to either the L1 a child is exposed to and uses to express herself or himself, or the language they identify most strongly with in a cultural sense. I try and restrict my use of the term to when I talk about policy documents that use this term.

Mother tongue education (MTE): the use of the MT as a MoI from pre-primary to grade 3.

Multilingual education (MLE): the use of two or more languages as mediums of instruction.

Multilingualism: the ability to use two or more languages, either separately or in various degrees of fluency and fluidity.

Multiliteracies: a pedagogy that has expanded the traditional views of literacy to include the various multimedia forms available. These include visual, audio, spatial, and gestural semiotic codes integrated with textual modes within social and cultural contexts. Multiliteracies pedagogy produces learners who can communicate, collaborate, make connections, and who can think critically and creatively.

CHAPTER 2: THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION IN KENYA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a background of the sociolinguistic situation in Kenya. I discuss the concept of multilingualism in Kenya and how English and Kiswahili are used. I also discuss the language and literacy policies as well as the LiEPs in sub-Saharan Africa, and the challenges affecting their respective implementations. I then give an overview of curriculum reforms in East Africa focusing more on Kenya and how the LiEP has been incorporated in the new curriculum.

2.2 Multilingualism

The definition of multilingualism has evolved as numerous scholars have given their views on the phenomenon. Multilingualism is defined by earlier authors such as Mackey (1962, p. 27) as the "knowledge of two or more languages". McArthur (1992) defines multilingualism as "the ability to use three or more languages, either separately or in various degrees of code-mixing. Different languages are used for different purposes, competence in each varying according to factors such as register, education and occupation" (p. 637). However, Cook (1999) acknowledges that definitions of multilingualism depend on the author's research questions, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies. Sociolinguists such as Franceschini (2009) define multilingualism as "the capacity of societies, institutions, groups, and individuals to engage regularly in space and time with more than one language in everyday life" (p. 33). Multilingualism in a country includes the country's indigenous languages, migration languages, and national and regional languages. However, sociolinguists have abandoned the notion of full proficiency in all the languages in an individual's repertoire, also known as "maximal multilingualism". They commonly define multilingualism as "the ability to function in more than one language without reaching the same degree of grammatical perfection in all the languages known by the individual" (Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou, 2009, p. 461)[5].

2.3 Multilingualism in Kenya

Like many other sub-Saharan countries, Kenya is a multilingual country. According to the 2019 census, Kenya has more than 40 spoken languages, which include both African and non-African languages (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019d). The African languages are grouped into

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5 Sociolinguists are, of course, also challenging the very notion of language (Makoni & Pennycook, 2012), which has made multilingualism even more difficult to define and has led to the preference of concepts such as 'translanguaging' and 'languaging'. These concepts point to the fluid repertoires that those who were commonly seen as multilingual possess and attempt to move beyond a bounded idea of languages.

three broad linguistic varieties: the Bantu languages comprise the majority, consisting of 66%, Nilotic 31%, and Cushitic 3% (Musau, 2003, p. 153). The Bantu languages include, for example, Swahili, Mijikenda, Pokomo, Taita, Taveta, Kikuyu, Luhya, Kamba, Embu, Meru, and Kisii. The non-African languages include Arabic, Asian, and European languages.

All Kenyan ethnic languages are dominant in certain regions. In these regions, a large population of the residents speaks the dominant ethnic language (Momanyi, 2009). For instance, the Pokomo speakers are found in Tana River County, but these speakers can also be found in various other areas all over the nation. This is because both the Kenyan Independent Constitution and the current Constitution gave Kenyans the right to freedom of movement across the state (1963 Kenya Constitution (Independence Constitution), 1963; The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). For this reason, some Pokomos speak other African languages depending on the interaction with other speakers in the areas to which the former relocated.

The linguistic repertoire of Kenyans falls into different categories (Michieka, 2005). There are Kenyans who are monolingual in that they only speak their MTs. These monolingual speakers are mostly found in rural areas and are the minority – they have neither interacted with other language varieties nor gone through the formal system of education where Kiswahili and English are taught as subjects. The second category is the bilingual speakers who speak their native language and Kiswahili as a lingua franca. The third category is the trilingual speakers who speak their native languages and, in the case of relocation into other homogenous areas, they learn to speak the language of that locality. Therefore, apart from their L1s, trilingual speakers also speak Kiswahili and another local language. Lastly, there is the category of multilingual Kenyans who speak more than one other African language apart from their vernacular languages and Kiswahili. Most Kenyans speak Kiswahili as a lingua franca to communicate with others. It is also important to note that there are some Kenyans who speak Kiswahili as their L1 (Kamwangamalu & Tovares, 2016; Khejeri, 2014; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1993; Zuilkowski et al., 2016). Kenyans who have undergone formal schooling are also exposed to English and can speak the language among themselves. From a study on linguistic proficiency in Kenya, Kembo-Sure (1999) suggested that educated people were likely to speak three languages, which typically include Kiswahili, English, and one of the indigenous languages as L1.

2.3.1   Kiswahili in Kenya

Kiswahili is a language that is broadly spoken by the people of Eastern Africa, although not as widely spoken in Uganda. This language has remained a symbol of East African integration (Namyalo & Nakayiza, 2015). Today, the language is spoken in many parts of Africa and Arabia. It is also taught

in some learning institutions in the US, Europe, England, Canada, Japan, and Korea, amongst others (Momanyi, 2009). It is a language that some countries want to include in their education curriculum. Recently, South Africa announced that they will soon start teaching it in their schools. This followed the South African Minister for Basic Education, Angelina Motshekga, signing a memorandum of understanding with the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary of Education, Prof. George Magoha, for the introduction of Kiswahili language education in South Africa. According to Africa.com (2019), the leader of the South African Economic Freedom Fighters political party, Julius Malema, has also been pushing for Africa to adopt Kiswahili as a unifying language of the African continent.

Kiswahili is the national language of Kenya and the language of communication in the East African community which includes Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda. Since 1967, Kiswahili is not only the national language of Tanzania but also the LoI in schools at the primary level (Rubagumya et al., 2011). However, there is still debate on whether to extend the use of Kiswahili as a LoI in secondary schools (Mlama & Materu, 1978; Roy-Campbell & Qorro, 1987; Rubagumya, 1993). Kiswahili is a Bantu language that borrowed vocabularies from the coastal Bantu speakers and a lot of its terminology from Arabic due to the influence of Islam and coastal trade (Brock-Utne & Hopson, 2005; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1993; Nurse & Spear, 1985). According to Momanyi (2009), "[about] 40% of its lexicon is Bantu which borrowed and continues to borrow words and terminologies from other languages to enrich its lexicon" (p. 127).

In Kenya, Kiswahili gained recognition in 1969 when the then ruling party, Kenya African Nation Union (KANU), gave its formal acknowledgment as the national language. However, it was only officially declared a national language in 1971. For Kenyan citizens, Kiswahili is a "language of unity". It therefore became a symbol of authenticity and political independence (Hornberger, 2009; Kembo-Sure, 1999). Kenya is a multilingual state, the citizens of which use Kiswahili as an inter-ethnic method of communication that bridges the linguistic gap between the different varieties. Kiswahili performs this role by serving as a lingua franca among people from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Due to its neutrality, it has enjoyed support from and popularity by the East African countries (Michieka, 2005; Mlaga, 2009; Nurse & Spear, 1985), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and many other countries of the world (Momanyi, 2009).

Recently, the 2010 Kenyan Constitution recognized Kiswahili as an official language (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The majority of Kenyans speak and understand this language as it is also taught as a compulsory subject in the primary and secondary school curricula. The language is not a compulsory subject at tertiary level, however, Kiswahili language departments have been established in all public universities and some private universities. The language is currently used in

MA thesis and PhD dissertation writing in the departments that teach it. It is also a language that is used to teach different Kiswahili linguistic courses (Musau, 2003).

Kiswahili is mostly used as a lingua franca for Kenyans since its citizens frequently speak other native languages. Kenyans consider themselves lucky to have a common language, which is not necessarily the case in many African nations (Momanyi, 2009). This language has been used by politicians to campaign and win votes during elections. It has been used for awareness campaigns on national and global matters such as HIV/AIDS and cancer, civic education, human rights advocacy, and others. It is also the language of administration, in addition to English, that is spoken in the national and county assemblies (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Kiswahili is a language that is used by professionals such as medical practitioners, agricultural extension officers, veterinary officers, and engineers while executing their duties in and to the public. Therefore, professionals need to know how to communicate in Kiswahili to completely discharge their duties in the public domain. In addition, media houses find this language to be an effective and efficient medium of broadcasting. The television networks and radio stations also provide programs in Kiswahili and there is a lot of print media that use the language. In urban settlements, the language is widely spoken in informal conversations, as the population is made up of people with different language backgrounds. In the rural areas, where the dwellers are more homogenous in terms of linguistic backgrounds, Kiswahili is not so widely used. The language is spoken as L1 by the minority of Kenyans and as L2 by the majority of the Kenyan population (Momanyi, 2009).

2.3.2   English in Kenya

In Kenya, English is the language of its colonizers. It is viewed as the language of education and an international language that helps to bridge the gap of communication with other nations. It is therefore spoken as a L2 by those who underwent formal education (Kamwangamalu & Tovares, 2016). The language has been in use and is still being used – it is difficult to replace it with other languages because of the role it has played. It holds a prominent role in the various sectors of media where it serves the interests of those in power (Michieka, 2005).

English has been afforded a higher status in the education language policies than the indigenous languages in Kenya (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017a; Republic of Kenya, 1964; The Constitution of Kenya, 2010; *Policy on Mother Tongues in Lower Primary School Sessional Paper No.14 of 2012*, 2012). Apart from it being taught as a compulsory subject to children from their first day of school, it is also used as a LoI. All national examinations are tested in English except for the Kiswahili and foreign language subjects. For education certification, a student is required to pass either English or Kiswahili. English is also a language of communication in the formal

employment sector, where it is a necessity to have a good command of this language (Musau, 2003). It is also the language used to conduct job interviews. As Khejeri (2014, p. 76) states, "a good command of English is a passport to social and economic advancement". This perception is what parents often offer as a reason for their preference for their children to be educated in English (Kioko et al., 2008; Tembe & Norton, 2008).

Having been given official status, English is used as a language of administration. In Kenya, just like other African countries such as Malawi and Botswana, English is predominantly used in the high courts, law, and higher education (Kembo-Sure, 1994; Nurse & Spear, 1985). It was also used in national parliament proceedings for a long time until the early 1970s, when Kiswahili was declared a national language and parliamentary debates were then reported in both English and Kiswahili. However, the preferred language in government documents is still English. It is also used as a medium of broadcasting in some of the media houses and is widely used in print and electronic media (Kembo-Sure, 1999).

Despite it being taught in schools and used as a school language, most Kenyans communicate in Kiswahili, as it is a medium of communication for the literate and the illiterate. English does not favour the illiterate because one must have attended school to know how to speak the language.

2.4   Policies on literacy

Literacy is a global concern that is viewed as an important approach to achieving human life goals (Keefe & Copeland, 2011). According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, education is a human right (United Nations, 1948). The United Nations (UN) not only recognizes education as a human right but also a key that opens doors to human development and expands opportunities and freedoms (United Nations, n.d.). UNESCO has put literacy at the top of its education mission and human rights agenda. In support of literacy in 1975 in the Persepolis Declaration, the UN and UNESCO stated that "[l]iteracy is not an end in itself, it is a fundamental human right" (UNESCO, 1975). The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All declared "literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving as essential learning tools that comprise the basic learning needs of every person […] child, youth and adult" (UNESCO, 1990, p. 6). Seven years later, the importance of literacy was emphasized in 1997 in the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning under Resolution 11 which stated that "literacy, broadly conceived as the basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world, is a fundamental right" (UNESCO, 1997, p. 4).

In the 21st century, the Belém Framework outlines the importance of literacy as,

An indispensable foundation that enables young people and adults to engage in learning opportunities at all stages of the learning continuum. The right to literacy is an inherent part of the right to education. It is a prerequisite for the development of personal, social, economic, and political empowerment. Literacy is an essential means of building people's capabilities to cope with the evolving challenges and complexities of life, culture, economy, and society.

(UNESCO, 2010, p. 38)

SDG 4 aims at "[e]nsuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all" (SDGs, 2018). This goal recognizes obstacles for attaining universal education and attempts to address them through targets to increase the number of learners in the developing countries (United Nations, n.d.).

Literacy augments learners' chances of developing themselves and enables them to build networks for socio-economic upliftment, thereby contributing toward economic freedom (Bartlett, 2008). In the classroom, literacy enables learners to interact with other learners while constructing meaning in the process. Well-developed literacy skills improve learners' self-esteem, as these skills enable them to communicate confidently with others in the classroom as well as in public (Bartlett, 2008; UNESCO, 2006). This means that the literacy practices learners engage in, both in and outside school, enable them to negotiate their way to economic development. Learners are empowered to negotiate by applying the literacy skills they have acquired in different contexts. In order for a country to develop economically, there is a need for literate citizens (Ngece, 2014).

To comply with the global agenda for education, the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 provides free and compulsory basic education for every child; this is also echoed in the Basic Education Act of 2013 (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010; Basic Education Act. No. 14 of 2013, 2017). The Constitution further obligates both the state and parents to facilitate quality education for children (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The Kenyan educational policy specifies the use of the MT (the language of the school community) as the LoI from pre-primary level to primary grades 1-3. From grade 4 onwards, English is used as the medium of teaching. In as much as the LiEP appears to be clear, its practical implementation is not straightforward (Dubeck et al., 2012). Students learn to read in these early stages of schooling, therefore the interpretation and (non-)application of the language policy is linked to the policies on the teaching of reading.

On how to teach literacy, Kenya's education policy, as at 2021, does not give a specific mandate on the methodologies of teaching literacy. Rather, the policy suggests that the teaching methods should meet the objectives of the lesson and the students' learning needs (Ministry of Education, 2006). The

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new Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) further encourages teachers to use their creative teaching methods as long as they can achieve the designed learning outcomes (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017b). The goal of literacy instruction is to provide learners with the necessary skills to construct meaning from a text. For learners to fully develop suitable reading skills, strategies must be considered. Some of them include parental involvement in their child's learning and the teacher creating a link between the child's home literacy activities and school literacy activities. This current study will, however, explore how Kenyan teachers interpret and follow the policies on language and literacy instructions in their classroom teaching.

2.5   LiEPs in sub-Saharan Africa

A LiEP ideally seeks to address the languages to be used in education as the language of teaching and learning at the various levels of education and the several administrative units of the country. Ideally, the LiEP should be part of the national language policy through a language charter or law that has been articulated in the national Constitution to include linguistics human rights considerations (Chumbow, 2012).

The issue of mother tongue education (MTE) has been broadly studied and results have shown that the use of a child's home language is necessary for the child to bridge their home learning with their school learning experiences. MTE also values the knowledge that students bring to the classroom. The first language that the child learns to express himself/herself in is an instrumental tool for his/her educational development (Wisbey, 2017). Cummins (2000) also states that children whose education foundations have been built on their native language tend to develop a solid literacy ability and easily transfer their knowledge and skills across languages. The learners learn vocabulary and concepts much faster, thus their reading and comprehension skills develop quickly. In addition, when teachers and students understand each other in the classroom, class participation increases. This demystifies formal education and children become enthusiastic learners, thus increasing the likelihood of success in school (Kioko et al., 2014).

The use of the MT in learning also creates an affirmation of the learner's cultural identity. Teaching the learners' culture using their home language helps the children appreciate their environment and culture, and enables them to appreciate the relevance of school in their lives. Home language use also creates an opportunity for parents and caregivers to build a supportive network with the teachers in the learning process of the child. Both community stakeholders and parents can provide support to the children in school when they understand the language.

In sub-Saharan Africa, matters of language policy remain significant, and it is a highly contentious issue how language affects education and development (Malone, 2007, 2010; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1993; Muthwii, 2002; Ndlovu, 2011; Trudell, 2007). The language of power in many African countries has been linked to the language of these countries' ex-colonizers. These languages of power therefore enjoy a high status, as has been shown in many studies, e.g., Bagwasi (2004), Graham McGlynn, & Islei (2015), and Sonaiya (2004). These languages are deemed to be "more important" and are usually the official languages and the languages of instruction at school, thereby overshadowing the other local languages (Wangia et al., 2014). While the second out of the UN's eight Millennium Development Goals is full primary education enrolment, the issue of language is not included (United Nations, 2015). The value of the MT in education in Africa is perhaps the most contested matter in the education sector. Yet there is an increasing realization of the significance of indigenous languages in propelling the key MDG initiatives, especially in the areas of combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, the reduction of child mortality, and improving maternal health, among others (Graham et al., 2015). In Nigeria, there is a project in development called "English Plus". This project, as described by Omoniyi (2014), is creating a place for local languages in spaces previously reserved for English. It is raising hopes for local languages which may finally come to be appreciated as a resource for national development.

The use of the MT as MoI in formal education, especially in the early years of schooling, provides a solid foundation in initial literacy development and learning. However, most of the African LiEPs persist in their use of the MTs up to grade 3 and transitioning to English from grade 4 onwards. Afitska et al. (2013) give an account of two countries' language-in-education dilemmas: in Ghana, the use of indigenous languages in school is restricted; in Tanzania, the LoI in schools is Kiswahili in primary education and then switches to English in secondary education, which the authors consider to be problematic. The lack of a coherent strategy for MTE or bilingual education is causing unsatisfactory preparation for the transition to English as a MoI. There are repercussions in the weak development of LiEPs, even in higher education. For example, in South Africa, where nine indigenous languages and Afrikaans and English are recognized as official languages in the 1996 Constitution, it is still the role of the government to develop the local languages in education. The University of KwaZulu-Natal is offering English and Zulu bilingual courses in some selected disciplines. However, findings from a study conducted by Wildsmith-Cromarty & Mhlophe (2014) on reading proficiency among Zulu-L1 speakers revealed that students feel that they are not well prepared to learn solely in Zulu.

In countries that have English-only policies, teachers have come up with ways to make students participate actively in learning, although often "the learning is reproductive and uncritical" (Graham et al., 2015, p. 427). A study conducted in Gambia revealed that teachers make use of extensive translanguaging[6], among other strategies, to help learners understand better and to meet pragmatic and pedagogic needs, with patterns that vary between the rural and the urban areas (McGlynn, 2013).

As a strategy to implement the LiEP of Ghana, the US Agency for International Development funded a literacy program called the "National Literacy Acceleration Program" that was introduced in 2009. It provides a structured program in which any of the local languages could be used as a language of education from pre-primary to grade 3. The bilingual schools that implemented this program used both African languages and English to teach language and literacy lessons. The lessons were divided into two parts: the first part used the local language and the second part used English for the English texts. However, teachers and learners used either of the languages when necessary (Education Development Center, 2009). A subsequent survey was conducted in Ghana on the implementation of the National Literacy Acceleration Program, and the results revealed that the program was more successful in monolingual regions but faced some challenges in multilingual regions (Anyidoho, 2018). Some of these challenges included the choice of language to use in multilingual classrooms – for example, the teacher might not be proficient in the local language, or a large percentage of the students are not able to speak the school language (Ansre, 2013; Anyidoho, 2018).

In Anglophone Africa, parents often wish for their children to be taught in English at school while maintaining the use of their indigenous languages at home. English is becoming more popular due to the expansion of education, and there is an increase in the number of people using it in their everyday repertoire (Graham et al., 2015). However, an interesting study conducted in one of the best performing senior secondary schools in Accra found that students who combined their Ghanaian language and English tended to perform better than those who used English or their indigenous language only in terms of argumentation in senior high school essay writing. The use of bilingual education has advantages (Ahadzie et al., 2014); this is in agreement with several MTE/MLE advocates such as Baker (2014), Benson (2002), Cummins (2000), Hornberger & Lopez (1998), and Thomas & Collier (2002).

Despite all the efforts of promoting the use of the MT as MoI, many countries still promote the use of English in education. This is because English is considered the language that guarantees success in the

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6 Translanguaging "is the use of one language to reinforce another language so as to augment understanding and strengthen the learning activities of the students" (McGlynn 2013).

globalized world economy (Wangia et al., 2014). This notion that African languages are not suitable for education and only colonial languages are a better medium of transferring knowledge and can lead to higher education or socio-economic achievements, has hindered the implementation of mother tongue-based education in the continent. Due to this belief that English uniquely promotes economic success and development, Malawi adopted an English-only policy from grade 1 in 2014. This country, with around 14 indigenous languages, replaced the policy in practice of using local languages with English from grade 1 to grade 4 (Mtenje, 2014).

The implementation of MTE policies has been rendered problematic because many languages have few speakers, and it becomes more challenging when one area has different language speakers dwelling together. Further challenges are presented when there is competition for special status between "languages of identity". A good example is in Eritrea, where politicization took place of regional and religious rivalries between Muslims and Christians, Tigrayans and Arabs, and respective elites against each other. The de facto dominance of Tigrinya faced opposition by many Muslims who were in favour of a bilingual official language policy. The government had to terminate public debate on the issue to avoid further politicization (Debenna, 2014).

2.6   Language planning and the LiEP in Kenya

In Kenya, just like in many other sub-Saharan African countries, the language policy was influenced by British colonial history (Nabea, 2009). The Kenyan languages were marginalized during the colonial era because the British system of colonialism provided education in English and demanded the use of English for official communication. However, the missionary educational systems allowed the use of vernacular languages for early primary education for the available small number of mission schools across the country. After Kenya obtained independence in 1963, English was still the preferred language of education for upper primary and secondary school levels, as was the case for some of the other sub-Saharan African countries (Rampton et al., 2002; Thiong'o, 1986).

Kenya is a multilingual country, with a linguistic population of more than 90 different indigenous languages and dialects, in addition to Kiswahili and other foreign languages such as English, German, French, Hindi, Italian, and Chinese which are spoken by a small number of the population (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019c). Because of the multilingual nature of the country and the influence of foreign languages, Kenya has had debates around MTE from pre-colonial to post-colonial Kenya. As a result, the country has had several education commissions that influenced government policies (Wa Mberia, 2016). Some of the key commissions during this period include the Phelps-Stokes Commission (1924), the Beecher report (1949), the Binns Commission (1952), the

Ominde report (1964), the Bessey report (1972), the Gachathi report (1976), the Mackay report (1981), the Kamunge report (1988), the Koech report (1999), and the Odhiambo report (2012).

The abovementioned commissions have made several recommendations over the years which have had a bearing on the language policy. Most importantly, these reports have shown that MTs are crucial in acquiring knowledge. For instance, the Phelps Stoke Commission (1924) acknowledges the roles that indigenous languages play in character development and learning about life skills in agriculture. In 1964, in post-colonial Kenya, the language policy started with the Ominde Commission, which advocated for an education system that put an end to the segregation of African, Indian, and White classrooms, which was the case during the colonial period. This report suggested the use of English as a MoI from grades 1 to 3 and Kiswahili to be taught as a compulsory subject (Republic of Kenya, 1964). The second report is the 1976 Gachathi Commission that criticized the previous report for not considering the use of the learner's L1 as a MoI. This Commission therefore introduced the use of the MT as the LoI from grades 1 to 3. It recommended the introduction of English as a compulsory subject from grade 1 and then to make it the language that supersedes the MT as MoI from grade 4 onwards. It also recommended that Kiswahili be introduced as an examinable subject in primary school (Republic of Kenya, 1976). The third report is the Koech Commission of 1999, which emphasized the Gachathi report's recommendation that the MT is to be used as a MoI for the lower grades. It further stipulated that Kiswahili should be one of the compulsory subjects and was to be examined at the end of primary school as well as secondary school (Republic of Kenya, 1999). Nevertheless, during the eras of the first and second presidents of Kenya from 1963 to 2002, there was resistance to the use of the MT as the MoI – parents wanted schools to offer their children what they themselves did not have, namely the English language (Muthwii, 2004; Trudell, 2007).

The current Constitution of Kenya has also contributed to the language policy of the country. It gives individuals operating within the jurisdiction of the Kenyan government the right to speak their L1s but limits the use of such languages to non-official domains. In official areas, the Constitution allows for the use of Kiswahili and English (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Most importantly, the Constitution envisaged a power-shift towards local citizens in that it recognizes that indigenous languages should be part of the governance and communication processes (Njogu, 2010). Recently, the LiEP of Kenya, as stated in Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012, spells out the arrangements for languages to share space in educational settings in this manner (see also Chapter 6, section 6.3.2 of this thesis for detail on policy documents review and its practicality in schools):

> The National and the County Education Boards shall encourage the use of the two official languages, Kiswahili and English both in and out-of-school as provided for in the Constitution

of Kenya (2010). The language of the catchment area (mother tongue) shall be used for childcare, pre-primary education, and in the education of Lower Primary children (0-8 years). Sign language, Braille, or other appropriate means of communication shall be used in the delivery of education to learners with special needs. It is important that, whenever possible, learners are not confined in their local areas for national integration. For schools located in metropolitan areas, Kiswahili shall be adopted as a language of the catchment area.

(Republic of Kenya, 2012, p. 16)

Since then, the implementation of the policy has faced some challenges, with one of the major challenges being the lack of teaching resources. In a country with over 40 languages, only materials for 22 (majority) languages were produced; the minority languages were left without learning materials, while other smaller minority languages were deemed similar to more established languages, so these school-going speakers were expected to learn from materials published in languages that were close to, but not, their own. For example, in the past, the Mbeere and Embu people used materials written in Kikuyu (Musau, 2003). In the case of the Kenyan Coast, where there are more than 11 languages, they were offered materials in Kiswahili which is not their native language. More so, the materials produced were not adequate to sustain literacy in these languages (Mbaabu, 1999). Another challenge to the implementation of the MTE policy is the lack of training for teachers. As Mbaabu (1999) explains, in the teachers' training institutions, teachers are not trained to teach in the MT. It is assumed that teachers who speak a MT should be able to teach it and be able to transfer knowledge and skills acquired from Kiswahili and English. In addition, most of the classrooms consist of linguistically diverse learners, yet teacher preparation does not include dealing with MLE. Therefore, teachers must develop their own coping strategies, such as the use of translanguaging, code-switching, translation to the learners' L1s, as well as repetition to manage this communicative challenge (Nyaga, 2013). However, Wolff (2000) recommends that language teachers in training should be exposed to the general methodology of language teaching as well as that for teaching specific languages.

2.7 Translanguaging in education

The term "translanguaging" was coined by Cen William in the Welsh context to refer to a teaching practice that consciously changes the language of input and the language of output. As cited in Lewis, Jones, & Baker (2012, p. 640), William further defines translanguaging in education as "using one language to reinforce another language to augment understanding and strengthen the learning activities of the students" (Williams, 2002). It is a pedagogy that involves the use of two languages through a process of deep cognitive bilingual engagement (Williams, 1996). It not only promotes a

deeper understanding of subject content but also facilitates the development of the weaker language in relationship with the more dominant language (C. Baker, 2001). Translanguaging also creates a link between home and school literacy, and integrates a classroom with students across the bilingual continuum (Lewis et al., 2012).

García & Wei (2014) use the term "translanguaging" to go beyond the use of two autonomous languages in education. They adopted a translanguaging lens which involves "*multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage to *make sense of their bilingual worlds*" (p. 65, original emphasis). This lens allows for building flexibility within the LiEPs to facilitate learners' meaning-making by engaging their linguistic repertoire wholly and developing it (ibid). Translanguaging goes beyond translation and code-switching in education. Rather, it is a *process* that involves bilingual learners performing bilingually in multimodal ways of learning, listening, reading, writing, discussing, taking notes, etc. (García, 2011). It pays attention to how learners negotiate social identities and combine various modes and media across social contexts. Since it is a flexible bilingual pedagogy, it provides learners with the possibility of accessing new academic content through the expansion of the semiotic resources that they bring to the learning context (Blackledge & Creese, 2010).

Translanguaging is not only a way to scaffold instruction in order to understand learning and language better; it is also part of the "meta-discursive regime" that must be performed by learners in the 21st century (García, 2011, p. 147). Translanguaging is a process by which teachers and learners engage in complex discursive practices, that include all students' language practices, to create new ones. They also sustain the old language practices while interrogating linguistic inequalities by giving voice to new socio-political realities (García & Kano, 2014). The notion of translanguaging also highlights two concepts that are fundamental to MLE, namely criticality and creativity (Li Wei, 2011). Criticality and creativity are intrinsically linked: one cannot break boundaries without being critical, and one cannot be critical without being creative. Teachers should encourage learners and give them agency to act linguistically creatively and critically. In this translanguaging space, the language practices of the learners are brought together "to develop an extended bilingual repertoire capable of deeply involving them cognitively but also a more sophisticated metalinguistic awareness that would enable them to negotiate these extended linguistic repertoires" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 74). Therefore, translanguaging is a socio-educational process that "enables students to construct and constantly modify their sociocultural identities and values, as they respond to their historical and present conditions critically and creatively. Consequently, translanguaging is transformative for the learner, the teacher, and for the education itself". It enables learners and teachers to contest the ideologies of traditional bilingual and monolingual classrooms (García & Wei, 2014, pp. 67-68).

2.8   Curriculum reforms in East Africa

The East African Community state countries[7], just like many other countries around the world, are carrying out extensive curriculum reforms. These reforms prepare learners better in terms of the education requirements for the world of work. In Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012, the EAC partner states adopted a common policy that harmonizes the education and training curriculum. This curriculum will shift to a competency-based and assessment approach, thus matching global trends (East African Community, 2014). This is as a result of the perception that a country empowers its citizens with essential knowledge, skills, values, and attitude through a curriculum, thereby not only empowering individuals but also furthering national development (IBE-UNESCO, 2017).

Tanzania introduced the CBC in secondary education in 2005, and in 2006, they introduced the CBC in primary schools (World Bank, 2011). The introduction of this curriculum was meant to upgrade the quality of education in Tanzania by producing learners who could demonstrate the acquired knowledge, skills, and attitude, and apply them when problem-solving, thereby meeting the aspirations and the changing needs of the society (Sifuna & Obonyo, 2019). In Rwanda, to deal with the scarcity of skills in their education system regarding science and technology, the shift was made to a CBC in 2015. This was due to the country's desire to produce a knowledgeable society that would meet local and global demands in the competitive job market. The introduction of the CBC was in response to Rwanda's educational philosophy of ensuring that all children receive a quality education in all levels of learning in order to develop to their full potential in knowledge skills and values, thereby ultimately enabling them to fit in in the competitive world (Republic of Rwanda, 2015).

Kenya is currently undergoing curriculum reforms from the ongoing 8-4-4 system, which requires that learners study for eight years in primary education, four years in secondary education, and four years at university level. This system is being replaced with a new 2-6-3-3-3 system, also known as the CBC. This new system is comprised of two years of pre-primary education, six years of primary education (i.e., three years in lower primary and three years in upper primary), three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary education, and lastly, three years of university education (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017a). The new CBC learning refers to systems of learning that focus on the needs assessment of the seven core competencies which are: "communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, learning to learn and self-sufficiency" (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017a, p.

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7 The East African Community is the regional intergovernmental organization composed of six countries in East Africa. They include Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania, with its headquarters located in Arusha, Tanzania.

21). This new curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and applying them to real-life situations. It also provides an opportunity to identify and develop learners' talents and potentials while preparing the learners for life and the job market (ibid).

2.8.1 Curriculum reforms in Kenya and the LiEP

The poor academic performance in literacy and numeracy skills, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, section 1.1, might have been attributed to the failure of the 8-4-4 system to implement the LiEP. The 8-4-4 system has faced many criticisms, thus the government had to consider the CBC which began in 2017 with a pilot phase in 10 schools in each of the 47 counties. These schools included public, private, and special needs schools (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017a). The key focus of CBC is the mental ability of the learners to process knowledge. This curriculum proposes a practical framework that nurtures learners' competencies based on their gifts and talents. The LiEP states that the language of the catchment area is to be used as the language of education from pre-primary education to lower primary level (grades 1-3) (Republic of Kenya, 2012). In the new CBC system, they have also included "indigenous languages" as a subject to be taught in school (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017a, 2017b), as with the curriculum in the former 8-4-4 system. The CBC aims to make education responsive to Vision 2030 and the SDGs that highlighted education as a vital component to attaining them. MTE is believed to be amongst other factors that would drive learners to acquire the necessary skills and competence to meet the human resources aspirations of Kenya's Vision 2030 blueprint for development (Wa Mberia, 2016).

Subsequently, with the CBC in place, teachers are required to provide democratic spaces, guidance, materials, and activities to learners using their indigenous languages or in Kiswahili in schools located in the heterogenous population (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017a). Despite all the recommendations made by the various commissions and the Constitution of Kenya (2010) in bringing about curriculum reforms, a well-drafted CBC education system, and the LiEP, there are still challenges in the implementation of the language policy in schools. This research has shown some of the impediments in the implementation of the policy. I will discuss this in detail in Chapter 6 of this study.

2.9 Summary

This chapter has discussed the sociolinguistic context of Kenya. It presented the phenomenon of multilingualism in Kenya as a result of the many languages spoken in the country. The chapter has also described the uses of English and Kiswahili in the nation, and it is evident that English has been given a higher status in the country than Kiswahili, which is mostly used as the lingua franca for

Kenyans. The chapter also presented the language policies in sub-Saharan Africa that emphasize the use of African languages as MoI in the early years of learning. However, empirical studies have shown that the implementation of the LiEPs in Africa faces challenges and the value of MTE has been contested in the education sector. Despite the many efforts to promote MT as the LoI, many countries still promote the use of English in education. Lastly, this chapter discussed the curriculum reforms in East Africa and that the EAC partner states have adopted a common policy that harmonizes education and the training curriculum – the CBC. This curriculum is aimed at upgrading the quality of education. The CBC is perceived to produce knowledgeable citizens that meet the demands of the locally and globally competitive job market.

CHAPTER 3: LITERACIES

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I critically discuss the concept of literacy. Firstly, I discuss the different approaches to literacies, which include didactic, authentic, functional, and transformative literacy. Secondly, I discuss related theoretical paradigms, including social approaches to literacy, critical literacy, and multiliteracies. As part of this discussion, I also introduce and explicate some important concepts such as literacy events and literacy practices. This study is embedded within the larger theoretical framework of critical literacy, which goes beyond the traditional view of reading and writing. This theory includes critical thinking, questioning, and transformation of the norms governing the social fields of everyday life. Learners do not only read the word but also read the world around them. I also discuss the concept of multiliteracies, which is specifically concerned with expanding the definition of literacy beyond the linguistic that learners also need to be able to read. This concept describes the new approach to literacy pedagogy that takes into consideration the changing social environment that students face.

3.2 Approaches to literacies

3.2.1 Didactic literacy

Didactic literacy is the oldest approach to literacy, with its roots traced back to the start of writing systems. It gained its prominence in the world as a mode of learning in institutions in the 19th and 20th centuries (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012a). Didactic literacy is a method of learning involving a teacher, the textbook, and the students. The teacher is the authority in this learning approach. His/her role is to tell the learner what is in the textbook. The role of the learner is to listen to and absorb what is being taught. The teacher establishes a relationship in which "the students learn to accept received facts and moral truths, comply with commands issued by the teacher and absorb the authoritative knowledge presented in the curriculum" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b, p. 39). Freire (1996) referred to this approach of learning as the "banking" concept of education, where knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable (the teacher) upon those who know nothing (the learners). In this case, the teacher is the knowledgeable party who transfers knowledge to the learners, the latter being perceived as knowing nothing and merely listen passively (Freire, 1996; Zou et al., 2011).

In a didactic literacy pedagogy classroom, it is assumed that learners have no power to construct knowledge themselves – it is only the teacher who commands knowledge (Zou et al., 2011). In addition, didactic education assumes that learning is memorizing and absorbing work, rules, and facts, which encourages rote learning. It presupposes that "school knowledge is a kind of shopping list of

things to be known", and the pupils' role is to absorb without questioning (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b, p. 48). Criticism is not allowed here and no one should doubt or question the teacher who is all-knowing (Freire, 2015). In this type of classroom, a good student is a listening student – silent, undifferentiated, a student who answers questions the right way and who does not miss a word in the whole class recitation (Richardson, 2008).

In a didactic educational setting, the classroom is arranged to serve a communicative purpose. In a typical didactic classroom, the teacher's space is positioned in such a way that s/he sees all the students; it is often a raised space in front of the classroom. The classroom walls are decorated with charts, maps, and a few works produced by the teacher. The children's desks are set up in rows facing the teacher to ensure that there is eye contact with the teacher. This seating arrangement discourages peer-to-peer lateral vision (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). This setup also discourages student dialogues which may tempt the learners to pursue some tangential interests as a way of defiance of the teacher's authority or copying from each other's work. Students are forbidden to talk (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012a): the learners must do their work quietly, be silent all the time, and listen to the teacher. The only time that students may speak is when the teacher engages with them in question-and-answer sessions, where one student speaks at a time, and they must raise their hands to be selected to speak (Meyer, 2007). Another scenario where students are allowed to speak is when the whole class recites in unison a repetition of what the teacher is teaching (Freire, 2005; Meyer, 2007).

This learning approach is, however, not always a bad teaching method. It has been common practice in literacy classes for centuries and, to date, is still in use (Haidet et al., 2004; Yerrick & Ridgeway, 2017). It remains an effective way of teaching literacy, especially in an underdeveloped world where there are limited resources, and the textbook is treated as a source of authority. Even in the developed spaces, in mass, compulsory, and institutionalized education such as at universities, this method has been in use for a long time (Bligh, 2000). Didactic literacy is often effective when students require clear instructions from a teacher to explain concepts, to remove ambiguity, and to cover a large amount of content in one session (Bligh, 2000; Brookfield, 1997). This method of learning is also useful in learning-subject matters such as vocabularies of a foreign language, mathematical formulae, and the periodic table of elements. It may also be appropriate in learning doctrinal religious readings, where people may not question matters of faith, whether they agree or disagree with the teachings (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b).

Didactic education teaches respect, discipline, order, hierarchy, self-restraint, and every traditional moral virtue. It creates a society in which workers receive a supervisor's orders at work, citizens conform, and wives obey their husbands at home (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b).

3.2.2 Authentic literacy

The application of didactic education in learning institutions attracted criticism from "progressivists"[8]. Some of these criticisms entailed that the knowledge imparted to learners was so rigid with only right and wrong answers that learners were not supposed to question the content taught. The formal academic disciplines do not apply to the real lives of learners, and learning does not fully engage the learners' identities, interests, and motivations (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). There was a need for a learning strategy that would encourage active learning activities that would involve learners actively engaging with the content and with each other (Elnicki et al., 1999; Green, 2000; Green & Ellis, 1997).

Authentic pedagogy is a viable substitute for didactic pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013). It is a pedagogy that is understood to be "true to what practically needs to be known in the world, rather than the abstract facts and theories of didactic pedagogy" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015b, p. 10). Therefore, authentic literacy pedagogy is an "immersion in personally meaningful reading and writing experiences, with a focus on processes of reading and writing rather than the formalities of rules and adherence to conventions" (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 120). This approach is learner-centred and aims to create a space for self-expression. Consequently, authentic literacy gives learners the freedom to criticize, initiate, create, and transform knowledge (Aljanahi & Alsheikh, 2020).

In their insights into this issue, Kalantzis & Cope (2012b) gave the example of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau was among the first modern thinkers to propose a more natural and authentic education. In his book "Emile, or Education", Rousseau illustrated how he would educate his imaginary student, Emile. Rousseau suggests that letting a student observe a natural phenomenon would arouse his curiosity. He proposes that educators should not be in a hurry to satisfy the learners' curiosity, but rather provide them with problems and let them find solutions by themselves (ibid). In his book, Rousseau explained further that a teacher should:

> Let the student know nothing because you have told him, but because he has learned it for himself. Let him not be taught, let him discover it. If ever you substitute authority for a reason he will cease to reason; he will be a mere plaything of other people's thoughts.

> (Rousseau, 1911, p. 131)

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8 Progressivists believe that individuality, progress, and change are fundamental to one's education and believe that people learn best from what they consider most relevant to their lives.

Maria Montessori, who was the first female doctor in Italy, was also among the first progressivists to criticize didactic education. Through her works with young learners with disabilities, Montessori believed that the teacher's role was to assist the student to learn by themselves in a free environment. The teacher should facilitate that environment for the learner and connect the learner's home, school, and community literacy practices. There should be no boundaries in those learning spaces (Montessori, 2002). This is also supported by Kalantzis and Cope (2012b), who agree that in authentic literacy, teachers invite outsiders like parents and professionals whose expertise is relevant to the learning taking place in the classroom space and engages them in the learning process. By doing so, it creates a link between in- and out-of-school learning.

Another major contribution toward authentic education was by John Dewey, an American professor of philosophy, and a founder of progressive education in the United States. His concept of progressive education is more learner-centred rather than discipline- and academic-centred. He was interested in how education could enhance democracy. His underlying philosophy was "pragmatism", which entailed that the purpose of education is to solve the everyday problems of human life through linking knowledge to practical social experiences (Dewey, 1951).

One of the ironies of didactic learning, as stated by Kalantzis & Cope (2012a), was that the role of the teacher was reduced to that of bureaucratic functionary, where the teacher is caught between textbook and syllabus, on the one hand, and learners and tests, on the other. The role of the teacher was just as an intermediary in the chain of knowledge. Therefore, criticism resulted in a shift from didactic education to one that would engage the learners in taking a more active role in their learning, which is regarded as fulfilment of the needs of the students and society at large (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b, 2012a). There was a shift in focus from teaching to learning in the 20th century. In authentic literacy pedagogy, learners bring to the classroom a wealth of knowledge and lived experiences that can be a great asset to learning, but it requires the effort of teachers to be aware of these linguistic and cognitive tools and to take advantage of them (Gee, 1989; Rosebery et al., 1992). Teachers use their core concepts of knowledge to guide learners, pose challenging questions to them, and probe them to justify their answers with evidence (Levin et al., 2013). This learning approach supports cognitive autonomy, where students are asked to generate original solutions to problems and to use the knowledge in meaningful ways in the classroom and beyond (Stefanou et al., 2004; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016).

Authentic education acknowledges that each learner is unique, rather than treating them as having equal abilities to learn. They are accepted as they are, and their strengths are valued while allowing the learners to gradually overcome any limitations in favourable environments (Watagodakumbura,

2013). Here, learners are considered to be co-constructors of knowledge along with the teachers, as suggested in Vygotsky's cognitive development. Learning occurs when there is social interaction with the teacher through collaborative dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978). Numerous studies have revealed that authentic literacy pedagogy practices are associated with students' increased abilities to engage in higher-order thinking and complex problem-solving (Aljanahi & Alsheikh, 2020; Koh & Luke, 2009; Newmann et al., 1996; W. C. Parker et al., 2013; Ramirez & Jimenez-Silva, 2015).

The physical spaces of the authentic classroom are a typical modification of a didactic classroom. The learners' desks are arranged in a way that allows the children to interact and move around the classroom. This setting allows the children to work in groups because they face each other. The desks might be replaced with working tables to allow a more comfortable working space for the learners (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012a). The walls of these classrooms might be decorated using the children's work, which is a symbol of celebrating students' efforts and their presence in the classroom. The MT, alongside the school language (if the two are not the same), is also used for instruction. In an authentic classroom, unlike the didactic classroom, learning can also take place outside the classroom setting through, e.g., outdoor activities and excursions. However, the centre of activity is mostly grounded in the classroom (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). In an authentic classroom, as suggested by Rhodes & Shanklin (1993), learners have a say in their learning experiences and are free to make their own choices. Giving learners the freedom to make learning choices empowers them in classroom interactions and decision-making activities (Wortman, 1993). Snowball (1992) adds that when learners are given the chance to plan, explore, and share their learning experiences with others, it adds purpose to the activities.

The aim of authentic literacy pedagogy is to produce citizens who will be mapped along appropriate career paths in a world of countless opportunities and who will participate actively in their social world (Watagodakumbura, 2013). A further aim is to produce inquisitive and open-minded citizens who will be able to adapt to social changes in their lives and become members of manifold social worlds in the 20th century (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). Moreover, authentic literacy pedagogy produces human beings who are more empathetic, creative, innovative, productive, and satisfied, "which is a starting point of a significant positive overall social change" (Watagodakumbura, 2013, p. 175).

3.2.3   Functional literacy

Functional literacy is the acquisition of basic knowledge and the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, which are necessary for effective functioning in society. Those who attain these skills can develop new attitudes, and actively and successfully participate in their daily activities. They can comprehend printed texts and expressions that they encounter in the spaces in which they interact

(Lankshear, 1993). Grajo and Gutman (2019) define functional literacy as the ability to decode written words and symbols, and interpret them to carry out the daily activities necessary to maintain a home, employment, and manage one's health conditions (p. 1).

Functional literacy "focuses on learners reading texts that enable them to succeed in school and participate in society. Its aim is for learners to understand why texts exist" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012a, p. 160). The advocates of functional literacy claimed that authentic literacy "so often fails in practice to improve learning outcomes" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012a: 176). Here, the students and the teacher work together, the learners assume the role of an apprentice while the teacher takes the role of a language expert. The learners go through a sequence of texts and steps to become better readers and writers of different genres that are not only valued in education but also in the wider society. They critically analyse the different social purposes of textual conventionality.

Functional literacy aims to equip the illiterate with basic literacy skills (Kozol, 1993). The activities that functional literacy needs to fulfil include shopping and food preparation, money management, employment seeking, medication and health management, navigating transport systems, etc. (Grajo et al., 2019).

3.2.4 Transformative literacy

Transformative education emerged in the 21st century. Literacy in the 21st century involves active meaning-making and communication across different semiotic modes (Buckingham, 2013; Gainer, 2012; Lin et al., 2013). Today, it is nearly impossible for education not to address globalization, the advancement in technologies, the changing nature of work, diverse classrooms, the shifting dimensions of human identity, subjectivity and personality (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). These changes have exposed children and young people to the world of digital television, video games, and the internet. At the same time, the new digital media has paved the way for new possibilities for teaching. Digital learning is creating new spaces for both educators and learners to challenge the social relations of traditional classrooms and pedagogies while simultaneously transforming them. Transformative education is the current "new learning" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b, p. 61).

The authentic learning of the 20th century improved on didactic education. This new learning needs to complement authentic learning and, in fact, do more – it must be "transformative" (Cranton, 2006). It should aim to change the learner's life chances and their world. This approach to literacy recognizes the educational legacies of didactic and authentic literacy to design better educational futures. Transformative pedagogy entails critical questioning which increases learners' awareness of their own assumptions (Cranton, 1994). It is a pedagogy that acknowledges collaborative inquiry of the

participants that forms links between teaching, learning, and making sense of the world (Farren, 2016). Transformative education is, however, an emerging idea that is a work-in-progress. It is "an act of imagining the future of learning and an attempt to find practical ways to develop aspects of this future in the educational practices of the present" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b: 61-62).

In transformative learning, the environment is comprised of flexible spaces where learners can work from anywhere with no physical boundaries such as the four walls of the classroom. Students could work in the library, in somebody else's classroom, in a workplace, a gallery, in locations in the community where knowledge is constructed and used. A group of students could even work in one of the group member's homes. With the help of modern technology, these learners are connected with teachers and other learners locally and globally, and information is accessed through web-enabled devices (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). Learners can also take an active role in meaning-making through digital learning. Rowsell & Walsh (2011) point out that "designing on-screen has not only transformed how we make meaning but also transformed ways of reconstructing and renegotiating our identities" (p. 56). Hamilton, Tett & Crowther (2012) go on to say that "[in] a world where electronically produced text carries meaning, exclusion from digital technologies can have disempowering consequences – especially for life in the home, community, and workplace" (p. 4).

This might sound impossible. One might ask oneself about the teacher's role as the caretaker? In the present day, one is able to know where the child is no matter where they are. Kalantzis & Cope (2012b) claim that in a digital world, "every child has access to a mobile phone, a reading and writing tablet or a personal computer, with a global positioning system facility that tells you exactly where they are" (p. 63). With these devices, the teacher and the students can communicate with each other, no matter where they are. The teacher can know exactly what the learners are doing because they commit their work to a "cloud"-based server system that supports sharing and messaging. The teacher can see what the learner is doing, and an automated alert system can notify the teacher whenever a student strays beyond the designated perimeters or outside the agreed task scope (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). The online environment is free from restrictions of time and place, and students can participate in discussions that are either asynchronized or synchronized (Comeaux, 2005). It also allows learners to express themselves without being interrupted and without the risk of being marginalized in terms of social class, gender, race, or disability (Bender, 2003).

However, online learning education faces some digital inequalities. The biggest challenge associated with online learning is access to the information communications technology (ICT) resources; it goes without saying that for learning to take place, ICT facilities should be available (Arthur-Nyarko & Kariuki, 2019; Lemphane & Prinsloo, 2014). Access to ICT resources is spread unevenly in different

populations, spaces, and households, as the internet is not the same everywhere (Lemphane & Prinsloo, 2014). Online learning is beneficial, however, its effectiveness depends on socio-economic contexts. For instance, students from developed countries enrolled for online courses are likely to perform better academically than their peers from developing countries, the latter likely scoring lower or withdrawing from these online courses due to unequal access to digital resources in these contexts (Kizilcec & Halawa, 2015; Lembani et al., 2020). In the US, for example, a study revealed that students who engage in online learning performed better than those in traditional learning, while students who combined face-to-face and online learning sessions performed most successfully (The Council of Independent Colleges, 2016). When students do not have adequate access to technology, computers, and study materials, it may leave them apprehensive and marginalized, which affects the process of online learning (Queiros & de Villiers, 2016). For example, Brazil is pushing for universal digital exams, yet some of their candidates have no access to digital resources in their homes. This may result in a negative reflection on their academic performance (Duboc & Menezes de Souza, 2021). Additionally, the availability of digital resources does not necessarily mean that learning is indeed taking place: a student may be part of an e-learning session but might not be following the tutor or using the service actively (Bean et al., 2019).

Online tutors ought to have advanced technological skills (Bean et al., 2019). When teachers lack background experience and inadequate technological skills for online learning, it becomes a constraint to online education (Olesova et al., 2011). When students do not have prior knowledge and experience in online learning, they may also lack support systems and technical assistance, thus affecting the learning process (Srichanyachon, 2014). According to a study conducted in Tanzania, 63% of the teachers engaging in online learning lacked the necessary skills required to establish or use online educational resources (Mtebe & Raisamo, 2014). Another criticism of online learning is the factor of slow and unreliable internet connectivity which causes delays in giving instructions, thus also affecting the quality of learning (Bean et al., 2019; Srichanyachon, 2014). The lack of access to the internet and digital devices in homes in rural communities also causes digital inequality (DePaul, 2020). In addition, rural areas often lack a constant supply of electricity, thus making it difficult to assimilate online learning (Ivala, 2013). In summary, lack of access to modern technologies and poor technological skills in teachers and learners contribute to digital inequalities, thus shifting these parties into a vulnerable position in current society (Smythe, 2018). Effective online instruction often allows learners to establish learning goals and become self-directed students who collaborate and share with, and generate knowledge from others (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004).

Transformative education is not entirely a utopian concept, but various countries are indeed implementing some of the elements of this approach (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). For instance, in 2004, the US reported having approximately 2.3 million college and university students registered for online courses (Allen & Seaman, 2005). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the temporary physical closure of learning institutions all over the world, bringing about an urgent shift to e-learning. Almost all learning institutions were forced to undertake teaching and learning remotely and on digital platforms. Most universities and colleges embraced learning via Zoom and Microsoft Teams, where instructors and learners connect virtually in the comfort of their homes.

Unlike pedagogy which discouraged lateral communication, the new learning, according to Kalantzis & Cope (2012b), strives to encourage students to engage in lateral communication through face-to-face interactions, online chats, email and instant messaging, internet and mobile telephony, messaging around an image, video, and audio content, in both designing and sharing environments. It also allows the use of multimodality, multilingualism, invented discourses, and the use of specifically tailored communication for those with special needs, hence expanding the diverse expression of meaning-making. Learning is not an imposed activity for the students; rather, it is a negotiated matter where the learners are meaning-makers and meaning-receivers. Teachers here are the designers of pedagogy while the learners are co-designers of knowledge and learning. The teaching discourse of this approach is more dialogical and interactive. The learners are not only co-creators of knowledge but also share their knowledge with other students. They teach each other and give each other structured feedback (ibid). The role of the teacher is to create a safe and favourable environment for learning by validating learners' opinions and contributions while attending to their reactions and emotions. The teacher facilitates positive student interactions and mediates conflicts whenever they occur in the learning process (Parkes, 2001).

The role of teachers in transformative learning is to create a supportive learning community (Meyers, 2008). They are not only knowledge experts but also critical inquirers who design knowledge out of practice in collaboration with other teachers (Farren, 2016). They no longer work independently but rather work together as a unified body of professional collaborators. They work together, teach each other, document, and publish together. They also share the learning resources that they have developed together (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). The teachers' role is to create conducive knowledge-making environments for learners. They build learning scaffolds, manage student learning as well as monitor their students' performance. Their work is in the best interests of the learners, hence they are advocates for learning improvement, and they invite parents and community experts who can contribute positively to the learning experience (Farren, 2016; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b).

The goal of transformative learning is to produce innovative and creative citizens who can navigate diversity and constant change, collaborate, solve problems, and learn as they go (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b). Transformative education is "action-oriented" (Farren, 2016, p. 193). It creates people who can participate in a globalized and cosmopolitan world, the kinds of people who cannot be intimidated by change or suffer from "future shock". These citizens will be able to take control as agents of social design in their working and living spaces (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012b).

3.3   Social approaches to literacy

The shift towards the view of literacy as transformative began with a greater focus on the social aspects of literacy, especially considering where and for which purposes literacy was used and acquired. In addition, the home environment and the interaction between home and school also received more attention within this paradigm. This led to the coinage of some concepts which have become staples in literacy studies. The social aspects of social literacy highlight the use of literacy in terms of literacy practices and events that can be observed and recorded in general social contexts of literacy (Barton, 2007; Maybin, 2007). The term "literacy event", according to Barton (1994), originated from the sociolinguistic notion of a speech event. A literacy event, as a concept, was used by Heath (1982) to refer to "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participant's interactions and their interpretative processes," and as "an action sequence involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role" (p. 93). Anderson & Stokes (1984) also referred to it as an event in which an individual "attempts to comprehend graphic signs" (pp. 59, 65). Barton and Hamilton (2012) agree with Heath (1982) in that those events happen when there is a written text, and this text provides an occasion for reading and interpretations around it. They explained that texts are critical in literacy events. Part of the study of literacy includes the study of texts – how they are produced and used. The authors explain further that in literacy events, people use written language in integrated semiotic modes, including musical notation, numerical systems, maps, and other non-text-based images. For instance, cookery text has print literacy mixed with numeracy and images, and the recipes come from television programs, magazines, books, and through verbal transfer (Barton & Hamilton, 2012).

Events are the activities that arise where literacy plays a role. For example, when following a recipe, the process of preparing the food is the literacy event. Text can have many roles in one activity and "literacy can act in different ways for different participants in a literacy event" (Barton & Hamilton, 2012, p. 11). Literacy events, as suggested by Heath (1983), have social interaction rules which guide the amount and the type of talk around a written text. Additionally, these rules define the ways in

which oral languages reinforce, extend, deny, or set aside the written material. A literacy event is an important notion as it assists literacy practitioners and researchers in focusing on situations where they can observe activities taking place as a result of reading and writing (Street, 2001). These events are situated interactions that occur in specific contexts. They are observable activities arising from literacy practices and are shaped by them (Barton & Hamilton, 2012). Literacy can be analysed within literacy events (Gee, 2000). Some events are connected by routine sequences of the formal process and expectations of institutions such as schools and workplaces, while others are constructed by informal expectations of peers and the home (Barton & Hamilton, 2012). As such, it is sometimes quite difficult for a non-participating observer who is unfamiliar with the conventions of the literacy event to follow what is taking place.

The notion of literacy practices is defined by Baynham (1995) as "concrete human activities" involving what people do with literacy, what they make of what they do, and how they construct its ideologies and values that surround it. According to Barton & Hamilton (2012, p. 6), literacy practices "are the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives". Scribner and Cole (1981) defined the concept as the use of literacy in real-life situations. Street (2003) also refers to it as the everyday uses and meaning of literacy in social practice. In the simplest sense, Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanic (2000) explained the concept of literacy practices as the different ways in which people use literacy to get things done in society. Literacy practices are not only the construction of knowledge but also the attitudes, feelings, values, beliefs, and social relationships associated with reading and writing of specific texts within particular contexts (Gee, 2000; Street, 1984). These practices also consist of people's awareness of literacy, constructions, and discourses of literacy, and how people talk about literacy and make sense of it (Barton & Hamilton, 2012). Street (2001) went further and explained the concept as:

> An attempt to handle the events and the patterns of activity around literacy and link them to something broader of a cultural and social kind. And part of that broadening involves attending to the fact that a literacy event has brought to its concepts social models regarding what the nature of this practice is and what makes it work and gives it meaning. And you cannot get those models by simply watching what is happening.

(Street, 2001, p. 21)

Unlike literacy events, literacy practices are not behavioural units that can be simply observed (Street, 1993). To be able to understand literacy practices, a researcher must conduct an ethnographical exercise – interacting with the people by talking and listening while linking to their immediate

experiences of reading and writing, in addition to linking their values and ideologies that surround what they do with literacy (Baynham, 1995). It is often not enough to ask people about reading and writing alone, since what might give meaning to literacy events "might be something that is not, in the first instance, thought of in terms of literacy at all" (Street, 2001, pp. 21-22). The *values* around the notion of literacy practices precisely "form a bridge between literacy as a linguistic phenomenon and the social context in which it is embedded" (Baynham, 1995, p. 54). Therefore, the notion of literacy practices "offers a powerful way of conceptualizing the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape" (Barton & Hamilton, 2012, p. 6).

Literacy practices and events are crucial aspects that contribute to the development of literacy as a social practice (Barton, 2007). Literacy as a social practice is critical to find meaningful ways in which early childhood teachers can support the development of social literacy in young children (Theodotou, 2017). It is worth acknowledging that literacy practices and events reveal people's interactions with literacy and not necessarily their literacy knowledge. However, while observing literacy practices and events, literacy knowledge can sometimes be perceived. Therefore, literacy practices and events can be found naturally in people's day-to-day lives (Theodotou, 2017). Recognizing that literacy practices and events occur both in and out of school will help to address the educational challenges thereof (Ntshuntshe, 2011).

3.3.1   Home literacy

The home is the primary domain often identified with people's literacy lives and is central to the development of a sense of social identity (Barton & Hamilton, 2012). Home is an environment where parents and children come together to develop the child's language and literacy acquisition. Edward (2014, p. 57) surmised that "the best predictor for later reading development is the quality of the home environment […] Continuing to examine different aspects of the home environment may provide crucial information with respect to literacy development in the earliest stages of a child's life". A significant amount of research has shown that home literacy practices and home literacy environments[9] have a strong influence on child language and literacy development (C. E. Baker, 2014; Baroody & Diamond, 2016; Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Eleni Zgourou, 2018; Gonzalez, 2013; Kim et al., 2015; Mendive et al., 2017; Weigel et al., 2010).

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9 Family interaction with reading materials and available literacy resources at home.

Early literacy experiences for children lay a foundation for them to know how to read prior to receiving a formal education (Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009). Hamilton (2013, p. 271) also confirms that those children who learn to decode faster during their first year of primary school "may already show orientation to the mechanistic aspects of reading before starting to learn to read at school". Parents can support their children in literacy activities if they engage with them (Leseman & De Jong, 1998). It is important to provide children with opportunities to practice literacy skills as it is necessary for literacy development (Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009). Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan (2002) recommend that the home literacy environment should be viewed as "complex and multifaceted", where there is a combination of numerous literacy practices. There are three home literacy practices that may assist in the literacy development of children: parent literacy practices, child literacy practices, and parent-child literacy practices (p. 411).

3.3.2   Parent-child literacy practices

Child language and literacy skills can be promoted when parents enrich their homes with literacy materials such as books, newspapers, magazines, educational games and toys, and writing materials. Children are encouraged to explore reading when they have access to literacy materials (Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009). Empirical studies have shown that the provision of home literacy resources has an impact on children's current and later language and literacy skills (A. D. Johnson et al., 2008; Payne, 1994; Rodriguez, 2011). Kim et al. (2015) assert that children who come from homes with rich literacy environments have more opportunities to engage in diverse and complex language.

Children who come from homes with little or no reading resources often begin school with little reading experience. The provision of these literacy materials is not enough – the child's engagement with these materials is also important. Some studies have focused on the frequency of children's actual engagement with these materials in the home. The extent to which children engage with these literacy materials depends on the interest they have in them (Baroody & Diamond, 2012, 2016). Children who take an interest in literacy practices often create or seek more opportunities to involve themselves in literacy activities, thereby practicing their literacy and language skills (Baroody & Diamond, 2016). Other than interacting with literacy materials by themselves, they may also ask their parents to read with or to them (Baroody & Diamond, 2016; Farver et al., 2006). During shared reading, parents can converse with the child beyond the content that they have read. This way, novel vocabularies and complex grammatical language are introduced to the child (Dickinson & Snow, 1987; Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans, 2010).

Parents' attitudes toward reading activities play a significant role in the home literacy environment. Children are encouraged to involve themselves in home literacy activities when they see their parents getting involved in literacy activities (Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009). Baroody & Diamond (2012) also agree that when parents model or engage in literacy practices, they may contribute to their children's literacy development. For instance, parents who engage in literacy practices by reading for leisure in front of their children convey a message that literacy is a normal everyday activity (Burgess et al., 2002). Neuman (2003) also affirms that parents who read for entertainment rather than for skill motivate their children to have a more positive attitude towards reading. There is some evidence to suggest that children of parents who promote literacy in homes have higher chances of succeeding in school. Rashid, Morris, & Sevcik (2005) state in their study that those parents who promote literacy activities in their homes believe that their children will become successful literate people. Children are more likely to participate in recreational reading when they are motivated to participate in literacy activities at home (Kessler-Sklar et al., 1999).

There is a common belief that literate parents are more likely to provide literacy opportunities in their homes than less literate parents (Phillips & Lonigan, 2009). It is plausible that a child's literacy outcomes are related to their parents' literacy practices. This is due to the fact that in a home where literacy is valued, children tend to have more opportunities to engage in their literacy practices and/or with their parents. Empirical studies have shown that parents who enjoy reading for leisure tend to involve their children in literacy practices (Brown et al., 2013; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). For example, research done by Brown et al. (2013) on Australian middle-income families found that parents who read for pleasure also engage their children in literacy activities. In addition, providing access to more literacy opportunities and modelling literacy behaviours directly or indirectly promotes the use of a more syntactically complex language and advanced vocabulary than families who do not engage in reading (Symons, 1996; Van Steensel, 2006). Moreover, parents who involve their children in literacy practices may expose the children to language qualities, thus explaining their advanced literacy and language skills (Van Steensel, 2006).

Parents can engage in numerous literacy practices with their children. They can read books to and with them, sing songs, teach letters, numbers, and words, play rhyming games, watch television, and visit the library together. Rogoff (2014) states that children acquire literacy skills through interaction with parents, siblings, grandparents, and caregivers in the home literacy environment. There is substantial evidence that children of parents who promote literacy in their homes succeed in developing literacy skills (C. E Baker, 2014; Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Eleni Zgourou, 2018; Gonzalez, 2013; Raikes et al., 2006; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014; Truesdell & Hill, 2015). For example, a

study done by Sénéchal and LeFevre shows that parents who reported teaching their children and having high expectations for their reading while in pre-primary "were a robust predictor of growth in early literacy" (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014, p. 1563). In homes with strong literacy practices, teachers view parents who spend time reading with their children as role models (Paratore, 2002). Parents who value reading are more likely to foster these attitudes in their children. For example, in a family where children are encouraged to read newspapers or even read something as simple as a grocery list, these children develop print awareness and become familiar with the print environment even though the reading activity is not related to school literacy (Leseman & De Jong, 1998).

Research has shown that children's literacy practices develop better when there is strong parental involvement in their children's literacy activities at home. When families show interest in their children's schoolwork, it influences their positive engagement in school (Dove et al., 2015). In their study, Dove et al. (2015) found that the more parents involved themselves in their children's schoolwork, the more likely the child would improve in literacy performance. Parents must understand how home literacy is important for their children's literacy development. They can model the best literacy practices environment at home and provide opportunities for their children to participate in these literacy activities (Gonzalez, 2013). However, this becomes a challenge in homes where literacy is not dominant, or where parents rarely spend time reading with their children. In this scenario, the teachers need to involve the parents to assist in coming up with a solution to this problem (Rasinski, 2004). One of the solutions is to involve someone with good literacy skills in helping the children. For example, a study done by Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans (2016) stated that between 75% to 90% of the time, families reported having someone read to their children, support them in learning to read, and help with homework at least twice a week.

It is also important for parents to have the necessary reading skills in order for young children to become successful readers. When parents do not have these skills, it may compromise their children's learning. For instance, parents without the required reading skills may end up correcting a child who consistently makes mistakes when reading, instead of teaching the child reading strategies that assist in self-correction. This may frustrate the child and s/he may lose the motivation to read (Gonzalez, 2013). In addition, parents without the necessary reading skills may not be able to help their children with their homework, which is necessary for the learners' success (Gonzalez, 2013). It is worth noting that the education level of the parents also matters in the literacy practices at home (Lynch et al., 2006). Lynch et al.'s (2006) study showed that parents with higher levels of education tend to value reading more than those with lower education levels. Parents who have obtained college and

university degrees understand the importance of home literacy and reinforce the practices more (Lynch et al., 2006).

3.3.3 Connecting home and school literacy

The school institution is socially powerful in supporting literacy practices that are frequently considered dominant. These dominant literacy practices are often formally learned and are standardized and institutionalized. As such, the repertoire of literacy practices that children are exposed to and engage in is shaped by their school context and the literacy values that are associated with schooling (Barton, 2007; Street & Street, 1991). These dominant practices are emphasized by Barton & Hamilton (1998, p. 10) who state that they "can be seen as a part of whole discourse formations, institutionalized configurations of power and knowledge which are embodied in social relationships". Literacy is a concept of knowledge and skills acquisition that is taught and learned in school. Its application can neither be separated from the concrete circumstances in and outside school nor can it be easily separated from the circumstances of its acquisition in school as a social way of life (Erikson, 1984).

Evidence has shown that there is a relationship between the quality and quantity of literacies that a child is exposed to in their homes, and literacy learning and performance at school (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006; Roberts et al., 2005). Scholars agree that the connection between literacy in and out of school supports the development of complex literacy skills and learners' identities across contexts (Gaitan, 2012; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Moje & Luke, 2009; Morrow & Young, 1997). When teachers attempt to connect learners' home literacy to the school context, it allows students to participate in school literacy in a meaningful way (Mantzicopoulos et al., 2013; Siebert & Jo Draper, 2008).

Family literacy processes have an impact on the students' literacy in and outside the classroom. Burns (2003, p. 23) affirms that "literacy is intimately bound up with the students' lives outside the classroom in numerous and complex ways that affect their L1 and L2 identities". Therefore, the school should promote literacy projects that involve the parents' participation in the literacy of their children since their participation is of paramount importance. On the same note, in their study, Ávila and Garavito (2009) recognize that when parents help their children to do their homework, it also assists in strategy development that builds interaction between parents and children. The authors conclude that schoolwork can be used as a strategy to get parents to participate in their children's education. In addition, based on their findings, they also recommended that teachers should be explicit with the students' families in the way they define literacy at school. They should also recognize that home literacies in which learners engage are crucial resources to build upon in the classroom (Ávila & Garavito, 2009).

Teachers' literacy practices both in and outside the school also influence their attitudes toward learners at school (Lycke et al., 2018). Gomez's (2009) study on how reading teachers connect home and school literacies found that in their reading behaviour, teachers connect their personal literacy lives to their professional literacy lives. This study revealed that some teachers are more enthusiastic about helping their learners make the connection between personal experience and school literacy (Gomez, 2009).

Literacy practices that are culturally responsive value the students' home cultures, as the learners learn to engage in the school literacies presented by their teachers (Gay, 2018; Turner, 2007). In his study, Kesler (2011) discussed the importance of pairing critical literacy with culturally responsive pedagogy. The study showed that when teachers recognize and apply critical literacy in a culturally responsive context to the ways in which learners respond to texts, it helps these learners who may otherwise have been impeded by challenging texts. As expressed by Goodman (2008), teachers should take advantage of and get to know what the learners already know from home and use it in the classroom.

3.4   Critical literacy

Critical literacy is the approach within which my study is embedded. The term "critical" was derived from the Greek word *Kriticos*, which denotes the ability to argue and judge (Pandya & Ávila, 2013). The roots of the notion of critical literacy may be traced back to the 1920s, with the tenets of the critical theory propounded by the Frankfurt School, and later gained prominence with the works of Paulo Freire in the late 1960s (McLaren, 2000). The Frankfurt School emphasized the importance of class struggle in society while focusing on political and economic philosophy (Vasquez, 2016a). Additionally, more works on critical theory were developed during the time of Paulo Freire which focused on critical consciousness and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1996; Freire & Macedo, 2005). There are various theoretical traditions and paradigms of scholarship that influenced the definition of "critical literacy" and its practice, including feminist poststructuralist theories (Davies, 1993; Gilbert, 1992), critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1999), postcolonialism traditions (Meacham, 2003), critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Janks, 2010), critical media literacy (Share, 2009, 2010), cultural studies (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011), queer theory (Vicars, 2013), place-conscious pedagogy (Comber, 2016), and critical sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (Blommaert, 2013; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; McKinney, 2017). These theorists have led to different orientations toward critical literacy. However, regardless of these different orientations, the theorists come to a mutual understanding that critical literacy focuses on breaking the unequal power relations in society and concentrates on issues of equity and social justice in support of diverse learners (Vasquez, 2016a).

Paulo Freire (1996) defined critical literacy as the ability to read and write a text, and analyse it reflectively to understand injustices, inequalities, and power that prevail in the world. Anderson and Irvine (1993, p. 82) view critical literacy as "the process of becoming conscious of one's experiences as historically constructed within specific power relations". Janks (2010) states that it is the engagement with texts, discourses, and modes of information that provides learners with the technical skills to critically analyse how texts work. Comber (2012, p. 589) defined critical literacy as "an evolving repertoire of practices of analysis and interrogation which move between the micro features of texts and the macro conditions of institutions, focusing on how relations of power work through these practices".

In the 1970s, Freire gave literacy a socio-political dimension. In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he introduced the pedagogy of problem-solving. He taught peasants in Brazil and Chile how to read by introducing vocabulary that speaks to their daily life experiences. Using words as a stimulus, he engaged them in critical reflection on the realities of oppression around them, and how they could transform their worlds if they freed themselves from that oppression (Freire, 2005). When his participants were led to a critical consciousness of their situations, Freire realized that they were able to retain the words in their vocabulary. The participants started expressing their discoveries after some hours of learning:

> […] I now realize I am a person, an educated person. We were blind, now our eyes have been opened. Before this, words meant nothing to me; now they speak to me, and I can make them speak. Now we will no longer be a dead weight on the cooperative farm. I work, and working I transform the world.
>
> (Shawl, 2005, p. 33)

When men and women start to discover themselves in the process of learning to read, it means they discover themselves as creators of culture, and hence their work can be deemed creative.

In the 1970s, Freire's work on literacy was not just about the knowledge of reading and writing, but also pertained to how readers and writers should assume the aspect of creative and critical thinking in the process of reading and writing, as well as reflecting on the significance of the language (Freire, 1996). Having worked with the indigenous peasant community in Brazil, Freire argued that traditional literacy was based on the "banking model" of education. The learners' lives, experiences, and cultures were considered irrelevant in the learning process. Therefore, he advocated for a dialogical literacy approach that included the principles of reciprocal exchange between the oppressor and oppressed, the teacher and the learner. These dialogues would alter the binary relationships of the different groups. "Cultural circles" would commence on learners' dialogues on their struggles, problems, and

aspirations. The focus would be narrating, naming, renaming, and understanding the learners' lifeworlds to solve the real problems affecting them (Freire, 1996).

In the 1980s, Freire together with Macedo advocated for the concept that "reading the word" should also simultaneously involve "reading the world" (Freire & Macedo, 2005). This means that when reading any text, it should conciliate with the reader's day-to-day life, experiences, and the spaces, places, and languages that they encounter, utilize, and dwell in (Vasquez, 2016a). According to Freire & Macedo (2005), the skills of reading and writing are facilitated by exploring learners' causes and effects of lived realities, which are the potential tools for social transformation. On the contrary, when teachers focus on teaching oppressed communities how to read the word only, and do not teach them how to read the world, they may technically become literate "but will remain passive objects of history rather than active subjects" (Freire, 2005, p. 181). Freire further explains that in critical pedagogy, the teacher ceases to manipulate the students because this pedagogy focuses on the students' expression of their consciousness. Consciousness is the essence of being aware and responsive to the surrounding world. Thus critical literacy can lead to "unpacking myths and distortions and building new ways of knowing and acting upon the world" (Luke, 2013, p. 22).

3.4.1   The critical teacher

Critical pedagogy is against the "narrative character" of the teacher, where s/he is the narrating object while the student is the "listening subject" (Freire, 2005, p. 71). The teacher fills the student with the content of the narration that detaches them from reality. The student, on the other hand, is required to listen and mechanically memorize the narrated content. This method of learning is not ideal since it turns the learners into "empty containers" that need to be filled by the teacher's content. It assumes that the teacher knows everything and chooses the content to teach, while the students know nothing and must adapt to what the teacher has taught (Freire, 2005, pp. 71-72).

In critical literacy, however, "knowledge emerges only through intervention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other" (Freire, 2005, p. 72). Both the teacher and the students should become partners in the learning process – they should both engage in critical thinking and be in pursuit of mutual harmonization. The efforts of the teacher must correspond with those of the learners. The "banking concept" of education should be rejected and be replaced by "problem-solving" education, which poses resolutions to the problems that human beings face in the world. It is responding to human consciousness (ibid).

According to Freire (1996), problem-solving education breaks the vertical pattern of banking education through dialogue – it is the liberation of education. Through dialogue, the teacher's authority ceases to exist, and learning takes place in the form of a conversation between the teacher and students. The teacher is no longer the one who teaches; s/he is taught through dialogue with the students, who in turn teach what they have learned. They both become responsible partners in the process in which they all grow. Here, arguments based on authority no longer exist; rather, authority is based on the side of freedom and not against freedom. In dialogue education, nobody teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People learn from each other and teach each other, and this is mediated by the world. The learners are no longer passive listeners but become critical co-explorers in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the content material to the learners for their consideration and the learners reconsider the teacher's earlier consideration as they express their own. The role of a problem-solving teacher, together with the learners, is to create learning conditions where assumptions are superseded by true knowledge (Freire, 1996).

Education is a practice of freedom; one cannot be detached from the world. It confirms that, apart from people, the world also exists as a reality. In problem-solving education, learners develop their power to critically consider the way they exist in the world they find themselves in; they come as a real process of transformation. Problem-solving education "regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality" (Freire, 2005, p. 83). It affirms that human beings are unfinished and incomplete beings in an unfinished reality. Thus, the uncompleted character of people and the transformational character of reality demands that education be a continuous process.

Hushmendy (2018) highlighted the principles of critical literacy as follows: (i) education is politically oriented; (ii) education aims at eliminating oppressions which include class, nation, race, gender, and sexuality; (iii) the process of teaching and learning should be community-based; (iv) dialogue and problem-solving should be encouraged; and (v) the concept of critical consciousness and action for social change should be developed (p. 2).

On the same note, as stated in the *Encyclopaedia of Diversity in Education*, the following are the key aspects of critical literacy, according to Vasquez, Janks, & Comber (2019, pp. 306-307):

- Critical literacy is not a unit to be studied or a subject to be taught; rather, it should be viewed as a lens or perspective for curriculum teaching and beyond. It means having a critical viewpoint of life or a way of being.

- In critical literacy, the learner's diverse cultural background and knowledge as well as multimodal literacy practices are important in building the curriculum. Students learn best

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when they can associate what they are learning with their daily lives. Classroom literacy should include issues, topics, and questions that are important to the lives of the learners.

- Through critical literacy lenses, the world is viewed as a socially constructed text that can be read. Therefore, learners should be introduced to the concept of critical literacy at an earlier stage to understand this. Texts are created from a particular point of view to convey messages. Therefore, texts are not neutral, as they can be rewritten to reframe the messages conveyed. Learners thus need to be trained to question the perspectives of others.

- Texts are socially constructed and are written from perspectives to make the reader think and believe things in certain ways.

- The way we read texts is never neutral, just as texts are never neutral. When we read a text, we relate it to our past experiences and try to understand it in our world. Hence, we need an analysis of the texts we read.

- Critical literacy involves making sense of the socio-political system through which we question those systems that affect our lives. Critical literacy suggests that we direct our focus to these issues that affect our lives, such as class, race, or gender, and to the use of language to address these issues. How we use discourses to address these issues determines how we can – or how we are unable to – live our lives in powerful ways and determine who is given more powerful roles in society.

- Critical literacy practices entail designing and producing texts that can provide opportunities for change. This text-design process involves the production of multimodal texts with the intended purpose of addressing an issue and not just designing as a practicing skill. For instance, students should be able to design and produce a text that is intended to address real issues. If they write petitions, for example, the students should be able to send them to the relevant people they were intended for.

- Lastly, critical literacy is about reimagining texts and images, and redesigning them to convey different messages that are more responsive to social injustices and inequalities.

3.4.2 The application of critical literacy

Critical literacy has been practiced differently in diverse places around the world. As such, my discussion attempts to give a broad overview of it being used in different contexts and localities. I have also tried to centre on studies that focus on children producing their texts and making meaning through processes of critical literacy pedagogy. Since minority children and languages can benefit

from critical literacy, this has been another focus of my study, with immigrants, minority language users, and indigenous language users also being a focus of my overview. My review, however, remains incomplete and is guided by my access to literature, my theoretical views, and my connection to my methodological orientations.

Some of the places in which critical literacy practices have been applied include the US, Australia, Canada, Brazil, and South Africa. For example, in the US, Vivian Vasquez used critical literacy practices with young children between the ages of three and five years at pre-primary level. She engaged them in critical literacy by using their inquiries about the things around them. She asked them questions on things such as equity and social justice using their everyday texts such as media adverts, food packaging, and children's literature (Vasquez, 2014). Sanchez (2011) and Zanden (2016) emphasized that the use of more practical examples is needed for children's development in this regard in their early years of schooling.

In Los Angeles, Alejandro Segura-Mora, a Spanish teacher in his kindergarten classroom, observed the perception of racial identities in the reading of a story called *Nona Bonita*. This came up after one of his pupils opened up to him about his mother giving him pills to change his dark skin colour. When the teacher inquired further about it, the child responded that he hated his dark skin colour, and he wanted to have white skin. During the classroom discussions while reading the book, he realized that most children do not like their dark skin colour. However, after engaging them in critical thinking at the end of the conversation, the students determined that all children are beautiful and that good behaviour is what matters, not the colour of their skin (Segura-Mora, 2009). This activity demonstrates how critical thinking changed the learner's perspectives about skin colour and behaviour.

According to O'Brien, critical literacy with elementary-school children in Australia began in the 1990s with Barbara Comber, whose work was very influential. In particular, her works, together with those of Jenny O'Brien, created spaces for critical literacy in young children by using magazines and newspaper advertisements (O'Brien, 2011). In one of O'Brien's works, she explored the roles of children's critical analyses of Mother's Day catalogues in two elementary schools in Australia. The classroom activity involved the learners as text readers interacting with how the texts were handled, both in conventional and unexpected ways. By making meaning through the catalogues, the children were able "to question the representation of mothers, identify gaps and suggest possible changes". All through this activity, O'Brien was helping the children by "setting purposeful reading, writing and talking tasks" (O'Brien, 2011, p. 52).

In Brazil, a critical literacy study was conducted with first-year university students in the State University of Campinas and the University of São Paulo. The aim was to understand how the

parameter of critical literacy is interpreted by young Brazilian readers. A documentary and a short story in the form of texts were presented to the students who were then required to critically analyse them. The findings showed that the students, at their initial stages of university education, were able to demonstrate familiarity with meaning-making when the text content was literature. They were able to interpret the fiction story and identified power conflicts that manifested in the given short story. However, in the documentary, the students exhibited low confidence in creating their meaning for it. There were few critiques on the text; rather, the students focused on learning about its content (Monte Mór, 2007).

In South Africa, critical literacy was used as a tool in the struggle against apartheid (Janks, 2010, 2014; Janks & Vasquez, 2011; Stein, 2007). For example, in the 1980s, Pippa Stein introduced an English language teaching and learning project, dubbed *SPEAK*, with a group of young children. This project took a critical pedagogy approach which had two guiding principles: "a genuine search for meaning [within] an atmosphere of freedom and learner responsibility" (Stein, 2007, p. 4). At that time, South Africa was in an intensely political situation of violence and brutality. Stein encouraged the learners to talk about their daily events. Through their stories, the children began to relax and came up with solutions to their problems (Stein, 2007, pp. 8-9). Hillary Janks focused on increasing awareness in adolescents and young adults of how language was used to oppress the majority of Africans to deny them education, to hide the truth, to position readers, to construct others, and to authenticate oppression (Janks, 2010, p. 12). To counter these discourses, she designed and produced Critical Language Awareness (CLA) materials for South African schools, specifically targeting older learners (Janks, 2014).

3.4.3   The status and new direction of critical literacy

Recently, scholars have argued that the importance of critical literacy is not just in analysing texts and understanding their significance, but should also include the aspects of text design and reproduction. Since a text is not neutral, we should understand the position from which a text is analysed as well as the position from which it is designed and reproduced (Janks, 2010; Kamler, 2001; Luke, 2013).

Technology is advancing, and proponents of critical literacy are finding ways of including this concept in multimodalities and new technologies (Comber, 2016; Janks & Vasquez, 2011; Larson & Marsh, 2005; Nixon & Comber, 2005), engaging with time, space, and place-based pedagogies (Comber, 2016; Nixon & Comber, 2005), working with culturally diverse classrooms with multilingual learners (Lau, 2012, 2016), and working on improving the syllabus content to suit the learners (Janks, 2010; Nixon & Comber, 2005; Vasquez, 2017). These new directions remind us that there is no universal or "correct" model of critical literacy – the educationists who have been working in this field can agree to that (Janks,

2010; Luke, 2013; O'Brien, 2011; Vasquez, 2014). It is about how education practitioners employ their attitudes, tools, and philosophies with their learners in their day-to-day lives in terms of problems, power, and politics (Luke, 2013: 29), and how teachers can adjust to the politics of spaces and places according to their work environment at particular times (Janks, 2014).

The rapid progression of new technologies in the world today has resulted in diverse mediums of communication that have drastically changed how people communicate. A new reality has been formed that requires the development of new skills necessary to approach literacy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009b; Kress, 2003). Multiliteracies support learners in decoding, making meaning as well as critically analysing numerous texts for various purposes in diverse contexts (Luke & Freebody, 1999). Therefore, critical analysis, which is also known as "critical literacy", is an important component in multiliteracies (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Klenner & Sandretto, 2011).

3.5   Multiliteracies: An approach to critical literacy

The rapid change in economic, social, and digital spheres has dictated the revision of the definition of "literacy practices and the reconceptualization of methods of literacy education and communication" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015b). The new ways of rethinking education seek to bring together social, cultural, and cognitive potentials through a wider range of in- and out-of-school literacy practices (Aljanahi & Alsheikh, 2020). Literacy practices are now regarded as "a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill […] embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles" (Street, 2003, pp. 77-78). These concepts have been converted into action by The New London Group (1996) and later by Cope & Kalantzis (2009b) who came up with the pedagogical approach of the "multiliteracies framework", which includes "four ways of knowing, four 'takes' on the meaning of meanings that will provide learners with multifaceted ways of reading the world" (The New London Group, 2000, p. 241), otherwise known as the four components that make up the "knowledge processes" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015b, p. 1).

The concept of 'multiliteracies' was born in 1994 by a group of ten prominent scholars, famously known as The New London Group, who convened to discuss the state of literacy pedagogy (The New London Group, 1996, p. 62). The concept was later expanded by Cope & Kalantzis (2009b, 2015b). Proponents of socio-cultural theories, particularly the works of Vygotsky (1980), influenced the understanding of how historical, social, and cultural backgrounds that learners bring with them to the classroom would facilitate their learning and understanding. Likewise, the idea of multiliteracies came as a result of the changing world, and a need was identified for a more relevant agenda for

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literacy pedagogy – a literacy for the 21st century. Traditionally, literacy teaching has been confined to reading and writing a written text. However, the multiliteracy framework is driven by the idea of multimodal meaning-making via modes other than language, such as visual, auditory, spatial, gestural, and multimodal mediums (The New London Group, 1996). Supporters of multiliteracies refute the notion that one form of literacy is superior or more valid than another because literacy phenomena can be understood by their users. The multiliteracies approach suggests "a pedagogy for active citizenship, centered on learners as their agents in their knowledge processes" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009b, p. 172). This new pedagogy calls for education that:

(i)   Will create individuals with skills, knowledge, and the capacity to participate in civic life as citizens.

(ii)   Promises better employment and personal growth and development.

(iii)   Builds competitive workers who are well skilled and knowledgeable in the world economy and a workplace where there are new communication strategies, cultural and language diversity, advanced technologies, functional organization, diverse workforces, and niche clientele.

(iv)   Empowers people to be free to become what they want to be and also succeed on their terms as long as they have their ability and strong will.

(Cope & Kalantzis, 2009b, p. 166)

The New London Group proposed two major principles of this new literacy pedagogy. The first principle prescribes literacy that will "account for the context of our cultural and linguistic diversity and increasingly globalized society" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 61). This principle is also reflected by Mills (2010), who contends that every cultural community within a society has its systems of solving problems within its context. By embracing this diversity, there will be numerous potential solutions to the challenges presented. Cultural diversity has not been well addressed in the previous literacy pedagogy despite it not being a new phenomenon. This principle also considered multilingualism in view of the minority languages in the context of globalization where English has become the world language (The New London Group, 1996).

The second principle recommends that "literacy pedagogy now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies" (The New London Group,

1996, p. 61). Cope & Kalantzis (2006) assert that the digital revolution and the internet are changing the world. The trending technologies are the agents of intellectual freedom and democracy. The new social interactions are developed through the creation of membership to social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram. Borsheim, Merritt, & Reed (2008) uphold those technologies and include mobile phones, computers, the internet, and web applications such as blogs, Wikis, and other social networking sites which have changed the nature of texts and how people use and interact with them. In the 21st century, people rarely ever use pen and paper to write letters and send these items via the postal services; they send messages through digital applications such as email, WhatsApp, and Skype, among others. Additionally, in job applications, people use online application systems. These web applications are vastly more popular than traditional pen and paper. The internet has also made access to information easily available and accessible anytime and anywhere via smartphone technology. Cope & Kalantzis (2009b) agree that the advancement of technology is challenging children to engage greatly in the new media environment. However, one should be aware of the digital inequalities affecting the accessibility of new technologies.

Following the two multilingual and multimodal overarching dimensions of multiliteracies, four main components to this new pedagogical approach emerged. These are "situated approach", "overt instruction", "critical framing", and "transformed practice" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 88). The new trend in multiliteracies pedagogy has shifted literacy practices from didactic learning to authentic learning, where activities are re-created according to the lifeworld of learners. The first component, "situated practice", acknowledges that human cognition is contextual. Meanings are derived from the real-life world of experiences, subjective interests, and actions (Gee, 2004). Learners experience learning "the known" and then move to "the new". They begin to reflect on the experiences that are familiar to them in their world of understanding and bring to the learning situation their diverse knowledge, interests, and experiences. They then start reading or observing the unknown, concentrating on new situations and text. The learners are exposed to a new text, experiences, and information but only within their intellectual comfort zone, almost close to their own life experiences. "The known" and "the new" interweave, taking the learner into new domains of action and meanings (Kalantzis & Cope, 2010). The situated approach therefore supports cultural diversity pedagogy as it calls for teachers to involve their learners in activities that are meaningful to them about their family experiences, peer relations, personal interests, online communities, and others (MacKay, 2014).

The second component of multiliteracies pedagogy is "overt instruction" or "conceptualizing" (The New London Group, 1996). The latter component involves "the development of abstract, generalizing

concepts and theoretical synthesis of these concepts" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015a, p. 19). Here, the teachers introduce new knowledge slightly above their learners' experiences. Learners can categorize terms by using these knowledge processes. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2009b), conceptualizing occurs in two ways: by naming and with theory. Conceptualizing by naming involves the learner giving things abstract names or grammar to describe how a text works. Activities include naming, defining terms, labeling diagrams, and comparing or contrasting (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009b). Conceptualizing with theory includes "making a generalization and putting the key terms together into interpretative frameworks, and to understand how the concepts connect to the theory" (p. 185). The learning activities may include drawing a diagram, writing a summary, or making a concept map. Since this process is more fragile, teachers are required to apply their expertise to build upon the learners' levels of understanding.

"Critical framing/analyzing" is the third component of multiliteracies pedagogy. The goal of this pedagogy is to help the learner frame their mastering from situated practice and understanding from overt instruction "in relation to the historical, political, ideological and value-centered relations of particular systems of knowledge and social practice" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 86). This type of pedagogy requires an analysis of the socio-cultural context and functions of learning. Students are guided on how to use knowledge to develop the skills necessary to question, evaluate, and re-evaluate knowledge based on new ideas and contextual information (The New London Group, 1996). They learn why they are learning what they are being taught.

The fourth and final component of multiliteracies pedagogy is "transformed practice". The goal of multiliteracies is to equip learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes learned through the three aforementioned components and to apply them in the real world outside of school (Mills, 2006; The New London Group, 1996). In transformed practice, learners are encouraged to be producers of knowledge that are relevant to themselves and the world around them, as opposed to just becoming passive consumers of knowledge. It requires learners to appropriately apply the knowledge acquired to real-world situations and actual problems. It also engages the learners in activities that will require them to transfer knowledge to new situations and different settings (Cope & Kalantzis, n.d., online). Through these practices, learners "will not only be transformed through multiliteracies pedagogy but also might transform or influence community, economy, and political life" (Anstey & Bull, 2006, p. 39).

Multiliteracies identifies the four abovementioned dimensions of pedagogies to address the diversity of learners' needs. It is also important to note that learning takes place when students engage in what

is known as "weaving", that is moving back and forth between these four concepts of knowledge processes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015b, p. 20). The teacher is provided with these frameworks of multiple modes of meaning-making. It is worth noting that one or more of the above might not be effective for all learners or all disciplines. Teachers need a flexible repertoire that is more appropriate to the context or subject. They also need to push this repertoire in terms of the knowledge processes that students engage in (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015a).

One of the key ideas of multiliteracies is the meaning-making of "designs" on pedagogy. "Design" is the process of representing meaning for oneself through reading, watching, and listening, as well as making meaning in the communication process for others through writing, speaking, or creating pictures (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009b, p. 175). The goal here is to actively involve teachers and learners in developing ideas for reading the new and unfamiliar in any form that may present themselves. The design in multiliteracies, as presented by Cope and Kalantzis, has three features: (i) "Available designs" that are found in representational forms such as mode (linguistic, audio, visual, gestural, spatial, and tactile), genre (the shape of a text), and discourse (the shape meaning-making takes in a social institution); (ii) "The designing", which is the process of making meaning involving the application of knowledge to create a new meaning in order to communicate perception by re-voicing, suiting, and transforming the "available designs" to represent meaning for oneself or others; and (iii) "the redesigned", which is how the person and the world are transformed through the product of the designing process (the new "available designs") (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015a, p. 131).

This understanding of the concept of 'multiliteracies' and its components forms one of the approaches of this study. It aims to juxtapose school literacy practices, especially the creative narratives of grade 3 learners, against the "knowledge processes" demonstrated above. In Chapter 8 of this study, I will analyse the creative narratives designed by the learners, with a focus on multiliteracies as an approach to critical literacy.

3.5.1   Development of multiliteracies

It has been over 20 years since the concept of 'multiliteracies' was introduced. Over the years, this subject has been in discussion by numerous researchers, scholars, and educationists all over the world. The discussions range from the development of multiliteracies (e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 2009b, 2009a, 2015a; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012a, 2014; The New London Group, 2000), to the implementation of multiliteracies in different learning contexts (e.g., Ferreira, 2006; Janks, 2006; Kendrick, Jones, Mutonyi, & Norton, 2006; Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006; Nyirahuku & Hoenig, 2006; Oostendorp,

Duke, Mashazi, & Pretorius, 2021), to other cultural and practical issues related to multiliteracies (e.g., Aljanahi & Alsheikh, 2020; Hong & Hua, 2020; Lemphane & Prinsloo, 2014; Nyirahuku & Hoenig, 2006; Rowsell, Saudelli, Scott, & Bishop, 2013). Southern uptake of multiliteracies has been particularly important because it highlights the linguistic and cultural diversity of multimodal pedagogies (Oostendorp et al., 2021, p. 165). In South Africa, influential studies pointed to the ability of students to navigate between different cultures and linguistic varieties (Janks, 2006; Lemphane & Prinsloo, 2014; Stein, 2007). In Brazil, distinctions between written language and drawings have been challenged. For example, in Kashinawa multimodal writing[10,] research found that, despite having the alphabetic writing system, the drawings carried more information on meaning-making. Kashinawa multimodal writing has more than just "voices on paper": the drawing (*kene* 'graphics' and *dami* 'figures') carries the complex synaesthetic performative "in the sense of attempting to transpose to paper the wealth and complexity of indigenous orality" (Menezes de Souza, 2003).

Together with other original members of The New London Group, Cope and Kalantzis continued to develop the idea of multiliteracies pedagogy to a more practical concept of 'knowledge processes' by introducing "Learning by Design pedagogy". Kalantzis and Cope uphold that "learning by design needs to be deliberative, purposeful and reflective to ensure that goals align with the performance outcomes and aspirations of learners" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2014, p. 110). It emphasizes teachers helping to develop learners who take responsibility for their learning. The teacher does not only rely on textbooks and lesson plans but rather becomes a diverse professional who sources learning information from the internet. Kalantzis and Cope (2012) explain: "The teacher remains an authoritative source of knowledge without being authoritarian. The online environment expands the reach of learning across time and space beyond the classroom walls". As such, the "new learning" calls for "new students" and "new teachers".

Another exciting development has been the conversations between multiliteracies and decoloniality (Bock & Stroud, 2021; Heugh et al., 2021). These conversations not only center on Southern thinking but also take multiliteracies out of the classroom much more in an attempt to offer a broader way of how literacy practices can be used to empower but also in the practices of love, care, hope and relationality (Heugh et al., 2021; Bock & Stroud, 2021).

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10 Kashinawa visual texts consist of highly coloured drawings accompanied by alphabetic (verbal) texts. These drawings are of two consistent types: abstract geometric line drawings that may be monochromatic or multicoloured, called *kene*, and figurative drawings representing persons, objects, and various elements of nature, generally organized in some sort of narrative order, called *dami* (Menezes de Souza, 2003).

3.6   Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the different types of literacies, their advantages, and their limitations. The chapter also presented the social aspects of literacy and defined the key terms of literacy practices and events. It also described the literature on the literacy practices that parents and children engage in at home, and the importance of teachers in connecting home and school literacy. In addition, the theoretical frameworks of critical literacy and multiliteracies were discussed. Critical literacy, as the main theory of this study, favours the authentic literacy pedagogy where learners are considered as co-constructors of knowledge along with their teachers. The knowledge and experiences that students bring from home should be acknowledged, and teachers are encouraged to build upon this knowledge. Furthermore, the pedagogy of multiliteracies advocates for the importance of schools adopting authentic literacy pedagogy that complies with the changes of today. In today's rapidly advancing world, children are exposed to new forms of literacy and communication that are increasingly multimodal. Therefore, the pedagogy of multiliteracies has expanded the traditional views of literacy to include the various multimedia forms available in these learners' spaces. Multiliteracies examine literacy learning through a pluralistic lens instead of a limited academic lens of reading and writing (The New London Group, 1996).

<div align="center">**CHAPTER 4: LINGUISTIC CITIZENSHIP**</div>

4.1   Introduction

This section will provide the conceptual orientation that will give a general background to understanding the concept of linguistic citizenship as used in this study. I will provide a general background of this concept, and how it has been used in education and beyond.

4.2   The concept of linguistic citizenship

The concept of linguistic citizenship was developed in the 1990s in the geopolitical South11 (South Africa and Mozambique) due to the failures of the implementation of Mother Tongue and Bilingual Education programs (Stroud, 2015). The failure of these programs was often blamed on poor program management and lack of material resources (Stroud, 2001). The MTE programs did not deliver matters such as language maintenance and cognitive enhancement. Research results suggested that key parameters of successful and failed programs depend on whether the community members actively participate in the development of these programs, for example, by contributing to the choice of curriculum or the establishment of the language orthography (Stroud, 2015). The sustainability of MTE/BE is the extent to which the community found the use of vernacular languages in their everyday management in terms of employment, education, health, and politics (Stroud, 2001). The results generally showed the importance of having a committed, engaged, and agentive community for successful program outcomes.

The findings contrasted with the government's top-down intervention model borrowed from the global North[12] and administered by foreign aid organizations and NGOs. The importation of models and training programs from the North did not address the needs of the local stakeholders, thus resulting in the failure of these programs. During that time, the dominant model for language policy and planning was Linguistic Human Rights (LHR) which was an "affirmative model", as described by Stroud (2001, p. 344). Affirmative models "tend to add rights for marginalized groups in predetermined categories, thus leaving these categories intact rather than breaking them down" (Oostendorp, forthcoming, p. 6). Instead, Stroud suggests the need for a "transformative model" which deconstructs categories. The transformative model is linguistic citizenship, defined by Stroud as:

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11 Nations that are politically related, especially in international relations as influenced by geographical factors. Here, it refers to the countries in the Southern African region.

12 Refers to developed countries of North America and Europe that are characterized by political stability, established democracy, wealth, technological advancement and dominance of the world economy and politics.

the situation where speakers themselves exercise control over the language, deciding what languages they are, what they mean, and where language issues, especially in educational sites, are discursively tied to a range of social issues, policy issues, and the question of equality.

(Stroud, 2001, p. 353)

Consequently, the notion of linguistic citizenship was born due to the perceived need of the speakers' everyday socio-political strivings for agency and transformation through their linguistic practices and representations (Stroud, 2015). Speakers as actors and agents in the process of becoming use language to open possibilities and to create new sensibilities for imagining themselves differently. They make use of available linguistic resources and connect language as a "target" of change and as a "medium" for ontological, social, and epistemological transformation (Stroud & Bock, 2021). It is when "individuals claim and exercise their right to voice, to be heard and to act upon whichever dimension of a person's linguistic repertoire as may be useful in circumstance or purpose" (Heugh, 2018, p. 175). Agency remains with the community members both individually and collectively, because it is where responsibilities for communal welfare are co-owned (Heugh, 2017). It was this perspective that provided the impetus for a critique of the then LHR paradigm, which was the dominant political philosophy of language at that time (Stroud, 2015). This paradigm "does not provide sufficient space for the realization of social rights, especially meaningful access to education, or for the participation of minority languages themselves" (Stroud & Heugh, 2004, p. 215). Rampton and colleagues further claimed that the LHR paradigm was an "inadequate framework for understanding and promoting mother tongue programs that work" (Rampton et al., 2018, p. 3).

The proponents of linguistic citizenship feel that it is a better way of deconstructing social order based on language discourse. The supporters of this concept feel that, in matters to do with confronting the problems of politics of language, linguistic citizenship provides a more grounded theory and an adequate conceptualization compared to LHR (Rubagumya et al., 2011). Stroud proposed linguistic citizenship over LHR for the following reasons: linguistic citizenship (i) prioritizes democratic participation while emphasizing cultural and political 'voice' and agency rather than just language on its own; (ii) sees all forms of linguistic practices to be potentially relevant to the community's social and economic well-being; and (iii) stresses the importance of grassroots activities and participation on the ground often outside state control and formal institutions (Rampton et al., 2018, p. 4).

4.2.1 Why linguistic citizenship and not Linguistic Human Rights?

LHR is seen as a discourse of linguistic empowerment and emancipation. The roots of LHR are based on liberal rights theory. In general, rights have been promoted as a way of diversity management of the

minority language communities. Rights have been endorsed as a means of controlling diversity, while language rights specifically are seen as the solution to increased participation in the minority languages as a way to preserve these languages. Rights are also viewed as a means to increased efficiency in education and generally as a prerequisite for technological development (Stroud, 2010, p. 197).

Several scholars have criticized LHR, with some agreeing that its main criticisms are, firstly, that this paradigm is claimed by different language groups to be discriminatory, selective, and divisive. Secondly, it is seen to encourage the mainstream categorization of languages as superior and inferior, and tends to "uplift" the inferior languages (Rubagumya, Afitska, Clegg, & Kiliku, 2011; Stroud, 2001). The advocates of LHR have also been criticized for giving more attention to "inter-language discrimination" rather than "intra-language discrimination". Blommaert (2001; see also Pennycook, 1998, p. 80) contends that:

> Strangely enough, diversity and hence inequality is reduced to inter-language diversity and inequality. Diversity and inequality within units conventionally called 'language' are not treated (there is a cursory mention of it, but it remains undeveloped). What is at stake is the difference between, e.g., 'French' and 'Berber', 'English' and 'Swahili', 'Dutch' and 'French': things that have a name.

> (Blommaert, 2001, p. 135)

Furthermore, Stroud and Heugh (2004) maintain that LHR is seen as not accommodating linguistic diversity, but rather promotes the metropolitan languages and reduces the world's languages. The LHR paradigm assumes that rights are granted yet are monitored by government institutions. Blommaert (2003) adds that the state has the right to give and deny linguistic rights to the community because it is a critical factor in both a positive and negative sense. In other words, the language speakers do not enjoy their freedom to these rights since there are conditions attached to them. LHR perceives language as an unproblematic construct. For example, "English language" or "Kiswahili language" are languages that are constructed and sometimes contested. That is why we currently have many "Englishes" (Kachru, 1983) and it is equally the same case in Tanzania where different varieties of "Kiswahili" emerged (Rubagumya, 2009). By indexing language rights on the collective rights of groups, LHR assumes that the language community identifies itself with its language. However, this is not necessarily the case, as there might be members who have already secluded themselves from their languages for one reason or another (May, 2000). Stroud contests that LHR singling out specific "minority" language groups for special treatment is "potentially discriminatory and socially divisive" because claims to inadequate resources are being contended along ethnolinguistic lines (Stroud, 2001, pp. 346–347).

An example of how LHR-based policy failed is in South Africa. The South African Constitution of 1994 recognized 11 languages as official. These languages are treated as equal on paper but, practically, English is the dominant language above all the others as it is the preferred language in most public spheres, e.g., in education, government, media, etc. As Heugh (2007, p. 200) comments, "it shows the weakness of the South African language policy on the role of LHR". Furthermore, the speakers of Northern IsiNdebele in South Africa were never recognized in the Constitution as an official language alongside Southern IsiNdebele, even though both languages are part of the Nguni group. Despite having a language policy that promotes multilingualism and language rights, Northern IsiNdebele speakers found themselves left out. Regardless of all efforts in lobbying for official recognition, it still bore no fruit as the government was already overwhelmed by the consequences of officializing the 11 languages. The Northern IsiNdebele claimed that their variety was not recognized as a "linguistic community" by the post-apartheid government, and thus they were not allocated terrain. This explains why their language did not gain official recognition anywhere. In spite of this, the Northern IsiNdebele, under the umbrella of the Northern AmaNdebele Nation Organization (NANO), developed their own grassroots strategies by developing their orthography, glossary, and grammar for school, and demanded the use of their MT as a LoI in their primary schools. In addition, the organization lobbied for their inclusion at both provincial and national education departments (Stroud, 2001, pp. 348-349). In this case, we see that the community took their issue as a marginalized group and actively pursued their linguistic citizenship as speakers. Conversely, the other South African linguistic communities, even though they have been allocated official status based on the LHR paradigm, have neither actively exercised their linguistic rights nor their linguistic citizenship. This shows that linguistic citizenship does not take rights for granted, neither does it assume protection from the government. The concept of linguistic citizenship therefore advocates for the speakers themselves to engage in grassroots agency and to engage in the struggle to develop and use their language (Rubagumya et al., 2011).

Stroud's main contention going beyond the LHR argument is that emancipatory politics should be facilitated by an enhanced understanding of sociolinguistic processes (Stroud, 2010). Stroud and Heugh (2004, p. 209) state that the aims of linguistic citizenship are "to promote the idea of language as a political and economic 'site of struggle' [alongside] the deconstruction of essentialist understandings of language identity[,] and respect for diversity and differences". Stroud adds that:

> Linguistic Citizenship is a view on language and politics that recognizes the manifold challenges posed by late modern contexts of migration and multilingualism for democracy

and voice. And that takes as a central point of departure the desirability of constructing agency and maintaining voice across media, modality, and context.

(Stroud, 2010, p. 212)

The roles of languages in societies recognize that societies are multilingual, and communities are mutually interdependent. The diversity of linguistic resources in these communities is a source of social, economic, and cultural-economic capital. Linguistic citizenship recognizes that speakers of a language must be involved in society in order to raise the status of a language. Its vision is to ensure that language communities in multilingual contexts benefit from their languages in terms of strengthened community identity and culture, improved education achievements, and a strong voice in politics and economic development. These community members are also ready to fight for and claim these democratic rights. They can build alliances with common goals and challenge those who are against their languages. Furthermore, these minority language speakers are willing to develop their languages by introducing them in education programs and sustaining them by producing learning resources and pedagogies as well as training their teachers (Rubagumya et al., 2011, p. 79).

Premsrirat and Bruthiaux (2018) agree that linguistic citizenship "sees revitalization as fundamentally a question of community members finding or creating a platform which launches claims to audibility, visibility and ethical engagement with the sociopolitical and economic realities under which disempowered minorities live" (p. 153-154). It involves minority language speakers participating and having their voices heard in the national arenas, which is a way for them to preserve their cultural identity and languages (ibid).

4.2.2   Linguistic citizenship and MTE

The issue of language in education is generally mediated through the broader socio-politics of language (Stroud, 2010). Language in education can create an enabling political framework within which languages can claim their political place. For instance, the state can put into policy the use of local languages as MoI in schools but may fail to enact their implementation within the education sector (Spolsky, 2004). LiEPs fail to deliver their promises concerning their goals and ideologies as stated in their policy documents. This is because the government enacts language policies that encourage "avoidance, vagueness, arbitrary, fluctuation, and declaration without implementation" (Bamgboṣe, 1991, p. 8).

However, Rubagumya et al. (2011) emphasize that a powerful political force that promotes languages must come from the top (government), from the bottom (communities), and from the sides (NGOs).

As an example of the top-down approach, the governments in Ethiopia and Eritrea legislated MTE into effect, where the respective governments mandated the use of African languages as MoI in primary schools. An example of the bottom-up approach involves communities in Papua New Guinea who themselves established local languages as a medium of literacy in schools. And lastly, the input from the side comes from academics and NGOs who disseminate information and help to develop capacity for the implementation of such programs. Communities working alone may not have the necessary expertise to effect this language implementation, thus they need support from NGOs, as in the case of Papua New Guinea. This is a modified approach to linguistic citizenship that the language community needs to support the development of the MTE programs (Rubagumya et al., 2011).

As discussed above, linguistic citizenship requires a mixture of top-down, bottom-up, and side approaches for proper language planning to ensure that all citizens enjoy their linguistic rights. When government offers the citizens infrastructure, the people themselves must take the responsibility to develop their language in education and for socio-economic development. The Bolivian Education Reform of 1994 was successful when teaching and learning materials were developed in the languages of Quechua, Guarani, and Aymara. The material development process involved the participation of stakeholders from grassroots level (Contreras & Simoni, 2003). The people claimed ownership of the reform since they were actively involved in all stages of the implementation process (Hornberger & Lopez, 1998). In Ghana, the MTE programs were run by the German aid organization *Deutsche Gesellschaftfuer Teknishe Zusammanarbeit* (GTZ). The notion of linguistic citizenship was also applied when the local communities developed MT resource materials for schools as well as for the wider community. Through the providence of education materials in local languages, the communities are afforded discursive spaces in which they can negotiate national and global discourses of major local concern, such as health matters, agriculture, or the general elections. This has created "a site of mediation for the language communities" (Alvarez et al., 1998).

In the recent past, the speakers of Chong, one of the indigenous languages of Thailand, took a community initiative in developing their language so that their children could be taught it in school. This is in alignment with the idea of linguistic citizenship that the community must take initiatives in matters of language rights and development. The community members perceived their language as going extinct since the younger generations could hardly speak it. As part of this language's revitalization, an orthography and school materials were developed with the help they had sought from Chong elders and Mahidol University. As a result, the Chong language is now being taught as a subject in schools within the locality (Premsrirat & Bruthiaux, 2018).

Language in linguistic citizenship is both medium and message and is key to successful understanding in the context of education. Consequently, approaching education through the lens of linguistic citizenship entails "understanding how new subjectivities and agencies are co-developed in synchrony with new registers and styles of speech, including multilingual and multimodal repertoires" (Stroud & Bock, 2021, p. 7). This is particularly relevant for African languages which continue to be viewed as in need of development and not suited for educational purposes. By using a linguistic citizenship lens, African languages, could be reimagined as sophisticated enough to be used in all arenas of society. This will enable the language in focus to become a proper vehicle for education. African communities will be able to embrace their languages as MoI in schools once they see the effectiveness of the language used in schools. Consequently, their roles in society as speakers aid in the economic development of the country (Rubagumya, 2009). Stroud agrees that linguistic citizenship is one of the concepts that helps to enable the discussion, interpretation, and local negotiation of global, regional, and national concerns. It permits democratic participatory approaches to issues of citizenship "based on an idea of language as a political and economic site of struggle" with respect to language diversity and acknowledging language identity (Stroud, 2010, p. 353).

4.2.3 Linguistic citizenship beyond classrooms

Although it emerged within educational contexts, the concept of linguistic citizenship has evolved and been developed extensively as a broader Southern sociolinguistic theory of language. A fruitful research focus using linguistic citizenship has involved popular culture, especially music, comedy, and theatre (Stroud & Williams, 2017). These studies found that these forms of popular culture enabled the emergence of a semiotic space which permits multilingual practices that create favourable environments for youths and marginalized identities to express themselves freely. In these spaces, speakers reconfigure language through resemiotization and entextualization of the "extreme locality"[13] where they can engage with social issues that relate to their positions in society, such as politics, racism, sexuality, and social transformation (Stroud & Williams, 2017; Williams & Stroud, 2010).

As with my study, others have tried to view linguistic citizenship as a concept that can be productive in understanding educational practices by looking at the wider community. For example, a study conducted by Foote (2020) in the Yangon deaf community shows that, in order to overcome the challenges associated with sign language as a MoI in the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, the teachers of this institution used a dialogic approach and involved the community. Through community

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13 "A space that binds participants together around a common understanding of the local bric-a-brac of events and reference points that they share, and the people they know" (Williams & Stroud, 2010).

participation that involved deaf students and deaf alumni, they were able to develop appropriate signs that would be used in the school. This approach also assisted with the acceptance of neologisms within the deaf community. Foote emphasized the use of a similar approach in not only MTE and deaf education, but also in endangered language contexts and multilingual countries. Foote argues that community participation through a dialogic approach is the democratic way "that has the potential to disrupt dominant power structures and promote equality" (Foote, 2020, p. 430). In addition, Chimbutane (2020), in his works on MTE/BE in Mozambique, emphasizes the importance of community participation and agency in the inception and implementation of the programs. Communities possess valuable knowledges that can be shared with schools. Community involvement in a school's educational projects and the use of local languages also helps to bridge the gap between the school and the communities. Along with other researchers in Mozambique, they agree that, besides community participation and agency being necessary for successful MTE/BE, these elements demonstrate an emancipation, empowerment, and powerful manifestation of community pride in minority languages (see Chimbutane, 2020; Cumbane, 2020; Machalele, 2020). These researchers suggest that a more dialogic approach in MTE/BE would enable the negotiation of knowledge with the community that would help in bridging the gap between the school and the communities (ibid).

4.3   Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the emergence of the concept of linguistic citizenship. The chapter also presented why the concept of linguistic citizenship is preferred to the LHR in the development of minority languages. It has also described why linguistic citizenship is key to successful understanding of mother tongue-based education, because it advocates for bottom-up approach where communities take initiatives in establishing their local languages and get seek support from other bodies in order to implement successful MT programs. Although linguistic citizenship emerged within the educational context, this chapter has also demonstrated how it has evolved and developed extensively beyond the classroom.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I give a detailed description of the methodology used to answer the research questions of this study. I will discuss the research methodology, the research design that I used, and the study context. I will also talk about the participants, the data collection process, the data collection methods I used, and my data management and analysis. Lastly, I talk about the ethical considerations and the challenges I faced while collecting the data.

5.2 Qualitative research methodology

In this study, I used a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research relies on information about qualities that cannot be quantified. While a quantitative approach emphasizes measurements of variables, a qualitative approach focuses on descriptions of variables. Qualitative research methodology studies explore meanings, perceptions, experiences, and feelings rather than explaining extent, incidence, or prevalence which is characteristic of the quantitative research approach (Kumar, 2014). Additionally, Bryman (2012) describes qualitative research as a strategy that emphasizes words and/or pictures rather than numbers. A qualitative research methodology accepts and appreciates a search for holistic meanings by conducting studies in natural settings (O'Leary, 2017).

This study aimed to understand the literacy practices that are used within the school environment and in the community in a multilingual setting. To meet this aim, I gathered data on beliefs, perceptions, and human experiences, aspects that quantitative research could not adequately cover (Wertz et al., 2011). Furthermore, not much was known about literacy practices in the Tana River County setting before this study. In such a case where there is limited knowledge about the phenomenon, a deeper understanding of the study topic can be obtained through qualitative research approaches first, before quantitative research approaches can be pursued (Carey, 2012; Jeanfreau & Jack, 2010).

Qualitative research methodology consists of different designs depending on the nature of the inquiry. Examples of these designs include grounded theory, phenomenological research, narrative study, case study, participatory action research, and ethnography. All these have their strengths and weaknesses. Among the designs of conducting qualitative research, the ethnographic research design is unique because the researcher interacts with the participants in their real-life environment. Consequently, I chose the ethnographic research design to obtain in-depth insights into literacy practices that the children in the community are exposed to and interact with in their natural settings.

5.3 Ethnography

Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (2011) describe ethnography as the study of people "as they go about their daily lives. For this approach to be successful, it is necessary to build a rapport with the participants, learn the local languages, and for the researcher to immerse themselves in people's everyday activities" (p. 1). Ethnography allows observers to immerse themselves in the daily lives of the participants in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' views, behaviours, and ways of making meaning of the world and of themselves. By collecting detailed interviews and observations, ethnography aims to provide a rich, holistic insight into people's actions and views as well as the audio and visual aspects of the spaces in which they live. Participant observation allows the researcher to understand the familiar, and also to "make the strange familiar" (Reeves et al., 2008, pp. 512-514).

In this study, I examined the literacy practices within and outside of the school environments in multilingual contexts in Kenya using the "real-life" context of schoolchildren (Simons, 2009). In order for me to study the participants by observing their daily lives, via interviewing said participants and taking pictures of literacy practices in the public spaces as well as their homes, I had to gain access to the community. To carry out a successful ethnography, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) advise that the researcher should negotiate access and build a good relationship with the community. Bearing this in mind, it is important to note here that I am an insider to the community I studied. I was born in Tana River County and have relatives there. Although I was raised in a different county – Mombasa – Tana River County has been my place of work for the past eight years as I worked with different organizations. Consequently, I established a good working relationship with the Tsana community, particularly the school. Through my former employer, I was fortunate to have worked closely with some of the teachers when I was developing mother-tongue coursebooks for children in the lower school grades (Abiyo, 2017). Furthermore, Tsana Primary School is one of the beneficiaries of the MT project that I implemented. Despite my familiarity with the community, I still had to live amongst and interact with the members of this community to gain the trust of the participants. Most importantly, being a member of this ethnic group myself, as well as a fluent speaker of Kipfokomu, I was able to interact freely with the participants and speak comfortably with the members of the community, thus making my stay and the data collection process easier.

5.3.1 Linguistic ethnography

The specific type of ethnographic approach my study is aligned with is that of linguistic ethnography. Copland and Creese (2015b, p. 37) state that "linguistic ethnography views language as a communicative action functioning in the social context in the ongoing routines of people's daily

lives". By looking at how people use language, we can gain more knowledge about wider social structures, constraints, and ideologies. This is achieved by "investigating the linguistic sign as a social phenomenon open to interpretation and translation but also predicated on convention, presupposition and previous patterns of social use" (Copland & Creese, 2015b, p. 27). Scholars like Rampton and colleagues argued that the advantage of linguistic ethnography is that it combines ethnography with linguistics, thus "allowing the researcher to analyze concepts in the 'abstract' discipline of linguistics using ethnographic methods that are more geared towards social reality" (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 4). This study used the principles of ethnographic monitoring (Hymes, 2002) that involved participatory engagement between the researcher and the participants so as to encourage change and adjustment; and culminating in "ethnological" generalization (Blommaert, 2013). This form of ethnography requires continual dialogue and collaborative engagements between the researcher and the various stakeholders/participants.

5.4   Study context

The context of a study is defined as "the environment and conditions in which the study takes place as well as the culture of the participants and locations" (I. Holloway & Wheeler, 2010, p. 41). The context of this study is Tana River County located in the Coast Region in the south-east of Kenya. The county is named after the River Tana, which is the largest river in Kenya. The county has an area of 37,950.5 square kilometres and a population of 315,943 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019b). Tana River County is in a semi-arid zone and is characterized by low and erratic rainfall, high temperatures of an annual average of approximately 30℃, and seasonal floods from the River Tana. Acute droughts often contribute to destitution and inter-ethnic clashes revolving around the sharing of the scarce natural resources. Since the area is known for low crop yields, a high percentage of the household budget is therefore required for food (Africa Business Foundation, 2010).
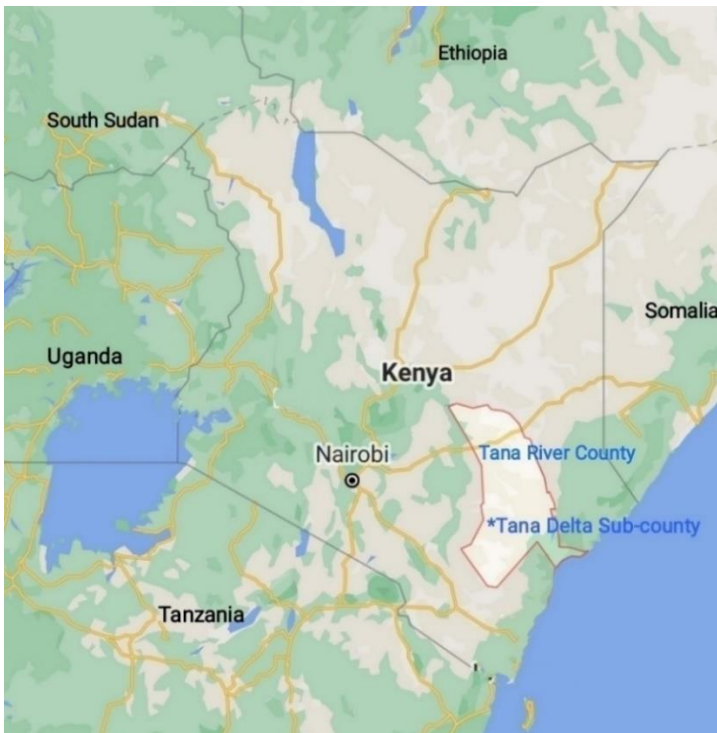
Figure 1. Map of Kenya showing Tana River County (Retrieved from Google Maps)

According to the Minority Rights Group International report, the indigenous communities in Tana River County are categorized amongst the minority groups[14] in Kenya (Makoloo, 2005). The county is also ranked amongst the poorest in Kenya, as 72% of the total population lives below the poverty line. Three-quarters of the population are unable to obtain one or more of the minimum human basic needs and services such as food, clothing, shelter, water and sanitation, health services, and education (Bible Translation & Literacy, 2014). Makoloo (2005) also confirms that the county is one of the marginalized communities in Kenya and suffers from low levels of income, education, and literacy, and poor health and nutrition when compared to other dominant Kenyan populations. The dominant communities "have easy access to economic success and enjoy abundant school and education facilities" (Makoloo, 2005, p. 7). However, the education status of Tana River County is below average. The 2019 census shows the distribution of the population by school attendance from age 3 years and above (a population of 284,605) as follows: 34% of that population are currently in learning institutions,[15] 11.5% left learning institutions after completion, 10.2% dropped out of school, and 44% have never attended a learning institution (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019c).

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14 Any ethnic, linguistic, or religious groups within a state constituting a numerical minority and which is in a non-dominant position in that state.

15 The learning institutions in Kenya are pre-primary school, primary school, secondary school, middle level / technical and vocational training colleges (TVET), university, and adult basic education.

Tana River County is comprised of three sub-counties, namely Tana North, Tana River, and Tana Delta. Tana River County is a multilingual county in which several ethnic groups exist. The dominant ethnic groups include the Pokomo, who are mainly farmers, and the Orma and Wardei, who are predominantly pastoralists. The other tribes include the Boni and Waata, who culturally are hunters and gatherers, as well as the Malakote/Wailwana, Mwina, and the Bajuni (County Government of Tana River, 2021). The county is also home to other Kenyan ethnic groups.

According to the 2019 census (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019a), the Pokomo, as one of the dominant communities in the county, has a population of 112,075. They live communally in small villages of approximately 20 to 100 houses. The Pokomo culture is based on a complex social hierarchy. They have a strong communal spirit and cooperation. Being an agricultural community, the principle of *Sindika* involves members of the community rallying together in times of seasonal labour, such as planting and harvesting, to work together for the benefit of all. The Pokomo people see themselves as resilient and courageous people who are proud of their language and heritage. These people are known to live along the River Tana and have learned to accommodate themselves to the flooding river in order to benefit from the water and silt that the floods provide. Fish is important in their diet, and they have long used the banks of the river to grow bananas, mangoes, plantains, and sugarcane. In the earlier days, they had a reputation for hunting crocodiles and hippos which are abundant in the River Tana. However, this was stopped in recent years after the government banned hunting wild animals in order to conserve these species. This has posed many challenges for the Pokomo people as these animals are now too many in number and cause great harm not only to the crops grown along the river but also to human life. Some Pokomo have started keeping livestock (sheep, cows, and goats) but this has been hindered by banditry in the vicinity. Up until the 1990s, bandits often used to attack the community members in their villages and steal their valuables, including livestock. In certain areas, these raids have cost people their lives. This was an acute problem resulting in many people giving up on keeping livestock. Compared to the other ethnic groups in the area, the Pokomos are relatively learned (Africa Business Foundation, 2010) thus complimenting the majority of teachers in the region. However, a sizable proportion – 21% – of the Pokomo population is still deemed to be illiterate (HVA International, 2007).

The Pokomo are divided into two groups, namely the Upper Pokomo (*Mila juyu*[16]) and the Lower Pokomo (*Mila nchini*[17]). They speak Kipokomo, a Bantu language, with the majority of speakers being the Upper Pokomo and the number of Lower Pokomo speakers being around 40,000 (Bible Translation & Literacy, 2014). Apart from dialect being a major difference between the two groups, religion also distinguishes them from each other. The Upper Pokomo are mostly Muslims, whereas the Lower Pokomo who dwell in Tana Delta sub-county are largely Christians. The linguistic variation of the Upper Pokomo and Lower Pokomo has a considerable difference at all levels, including the phonological, lexical, and morphological (Nurse, 1983). The Pokomo regard their language as divisible into Lower Pokomo and Upper Pokomo. Apart from the two major linguistic differences, there are other divisions in each of the sub-tribes. For the Upper Pokomo, there are six linguistic varieties,[18] while the Lower Pokomo has five[19]. The two main Pokomo languages have been standardized after a move to have unified writing systems that were first developed by German missionaries and later revised by Lower Pokomo linguists. This resulted in the use of different orthographies. Because of the differences in linguistic systems, in order to differentiate the two, the language of the Upper Pokomo is written as *Kimpokomu* while the Lower Pokomo language is *Kipfokomu*. For the sake of this study, I will be focusing more on the Lower Pokomo and their language of Kipfokomu, as the study context was in Tana Delta sub-county.

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16 *Mila* is a Pokomo word which means 'culture', and *juyu* means 'up'. Therefore, *Mila juyu* means 'people of the upper culture'.

17 *Mila nchini* means the 'people of the lower culture'. The word "lower" here refers to the geographical lower part of the River Tana, as the *Mila nchini* Pokomo settled toward the Delta side of the river.

18 The Upper Pokomo linguistic varieties include Milalulu, Zubaki, Ndura, Kinankomba, Gwano, and Ndera.

19 The linguistic varieties of the Lower Pokomo include Ngatana, Buu, Dzunza, Kalindi, and Mwina.

Figure 2. Kimpokomu alphabet chart (Retrieved from Bible Translation & Literacy's website)

Figure 3. Kipfokomu alphabet chart (Retrieved from Bible Translation & Literacy's website)

Initially, the study setting was Tana River County of Kenya, specifically two schools within two communities of the Tana Delta sub-county. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research took place only in one school and community within Tana Delta. The school selected for this study was Tsana Primary School, located within Tsana Village. The school is specifically located at Garsen South Ward in Tana Delta sub-county. I will further discuss the context of this school in Chapter 6, section 6.2. For now, I justify why I chose this setting.

Tsana Primary School was specifically chosen as the setting for this study because it is one of the oldest schools in the Tana Delta sub-county. Tsana Primary School is among the few selected pilot schools in the country to have received educational tablet devices from the government. These tablets have been installed with education programs and are specifically for the lower primary grades. In addition, the school has an overhead projector to facilitate learning. There are thus indications that the school is open to using multimodal elements in the classroom. Tsana Primary School does not have a school library, as is the case for the rest of the public primary schools in Tana River County. According to the County Education Board of Tana River County, the school is among the best performing schools in the county in the National Examinations over the years. Most importantly, the school has had MLE programs implemented by other educational stakeholders over the years. With this in mind, it is clear that understanding literacy practices in multilingual schools could likely illuminate what is happening with the phenomenon in the other multilingual schools within the locality. In addition, the school is easily accessible by road. I had ease of entry and access to Tsana Village and Tsana Primary School, as I am originally from the region. At one time, I taught in the village's secondary school as a board teacher[20] and later implemented some MTE programs in the primary school.

5.1   Ethical considerations

This study adhered to the Helsinki Declaration, which articulates the ethical considerations required to conduct research with humans. To conduct the study, I obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities at Stellenbosch University (SU project Number 10423 – see Appendix 1). In addition, with the study being in Kenya, I obtained a research license from the Republic of Kenya through the National Council for Science and Technology (permit number NACOSTI/P/19/2054 – see Appendix 2). Furthermore, I obtained authorization from the Sub-County Commissioner for Tana Delta (see Appendix 3). I also obtained permission from the Ministry of Education, Tana Delta (see Appendix 4). Furthermore, I paid a courtesy call to the area chief to inform

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20 A temporary teaching position offered by the school's board of management.

her about the research and shared copies of my formal research permissions. Lastly, I went to the school headteacher with all these documents and informed him about the study and sought his permission to conduct the study at the school.

Regarding the study participants, I ensured that my research was conducted with the utmost respect for all participants, regardless of age, gender, religion, and culture. I made sure that all the participants were informed and aware that their participation in my study was voluntary, and that they were required to give their informed consent to participate. I explained to them clearly that all the information obtained would not be used for any other purpose apart from academic ones, and that their identities would be hidden in the report findings. As for the children, in addition to obtaining their assent, I made sure that I received consent from their parents for the former to participate in the research.

5.2   Participants

The participants for this study included grade 3 children from Tsana Primary School, their parents or caregivers, and the teachers of grades 1, 2, and 3. The school's Drama teacher was also included to provide his literacy perception of the subject and its use of the MT. Other community members also provided me with additional information for the study.

5.3   Sampling

This study used purposive sampling to recruit the participants. Purposive sampling is not based on a random selection of participants; rather, it is the strategic selection of participants who will be most valuable to the study (Polit & Beck, 2014). This method of sampling enables the selection of relevant participants who can assist in answering the research question posed by the study (Bryman, 2012). In this study, purposive sampling allowed for critical consideration of the boundaries of the study population (Silverman, 2006). Table 1 below shows the selection criteria for the participants.

Table 1: Selection criteria for the participants

Participants	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Grade 3 learners	Learners who can read and write and are in the transition stage to grade 4 (upper-grade level)	Learners who commute from far-located villages
	Learners who are active in the classroom (to get the view of most active students)	Learners who are unable or unwilling to communicate freely
	Female and male learners (to include gender perspectives)	

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Teachers of lower grades	Teachers who had been teaching in the lower primary grades for more than 5 years	Teachers who teach the upper primary classes
	A teacher who teaches Drama and Creative Arts	
	Male and female teachers	
Parents/guardians of the learners	The biological mother and/or father of the child	
	Guardians of the children who stay with the child during school days	
	Both literate and illiterate parents/guardians of the child	

5.4   Sample size

The sample size of this study comprised four grade 3 learners, four teachers including the Drama teacher, and five parents of which two are a couple and one a guardian.

5.5   Data collection

Data collection began on 3 February 2020 and was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in the temporary closure of all learning institutions on 20 March 2020 in Kenya. However, I resumed the second phase of data collection in October 2020 and ended in December 2020. Table 2 below shows a summary of the data collection activities.

Table 2: Summary of data collection activities

Objective	Data source	Data collection method	Type of data
To establish teachers and parents' engagement in literacy practices with children	Lower-grade teachers Parents of grade 3 pupils	Interviews Observation	Text Visual
To describe how parents and teachers articulate their views and perceptions on literacy practices	Parents of grade 3 pupils Lower-grade teachers	Interviews Observation	Text Visual
To establish the kind(s) of literacy practices that children are exposed to and engage in within the community and school	Grade 3 pupils Teachers Parents	Interviews Observations Collection of linguistic artifacts	Text Visual

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		and linguistic landscapes	
To supplement data collected from the teachers, parents, and grade 3 learners	Cultural drama dance	Video record	Visual
	Drama teacher	Interview Observation	Text Visual
	Children	Stories creations	Visual and text
	Researcher observations	Fieldnotes	Text and audio
To describe the study context	Records of school history	Document review	Text
	Records of school policy on language	Document review	Text
	Policy documents on education	Document review	Text

5.5.1 Recruitment

After obtaining all the approvals for conducting the research, I held a meeting with the school's headteacher during which I informed him about the research and shared copies of the official study permissions. I also requested that the headteacher informs the teachers, parents, and children about the research and the possibility that they may be contacted to participate in it, and their freedom to inform the school if they did not want to be part of it. I then engaged in the recruitment process as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The participant recruitment process

Grade 3 learners
I informed the grade 3 teacher of the need to obtain the parents' or guardians' consent and children's assent before engaging the children in the research.
I asked the class teacher for the list of grade 3 learners who met the selection criteria.
I observed the learning activities of the selected children in the classroom and selected the learners to be interviewed.
I invited the learners' parents/guardians through the class teacher to an information session at the school.

Once I explained the study to the parents/guardians and addressed all of their questions, I gave them the consent form for their child to participate in the research. This form outlined the details of the study (see Appendix 5).
I asked the parents/guardians who showed interest in their children participating in the study to complete the consent forms (see Appendix 5). After parental consent was obtained, I contacted the children to explain the study to them.
Once the study had been explained to the children and all their questions addressed, I gave them the assent form to complete (Appendix 6); this form outlined the details of the study.
If these selected children did not wish to participate, the process described above was repeated with other parents/guardians and their children in order to gain further participants.
Teachers
I asked the school headteacher for the list of the teachers who met the selection criteria.
I called the teachers to a meeting at the school to explain the study to them.
Once I explained the study and all of the teachers' questions were addressed, I invited them to participate in the study.
I gave invitation letters / consent forms that outlined the details of the study to those who showed interest in participating in the study (see Appendix 7).
I asked the teachers who agreed to take part in the study to complete the consent forms (see Appendix 7), after which I invited them to the data collection session at a mutually acceptable time and place.
If the selected teachers did not wish to participate, the process outlined above was repeated with other teachers in order to gain further teacher participants.
Parents/guardians of grade 3 learners
I asked the class teacher for the list of the parents who met the selection criteria.
I invited the parents through the class teacher. He sent the parents a verbal invitation via the children to come to the school for an information session on the study. For those parents who did not attend the information session at the school, the teacher took me to their homes instead.
Once I explained the study to the parents/guardians and all of their questions were addressed, I invited them to participate in the study.
I gave invitation letters / consent forms that outlined the details of the study to those who showed interest in participating in the study (see Appendix 8).
I asked the parents/guardians who agreed to take part in the study to complete the consent forms (see Appendix 8), after which I invited them to the data collection session at a mutually acceptable time and place.
If the parents/guardians selected did not wish to participate, the process outlined above was repeated with other parents/guardians to gain further participants.

It is an ethical requirement for the researcher to make clear all the intentions of the research to the participants (Flick, 2008, p. 126), in addition to stating any possible benefits and/or risks that may come from participating in the research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Consequently, before conducting the interviews, I made the consent forms available to the participants and explained to them the purpose and procedures of the research. Those who were willing to participate were able to sign these forms. The information in the consent form made it clear to the participants that they would remain anonymous throughout the study and that the information they shared in these forms would remain confidential. It was also clearly stated that they could withdraw from the research at any time without providing reasons. As recommended by Flick (2008), I interviewed those who signed the consent forms to ensure transparency.

5.5.2   Demographic details of the participants

Table 4 below gives an overview of the demographic details of the recruited participants to provide a better understanding of those who contributed to the research data.

Table 4: Participants' demographic details (pseudonyms used)

Grade 3 learners	Hasango	Komora	Nagheya	Bonaya	-	-
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	-	-
Age	9	10	9	9	-	-
Teachers	Buḍuko	Nanzora	Tsekeya	Ḍuda	-	-
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male	-	-
Age	52	34	58	36	-	-
Academic qualification	P1[21] diploma, ATS (III)	P1 certificate	P1 certificate	P1 diploma	-	-
Teaching experience (in years)	26	9	26	10	-	-
Parents/ Guardians	Ḍambala	Haḍula	Gerera	Habute	Hagayana	Habwoya
Age	70	41	52	46	36	40
Level of education	P1 certificate, ATS (I)	Diploma in ECED and	Form 4	Form 4	Class 1	Did not go to school

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21 Certificate in primary teacher education.

		P1 certificate				
Relationship with the children	Hasango's guardian	Hasango's mother	Komora's father	Komora's mother	Nagheya's mother	Bonaya's mother

5.6   Data collection methods

The methods of data collection used in this study were informed by the research question and by the research design – namely, in the case of the latter, an ethnographic study. The following data collection methods were employed: in-depth interviews (section 5.6.1), observation (5.6.2), children's written narratives (5.6.3), document review (5.6.4), collection of literacy artifacts and recording of linguistic landscape data (5.6.5), and fieldnotes (5.6.6).

5.6.1   In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews are interviews with questions that are formulated in such a way that they require the interviewee to expound more on the subject matter. The interviewer systematically documents and records the responses to probe for deeper understanding and meaning (Guion et al., 2011). These interviews allow the participants to share deep and holistic perspectives as well as allowing for spontaneity and other questions to arise from the interview responses. Interviews also elicit the personal views of the participants and give the individual variations of the phenomenon to allow for comparisons and contrasting perspectives (Patton, 2002).

I conducted in-depth interviews with the grade 3 children, their parents, the drama teacher, and the grade 1, 2, and 3 teachers. An interview guide was developed to guide the interview session. I used smartphones to record the conversations and brief notes were taken when necessary, during the interview sessions. The sessions lasted an average of 50 minutes. The venues for the interviews were in the participants' homes due to the lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, except for the drama teacher whom I interviewed at school upon the reopening of schools for some selected grades. My role was to probe the participants and guide the session. In total, fourteen in-depth interviews were conducted.

5.6.2   Observation

Since the research is an ethnographic study, it involves observations. The ethnographic study includes "choosing to employ field methods that entail a commitment to get close to the subject being observed in its natural setting, to be factual and descriptive in reporting what is observed, and to find out the points of view of participants in the domain observed" (Genzuk, 2000, p. 2). Participant observation with children is not much different than with adults, as it also includes engagement with children to

appreciate their lives and experiences and getting to know how they understand the world (Clark et al., 2014).

To observe their literacy practices, I became a participant observer, and lived and interacted with the members of Tsana Village for about six months. I devoted most of my time to being in the community spaces such as the school, hospital, and trading centre. However, due to lockdown, there were some limitations, and I was not able to spend much time at the school. For the classroom observations, I was unable to conduct a sufficient amount of observation to give an adequate description of the literacy practices that the teacher and learners engaged in. Nevertheless, I still managed to observe a few classroom teaching sessions. I took some fieldnotes and used a smartphone to audio-record the interactions.

I also had the opportunity to attend a drama festival for a primary and high school competition. Tsana Primary School took part in this festival and presented a cultural drama dance. During this event, I observed the drama dance as a non-participant. In this process, I video-recorded the dance after obtaining permission from the drama teacher. I took notes and asked the drama teacher for clarification at certain points.

5.6.3 Children's written narratives

Learning to write is a powerful way of letting children express themselves, as they can also take an active role in research. Activities like role-play, drawing, and writing "place the child at the center of the research process as an acting subject" (Save the Children, 1997, p. 107). This means that what the child expresses is a true reflection of their feelings and expressions, "capturing more aspects than a researcher might have imagined and freeing the child from the researcher's preconceived frameworks" (ibid, p. 107).

In the current study, the children's written narratives were additional data collected that were meant to be in response to the previous data collected. From the interviews and classroom observations, I realized that the children do not read for leisure and are not engaged in creating their texts. They are only exposed to school resource books and they only read to pass school tests. At home, they do not have storybooks that they can just read for fun. Therefore, this data set was aimed at creating activities that would give the children a space for participation. When children are allowed to engage in personally meaningful activities and practices, these children can be resourceful. Furthermore, I wanted the children to engage in these kinds of story-creation activities because literacy skills are generally highly valued in education. I gave them the freedom to choose the languages they were comfortable communicating in so that they

would work comfortably. The stories would later be compiled into a storybook and distributed to the children as a way for me to contribute to the community.

In this study, 12 grade 3 children were invited to participate in the exercise after seeking verbal permission from their parents and the headteacher. The number increased to 18 when other learners heard about the exercise. However, after a while, four children withdrew from the task which could indicate some exercise of control on the part of the children in the research participation (Einarsdottir et al., 2009).

The learners were introduced to the activity by me explaining to them the purpose of the task, which was to craft creative stories in order to develop storybooks for the schoolchildren. I bought different storybooks in different genres and languages – English, Kiswahili, and Kipfokomu – for the learners to be exposed to. The first week was spent reading stories individually and in pairs under my supervision. I also read stories to them and asked them some questions relating to these stories. In addition, one of the teachers of the lower grades offered to guide them on how to write a story. The children were provided with writing paper, pencils, and erasers as well as colouring-in pencils and crayons. The first assignment was for the children to create one story together with some guidance from the teacher. No theme was given, as it was part of the research design to allow the children to exercise their agency in language choice and their creativity. The children were then put to work in groups and were later encouraged to write individually. The story-writing process also involved drawing and storytelling. Smartphones were used to record the stories, a digital camera was used to take pictures of the stories, and brief notes were taken when necessary.

This activity took place from October through December 2020. This period was when the government called for school reopening for grade 4 and class 8, as a result of easing of lockdown restrictions in the country. I took that opportunity to continue with my data collection with some of the grade 3 learners. I spent around eight weeks with the children, meeting for two and a half hours every weekday.

5.6.4   Document review

Document review is a method of data collection that involves examining existing documents. It can be used to portray and enrich the context of the study and can contribute to the analysis of issues (Simons, 2009). Documents are useful as they represent thoughtful data as a result of the participants having given attention to compiling them (Creswel, 2016). These documents also serve as substitutes for records of activities that the researcher cannot observe directly (Stake, 1995). Documents also aid in corroborating and augmenting evidence obtained from other data sources (Yin, 2014). Consequently, I reviewed the following documents in the field:

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- Records on the history of the school;

- The school policy on the language of the school;

- The lower primary curriculum designs; and

- The government policy documents on education.

A document review lasted one day. I took digital photographs of the pages that had information related to literacy and wrote about them in my research notebook.

5.6.5   Collection of literacy artifacts and recording of linguistic landscape data

A linguistic landscape, as defined by Blommaert (2013, p. 1), is the visible presence of written language in billboards, commercial shops, road and safety signs, graffiti, and other kinds of inscriptions in public spaces. These can be produced professionally or by non-professionals. A linguistic landscape carries the aspect of multilingualism since it implies the use of more than one language to communicate in the different spaces (Gorter, 2006, pp. 1-2). In ancient times, there were some places in which linguistic landscapes were already using more than one language. Today, it is rare to find a monolingual linguistic landscape because of the increase of international slogans and brand names and the spread of English in non-English-speaking countries (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017). I took photos of writings on the walls of shops, health awareness posters in the village health facility, safety message stickers in public transport vehicles, writings and drawings in the school, road signs, advertisement posters in the community as well as posters and writings in the homes. I also took photographs of artifacts produced by children at school, and traditional artifacts such as fans that had some written texts on them.

I used a digital camera to collect the literacy artifacts produced by the children at school and the community members in the village. I also took notes to describe them.

5.6.6   Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes are notes made by the researcher during the data collection process to capture non-verbal behaviours such as the body language of the participants. Fieldnotes are useful to enrich the quality of the collected data (Simons, 2009). They can also be used to write down the researcher's reflections and observations during the data collection process (Yin, 2014). Throughout the data collection period, I made fieldnotes in a research journal.

5.7   Language

While conducting research, there is a need to shift power relations towards the participants. This is why the use of indigenous languages is an important social justice issue, which would foreground indigenous points of view (Smith, 2012). Regarding the medium of communication during the interviews, I used mostly Kiswahili and Kipfokomu, the latter being the language of the catchment area. I am proficient in these two languages. During the exercise, I also used some English words and expressions, although only minimally (which is a common way of speaking in Kenya). Only three interviews – with two teachers, and with a guardian of a grade 3 learner – were conducted mainly in English because that was the language the participants preferred.

The consent and assent forms were translated into Kiswahili, the national language of Kenya. I translated the interview guides into Kiswahili. I also assisted the participants who were illiterate to help them understand the information that was in the consent and assent forms. The grade 3 teacher was also present to confirm the accuracy of the information that I was giving them.

5.8   Data management and analysis

In this section, I will describe how I handled the data that I collected for the study. I also describe how I made sense of the data to answer the research question. With qualitative research being interactive, data management is often integrated with data analysis (Meadows, 2012). Qualitative research has more significance when there are many data sources, as is the case in the current study. I outline my data management process in the sections below.

5.8.1   Data management

The term "data management" is used to refer to all the processes that are undertaken to handle and prepare the data for, in the case of the current study, the thematic analysis (Meadows, 2012). These processes included transcription, translation, putting the data through qualitative data analysis software, and ensuring anonymity of and access management to the data. For the audio-recorded data from the interviews and classroom proceedings, I first listened to the recordings to understand the content. I then transcribed them in the language used into a Microsoft Word document and later translated these transcriptions sentence by sentence into English. I found the task to be time-consuming and therefore, for the remaining interviews, I recruited an undergraduate student to help me translate the data that I was transcribing. I also made sure that the interviews were typed in two columns, where one column contained the original form and the other contained the translated data. I re-read the translated work while cross-checking with the original data to ensure the accuracy of

meaning. To manage and organize the interviews, I then entered the data into the NVivo qualitative data analysis software (QSR International 2018).

For the children's stories and drawings, I scanned these items and entered the images in the NVivo qualitative data analysis software. I also entered the digital photographs of the pages I found useful during the document review process into the NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

The data was anonymized and were safeguarded and stored on my personal computer, the password of which only I knew. When necessary, the data was shared with my supervisor on a one-on-one basis using secured network connections. The data from the fieldnotes I took was kept in a research journal that only I had access to, and that could be shared with my supervisor if there was a need during the data analysis process.

5.8.2 Data analysis

The data analysis technique used in this study was thematic analysis, which focuses on establishing patterns or themes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). For the current study, the data comprises the transcripts from the interviews, the cultural creative dance, and the children's stories and drawings. The data also comprises the text data from the photographs of the linguistic landscapes, and the photographs of the pages of documents from the document reviews.

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying themes, and analysing and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). A theme is described as "an outcome of coding and categorization" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 14). Themes are identified after the coding process has been completed. The researcher reads through the identified codes over and over again to identify similar patterns to help address the research questions that were set at the beginning of the study (Saldaña, 2013). A theme captures something striking from the data that is related to the research question and represents a degree of patterned meaning and response within the data. Therefore, a theme has to be measured on whether it captures something important concerning the research question. As such, it depends on the researcher's judgment to determine what a theme is (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

I read through the transcripts to identify important ideas and expressions, intending to allow themes to emerge from what was said. This involved coding the data and later coalescing similar codes to form the themes. The themes that appeared served to address the questions of the study: (i) Literacy and linguistic practices in school and homes: the status quo; (ii) Local languages and local knowledge; and (iii) Critical intervention. I will discuss these themes in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, respectively.

5.8.3 The process followed in theme development

Initialization phase
- This stage entailed reading and rereading the transcripts, fieldnotes, the digital photographs of the analysed document, the children's narrative stories as well as examining the digital photographs of the linguistic landscapes and artifacts.
- I read and scrutinised the data three to five times, highlighted meaning units and coded them using NVivo codes and descriptive units. NVivo codes are short phrases or words from the participants used as codes, while descriptive codes summarised the main content of the excerpt (Saldaña, 2013).
- After coding, I wrote reflective notes after having looked for abstractions in the data.

Construction phase
- I compared and grouped the codes according to similarities and differences after having reflected on the process of organizing them.
- I assigned categories to each group of codes using my research questions. I tried to make the categories mutually exclusive and more comprehensive to discover the disparities between the codes on the meaning (Krauss, 2005).
- I sorted and piled all category of similar codes together and labelled them.
- I defined and described the labels of categories to improve the idea of the data.
- I grouped similar categories into sub-themes, and similar sub-themes into themes.
- The themes were generated from the description of the sub-themes that gave a certain aspect that was crucial to my study (Bryman, 2012).

Rectification phase
- To increase my sensitivity, I distanced myself from the data for about a month.
- I verified the certainty of the developed themes by going back to the data. This was facilitated through self-criticism and checking the phenomenon from a fresh perspective.
- To confirm the themes, I had several discussions with my supervisor to explore alternative interpretations of the findings.

Finalization phase
- I developed a storyline that described and connected the themes (see Chapters 6, 7, & 8). This involved choosing, chronicling, and ordering findings to come up with a comprehensive account of the data.
- I correlated the findings with the literature and linked them to the conceptual framework around content of the themes developed. This was to show how the phenomena of the study evolved and to facilitate a holistic understanding of these phenomena.

Figure 4. The process followed in theme development

5.9 Challenges while collecting the data

During my data collection, I experienced various challenges, and will highlight some in this section. I will also discuss some of the measures that I took to overcome a few of these challenges. My initial study was mainly focused on the school institution. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Kenya called for a temporary lockdown and closure of all learning institutions on

20 March 2020, meaning that I had to suspend all my school-based research. One of the school-based research activities involved conducting classroom observations while teaching was ongoing. However, I did indeed manage to observe a few sessions before the lockdown commenced. After consultations with my supervisor, we resorted to focusing more on the community so that I did not have to wait until 2021 to continue with my data collection. I had to make slight changes to my study and added one more data collection method to compensate for the school-based data that I may have missed due to the pandemic. I also used WhatsApp and phone calls as a way of gathering information in order to minimize physical interaction with my participants, thereby observing the COVID-19 safety protocols as suggested by the Kenyan Ministry of Health.

Another challenge that I faced was when I was conducting the interviews. My initial criteria for selecting the child participants were to select students who were active in class and others who were not active in class. My interview sessions with the latter were somewhat challenging since they were very shy and found it difficult to communicate with me. I therefore recruited other children who actively participated in class and were more comfortable expressing themselves. This could limit my data in generalizing the findings due to the biases in the participant selection. However, to ensure that the students who did not communicate so easily in a one-on-one interview setting still had the opportunity to participate in my study, I included the shy students in the narrative crafting activities where they were able to express themselves comfortably.

While I was doing the children's written narratives with the learners, I noted that some of the children came to class without having eaten. Most of them confirmed that they only have two meals a day – breakfast and supper – while some said that they only have one meal a day. During their regular school sessions, these children were provided with lunch through the "School Feeding Program" supported by the government. I therefore had to do something so that the children could actively participate in the activity that I had involved them in. It was also a way for me to give back to the community that hosted me. After having a consultation with them, we agreed that I would be providing them with porridge every day after our meeting sessions. This helped the situation, and the children were happy – some of them would even come with bottles to take some porridge home to their siblings.

All through the children's writing exercise, I followed the Ministry of Health's guidelines on COVID-19. There was a running tap and soap at the entrance to the class and hand sanitizer was also available in the classroom. I asked the children to bring facemasks with them but sometimes they would forget to do so or, when they did remember, to put them on, so I had to remind them every now and then. In class, I made sure that the children did not share desks: there was one learner per desk in order to observe social distancing protocols. Furthermore, since they were not many learners, it was easy for me to

manage them and remind them to continue to observe the COVID-19 measures set by the Ministry of Health. During this period of research, the Tana Delta region did not report any COVID-19 cases.

Another limitation that I encountered was when doing the document reviews at the school. I did not have access to the school minutes of teachers' meetings, minutes of parents' meetings, or minutes of the board of management. My intention in reviewing these documents was to find the school policies on literacy available in the school. The school administration however confirmed that they do not conduct regular meetings with the parents, and they did not have a working board of management at that time so could not hold meetings. Therefore, I only reviewed the documents that were available at that time.

5.10 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the methodology that I used to conduct this research. The aim was to understand the nature of literacy practices in and out of school in multilingual Tana River, Kenya. I have started by describing how the qualitative approach and the linguistic ethnography research design were suited for this study. In addition, among other things, I described the study context and the process of ethical consideration that I followed. Moreover, I discussed the data collection, management, and analysis procedures. In the next chapters, I present the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 6: LITERACY AND LINGUISTIC PRACTICES IN SCHOOL AND HOMES – THE STATUS QUO

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the methodology used for this study. This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the data on the status quo of the literacy and linguistic practices in the school and homes. This chapter draws data from interviews, document analysis, linguistic landscapes, and fieldnotes. The analysis aims to answer the main research question: What are the literacy practices that are used within the school environment and in the community in multilingual Tana River County? For a better understanding of the rest of the chapter, I will give a detailed description within which the study took place. I start by giving a general description of the context of Tsana Village and Tsana Primary School, including the history of the school, population, personnel, and physical setting. I will then describe the findings of the thematic analysis.

6.2 The context of Tsana Village and Tsana Primary School

Tsana Village

Tsana Village, as stated in the previous chapter, is in Tana Delta sub-county. It has a population of 8,155[22], according to the 2019 census. The village is semi-rural, and the murram road[23] infrastructure and telecommunication networks are fairly good. The members of this community are subsistence farmers and fishermen. A good number of Tsana Village members have migrated to various urban centres across the country for work. They mostly return to the village during vacation periods to visit their families. Most of the inhabitants are Pokomo, therefore Kipfokomu is usually spoken at home and among the speakers in the community. Some residents of this village are not Pokomo, but they learn the language through their daily interaction with native speakers. Kiswahili is also used for communication within the wider community. Children are exposed to these two languages at home before starting school. Therefore, students have a greater command of Kipfokomu and Kiswahili in comparison with English which is only heard and taught at school.

Tsana Primary School

Tsana Primary School was established in 1887 by German missionaries. It is regarded as the "mother" of all the schools within Tana River County. It is where formal education in this area was started

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22 Population per village was not available in the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019a) report. This information was obtained from the chief of the local area.

23 An unpaved road surfaced with crushed stones collected from a quarry.

under a strong Christian foundation. The initial school was sponsored by the African Inland Church. During its first few years of existence, the school taught the basic skills of reading, writing, arithmetic, as well as vocational training such as carpentry and masonry. It later changed to an intermediate school to connect with the larger national education requirement, and later to a full primary school. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the school served as a teacher training college and produced Primary Teacher 4s (P4 teachers).

Currently, Tsana Primary School is a mixed day and boarding school. It also has a pre-primary section. The school has 640 pupils (333 boys and 307 girls) at the primary level and 101 pre-primary pupils (55 boys and 46 girls). The school is understaffed, where the average ratio of children to teachers in the school is considered to be 58:1, in comparison with the recommended pupil-teacher ratio of 40:1 by the Teachers Service Commission[24] (2006), which is also the ideal ratio set by UNESCO and other international standards. Tsana Primary School has 23 teachers (seven males and sixteen females), where seventeen are employed by the Teachers Service Commission, two by the County Government of Tana River County, two by a local NGO, and two by the school's board of management. The image in Figure 5 below shows one of the buildings at the school.

Figure 5. The external area of the pre-primary block at Tsana Primary School

In the physical context of the school, Tsana Primary School sits on a 20-acre piece of land donated by the community. The school has also donated some acres of its land to aid the initiation of a secondary

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24 The Teachers Service Commission of Kenya is an independent commission established under the Constitution of Kenya to manage human resources within the education sector.

school in the village. Therefore, Tsana Primary School shares a gated playfield with Tsaiko[25] Secondary School. Tsana Primary School is divided into two sections: pre-primary and primary, specifically pre-primary 1 and pre-primary 2, and grades 1 through standard 8.[26] There are 11 buildings constructed of brick walls with corrugated iron roofing and cement floors. These buildings house the classrooms, administration offices, dormitories, the dining hall and kitchen, and some staff and students' toilets. There are a few buildings made of corrugated iron sheets that contain the dormitories' toilets and bathrooms. The school also has three freshwater boreholes, and children, teachers, and support staff drink water from these. Additionally, there are four water tanks distributed around the learning and the dormitory sections. Beside the pre-primary building, there is an open field used as a sports ground. There is also a small vegetable garden used to teach the children farming skills.

A description of the lower grades' organization

The lower grades in Kenya are grades 1, 2, and 3 – the foundation phases of primary education. One teacher is assigned to each class and thus teaches all the subjects. The teacher moves with the class from grade 1 to grade 3. From grade 4 onwards, the children are taught by different teachers depending on the latter's subject expertise. In Kenya, a lower primary teacher is one who is specialized in teaching the lower grades. However, these teachers can also teach in the higher grades as well.

A typical school day for the lower grades starts at 7:45 am. The day scholars walk to school on foot, as the school is located within the village. However, children who come from far-located villages sometimes arrive at school by motorbike. Most of them, however, walk to school. One of the teacher participants, Teacher Nanzora, confirms that there are students who walk many kilometers to school. All the learners attend the assembly at 7:45 am where the teachers address them. At Tsana Primary School, there are three assembly days: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The learners go to class at 8:15 am and each lesson is assigned 30 minutes. There is a short break between 9:15 am to 9:25 am, and a long break between 10:55 am to 11:25 am. During the short break, learners can go and use the toilets, and during the long break, the school comes to life with the sounds of the students playing on the school compound.

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25 A pseudonym for the village's secondary school.

26 "Standard" is the education grading system of the Kenyan 8-4-4 curriculum that is being phased out and replaced by the new CBC. The latter was launched in 2017 and is gradually replacing the grading system from "standards" to "grades".

Figure 6. Children playing during the school's long break

After the long break, the children go back to class. The lessons end at 12:25 when the children go for lunch in the dining hall. *Bulger*[27] is the meal served, and this is a part of a government feeding program for all government primary schools. After the lower grade and pre-primary children have eaten, they go home, while the upper primary grades continue with afternoon lessons from 14:00 to 15:30. After these lessons, the students clean the school and go for games, then later go to classes for "preps", which is usually revision time for the learners. The lower primary teachers remain at the school with the rest of the teaching staff. The school day at Tsana Primary School ends at 17:00.

Having described the study context, I now present the findings of the data from the interviews, document analysis, linguistic landscapes, and fieldnotes based on the research question.

6.3   Findings of the thematic analysis

What follows in the sub-sections below are the salient observations from my data.

6.3.1   "Although they speak Kipfokomu, the language of communication when we come to school is Kiswahili"

As stated in the previous chapters, the language of communication in Tsana Village is Kipfokomu and Kiswahili. Kipfokomu is more widely used in comparison to Kiswahili as the village is predominantly comprised of Pokomo-L1 speakers. The case is the same for the children: in my interviews with them, they mentioned using Kipfokomu and Kiswahili while playing with other

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27 A cereal made from cracked parboiled groats of several wheat species.

children. The parents also expressed the same in my interviews with them. For example, I asked one of the parents, Ḍambala, about the language his children use while playing or communicating with other children. Below is his response:

> *Mostly when she is with her friends, it is either Kipfokomu or Kiswahili. Because, you see, it depends on who she is playing with. If most of them speak vernacular, they all do the same. After all, they all speak Kiswahili and Kipfokomu; they can understand each other. So, it is a mixture of the two most of the time. But mostly they use Kipfokomu, though they even use Swahili.*
>
> (Ḍambala, parent interview)

The language of communication at home is Kipfokomu which is preferred over Kiswahili. For example, Ḍambala expressed the following:

> *Mostly at home, it is my vernacular. I encourage it so much. I feel so sad when a child whom I stay with changes to speak English or Swahili while I am talking to them in Kipfokomu. I don't enjoy it. I encourage that at home we use my home language. I think mostly that is the main reason why right now she can read my vernacular. She is good at reading it.*
>
> (Ḍambala, parent interview)

Ḍambala, as quoted above, encourages the use of vernacular while communicating at home. He does not like it when he speaks to a child in Kipfokomu, and the child responds in other languages. He further states that his child can now read Kipfokomu texts very well. This shows that speaking the home language to the children, and the availability of Pokomo texts, helps in improving in children's reading. In my observations, most parents spoke Kipfokomu in their homes, and similar views were also expressed by another parent who said:

> *Mostly we use Kipfokomu. We rarely use Kiswahili because it is the youngest ones who can't speak Pokomo fluently – they speak Swahili. So, to the bigger ones, we use Kipfokomu, but for the young ones, we use Kiswahili.*
>
> (Habute, parent interview)

Here, we see that Kipfokomu is the preferred language of communication in most homes; Kiswahili comes second. Neither the parents nor the children, in their respective interviews, mentioned the use of English as the language of communication. This is because this language is considered the language of school. However, in school, this is not actually the case. Despite the overwhelming dominance of Kipfokomu, English and Kiswahili are used in school, as these two are the only languages of communication allowed in the school. Teacher Buḍuko also confirms this in her interview, as shown below:

> *Although they use their mother tongue, the language of communication when we come to school, they just use Kiswahili.*
>
> (Buḍuko, teacher interview)

Interestingly, Tsana Primary School does not feature MT in its school language policy. This language policy is stipulated in the school rules and regulations as follows:

> The medium of communication is English, and Kiswahili on Fridays.

<div align="right">(Tsana Primary School Rules and Regulations)</div>

Here, the school's language policy contradicts the national language policy. I found that Kipfokomu is not given much value compared to English and Kiswahili. Teachers prefer using English and Kiswahili while teaching. We see that, although the school does not acknowledge the use of the MT in school, the language in the education policy of Kenya is different. This policy formally stipulates the use of the MT as a MoI from pre-primary to primary grades 1 through 3, transitioning to English from grade 4 onwards.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2 section 2.6, the LiEP in Kenya was enacted in 1976 by the Gachathi Commission. This commission introduced the use of MTs as the MoI for the lower levels of education. Since then, the MT has been included in the Basic Education Act of Kenya. (See Chapter 2, section 2.6 for policy detail on the sessional paper No. 14 of 2012 on Reforming Education and Training Sectors in Kenya).

Most regions in Kenya are predominantly rural and are inhabited by specific homogenous communities (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019c). In these regions, the use of the MTs is encouraged. Kiswahili should be used in linguistic heterogeneous areas because it is the national language. The Basic Education Act No. 14 of 2013 also ensures the following:

> [The] protection of the right of every child in a public school to equal standards of education including the medium of instructions used in schools for all children of the same educational level.

> Without prejudice to the paragraph above, advancement and protection of every child in the pre-primary and lower primary level of education to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable.

<div align="right">(Basic Education Act. No. 14 of 2013, 2017, p. 11)</div>

In addition, it is the right of the children to attain an equal standard of education. The language policy has a big role to play in this regard to ensure equality via the education instructions being given according to the learners' language of choice.

> The pupil's ideas and thoughts are in their mother tongue and will continue to be so, long after they have learned to speak English. To be encouraged to think for themselves, the pupils must be helped to do so in their language.

(Kenya Institute of Education, 2012, p. 147)

The above statement justifies the use of the L1. As a learner first thinks in their MT, they should be encouraged to do so in the classroom by using their home language. In the former 8-4-4 curriculum, MTs were included in the syllabus as a language subject to be taught alongside English and Kiswahili during the first three years of primary schooling. Similarly, in the current CBC syllabus, indigenous languages are included as a learning subject in the lower primary grades. However, unlike in the 8-4-4 system, the language policy is not explicitly explained in the CBC education system documents. For instance, in the curriculum framework document, the LiEP partly appears in the pre-primary section as follows:

> In pre-primary education, the medium of instruction is the language of the catchment area. The aim of teaching language activities at the pre-primary school level is to enable learners to express themselves fluently and to assist them to improve their listening ability, concentration, understanding, and memory.

(Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017a, p. 30)

As shown in the above excerpt, the new CBC does not explicitly explain the LiEP in the curriculum framework document. The policy is supposed to be implemented from pre-primary to lower primary grades, but the lower primary grades have not been mentioned in the document. In the curriculum designs, which teachers use as a guide to deliver the curriculum content, the policy has not been written as it was in the former 8-4-4 system shown earlier.

Furthermore, the CBC framework document emphasizes the value of English as an important language of economic success as shown below:

> The Constitution of Kenya 2010 accords English the status of one of the official languages while according to the language policy of 1976, it is the language of instruction from Grade four onwards, including colleges and universities. In addition, English is a language of communication at both local and international levels. Those who master English reap many academic, social, and professional benefits. In the school setting, success in education will largely depend on an individual's proficiency in English.

(Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017a, p. 42)

Despite government provisions for MT instruction, English is the preferred language of teaching in Kenya because of the learning materials being available in English and the system of English examinations. Thus, the use of home languages is undermined. Empirical studies conducted in Kenya

confirm that English is the preferred MoI over the languages of the catchment areas (Bunyi, 2006; Graham, 2013; Khejeri, 2014; Muthwii, 2004; Nyaga, 2013). Further evidence of this contradiction of the national language policy is also found in the practices that teachers reported using. In their interview, I asked the teachers about the LoI they use in the classroom. Below are some of their responses:

> *As the teacher, I use English when I am teaching an English lesson, strictly English when I am teaching English. I use Kiswahili strictly when I am teaching Kiswahili lessons then I combine languages when I am teaching the rest of the subjects. Other subjects, most of the teaching goes in Kiswahili because we have a challenge of using the mother tongue to express but when it comes to the book the child is using, now it is written in English, it is written in Kiswahili, so you cannot stick on mother tongue while you do not have the materials. So that is why we use… yeah, so we use Kiswahili, we also use English, when you want them to interact with the books which are available there, and if there is a content you want the children to master, then you stress that in Kipfokomu.*

> (Buḓuko, teacher interview)

Another teacher also expressed a similar sentiment as shown below:

> *Okay, it depends on the subject because those children are from pre-primary. Mostly you get some of them when you try speaking pure English, they do not understand. So sometimes we have to explain in Kiswahili, you explain the main thing in Kiswahili so that even when you see they do not understand it well, you change to Kipfokomu. You explain to them until when they get the concept, then you change to English.*

> (Nanzora, teacher interview)

For Teacher Tsekea, his opinion is different. Note that he did not mention the use of English in his teaching. Below is his response:

> *I use Kiswahili because, they understand better, for better understanding so that even the one who scores the least marks could get to understand the instructions.*

> (Tsekea, teacher interview)

Here we see that, although Teacher Tsekea did not mention the use of English as his language of preference in teaching, he uses Kiswahili. Therefore, in his class, there is no room for the use of the MT.

From the above interview excerpts, it is evident that all three teachers confirmed using translanguaging pedagogy between English, Kiswahili, and the MT to teach the subjects which are not the language subjects, e.g., English and Kiswahili. The use of translanguaging while teaching is also supported by other studies conducted in Kenya (see Bunyi, 2005; Jones, 2014; Khejeri, 2014; Muthwii, 2004). However, the use of the MT is only featured as a last resort to explain a difficult concept, as confirmed by Teachers Buḏuko and Nanzora. Studies conducted by Khejeri (2014) and Muthwii (2004) also confirmed the use of the MT to explain concepts taught in English more explicitly to the learners. However, Teacher Tsekea confirms that his preferred LoI is Kiswahili. I confirmed his statement because, during my classroom observation, he mostly used Kiswahili in teaching and would sometimes switch to English, while the MT is rarely used in his class. Therefore, it seems that, out of desperation, the teachers resort to using the MT to deliver more difficult or advanced content. This was confirmed by the two teachers above, Nanzora and Buḏuko, who mentioned using the MT to explain difficult concepts to the children.

The Tsana Primary School language policy emphasizes communicating in English all through the week except on Fridays when Kiswahili can be used as a language of communication at school. Despite the LiEP advocating for the use of the MT in the lower grades, the school itself does not take into consideration the use of Kipfokomu as the language of communication for the lower grades. However, even with that policy in place, the learners in the lower and higher grades continued to communicate in Kipfokomu and Kiswahili while playing at school and inside the classrooms; English was only used to communicate with the teachers. Similar observations were also made by Jones (2014), who conducted a study in Western Kenya that revealed that the students communicate in their local languages while playing at school.

While I was interacting with the teachers in the staffroom, they mostly used Kipfokomu while communicating amongst Pokomo speakers. Kiswahili was also used to communicate with non-Pokomo speakers. During their staff meetings, the medium of communication was mainly Kiswahili. Throughout the school assemblies, teachers used English and Kiswahili interchangeably while addressing the students. They mostly used English while teaching in the classroom. Therefore, the school language policy is not implemented as it should be. Both the students and teachers preferred to communicate in the languages of the community, while English was only used as the LoI in the classrooms.

Although the MT is prescribed in the policy as the LoI in the first three years of primary education, then transitioning to English from grade 4 onwards, English and Kiswahili seem to be the languages of preference for instruction, even in the rural areas where the dominant language of communication

might be other languages. In addition, English is the language of all learning materials and examinations, except for the Kiswahili language subject.

There is a great challenge in the implementation of the LiEP in terms of the MoI when English is privileged over Kiswahili and the other local languages. This therefore leads to *de jure* versus *de facto* policies. Johnson defines "*de jure*" as the law openly stated in the policies and "*de facto*" as the actual implementation of those policies. *De facto* policies "arise without or despite *de jure* policies and local language practices that differ from *de jure* policies" (D. C. Johnson, 2013, p. 10). In the current study, the *de jure* policy is the use of the MT as a MoI from grade 1 to grade 3, encouraging the use of a variety of local languages as stipulated in the policy. On the other hand, the *de facto* policy encourages the use of English as a MoI with little regard to what is expected of the *de jure* policy. Therefore, *de facto* English dominates the education domain in the country because of the formal testing which is in English. Teachers tend to "teach for the test", which has attracted the criticism that teachers use pedagogies that are not considered optimal for learning standard curriculum content or skills; these pedagogies are, however, believed to improve students' performance on tests (Phelps, 2016). These standardized tests "do not do what they are supposed to in assessing problem-solving and critical thinking. Instead, they tend to measure a specific skill set – namely, the ability to perform well on these" (Beresin, 2018).

Consequently, teachers are aware that the education system favours *de facto* examinations and learning materials. They are also aware of the challenges learners face with the *de facto* MoI that is an unfamiliar language to them. To overcome this, teachers code-switch between the three languages when delivering the education content in preparation for the learners' examinations which will be in English.

6.3.2   Pokomo MT resource books are available in school but not used in the classroom

As I stated in my previous chapters, Tsana Primary School is one of the selected schools in the region to benefit from a MTE program implemented by Bible Translation & Literacy[28]. In the school, there are Pokomo MTE content books and storybooks available in the bookstore[29], but these are absent from the classroom. The children are not exposed to these books that are written in their native language. For example, in the grade 3 classroom that I observed, the only books available were

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28 Bible Translation & Literacy is a "Christian organization that was established in 1981 to facilitate Bible translation, sustainable literacy and language development programmes among small language groups in Kenya and beyond" (Bible Translation & Literacy, 2014).

29 The school storage facility for teaching and learning resources. Subject teachers borrow learning materials on behalf of the students.

textbooks written in English. Some content that is in these English books is also available in the Kipfokomu coursebooks, however, the latter are not present in the classroom for the learners to interact with. Some of the teachers also claimed not to have MT coursebooks in the school, as shown in the excerpt below:

… but when it comes to the books the child is using, now it is written in English, it is written in Kiswahili, so you cannot stick on mother tongue while you do not have the materials. So that is why we use … yeah, so we use Kiswahili, we also use English, when you want them to interact with the books which are available there.

(Buḓuko, teacher interview)

Figure 7. Sample of the Pokomo MTE content books and storybooks available at Tsana Primary School

These teachers are fully aware of the availability of the Pokomo content books because some of them were actually involved in the development processes of these books. However, the teachers chose not to make them available for the learners in the classrooms. Despite MT being incorporated in the CBC as a subject to be taught, and having Pokomo language textbooks available in school, the teachers do not teach the subject. It may be possible that the teachers decided to avoid using the MT books because they are aware that the CBC does not explicitly emphasize the use of MT as a LoI as it was before in the 8-4-4 curriculum, as well as the fact that all the tests are usually in English. This means that, even though the books are there, the teachers cannot see a space for them in the classroom – they do not know where to fit them in. It also shows that teachers are left in a precarious position and thus choose to focus on what is explicit. However, we see that it is the children who are deprived of obtaining knowledge in all three languages. Since children are usually curious to know things, the presence of the MTE books in the classroom would add value to their learning experience.

6.3.3   "Parents do not want to commit themselves"

Parental involvement in their children's learning processes is important in the educational life of the latter. To create a link between home and school literacy activities, parents and teachers need to work as partners (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017; Jafarov, 2015; Msila, 2012). Parents must play their part in fostering home literacy activities. However, the data collected showed that there was minimal involvement of the parents in the learning processes of their children. In the school, for example, teachers complained about parents not participating in their children's learning. For instance, some of the teachers expressed the following thoughts:

> *The parents, their problem is ignorance; they are learned but they have no time. It is ignorance, pure ignorance. They have no time with their children. Not that they have not gone to school – they have. Although not to higher levels, they have gone to school. But they are not ready to commit themselves. So, I don't know. I usually say it is just ignorance. The parents, most of them do not help their children to do assignments.*

<div align="right">(Buḍuko, teacher interview)</div>

During my stay in the village, while engaging the learners in the writing narratives, I can confirm that this same opinion expressed above by Teacher Buḍuko was indeed a reality that I experienced. As part of the writing narrative activity, I gave the children some homework that required their parents' input. Unfortunately, out of 18 students, only four managed to complete the assignments with the help of parents or relatives. When I asked the learners why they did not complete the homework, I received the following responses from some of them:

> *My mother said that she is not a schoolchild to do schoolwork.* (Student A)
> *When I asked my siblings to help with the work, they said that they have finished school.*
<div align="right">(Student B)</div>

> *When I asked my grandmother to help me, she refused. She said that I should do it myself.*
<div align="right">(Student C)</div>

The above excerpts show that most of the parents and relatives have minimal input in their children's formal learning. As the teacher explained above, some parents have indeed gone to school though not to higher levels of education. The teachers construe the parents as not wanting to commit to their children's educational welfare. This is exemplified by the guardian of Student C above, who is an ECED teacher[30] but refused to help the child with the assignment. What the teachers construe as a refusal to assist can also be a reflection of parents and caregivers working long hours to ensure that their families are taken care of and not having the time and energies to help their children learn a home. Studies have

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30 In Kenya, the ECED training is considered the lowest qualification in the teaching profession, which would confirm the claims made by Teacher Buḍuko.

shown that one of the contributing factors to parental involvement in children's learning is the parents' education level (see Crozier, 1999; Deslandes, Potvin, & Leclerc, 1999; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2006; Pena, 2000). For example, Lynch et al. (2006) found that parents with higher levels of education tend to value reading more than those with lower education levels. The former understand the importance of home literacy and further reinforce these practices. Some parents believe that helping their children with their schoolwork is cheating, but it depends on the circumstances, the age of the child, the extent of the help requested, and the teacher's expectation of parental involvement with the homework (Christensen, 2014). During her interview, Teacher Nanzora reported that parents who are teachers themselves are the ones who help their children with their homework:

> *… for those whose parents are teachers, you find that at least when they get home, the children can be helped.*

(Nanzora, teacher interview)

The excerpt above contradicts the response of Student C's guardian, as shown earlier. This guardian is an ECED teacher but was not willing to help his/her child with their homework. This shows that not all parents who are teachers help their children with schoolwork.

Other factors also contribute to parents not helping their children with their homework in Tsana Village. Teacher Nanzora adds the following in her interview:

> *… Some parents are dropouts, others are illiterate. So, you find that they do not care at all. For example, if you give the children some work for them to do at home, right now in this CBC, the new curriculum, you must involve even the parents. In most of the activities of the class, we are asked to involve parents because it links classwork and home duties. So, you find that you must send the child home and just because the parent did not learn much, you can find that maybe the parent is a drunkard, so the child will just go home with the homework and still come back without completing it.*

(Nanzora, teacher interview)

We see that those illiterate parents, school dropouts, and parents with substance abuse issues are also contributing factors towards the non-involvement in their children's learning processes. Teacher Buḓuko suggests the same when she said:

> *The parents that could help their children, I do not think they would even be 15%, because some parents are not learned, others are dropouts, and others are literate but are drunkards.*

(Buḓuko, teacher interview)

Some parents might not be able to help with their children's homework because they are illiterate. However, they still find ways to help their children. Below is an example from one parent:

I usually motivate them to do homework. I ask them "Who has homework?". If it is her or the others, she tries helping them. But to say the truth, I do not know school things. So, there is her cousin who is in standard six who helps her. Also, her aunt, the mother of her cousin helps them with schoolwork since we are also neighbours.

(Hagayana, parent interview)

Some illiterate parents who have an interest in helping their children with their schoolwork find solutions to that challenge. Hagayana admitted having involved someone else to help with her children's schoolwork. Similar findings have been reported by Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, and Vernon-Feagans (2016) who showed that parents who rarely spend time reading with their children or are in a family where literacy is not dominant involve someone to help with their children's homework and to read with their children. In this study, two parents confessed that they are illiterate, but they seek help from relatives or neighbours to help their children with their schoolwork.

Some teachers try to overcome the challenge of parental non-involvement in their children's homework by coming up with some alternative means. For example, Teacher Buḏuko stated the following:

Most of the time, I do not give them assignments to go and do at home. I give them assignments that I know they can do on their own, without the help of the parents. Yes, I give them the assignments that I know they can do on their own. If it is a technical one, I just demonstrate in class, then I allow them to go and just try. Yeah, I give a clear demonstration in class. Not that "when you go home, go and tell your parents to help you". No, I show them how to.

(Buḏuko, teacher interview)

Because most of the parents do not help their children with their homework, some of the teachers have come up with a solution to that challenge by giving the children assignments that they can do by themselves. Here, Teacher Buḏuko simultaneously plays the role of the teacher and takes on the duty of the parent. Since she knows that the children will not get help from their parents, she is willing to show the learners how they can complete their homework without needing any assistance from their parents. However, in the CBC education system, parents are supposed to be involved in their children's learning processes. In fact, this is a requirement of the new curriculum of Kenya (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017b). It is also worth noting that the lack of parental involvement in children's learning is not limited to Kenya, but also extends to other parts of Africa. For example, in Ghana, a study conducted in Ankurase by Pryor et al. (2003) showed that parents were not interested in the education of their children since they considered it irrelevant for their children's future careers as farmers. Still in Ghana, another study conducted by Donkor, Issaka, and Asante (2012) in a community with low-income and high illiteracy levels showed that learners

received minimum support from their parents. In Nigeria, it also appeared that parents whose children were enrolled in public schools were less involved in their children's learning processes in comparison with those whose children were in private schools (Olatoye & Agbatogun, 2009). In South Africa, several studies that were conducted also reported minimal parental involvement, especially in the rural disadvantaged schools (see Mahlo, 2011; Maluleke, 2014; Manilal, 2014; Msila, 2012; Nojaja, 2008). However, a study conducted by Ngwaru & Njoroge (2011) revealed that there are instances where parents are unaware of how they could become involved in the literacy development of their children. Therefore, parents also need to be informed on how they can contribute to the learning processes of their children. As Galea (2002, cited in Ngwaru, 2012) points out, the aim of parental involvement is to facilitate parents to become self-empowered to recognize their potentials, strengths, and skills capable of nurturing their children's learning, and – most importantly – to actively participate in school activities as members of the school and the local community.

Teacher Nanzora gave the following response regarding helping the parents participate in their children's learning:

> *It is true, parents are supposed to be part of learning in the CBC, but it has proven to be a great challenge, and I think the parents are supposed to be called for awareness meetings now and then. Maybe it can solve that problem. But for now, it is a great challenge.*

(Nanzora, teacher interview)

In her opinion, parents should be called for awareness meetings and be informed of their role in education. Her suggestion is similar to one of Ralejoe's (2021), namely that parents need an awareness campaign to sensitize them to their roles as parents in the education of their children.

Another challenge that teachers face is that parents do not purchase learning resources for their children. Although the government is providing free education, there are indeed some areas that do not meet the needs of the students. This is where the parents are supposed to fill in the gap. Teacher Tsekea mentioned that sometimes the government delays in the provision of some of the learning resources, as mentioned below:

> *Things like manilla paper, colours, painting pencils, and drawing books. You call the parents and tell them that the government has not brought funds yet. So, if we agree, every parent is to provide for their children so that learning can continue.*

(Tsekea, teacher interview)

Learning has to continue despite the government's delay in providing such resources. According to the teachers, parents are expected to provide for their children when the government delays. However, the teachers view this as a challenge because parents might not be taking full responsibility for their children's education. Teacher Buḓuko explained this challenge as follows:

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Yeah … the parents now, not that they cannot buy, if I say they cannot buy it's a lie. But now, everything you ask the parents, buy this … I want this … I want that … At times it will also be a challenge because it reaches a time that they are not able to raise that money. Sometimes they take a lot of time to respond to your request. Then other issues are, they politicize such issues … "Ooh we know it is free education, why are you telling us to buy those things?". Yeah, such things.

(Buḓuko, teacher interview)

According to the teachers, the parents can generally afford to buy such extra learning resources but, as Teacher Buḓuko explained, when the teachers ask them to buy these items on a regular basis, these parents may end up not having the money to provide for their children. She also mentions that since education is free, some parents use that as an excuse for not providing for their children.

6.3.4 Tsana Primary School literacy practices

The school

The school is naturally where much learning takes place. Therefore, a school should have many literacy practices available for the learners. When you enter the compound of Tsana Primary School, what is immediately noticeable are the paintings of educational content on the walls of the buildings. In the pre-primary block, the walls have been painted with colourful educational content suited to the learners' level. There are some writings on the walls of the buildings as well as short sentences appearing on boards pinned on one or two trees within the school compound. The content varies from education to hygiene to motivational quotes. These writings are written in English, some of which are produced by the learners, while the majority were written by professional artists. The images in Figures 9 to 12 are some of the written signage and images found on the Tsana Primary School compound.

Figure 9. "Washing hands is cool and keeps you in school" – A message written outside a toilet wall

All the students' toilets at the school have a message with a reminder to the students to wash their hands. Figure 9 is a picture of the boys' toilets. The message is captured both in visual and linguistic modes. The young children in pre-primary, who cannot yet read and understand the written message, are still able to receive the intended message by seeing the mural of a boy washing his hands.
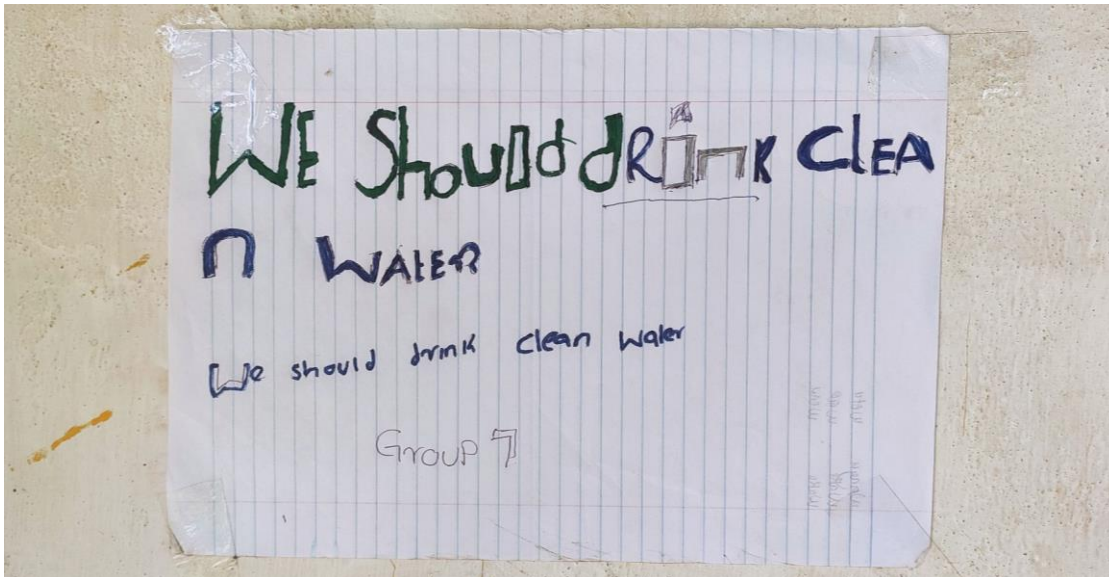
Figure 10. Message about drinking clean water pinned on a wall

The image in Figure 10 shows a sample of a message that was produced by the learners. This kind of message about drinking clean water was displayed on the walls of every block in the school.

Figure 11. A mural of education content

Figure 12. An inspirational quote pinned on a tree trunk

Motivational quotes are pinned on several trees in the compound (Figure 12), while others are written on some of the school walls (Figure 11). The importance of these messages is to encourage the learners to find value in education and to motivate them to work hard to become better citizens.

The classroom

The classroom is where most of the learning takes place. In the grade 3 classroom, the children's desks were arranged in small groups where the learners could face each other, thereby enabling their interaction and movement in the classroom. This seating layout is what Kalantzis and Cope (2012b) describe as an "authentic classroom arrangement". The teacher's table was at one corner near the entrance where he could see all the children. During my classroom observation, I noted that the learners would consult each other and clarify amongst themselves things that were not clear to them. They would also crosscheck and correct each other's work. This seating arrangement was also the same in grades 1 and 2, where Teachers Buḏuko and Nanzora teach. In their interviews, they mentioned that one of their teaching strategies is discussions. Therefore, this seating arrangement is suitable for peer discussions in the class. Figure 13 below shows the seating arrangement of the grade 3 classroom.

Figure 13. The seating arrangement in the grade 3 classroom

In one corner of the classroom, there was a display of clay works moulded by the learners. The walls of the classroom were decorated with charts prepared by the teacher. The language used in the charts

was English; only one chart that was about the Kiswahili language was written in Kiswahili. However, these charts were very old and faded, and some were also torn – see Figure 14. The lack of proper charts in the classroom poses a challenge to the learners. In one of my classroom observations, while the students were doing a classroom exercise, I noticed one student asking her group members which way the letter "F" faces. Nobody answered her because they were busy doing their assignments. She checked on the wall where the alphabet chart was, but she could not find it. Since she did not get a response from her group, she moved to another group to ask those students, and finally received some help.

Figure 14. Some of the charts found in the grade 3 classroom

Going on their appearance, it seemed that the charts had been up on the walls for quite a lengthy period of time without being replaced or updated. I asked the teacher about the charts, and he explained that it was the beginning of the year, and he was yet to make new charts. Subsequently, in consultation with the teacher, we managed to involve the learners in developing new charts. This happened two days before the imposed COVID-19 lockdown. The learners, after developing the new charts, were supposed to replace the old ones. However, I was not able to follow-up on this activity since the learners resumed classes in January 2021 while I was preparing to travel back to Stellenbosch University.

Figure 15. Children making learning charts together for their classroom

During my few days of observation in the grade 3 classroom, I noted that the teacher used textbooks as his main resource to teach the children. Most of the textbooks were sufficient for every learner in the class. However, I noticed a lack of textbooks for the learners for one specific subject – there was only one copy for the teacher. He had to move around the classroom with his copy to show the learners what he was teaching. In my few weeks of observation in the classroom, I also noted that the teacher did not use other modes of content delivery apart from the use of the textbooks. The grade 3 teacher relied on these textbooks and would sometimes incorporate role-playing as instructed by the text. Mupa & Chinooneka (2015) and Moulton (1997) contend that the use of textbooks alone does not improve learning; rather, to promote effective learning, their use must incorporate the larger instructional educational system. Research has also shown that creativity learning is important because it is conducive to learning in general – it helps with cognitive development and student achievement, and is also a prediction of academic success (see Eckhoff & Urbach, 2008; Freund & Holling, 2008; Leahy & Sweller, 2008; Rinkevich, 2011). However, Freund and Holling (2008) concluded in their research that despite creativity being a predictor of success, it depends on the teacher's view of creativity and it also varies from one classroom to another.

The interviews with the other lower grade teachers showed that there were instances where the teachers used some forms of multimodal learning. The following are some of the examples that the teachers mentioned in their interviews:

> *In writing ... there is also having outdoor sessions. Children like playing with sand. So, you find*
> *that they get to write freely on the ground. When they need to rub anything, it becomes easy.*

They could write on the ground and then move to their books. Now they have become very keen.

(Nanzora, teacher interview)

The teachers mentioned that they do take the children outside the classroom to learn about the environment. They write on the ground as a way to design meaning as they learn. This is in line with Stein and Newfield's (2006) view that pedagogical environments are semiotic environments. Teachers and students are constantly engaging in reading and sign-making that occur in all learning environments, both in and out of school. The representation of meaning also depends on the available semiotic resources.

When I asked her what the children enjoy most, Teacher Buḍuko gave the following response:

Teacher Buḍuko: Telling stories, singing, singing games they enjoy more … discussions, also the … is it the field trip, do I call them field trips? They go outside the class with their gadgets, they just take pictures, they observe things and then it becomes so interesting. When it comes to that lesson of, "… now today we are going out to the field, and we are going to look at the trees in the school and to take pictures", they feel happy.

Interviewer: OK, so you mentioned gadgets and taking pictures. Do they have cameras?

Teacher Buḍuko: Not the cameras, there are the tablets, the ones that were brought by the government. They can record a video, at that level, they can do it with those things.

From the above extract, it shows that the children enjoy learning more by using multimodality. Teacher Nanzora also expressed the same sentiments when I asked her the same question: "Going for Physical Education, singing, drawing, they enjoy".

The school has other literacy resources available. We also see that, in Teacher Buḍuko's class, she involves the use of the tablets provided by the government. Her learners are exposed to these gadgets at the early stages of their education. Interestingly, Teacher Buḍuko was the only teacher I interviewed who mentioned the use of the tablets in her lessons. The other teachers did not use the school tablets for education. When I asked Teacher Buḍuko why this was so, she gave this response:

The challenge is, now these gadgets came to our schools, but I can say, the ministry assumed we were all digital literate, yeah … They just gave us those things and there was no entry point. So, it is you as the teacher to think about what you can do with that thing.

(Buḍuko, teacher interview)

The availability of tablets in the school could provide a great opportunity for learners to be exposed to other modes of learning, in addition to the school also having an overhead projector to be used in classes. But the teachers not knowing how to use these devices is depriving learners of exposure to learning through different modes. Empirical studies done by Cope & Kalantzis (2015a), Cox (2012),

Gee (2005), Mills (2010), Neumann & Neumann (2017), Rowsell, Saudelli, Scott, & Bishop (2013), and Simpson, Walsh, & Rowsell (2013) show that the availability of digital technologies plays a significant role in learners' multiliteracies development. However, this study highlights a particular issue in that, unless teachers are digitally literate, the learners in the Tana River community will still be deprived of digital literacy in schools. This is similar to findings by Olesova, Yang, & Richardson (2011) who assert that when teachers lack background experience and adequate technology skills for online learning, it becomes a constraint to online education. Therefore, the availability of digital resources in schools does not necessarily encourage multiliteracies (Prinsloo & Walton, 2008).

Figure 16. Children making things out of clay

Another salient observation from the study is that, besides the home not providing the children with storybooks, the school also does not provide these resources for them. In the grade 3 classroom, the only books available were the coursebooks. One of the teachers also mentioned the lack of sufficient storybooks in the school:

> *Interviewer: What would you like to be assisted to become a better teacher?*

> *Teacher Nanzora: If we would get some storybooks, they would help in developing the children's language.*

> *Interviewer: Don't you have storybooks at school?*

> *Teacher Nanzora: There are not many; there are in those books that they give us. For example, in the program on 'TUSOME', you get the teachers' guide together with the student*

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book where there are stories in them. But you know there should be at least some supplementary storybooks of which the children can use, but they are not enough.

In the above interview excerpt, we see that Teacher Nanzora is requesting that the school be provided with storybooks to help the learners' language development. While I was conducting the written narratives with the learners, the children confessed to not reading storybooks at school. But after conducting my school observation, I realized that the school indeed has storybooks in the bookstore, but these are not used. When I asked the teacher in charge, he attested that the storybooks are there, but the teachers do not come to borrow them for use in their classes. I also noted that some of the Pokomo storybooks that were distributed in the school many years ago are still new – a sign that these books are simply on display in the bookstore and are not given to the learners to read.

Figure 17. A selection of the storybooks in the bookstore

The storybooks that were in the bookstore were for learners from grade 1 up to standard 8. These storybooks were available in English, Kiswahili, and Kipfokomu. The books looked unused and dusty, however, I noticed a few book sets that looked used. These sets were for learners at advanced levels, and they seemed to be used by the upper primary classes.

Figure 18. The storybook section in the bookstore

There is evidence that the school administration is indeed providing storybooks for the learners, but it appears that the teachers are not making these resources available to the children. I asked some of the other teachers in the school why the books in the store are not in use; they gave the following responses:

> *The storekeeper allows us to borrow books and return them within a week. That time is not enough for the learners since we also must teach other subjects. Also, a library lesson is once a week – 30 minutes a week is not enough. I wish the storekeeper would allow us to stay with the books for one month if not for the whole term. Again, why the weekly borrowing does not work for me is that whenever you want to go and borrow the books, sometimes the storekeeper is not around: maybe he is in the class teaching, or he is busy with other commitments. So, it does not work for me. That is why I gave up on using those books.*
>
> (Teacher X, informal interview)

> *The children are very careless with the books: you give them the books to read during their free time, they end up losing them. So, as a teacher, I make follow up to get the books, but I do not retrieve all of them. I am blamed for lost books. So, it is a challenge.*
>
> (Teacher Y, informal interview)

> *Some of the students steal the storybooks when they are asked to go and clean the bookstore. While the teachers are trying to help the pupils, they end up disappointing them. So, sometimes the storekeeper becomes hard on the teachers.*
>
> (Teacher Z, informal interview)

However, the responses from the teachers of the lower grades were different from those of the other teachers. The teachers of the lower grades indicated that they were not aware that the school had storybooks for their learners.

The school also does not lend books directly to the children: books are borrowed from the bookstore by the teachers. Therefore, when the teachers do not go to sign for the books, the children are denied their right to access them. The teachers of the lower grades indicated that they were not aware that some of the storybooks available in the school were also meant for their learners. Consequently, the learners tend to believe that reading is for passing exams because they only have access to the coursebook in the classroom. If they had access to the stories both at home and at school, perhaps their perception of reading would change.

6.3.5   Availability of literacy resources for children at home

To promote children's learning, there must be available resources for these learners. A home that provides resources captivates the interests of the children to read and develop literacy. In the data that I have collected, it is evident that in the homes of the child participants, there are insufficient literacy resources available to them. They mentioned that at home they read the Bible and schoolbooks. They mentioned reading coursebooks like English, Hygiene, and Christian Religious Education books. However, only one student – Hasango – mentioned reading for leisure. She has different sources of literacy available in her home. I will discuss Hasango's literacy practices later in this section. It seems that the students' understanding of reading is to read only for exams. This is not an exceptional case, as other studies have shown that students primarily read to improve their academic performance (see, e.g., Haese et al., 2018; Majid et al., 2017; Majid & Tan., 2007). For example, the study done in South Africa by Haese et al. (2018) revealed that participants did not have books to read for leisure at their homes but only read schoolbooks.

Most of the parents agreed that reading at home is important as it creates a link between home and school. When I asked the parents, "Where are the children supposed to read: at home or school?", I received the following responses from some:

> *I do not know what someone who is not a teacher would say … I do not know. But you see, most times, what the child does at home interlinks with what she learns at school. I mean, mostly whatever she is being taught at school is what she comes to practice at home. As a parent, you may not know that this is what they are being taught at school. And I can say this is true because I have never laid a hand on the CBC syllabus, but I am confident that whatever they do at home is the extension of whatever they learn at school. So, it is very true that … whatever we do at home complements quite a lot to their schoolwork, so it keeps the child busy throughout the day.*

<p style="text-align:right">(Ḓambala, parent interview)</p>

Ḓambala, who is a guardian to Hasango, is aware that whatever a child does at home is an extension of what they have been taught at school, and whatever they do at home also complements the child's education. In his explanation, Ḓambala not only referred to reading but also to the home activities. The same thoughts were expressed by Hasango's mother when I asked her the same question:

> *School and home, because when she is taught at school, she must practice at home. The practice that she does at home is what enables her to understand what she is taught at school. It is like a link that connects to the home literacy that would make her understand what she does at school.*

<p style="text-align:right">(Haḓula, parent interview)</p>

Both Ḓambala and Haḓula have teaching backgrounds. Ḓambala is a retired teacher and Haḓula is currently a teacher in one of the primary schools in the region. Both understand the importance of providing literacy resources to the learners at home. In addition, Ḓambala is aware that the children need to be guided at home on what to read and what not to read – he views this as a role of a parent, as shown in his response below:

> *Yeah, for example ... you can see that at times she may take books, which she will not understand what she may be reading. Because the most important part of reading is to read to understand the content. But when you see the book is so advanced, the material, she cannot tell what she is reading – that is beyond her scope. So, you guide her on areas that are as per her level as possible.*

<p style="text-align:right">(Ḓambala, parent interview)</p>

According to the Ḓambala's views, it seems that his child is exposed to a variety of literacy resources in the home. Ḓambala, being an adult, understands that he needs to guide his child to read the books that are at her level of understanding. The parent and the guardian of Hasango, being learned, also understand the importance of literacy development in children. This connects to studies done by Donkor et al. (2012) and Lemmer & van Wyk (2004) who associate a higher level of education in parents with more parental involvement in their children's education. Furthermore, Ḓambala acknowledges that the goal of reading is to understand the content and not just reading for the sake of reading. He goes further by giving the following example:

> *She reads anything she comes across: newspapers, sometimes magazines. Provided the language used is at the lowest level possible, not difficult language for her to understand. One such very good example is the book we use when we are doing prayers. She reads very fluently and many times she understands what she is reading. She can tell you what exactly is being discussed or what is being talked about.*

<p style="text-align:right">(Ḓambala, parent interview)</p>

This family normally has daily prayer sessions, and each member of the family has one or more specific days where they lead these sessions. I was invited to and attended some of their family

devotions on the days when Hasango was leading these prayer sessions. She was given a section of a book and the Bible to read. In my assessment, she read the texts very fluently which were written in English and Kipfokomu, respectively. According to her level of education, Hasango's reading was excellent. In some areas where she experienced difficulty with words, she was assisted by her guardian. After her reading, she explained a bit of what she had read and then handed the books over to her grandfather to continue sharing. As we see here in Hasango's case, children are encouraged to involve themselves in home literacy activities when they see their parents involved in literacy activities (Baroody & Diamond, 2012; Stubbe & Tarreli, 2009).

In this family, there is a culture of reading. Apart from the daily devotions, Hasango's guardian also likes to read for leisure. The few times I visited the family, I found Ḍambala reading or having just finished his reading. Next to his sitting place, I would find some books. He confirmed the same in my interview with him, as indicated below:

> *Rehema: Do you read with your child at home?*
>
> *Ḍambala: Yes, sometimes I do, especially during sessions of prayers. I always make sure she is seated close to me.*
>
> *Rehema: What about you? Do you read alone at home?*
>
> *Ḍambala: I am actually from reading. I like reading. You know, being a teacher, it becomes part of you. I read every day.*

Ḍambala likes reading for leisure and also likes reading in front of his grandchildren. Parents who enjoy reading for leisure tend to involve their children in literacy practices (M. Brown et al., 2013; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). Several times I saw Hasango reading using either his grandfather's smartphone or a book. Apart from printed texts, Hasango is also exposed to different modes of literacy. For example, in the house, there is a television set on which she usually watches children's programs and movies. She is also exposed to the use of smartphones that she uses to communicate with her mother, who stays in a different village, and her elder brother, who is studying outside the county. Below is part of my interview with Hasango:

> *Rehema: What do you do with phones?*
>
> *Hasango: For example, when I take my grandmother's phone, and if I miss my mother, I send a message to her asking her to call me. I could also call her or at times ask her to come to pick me up. I also call my brother whenever I miss him.*
>
> *Rehema: What else? What other things do you do with the phones?*
>
> *Hasango: Mmmh, if it's my mother's phone, I look for some games and play.*
>
> *Rehema: What else do you do with a phone?*
>
> *Hasango: I look for stories, I listen to music and sometimes I use my grandfather's phone to do schoolwork.*

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Rehema: Where do you get the stories from?

Hasango: E-KITABU. My mother's phone has a project that has some storybooks.

Rehema: What else do you do with her phone?

Hasango: I listen to music, and I watch YouTube.

Rehema: YouTube, what do you watch on YouTube?

Hasango: Cartoon.

We see above that Hasango is given phones by relatives to interact with. There are several things that she does with the phones that are for educational purposes as well as entertainment. During the interview with her mother, I inquired more about the stories that her daughter had mentioned. She showed me a tablet that has an educational application called "E-KITABU" installed. This application contained softcopies of several stories written in English and Kiswahili, as well as other learning subjects. Some schools in the area, including Tsana Primary School, are beneficiaries of an NGO-funded project that promotes literacy in schools. The school has education tablets and an overhead projector for learning purposes. Haḍula, Hasango's mother, is one of the custodians of the tablets in her school, and she lets her daughter use it to read stories. Haḍula said the following about the tablet:

> *In the tablet, inside there we have some reading materials; we also have textbooks. There are storybooks of which she just opens to read what suits her, like the storybooks. She just reads anytime when she feels like it. Not necessarily that she reads for any exams.*

(Haḍula, parent interview)

Having all these resources available to her in her home, Hasango not only reads fluently in all three languages, but she is also creative in writing. She was among the students that I engaged in narrative story writing (see Chapter 8, sections 8.6.2 and 8.6.3 for more information). She wrote very interesting stories in different genres, and was the only student who had the confidence to write her stories in English. Hasango's circumstances seem to suggest that children who come from homes with rich literacy environments have more opportunities to engage in and with diverse and complex language (Kim et al., 2015). I later asked her where she gets the ideas to write her stories. She responded by saying that she gets the ideas from the cartoons that she watches as well as the stories that she reads. She said that she tries to remember an interesting story that she had read before and writes it down. In her case, it is evident that home literacy is important as it improves the children's literacy skills and links to school literacy. There is an extensive body of work that supports the claim that literacy practices and the home literacy environment have a strong influence on a child's language and literacy development (e.g., Baker, 2014; Baroody & Diamond, 2016; Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Eleni Zgourou, 2018; Gonzalez, 2013; Kim et al., 2015; Mendive et al., 2017; Weigel et al., 2010).
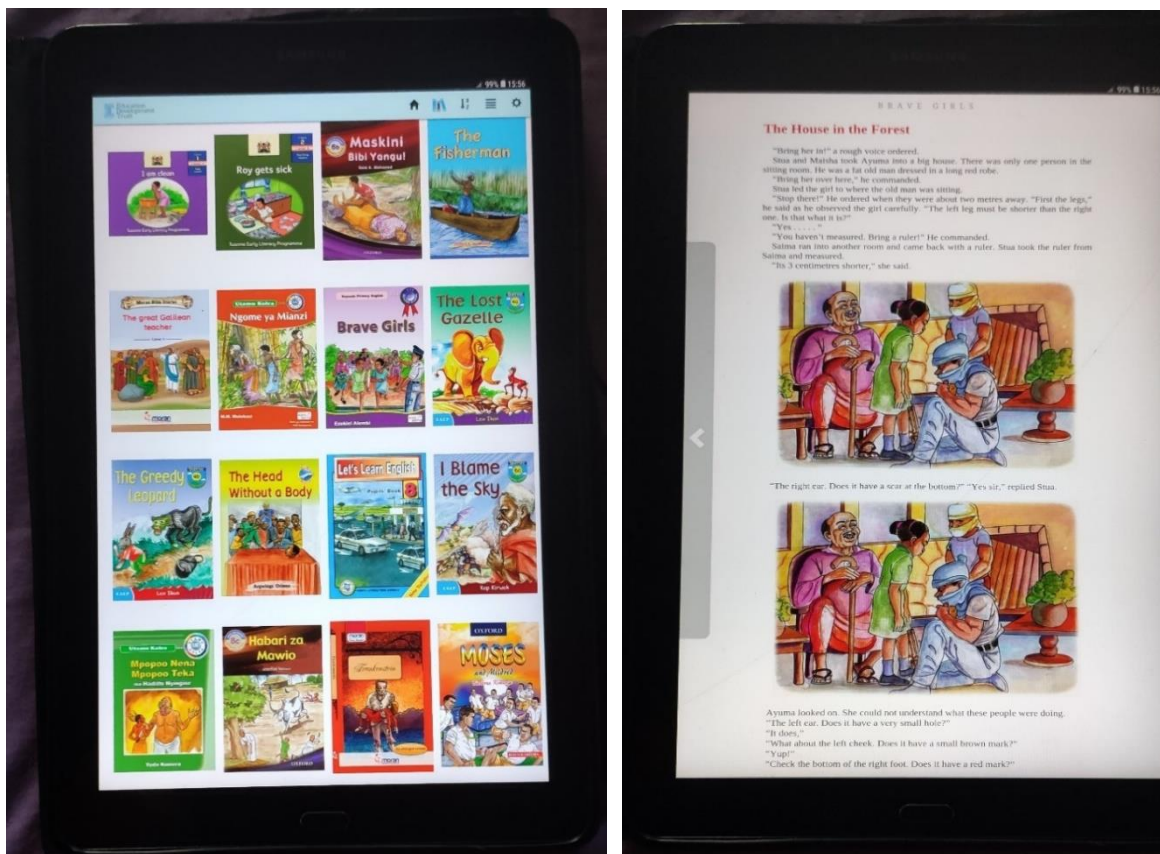
Figure 8. Images of Hasango's mother's tablet containing softcopy stories

It is important to note that not all the children in the county are lucky enough to have such resources as Hasango. Bonaya is a student who is representative of most of the Tana River County children. He comes from a house where there is no television or smartphones. Some of these students have limited access to their parents' phones, which are often not smartphones. Some students like Nagheya and Bonaya stated that they are not given a chance to use their parents' phones. The following is part of an interview with Bonaya about the use of phones:

> *Rehema: Does your mother have a phone?*
> *Bonaya: Yes.*
> *Rehema: Do you use it?*
> *Bonaya: I only use it to transfer money or paying the D-light[31].*
> *Rehema: So how do you transfer money? Via M-Pesa[32]?*
> *Bonaya: Yes.*
> *Rehema: How about D-light? How do you pay for it?*

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31 D-Light is solar company that manufactures and supplies solar lanterns and power system products.

32 A mobile phone money transfer system in Kenya.

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Bonaya: I go to the 'Lipa na M-Pesa'[33] *menu, I insert the business number, then the account number, I enter the amount of money, but then my mother inserts her PIN.*

Rehema: Ooh, do you use it to send messages?

Bonaya: No. My mother does not allow me to play with her phone.

Bonaya, as mentioned above, uses his mother's phone for payment transactions for a prepaid solar service. We see that he helps his mother to perform the transactions since she is not literate. However, that is the only thing he does with the phone. His mother does not allow him to use the phone to communicate. I asked Bonaya's mother why she does not allow him to send a text message using her phone. She responded by saying that the boy does not know how to send a text message. However, that contradicts Bonaya's opinion. Further along in my interview with him, Bonaya said that "Sending a message is easy – don't I know how to read and write? It is just that Mother doesn't allow me to play with her phone". So, we see here that the child is denied the opportunity to explore his parent's phone. In addition, this family does not own a television where the children could learn through watching television. The household owns a radio that they use to listen to music and radio programs, including children's programs. The following is what Bonaya's mother had to say about the radio and television:

> *Yes, we have a radio. Perhaps they could listen to some programs. If they want to watch TV, they would say, "Mama please allow us to go and watch because there are some programs meant for kids". Perhaps if I also go to a neighbour and see some helpful information for my children, I then tell them to go to the neighbour and watch so that they don't miss out on some lessons.*

(Habwoya, parent interview)

In Bonaya's home, if the children want to watch television, they go to the neighbours who have one. During the COVID-19 lockdown, there were education programs that aired on specific television channels for primary and secondary school learners. Bonaya's mother was referring to these programs that she did not want her children to miss out on. However, not all the children of Tana River County got the opportunity to watch these programs due to the high level of poverty in the area, with most families not owning television sets.

6.4   Conclusion

This chapter has presented the context and the findings of this study which sought to establish the literacy practices in and out of school in multilingual Tana River County. The findings show that the LiEP is not implemented in school even when Kipfokomu and Kiswahili are the learners' languages of communication both at home and school. Teachers still prefer using English as the LoI; the MT is only used to explain difficult concepts that cannot be explained clearly in Kiswahili. The findings

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33 A Swahili phrase which means 'Pay with M-Pesa'.

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also show that, despite the school having MTE resource books, these books are not in use in the classrooms. The only resources available in the classrooms are textbooks written in English. The learners are therefore denied the opportunity to learn educational content in their language – a language they understand and in which they can learn better.

This study shows that the language policy has an important gap that needs to be filled. The policy states that the MT is to be used in school foundation phases, however, the new CBC does not clearly emphasize the policy that MTs should be the LoI from pre-primary to grade 3 and then transition to English from grade 4 onwards, as it was in the former curriculum. Additionally, all testing is done in English. This current policy murkiness therefore disempowers the teacher because the system does not make it easy for them to incorporate the MT in the classroom. This is a multilayered problem: teachers do not implement the policy, and the policy and the curriculum do not make it easy for these teachers to implement said policy in their classrooms. The system is confusing for the teachers, as they do not know what to do with the policy. The examples provided clearly show that the school is a space in which the individual's resources are not valued. Individuals become deficient, inarticulate, silent, or powerless when they move from a space where linguistic resources are valued and recognized to a space where they are not (Blommaert, 2007). Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck (2005, p. 198) explain that "multilingualism is not what individuals have or don't have, but the environment, as structured determinations and interactional emergence, enables and disables". The current curriculum does not value and appreciate the LiEP and the linguistic resources of the students. Therefore, it ultimately disempowers the teachers and learners.

The results have also shown that there is minimal parental involvement in the children's learning. Teachers have complained about parents not helping their children with homework as they should. Some teachers have resorted to finding ways for the learners to complete their homework without help from parents. Teachers also complained that parents do not provide the basic learning resources for their children when the government has delayed in providing said resources. One of the reasons for this is that some parents claim that education is free, and they should not be asked to purchase any materials. However, there is a need for the parents to be sensitized and made aware of the importance of their participation in their children's learning processes, as proposed by one of the teachers.

The findings also show that most of the children do not have literacy resources in their homes. Learners only read the Bible and schoolbooks; they do not read storybooks, and this is no different in the classroom. Learners only interact with the school textbooks despite having storybooks available in the school. The teachers of the lower school grades were aware of the availability of the storybooks but claimed not to know that there were also storybooks for their learners. The learners only read in

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preparation for exams and do not read for entertainment, however, there are indeed some homes which are rich in literacy resources.

The school has different literacy resources available for the learners. It also has digital resources that could be used in multiliteracies. However, there is minimal evidence of the use of multimodal teaching approaches in the school. The government and other educational stakeholders may have provided the school with some teaching aids to enhance multimodal designs, but most of the teachers are not making use of these devices. The reason for this is these teachers' lack of digital knowledge, in the case of the tablets. The few teachers who already use these devices in their lessons could also offer some training to the other teachers who are interested in learning how to use them. However, there are various other ways, outside the realm of digital resources, of using multiliteracies in delivering educational content to learners, which is currently only very minimally used by the teachers.

CHAPTER 7: LOCAL LANGUAGES AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

7.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I described the context of Tsana Village and discussed the status quo of literacies and linguistic practices in the school and homes. This chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis which mainly concern how the community uses local languages and local knowledge, as opposed to the previous chapter which showed the dominance of English and written modes of communication. The data for this chapter is thus drawn from a variety of sources which include observations of various activities such as cultural creative dance, interviews, and linguistic landscape data sources. I highlight the point in this chapter that these insertions of other modalities and local knowledge and languages are acts of linguistic citizenship. This point will be elaborated on with various examples, the first being the example of Teacher Ḍuḍa, who first made me aware of these acts of linguistic citizenship. Through what I observed from him, it made me more attentive in my data to spaces where language and knowledge were thought "otherwise" (Stroud, 2015). I thus begin this chapter with Teacher Ḍuḍa. I then refer to other instances in the community where I have found the reinsertion of voice, agency, and the recuperation of local ways of doing.

7.2 Teacher Ḍuḍa performing acts of linguistic citizenship

I first started interacting with Teacher Ḍuḍa when I attended a drama festival as part of my observations of the school. The drama festivals in Kenya are part of the Ministry of Education's calendar of events through the arts and co-curricular activities. Since its inception in 1959, the festivals have been used as a platform for learners to exhibit their talents. The drama festivals involve all the learning institutions, from pre-primary schools through to universities. The goal of the drama festivals is to tap into and nurture the artistic talents of Kenyan learners across all levels of learning by providing opportunities for self-expression and actualization (Ministry of Education: State Department of Basic Education, 2018).

The cultural creative dance that I watched was performed on 11 March 2020. It was performed by 30 students (15 girls and 15 boys) and lasted for about 10 minutes. The dance had four characters: Mother; Bingwa, Mother's son; and Meta, her daughter. These two children are in the same class at school, and Teacher, the fourth character, is the children's mathematics teacher at school. The cultural creative dance consisted of three scenes: the home, the school, and the art competition.

The drama made use of a "multimodal assemblage" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001) to communicate its message about children having various talents and about the importance of the parent in the

education of their children. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) define multimodal assemblage as the representation of more than one mode combined to communicate the meaning of a message. The different parts of meaning are carried differently by the different modes. This means that the meaning of the message is distributed across all the different modes and may not necessarily be disseminated evenly. Therefore, one mode may carry a partial meaning of the whole message (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). A multimodal assemblage also depends on the social context, the technology available, the availability of modes and affordances, and the agency of an individual. Some of the meaning-making resources that made up the multimodal assemblage were the costumes and décor. The mothers were dressed in cultural attire suitable for dancing that has a fabric belt on their waists. The belts are important to aid in the dancing and to resonate with the Pokomo culture. The backdrop of the dance was of traditional houses made from mud walls and grass-thatched roofs. Traditional instruments were played including drums, a wooden xylophone called *miiri*, a flute, shakers, a whistle, and a bell. Kipfokomu was also used all through the dance in the song dialogues between the characters. In addition, there was a part where the Pokomo cultural dance, *Kitoko*, was also performed. The *kitoko* dance is usually performed when there are celebrations.

All through the dance, the modes of conveying the message were through the songs, choreographed movements, and body gestures. These body movements and gestures denoted different meanings, and were presented in such a way that even if someone were not a speaker of the language, they would still understand the message conveyed through the gestures. This was also taken into consideration for the audiences with special needs. The use of Kipfokomu in the dance was striking to me, as it is a language not used in classroom spaces. I asked the drama teacher, Teacher Ḍuḍa, why he used Pokomo songs only, and below is his response:

> *You know when you are doing drama, particularly for a competition that is based for Kenya Film and Drama Festivals, we go by the rules from the Kenya Film and Drama Festivals. So, the rules are very clear, that it must be a cultural dance. Though now this is a cultural creative dance. So, there is creativity. So, it is a drama dance, but it must have a cultural source. So, the Pokomo songs are giving it the source, the cultural source, the Pokomo drums, the Pokomo instruments, and anything that you see in the performance, that is in Pokomo, it is carrying the cultural weight in it. It is giving it a source.*
>
> (Ḍuḍa, drama teacher interview)

We see that the use of indigenous languages is appreciated in co-curricular activities such as in the cultural creative dance, although it is absent from the classroom. In the dramatic arts, it is a requirement that needs to be observed because it is one way to promote and preserve the cultural diversity of the country.

We see that local knowledge is incorporated into the message of the dance by the use of traditional instruments, costumes, and songs. All the characters wore different costumes that represented the roles they were playing, i.e., students, mothers, teachers, and the writing boards which were also represented by characters. Throughout the dance, audio and gestural modes of communication were used, and the music and songs were used to convey the different messages. In other words, different "modal affordances" were used in the dance. Modal affordances refer to the fact that different modes offer different potentialities and constraints for meaning-making (Jewitt et al., 2016; Kress, 2010). That is, the resource of a mode is used to represent or communicate easily what is less straightforward. The complex concept of affordance is connected to both the cultural and material, historical and social use of a mode (Carey Jewitt, 2013). Therefore, a modal affordance is shaped by how a mode has been used repeatedly and with ease to mean and do the social principles that inform its use in context. For instance, in the dance, the music would change from fast to slow or from loud to soft to suit the mood portrayed at a specific point. Where there was a sombre mood, the music would be played slower and softer, and when the mood was a happy one, the instruments would be played faster and louder. In this context, the instrumentation communicated the mood better than any other mode at that specific point in time. All the songs conveyed different messages. In addition, since it was a dramatized dance, there was dancing and a lot of holistic gestures of movement that were a vital part of the cultural creative dance. All these modes of communication used in the dance carried across important meaning to the audience.

I asked Teacher Ḍuḍa what the importance was of incorporating all these modes of communication into the dance. This was his response:

> *You know, one can communicate in several ways, apart from speaking: one can also do the gestures, that is body language, it's also a language in drama. It also gives a message. You know even the SNEs[34], those children who need special care have to also get the message. Even if they are there but they cannot hear the words, they have to get the message. So, when they observe, they get the message from it. Sometimes you don't get the words properly because one is dancing and also others are singing, but the diction is normally swallowed. So, they understand through body language.*

<div align="right">(Ḍuḍa, drama teacher interview)</div>

Teacher Ḍuḍa not only uses multimodal learning in the drama dance but also applies the same in his teaching. For instance, he mentioned the following in his interview:

> *Teacher Ḍuḍa: I normally use a wide range of teaching methods or approaches. Storytelling is a great teaching method that I use when I am teaching. Also, dramatization. It's not only that I train, and I narrate stories and do poems, but also I apply that in my classwork. So apart from the dramatization, the poems, storytelling, I normally give my learners chances to*

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34 Special Needs Education, which is the type of education that caters for children with special needs.

go and discover and then come to discuss in the classroom. That one is another approach of discussion ... yeah.

Interviewer: So, what are the methods that you think the children enjoy most?

Teacher Ḍuḍa: The children enjoy storytelling a lot, then dramatization. In dramatization, they are going to take part, but they are going to enjoy. Through storytelling and dramatization, it brings a real picture of what was happening those days, especially when learning about social studies. In fact, I use storytelling in most of my lessons.

Interviewer: Okay, do you also bring what is happening outside the school?

Teacher Ḍuḍa: Yeah, they bring to school what they learned from the village. They in fact ... in some of the things you only give them the instructions and they come up with the ideas of what is happening out there, and they play, they dramatize.

<div align="right">(Ḍuḍa, drama teacher interview)</div>

Teacher Ḍuḍa incorporates his other skills in his classes. He includes dramatization while delivering classroom lessons. We see that he allows his learners to integrate what they have learned following exposure with the world around them by the use of multimodality. As they come to present in class, the teacher gives feedback. The provision of feedback is in line with Gee's (2005) opinion that feedback helps learners stay engaged with and be informed on their progress, which reinforces what has been learned. One of the aims of multiliteracies is to create a bridge between home literacies and school literacies, which is important in drawing on learner's "funds of knowledge" to enrich the school literacies that they acquire. Funds of knowledge are defined by Moll et al. (1992, p. 132) as "the knowledge and skills found in local households". For learners to be fully engaged in a subject, they need to be situated in their everyday lives and to be able to relate to the learning material (Daniels, 2016). Teacher Ḍuḍa confirms that the children enjoy the dramatization, and it helps them improve their imagination. He also added that "the dramatization helps them to remember; they don't forget".

The use of different modes inspires the learners to develop a more flexible approach to learning (Hazari, 2004). Learning content presented in a variety of modes helps learners perceive that learning is easy and can improve their attention, thereby improving learning, especially in the poorer performing students (Chen & Fu., 2003; Moreno & Mayer, 2007). Furthermore, Fadel (2008) states that "students who learn through multimodal designs tend to perform better than those who learn using the traditional way of using a single mode".

In addition, the dance affords the teacher the opportunity to combine multiple modes. As I learned from my continued observations of the dance rehearsal sessions, the students are not free to do anything they want to in the dance. The children usually train in the evenings during the co-curricular activity sessions and sometimes over the weekends. The trainers include the choreographer, the voice coach, and Teacher Ḍuḍa, with the latter coordinating all the elements of the drama dance. During my observation, I noted

that, even though there are glimpses of "utopic" potential in the drama performances for rethinking language, learning, and modalities, there are also slippages back into the same kinds of discourses that the dance play seems to counter. The concept of "Utopia" is defined by Anderson (2002, cited in Stroud & Williams, 2017) as "the better way of living that is foreshadowed in the present". Since the world is ever-changing and unfinished, there are different ways and forms in which it can *become*, "and those forms are present in alternative ways of thinking, living and talking *now* as they have been *historically*" (Anderson, 2002, p. 694 original emphasis). Whereas the multimodal creative methods are emphasized, from my observations of the rehearsals, it seems as if the learners themselves are not given all that much opportunity for agency. Van Lier (2008) defines "agency" as "an individual's capacity to act within a given context". Student agency is further defined by Sharma (2008) as learners taking critical initiatives to influence the learning direction and outcomes of the classroom dialogues. In the dance, the children must follow the script and themes set by the teachers. The teachers are more knowledgeable, and the learners are considered to have nothing to contribute to the dance play.

After observing the drama performance, I was interested in learning more about Teacher Ḍuḍa. I found out through interviewing him that he has been spearheading the writing of Pokomo folktales. He has written several of them, and one of them, entitled *Nyuni jwa Rhikimo* ('The bird of Rhikimo'; see Appendix 10), has been recorded in audio format and circulated through social media where it is easily shared with the larger community. I asked Teacher Ḍuḍa why he created these stories in Kipfokomu and not in any other language, and he responded as follows:

> *The folktales, about the folktales I have written several of them, only that I … I've never had that time to go and record them. But it's my wish that I will get the time to go and record. And the very reason that pushed me to do so is that I teach drama, and I came to realize that the children do not know Kipfokomu. They don't know their mother tongue. They don't know anything. They think that the way people are living today is how they used to live very many years ago. They think everything was modernized as today.*

(Ḍuḍa, drama teacher interview)

Teacher Ḍuḍa's motivation to compose these stories in Kipfokomu was to teach the children the language, as he realized that the children do not know their MT or the vocabularies of their language. Brown (2021) states that we need to acknowledge that losing such vocabularies means that we are also losing the capacity to read and understand the world around us and the ecological system that we rely on for our sustenance. Teacher Ḍuḍa adds that:

Yeah, the culture is fading. The Pokomo culture is going. They don't know anything about the Pokomo culture. That's why I've decided to do the stories, and, in my stories, I want to bring in now the Pokomo culture. That's why I did that "Nyuni jwa Rhikimo" story specifically. I wanted them to know where the original Pokomo people used to cultivate. And what kind of crop they used to grow, the challenges they were facing when they were doing that particular activity of growing rice. I also wanted them to know that Pokomo people settled near the river, particularly River Tana. I wanted them to understand the Pokomo dances. If you listen to that narrative properly, some songs have flavoured that story. Those are Pokomo songs. I wanted people to know them because they are also going. I also wanted them to know the kind … the means, the different means of … that they used to cross the river. Those days there were no footbridges. I wanted them to know the methods that they used to treat sick people those days. Also, I brought the "wagangana" (herbalists). Yeah, I wanted them to understand that. That those days, there were no hospitals, and the witchdoctors and herbalists and traditional doctors were responsible for treating sick people. Then again, I wanted them to understand the performance procedures after one dies. The Pokomo procedures. And again, my targeted audience was not only children but also adults who do not know the Pokomo culture. But for the children, they will be entertained. They'll get the story, they'll think that it was … it is a true story but for the adults, at least they get the points … "Ooh! So, things were like that?" That is why the second narrative I want to record is called "Babel".

(Ḍuḍa, drama teacher interview)

From the above sentiments, Teacher Ḍuḍa's intention with his narration of these folktales is to teach the community about the Pokomo culture that is being lost. Through the various processes of both colonization and globalization, there are aspects of Pokomo heritage that the teacher feels needs to be regained. In other indigenous contexts, linguistic loss seems also to lead to a decline in indigenous natural-based livelihoods, and consequently, to a loss of traditional environmental knowledge (Loh & Harmon, 2014). If indigenous knowledge and language are not passed on to the next generations, it may ultimately lead to local habitants becoming strangers in their own lands (Cloete, 2015). To preserve indigenous knowledge, it was conventional for the elders to pass this knowledge on to the younger generations through subsistence activities such as harvesting sites, fishing grounds, and traditional hunting, rather than in the classroom (Hunn, 2002; Wilder et al., 2016). However, with the rapid development of digital technology, the oral transmission of local knowledge has shifted dramatically from the elders to modern technology (Wilder et al., 2016). Therefore, through his narratives, Teacher Ḍuḍa wants to keep the culture alive through his works of literature and the audio formats of his stories

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shared via social media platforms. In doing so, the children get to learn their history. He also mentioned that it is not only the children who do not have the original picture of the Pokomo traditions but also some adults as well. The local knowledge is passed on to the audience using Pokomo language in the stories that make them more authentic when explaining the culture. Decolonial theorists Walter and Walsh (2018) assert that "our task is to update the words of the ancestors for the new generations, to make them accessible to children (in stories, tales, riddles, and other forms), and to continue the work of the elders by planting seeds of ancestral knowledge and collective memory" (p. 93). One could say that Teacher Ḍuḍa is trying to sow the seeds of indigenous knowledge.

Figure 19. Pokomo people peforming a traditional dance. Photograph by National Museums of Kenya

Figure 20. Tana River residents crossing the river using canoes. Photograph taken by Alphonse Gari, The Star news

During my stay there, I observed that local knowledge was found in other areas within the village. There was a specific instance where I had an itchy throat and I feared that I might have contracted COVID-19. I talked about this with my host, an elderly man, who asked me not to visit the hospital first as he was going to find some traditional medicine that would cure throat and other chest infections. Later in the day, he brought a traditional herbalist to visit me, with the latter dispensing some of the herbal medicine and advising me on how to use them. I followed the instructions and my throat infection disappeared within a day. In addition, this traditional herbalist also helped a pregnant woman in the neighbourhood whose pregnancy was mired by some complications. It is worth acknowledging that not everyone in the village trusts traditional herbal medicine; others would prefer to go to the hospital within the village. Nevertheless, indigenous scientific knowledge "is in many ways complementary to the academic science or citizen science and not contradictory or redundant with them" (Wilder et al., 2016, p. 500). And although there is a sense of loss of traditional cultural

values, I saw people in action using their knowledge systems in complementary ways with Northern/Western knowledge systems and ways of doing. In the following sections, I will talk about these other observations that I made within the community.

Figure 21. Traditional herbs for throat and chest infections called *msafaradyi* in Kipfokomu

Figure 22. One of the processes of making herbal medicine

7.3 Village announcements in Kipfokomu

In Tsana Village, important messages are passed on through verbal communication in Kipfokomu. This has been, and continues to be, the quickest way of communicating messages to many people. The village headman usually goes around the village passing along messages by word of mouth. These announcements are transmitted very early in the morning or in the evening when the village is quiet. For instance, messages on COVID-19 pandemic awareness were given in the Pokomo languages in the villages through public announcements and were circulated through social media using a verbal message:

> Wewe mwana jwa Tsana, wiye kutumiani Mugoka, yatsana nao. Kwakwamba huo mukogaa wokuyawani kuye, kudzi kwamba ugijwani mikono myenga? Natsaka ukipate, funguya masikio usikiiye. Wewe kama kusikiye nishauri yako na huyu Muungu jwako. Utsekudza kwamba nkukwambijwa! Mugokaa, tembo ḍya kukaa hadharahadhara, kukaa vikundi vikundi kunwa, viyatseni! Koro hu ujwazi unakudza na mpepfo, na kumgija mwenziwo! Haṭa ni mukaziwo, ukiyawa safari nawa nguzi, nkudzomumpe mukono maana yakwe si rafikijo kawi! Ni muntu ambaye haṭa pia anawezakuwa mushukiwa jwa huu ujwazi! Kwa hivyo,

nakumwambiayani mumamaṯe. Hangu hii nsiku ya yeo nkudzosindiiye, wewe muntu jwa Tsana! Sisindiiye! Ikwakwamba wewe nkukoyowani TV, enda ukayowe namuna ya huu julimwengu juivyo kuhendekani. Kwa hivyo mambo ya kukaa kaa viṯuuṯuu viyatseni!

People of Tsana Village who take "khat", stop using it because the "khat" comes from very far and you don't know how many people have touched it. I want you to listen carefully: whoever has ears, let them hear. If you do not listen it will be your problem and your god. Never say that you were never told. Taking "khat" and drinking alcohol in gatherings must stop! This disease is airborne and spreads by touching one another. When you've traveled and returned home, go and wash your hands first before greeting people. Not even your wife! Everyone is a suspect for this disease. Therefore, I am telling you this to reflect – do not be stubborn. If you do not watch TV, go and watch and see how the world has changed. Stop all those gatherings!

(Tsana Village announcement)

Other ways in which awareness of the virus spread across the village was through posters written in Kipfokomu, as well as WhatsApp voicenotes that circulated in the county. These voicenotes elaborated on the possible ways of contracting COVID-19 and precautionary measures to be taken to protect oneself from the virus. During the pandemic, the use of Pokomo for awareness creation came to life, whereas before it was only used for verbal communication in the villages and church.

Figure 23. A COVID-19 awareness poster written in Kipfokomu

Figure 24. A Pokomo woman reading the COVID-19 poster. Photograph by S. Falama

In Tsana Village, announcements are usually made in Kipfokomu. The village meetings, or *baraza*, are conducted in Kipfokomu. During these *baraza*, discussions about civil education, health awareness, community development projects, and other important agendas always take place in the local MT. Since the village is mainly comprised of Pokomo residents, there is a preference for using the native language. Kiswahili is used in rare situations when non-Pokomo speakers are invited to deliver important messages to the community members.

It is worth noting that similar ways of language use are also apparent in other places in Kenya. For examples, the Sheng language is used to communicate important public announcements. Sheng is a hybrid language of mixed vocabularies from Kiswahili, English, and other local languages, and is mostly used by the younger generations. Although Sheng is not commonly used in Tana River County, it mostly appears in public communication such as posters, radio, and television announcements. For instance, the COVID-19 poster in Figure 25 below is written in Sheng, a language that is not commonly used in rural areas (Banda & Oketch, 2011).

Figure 25. A COVID-19 poster written in Sheng

7.4 Linguistic landscapes in local languages

7.4.1 Linguistic artifacts and linguistic landscapes in the home

The use of the local languages in this village is also visible in some of the homes. I visited one of the homes and saw a painted mural of a bird combined with some Pokomo text – see Figure 26 below. The message was *Nyuni nkakitsanza wala chihaa na wala nkahende kazi ela wakuishini kwa miro ya Muungu* ('Birds do not have an office, neither do they work, but they are living by the grace of God'). This is a verse from the Bible (Matthew 6:26). At another home that I went to visit, I saw the text of another Bible verse (Psalm 23) written in Kiswahili: *Bwana ni Mchungaji wangu, sitopungukiwa na kitu* ('The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want') – see Figure 27 below.

Figure 26. A mural containing a Bible verse written in Pokomo in one of the homes

Figure 27. Psalm 23 written in Kiswahili on the wall of a home

The semiotic landscapes in Figures 26 and 27 are the walls of two homes. In Figure 26, the painting seems old; the wall of the house was repainted but the mural was left untouched, however, some of the words in the mural were covered by the new paint. When I asked the owners of the home, they were able to tell me the full text painted on the wall. In Figure 27, the wall displaying the text is very near to falling down, as the house was not a permanent structure. The house was being renovated at the time the image was taken. Therefore, the material used for Figure 27 might not last longer than the one in Figure 26.

Both messages written on the walls in Figures 26 and 27 are clear. The messages are derived from the Bible and the audience of these messages could be anyone who visits these homes. Having a wall in the home with the written word of God in their languages may show that members of this community are religious and value their faith. The message written in Figure 26 is in Kipfokomu, which we know is rarely used in official settings such as schools. However, the owner of this home preferred this language over others.

Figure 28. A traditional mat as a linguistic artifact. Photograph by A. Shari

Figure 28 depicts the linguistic artifact of a traditional handmade mat made of bamboo sticks hanging on the wall of a house. It is called a *yutsatsa* or *jutsatsa* in Kipfokomu. The sticks have been woven together with raffia. The materials used to make this are available within the ecology of the Tana River. This type of mat is traditionally spread on the floor to sit on or is put underneath a bed or floor mattress. However, when decorated like the one in Figure 28, it is used as a decoration in the house. This *yutsatsa* has been decorated with painted flowers and a big heart in the middle. A Bible verse written in Pokomo has also been painted on it: *Ḍabvu 2:23, Sasa huyu ndiye aumbijwe dzami. Kaumbwa na mufufa wa mifufa yangu, na nyama ya nyama zangu* ('Genesis 2:3, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh'). The owner said that the *yutsatsa* was a wedding gift. From other observations in this study, I found that the local language was rarely printed on paper, but often appeared on other materialities. Materiality includes a variety of artifacts, objects, tools, documents, and technologies. Mondada (2019b, p. 463) notes that "[t]hey are not approached per se, as static materials in isolation, but as they are mobilized moment by moment in relevant and timed ways within a course of action". These materialities include mats and walls which seem to have a more intimate connection to the participants than paper.

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There are also other types of traditional mats with the same function as the *yutsatsa*. However, they are made from different materials. For instance, Figure 29 is an example of a *msala*, a traditional handmade mat of woven unprocessed raffia. The different colours used in this mat were attained by soaking the raffia in water with different dyes. The messages and flowers in this mat were artistically woven with the raffia on the warps.
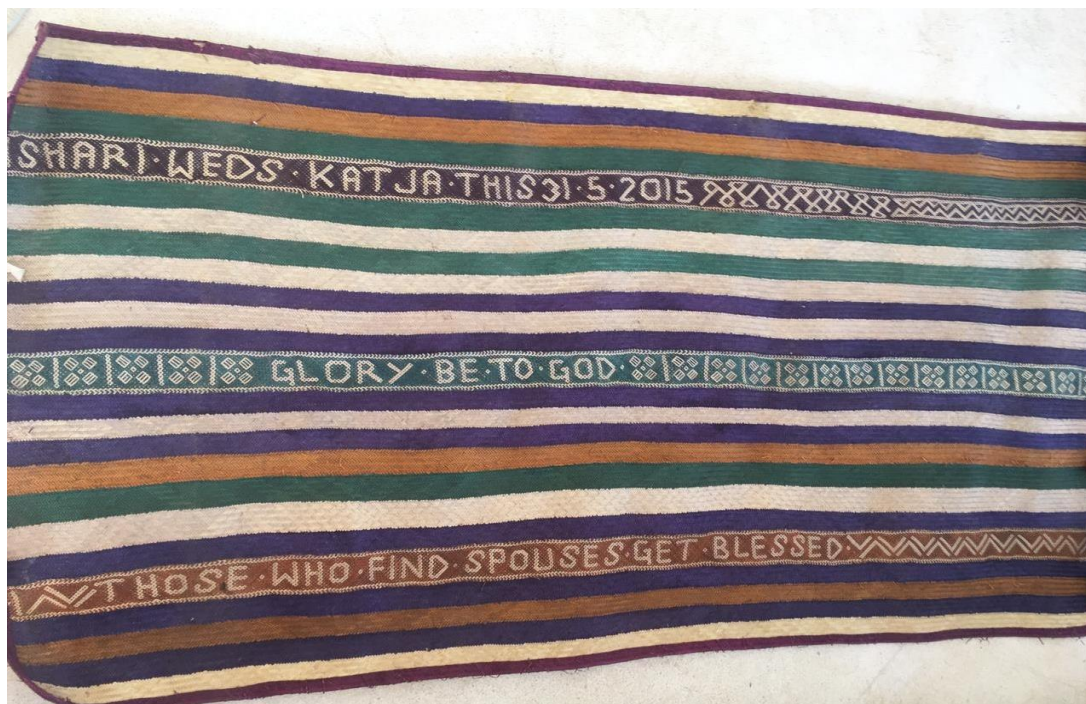
Figure 29. Linguistic artifact of a *msala.* Photograph by A. Shari

The message on this *msala* was in English and says: "Shari weds Katja this 31.5.2015. Glory be to God. Those who find spouses get blessed". This too was a wedding gift and both mats belonged to the same home. The writings in both Figures 28 and 29 are messages of love and marriage. On the rare occasion, you will find traditional mats with English messages in this community. The local languages are mostly used to maintain the cultural value of the artwork. However, the message in Figure 29 was written in English because the spouse was a European. It is also important to know that the messages on the mats are customized according to preference.

Another linguistic artifact that I found in Tsana Village is the traditional handmade fan, commonly known as *kipfepfeyo* in Kipfokomu. There are usually different types of handmade fans which may differ in both materiality and shape. Some are plain while others are decorated. The material used for the fan in Figure 30 is unprocessed raffia woven in a round shape with a flat surface. A wooden handle was attached to the fan by a strong crocheted thread. It was decorated with a painting of a flower and

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has a Kiswahili message painted on it which says *subira ina malipo* ('patience pays'). The different colours make it look beautiful.

Figure 30. A *kipfepfeyo* – a traditional handmade fan

Figure 31. Traditional bridesmaids pose for a photo holding traditional fans

The coastal region is known for its very hot weather, so handheld fans are used during hot seasons in the absence of electric fans. The handmade fan is strong and durable for daily use. Because of its beauty, these fans can be used as home decorations. They are also used in traditional weddings by the bride and bridesmaids, as depicted in Figure 31 above. At weddings, this fan serves to keep one cool, for beauty, for culture, and to pass on different messages for the occasion. Normally, the messages on the fans are of love, encouragement, hope, and faith, depending on the intended purpose.

Other linguistic artifacts available include the traditional food cover called *makawa* in Kiswahili. This is also handwoven with palm leaves or raffia. They are usually cone-shaped, as shown in Figure 32, and are painted with beautiful flowers and some messages. The messages are Swahili sayings that express emotions. They are usually themed according to the preference of the users but, originally, the messages inscribed on the food cover are meant for wives passing messages to their husbands (Ong'oa-Morara, 2014). For instance, the food cover in Figure 32 reads *ukinitunza kwa malezi, nitakuenzi kwa mapenzi* ('if you take care of me, I will honour you with love'). A wife may serve and cover her husband's food with the *makawa* to pass the message to him. It is also used to beautify the home when on display and, most importantly, it communicates the message to the intended audience.
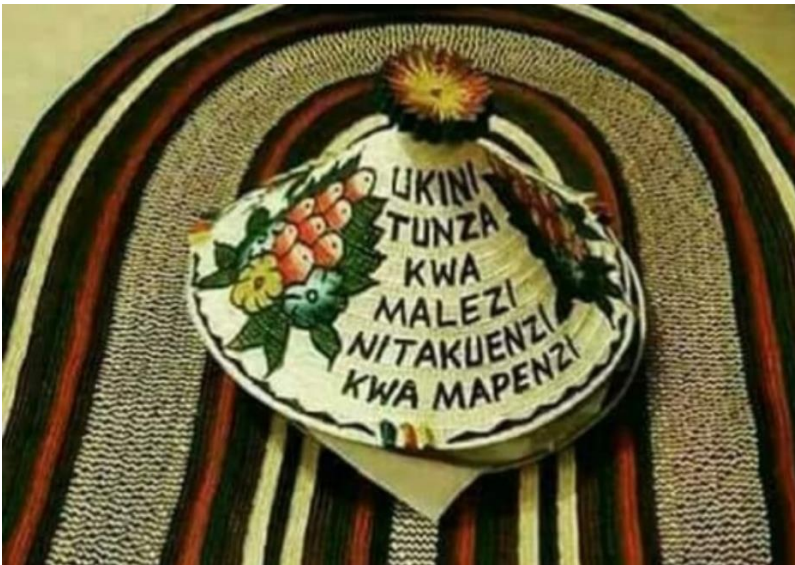
Figure 32. The *makawa* – a traditional food covering

The women of Tana River County have the coastal culture of using *kangas*, also known as *leso.* These are rectangular pieces of cloth that have multi-coloured print designs and a saying. The *leso* is usually made of cotton and/or polyester. The *leso* design usually has a border, or *pindo*, that is a different pattern but complements the rest of the design. The centre part of the *leso* is the *mji* which contains the message at the lower part, commonly known as the *jina* ('name') in Kiswahili. The name is the inscribed message on the *kanga* – see Figure 33.

Figure 33. A *kanga* or *leso*

There are several uses of *leso*: they are mainly wrapped around the waist as a traditional apron while cooking, they can be used for carrying babies, as a tablecloth, a towel, and can be handy to take to the beach or can be used for picnics, amongst others. For the Muslim Pokomo communities, the *kanga*

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can be used as a cloth cover while performing daily prayers. The *leso* can also be tied in a way that represents the traditional attire for the Pokomo women, as shown in Figure 34.

Figure 34. Pokomo women wearing *leso* as traditional attire

For the coastal women, including the Pokomo, the most important part of the *leso* is the message that it carries. The inscriptions are usually written in capital letters that may incorporate Swahili proverbs or sayings that carry religious slogans, or messages of warning or encouragement. In this context, the body of the *leso* wearer is a landscape for meaning-making, as well as functioning as part of a broader linguistic landscape for the readers (Caldwell, 2017). The messages on the *leso* may be on the themes of love, family, relationships, and emotions, and may carry metaphorical meanings that can be applied in multiple situations. By the wearer displaying the piece of clothing on herself, she is visually articulating the meanings presented on the *leso*, hence presuming agency and literacy (Caldwell, 2017). As mentioned by Ong'oa-Morara (2014, p. 87), "due to the analogous or metaphorical references of the names, their meanings are subjects to multiple interpretations". The interpretation of the *leso* naturally depends on the reader. For instance, the writing on the *leso* in Figure 33 says, *Asara ni roho, pesa ni makaratasi* ('loss is losing a soul, money is just paper'). This could be interpreted as encouragement for those in business or who have lost money – that they should not worry too much about their losses, that they can always work to recover it, but losing a soul is more of a loss since it cannot be recovered. It should be noted that, in most cases, the wearers of the represented text on the piece of clothing are not the "authors" of the text (Martin & White, 2005). Therefore, whatever interpretation a reader gives to the name of the *kanga*, whether intended or not,

the wearer is not responsible. In case the interpretation can jeopardize her life, she can always find a way to deny it (Ong'oa-Morara, 2014). Therefore, when buying a *leso* for oneself or someone else, the message cannot be ignored. The design might be beautiful, but the message is what matters most for the communication intended.

Importantly, it is part of coastal culture for women to wear *kangas* in order for people to read the text appearing on these items of clothing. Sometimes people communicate through *kangas*, especially women who are rivals, such as co-wives. In contrast to most traditional written modes, the *leso* "may afford immediate feedback and interactivity between the wearer and any potential interlocutors" which is similar to the ways of modern written communication such as WhatsApp, SMS, and e-mail (Martin & White, 2005, p. 129). For example, a wearer (a co-wife in this context) may wear a *leso* displaying a text like *utake usitake, tutabanana hapa hapa kwa mume mmoja* ('whether you like it or not, we shall both cram ourselves onto one man'). The wearer of this text could be a second wife trying to convey a message to the first wife that she is there to stay in the relationship, and they will both fight/compete for their husband. In response to this message, the first wife could wear a *kanga* for the second wife with a text like *Sibabaishwi na matawi, mimi ni shina* ('I am not intimidated by branches because I am the trunk'). The interpretation of this text may be that the first wife in the polygamous family is not intimidated by the second wife since the former occupies the highest status in the family. This is an example of communication via *leso* text between two co-wives in a polygamous family, fighting to protect their perceived rights and privileges of patriarchy, such as getting undivided and exclusive love, attention, and fulfillment of material and economic needs.

To summarize this section, we see that in the home, community members can communicate via various means, from murals to handmade artifacts to *leso* cloth. All are used to convey messages to different audiences. The proverbial inscriptions on *leso* act as a medium for women to display various linguistic skills and poetry in society (Ong'oa-Morara, 2014). The different materialities are used in innovative ways to communicate customized messages to suit different situations in the home and the community. The aesthetics of these materialities describe the functions to arouse love, hope, and fear. These experiences could be regarded as pleasurable. Affect is involved in the production of pleasure. Affect and aesthetics cannot be separated from the meaning, from the sensory, and from the social context and histories in which texts are designed. Modality is in the interpersonal relationship between producer, message, and audience (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). In this regard, aesthetic values and pleasures that are associated with materiality "are socially produced, claimed, and negotiated. If the audience has no experience of the genre in question or has decided it is not for them, then the effort

to produce pleasure and the claim to cultural value associated with it will fail" (Burn & Kress, 2018, pp. 21-22). Local languages are thus inserted into spaces where the communication of affect is vital.

7.4.2   Linguistic landscapes of business owners

The business owners in the village use the local languages to advertise their products and services; others may also include English. For instance, outside a posho mill, I saw a notice that reads *Mtambo sasa unafanya kazi, njoo upate huduma. Karibu* ('The posho mill is now operating, come for the service. Welcome') – see Figure 35 below.

Figure 35. A public notice written in Kiswahili outside a posho mill

The owner of this business used a marker to write the message on a concrete pillar on the gate of his establishment to communicate with his clients. The writing is not very visible from a distance. However, the owner said that this did not matter because, since the posho mill is functioning, the neighbours nearby can hear the noise produced by it. The neighbours could also tell others who do not reside close to the mill that this mill is functioning. In this context, the noise from the posho mill also operates like signage, which resonates with Stroud & Mpendukana's (2009) view that semiotic signage in sites of necessity may include non-linguistic signs.

For some businesses, like a café or restaurant, one must be inside the business premises to know what the products and services are on offer. In such places, the menu is usually written in a place that is visible to all who enter – one can read what is on the menu and order one's food. Figure 36 shows an example of a menu in most of the food places in the locality; some are written on a wall inside the premises. The menu in Figure 36 was written on a piece of plywood. It seems that this piece of plywood has been reused for the same purpose because the previous writing is still noticeable

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underneath the new writing. It also looks like the prices have been changing with time, thus the use of chalk on the price list.

This menu is multilingual, as the languages used are Kiswahili, Kipfokomu, English, and Sheng. Though Sheng is rarely used in this locality, we see that the business owner used it in the price list here. The word *ndondo* is Sheng for 'beans' (*maharagwe* in Kiswahili and Kipfokomu). It seems that the owner opted to use the Sheng word here, as its Kiswahili name is long and more than likely would not have fitted on the menu. The same can be said with the use of "½ cake", where the owner used the alphanumeric "½" rather than the word "half".

Figure 36. A menu of a local food café

Figure 37 below depicts the linguistic landscape of a shop in Tana Delta. Different languages are used to inform (potential) customers about the products and services available. The name of the shop is a Pokomo name: *Haju Ent.*, where *Haju* means 'king' and *Ent.* is the abbreviation for 'enterprise'. The use of linguistic hybridity has been exploited in the shop's name by the presence of the Pokomo word *Haju* with the English abbreviation "Ent.". The Swahili word *barafu* was also used to mean 'ice' in the writings, but most of the writings are in English. This might be because some of the English words are commonly used as such due to the fact that there are no linguistic equivalents in Kipfokomu.

Examples of these English words used in the linguistic landscape in Figure 37 include "ice cream", "pastry", "cookies", and "baby shower", among others. Such words lack Pokomo equivalents as they are relatively foreign concepts, therefore, people use these English terms. Importantly, within this landscape, the use of language resonates with Stroud & Mpendukana's (2009) argument that "the use of multiple languages in the signage of necessity is characterized generally by a particular and pervasive linguistic hybridity, both as code-mixes and more or less adapted loans from English and African languages as cross-language transfers" (p. 376).

Figure 37. The multimodal linguistic landscape of a shop

Images are also used on this landscape which makes it multimodal. The signs are handwritten and look artistic with the use of different colours, calligraphy, and fonts. Bright and high and low saturated colours were used for the signage of this shop. The two types of saturation, as distinguished by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), have different meanings: "High saturation may be positive, exuberant, adventurous, but also vulgar or garish. Low saturation may be subtle and tender, but also cold and repressed, or brooding and moody" (p. 233). With this in mind, cream is the dominant colour in the composition in Figure 37, with some blue, yellow, red, black, green, and white forming the letters on this linguistic landscape. The choice of colour here appears to be linked to the products and services on offer. The signage of this shop incorporates a range of ludic and aesthetic functions that highlight humour and playfulness (Tarone, 2000) in addition to transmitting interpersonal, informational, or transactional information (Yule & Brown, 1983).

Going by Scollon & Scollon's (2003) descriptions of durability and permanence, the materials used for the linguistic landscaping in Figure 37 appear to be more permanent than those used in Figures 35 and 36. The name of the shop owner, "Mrs. Chic Jr", has been written on the wall of the shop as

well. This could be because the community members refer to the shops by the names of the shop owner(s). In this case, for instance, they would refer to "Mrs. Chic's shop". The owner of the shop is also a teacher, thus adopting the title of "Mrs." before the name and probably because she is known by that name at school.

7.4.3   Linguistic signage and place semiotics

In Tsana Village, community members mostly rely on the oral description of places. Banda and Jimaima (2015) refer to this as "oral linguascaping". However, some places require signage, with the result that linguistic signage is also used to give directions to places within the village. The signage in Figure 38 below gives directions to a local beach resort. The signage is in the middle of the bush, as the place is on the outskirts of the residential community. From the village, there is no signage giving directions to this beach. The first time I went to this beach, I was directed by oral linguascaping as follows:

> *Follow that footpath that is in the middle of the bush, you will see people and motorbike riders using it, just follow the route until you see a recently cleared bush on your right side. From that point, you will hear some human voices since it is the weekend, the place is busy. Follow the footpath on your right and you will reach your destination.*

Because there were no buildings – just bushes, shrubs, and many trees – the environment was used as a point of reference. The people created, translated, and interpreted the meaning of objects and spaces in the environment by verbal inscription. Banda and Jimaima (2015, p. 658) state that this "is a function of social-historical knowledge and cultural materialities". This is in line with Cannadine (2000) who argues that landscaping is not only created by planting, shaping, and diverting (landscaping) but also involves "the process whereby those trees, rivers, and flowers become invested with meanings, morals, and myths […]" (p. 188).

Figure 38. Signage with a place name

The second time I went to this beach, I saw that signage was placed at the point where I was directed to turn right, as shown in Figure 38. The signage was written on an old piece of corrugated iron that was tied to a wooden pole by a piece of mosquito netting. This is in line with Stroud and Jegels' (2014) idea that semiotic landscapes are embedded in the material culture within the locality. The sign reads "Banderaz Beach Resort" – no extra information pertaining to direction or distance was added to this sign. However, it actually does provide information on direction because the signage was installed in such a way that it points in the direction of the beach. For this signage, a local name was used together with English; note, however, that the name "Banderaz" has no Pokomo meaning. Another sign that I found interesting in Tsana Village is the signage with initials, as shown in Figure 39 below. Newcomers to the village will more than likely not know what this vague sign – "B.M, S. Africa" – is communicating. However, Scollon and Scollon (2003) point out that inscriptions bear meaning. Pennycook (2010) adds that people reinvent the environment and infuse meaning in artifacts and objects. This signage is giving directions to someone's residence. "B.M" is the initials for the name of the homeowner, while "S. Africa" denotes "South Africa". A person may wonder what South Africa has got to do with Tsana Village. The reason here is that the homeowner married a non-African wife who lives in South Africa, and therefore named his residence "S. Africa". In Tsana Village, there is also another residence that is dubbed "South Africa" because the owners work and live in this country. Secondly, both these homeowners also share the same surnames although they are not closely related. Additionally, the residences are in the same direction, that is, outside the main village where people live communally. As such, there is usually confusion when people say they are going to "South Africa" – one must specify exactly which residence they are going to.

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Figure 39. Signage with initials

The owner of the sign in Figure 39 gives directions to his home through the use of this sign. In Tsana Village, this is the only sign that gives directions to someone's home. The material used in this landscape is a used piece of wood affixed to a wooden pillar. The meaning of the signage is visible and clear if one knows the context. The signage has an arrow showing the direction to the home. In giving directions, this signboard may be used as a reference point for people traversing the place to other spaces. Here, I have shown how my doing ethnography in this village helped me gain extra understanding and meaning about linguistic landscapes. This is in line with Blommaert & Maly (2014) who assert that ethnographic linguistic landscape enables researchers "to see the sociocultural phenomena in the deployment of multilingual and specific semiotic resources" (p. 22).

In Figure 40, the business owner used signage to advertise his products. The place of the business is about 100 metres from the road. Therefore, the signage was in a good place to advertise his business. The message on it is written in Kiswahili and reads as follows: *Tunauza bidhaa mbalimbali hapa kama cement, blocks, mchanga, kokoto na mapande* ('We sell different products here like cement, blocks, soil, concrete and broken blocks'). However, in the signage, two arrows that are meant to indicate direction face different directions, which may confuse the reader of the sign. Again, the writer of the sign might not be a professional as there were some spelling mistakes in the text. However, the writer used both Kiswahili and English in the advertisement. This could perhaps be because those words are often used in English.

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Figure 40. Signage advertising a business

In summary, the study of linguistic landscapes not only provides the background of the day-to-day activities of the Tsana people but also shows the value of their local languages, therefore shaping their interactions and maintaining their identities. We also see that some of the material used for the signages has been repurposed from old corrugated iron sheets and old pieces of wood, as shown in Figures 38, 39, and 40. Banda and Jimaima (2015) argue that the repurposing of semiotic materials depends on the historical, economic, and socio-cultural context surrounding the production and consumption of the signage. For instance, people in Tsana Village would prefer oral linguascaping of the environment to using written language. We also see that the material used for the signage, such as the wooden poles and mosquito netting that were used to support the repurposed signage, were also readily available from the environments. Through the repurposing of semiotic materials, people surpass the limitations caused by the conditions of the materials and create new meanings and purposes beyond that for which they were originally designed (Banda & Jimaima, 2015).

7.5 Conclusion

Stroud defines linguistic citizenship as cases where speakers of minority languages and linguistic varieties claim and exercise agency and the right to be heard. The speakers may use whichever linguistic repertoire or multimodal means that are useful in the circumstances (Heugh, 2018; Stroud, 2018). Agency rests with an individual and the community as a whole, where communal well-being is a co-owned responsibility (Watson, 2014). In this chapter, there are some instances of acts of

linguistic citizenship. An example was shown earlier in section 7.2, where Teacher Ḍuḍa was talking about creating and circulating indigenous knowledge through stories and folklore. His motivation to write the Pokomo stories was in response to the perception that Pokomo cultural and linguistic practices have been lost.

Language revitalization could be seen as an act of linguistic citizenship where community members "create a platform to claim visibility, audibility and ethical engagement with the socio-political and economic realities under which disempowered minorities live" (Premsrirat & Bruthiaux, 2018, p. 154). Since the state is not providing the resources for Pokomo heritage preservation, Teacher Ḍuḍa is using the materials at hand – e.g., an audio recorder, his phone, etc. – to do this. He is agentive and is hoping to provide a voice for the community. Through these stories, the audiences are not only entertained but also get to learn the Pokomo language as well as the culture. In his story, *Nyuni jwa Rhikimo* ('The bird of Rhikimo'), Teacher Ḍuḍa introduced many of the Pokomo cultural practices that are no longer in use nowadays, such as the traditional methods of cultivation, the types of crops grown, the challenges faced around farming, the different songs and dances which used to be performed in different seasons and at events, the traditional ways of treating the sick, as well as the procedures and rituals the Pokomo people used to follow when one dies, amongst others. According to him, his target audience is not only children but also adults who are not familiar with Pokomo culture. Teacher Ḍuḍa is using this platform to educate and create awareness in his audience about the Pokomo language and culture with the hope of preserving these elements. This articulates well with the idea of linguistic citizenship that the community must take the initiative in matters of language rights and development (Premsrirat & Bruthiaux, 2018). The community members – Teacher Ḍuḍa in this context – perceived their language and culture as nearing extinction and realised the need to keep these alive.

Teacher Ḍuḍa is using modern technology to transfer Pokomo folklore. The teacher recorded himself narrating the folklore in audio format. He also incorporated songs, musical instruments, and animal voices in the background of relevant scenes. In the audio, he used voice intonation to suit different scenarios which makes the story captivating to the listeners. *Nyuni jwa Rhikimo* has been circulated on various social media platforms. In this way, the revitalization of language "can be seen as a semiotic resource for the (re)construction of agency and self-representation, an economic resource and site of political and economic struggle" (Lim & Ansaldo, 2007, p. 7).

Similarly, to keep the language in use and visible, the Tsana community members use Kipfokomu in different ways. For example, they use the language to communicate in various spaces such as in modern technology, linguistic landscapes, and artifacts at homes and in the community. This reveals that,

although the print culture in the Pokomo language is limited, other materialities are used on which the language is inscribed. They have even used Kipfokomu to communicate important messages, such as raising awareness of the COVID-19 virus through print and audio formats. Community members also use a village crier to transmit important messages in the village; these messages are always in Kipfokomu. Kipfokomu, although devalued in schooling, is shown to be important to express affect and relation within the spaces of the village. The language is used with the materials at hand and "speakers create transient or more permanent interpersonal engagements" (Stroud & Bock, 2021, p. 7). There is a retooling of the available linguistic and material resources (ibid), such as the *leso*, is incorporated into other communicative practices, like SMS and WhatsApp, within the community and disrupts the dominance of English found in official spaces. The use of different spaces to make customized messages, such as the proverbial messages inscribed in the *leso*, the handmade fans, and the traditional food covers, showcases the women's poetic and linguistic skills, thus appreciating the aesthetics and affects demonstrated in them. This research has shown how different materialities are used to communicate in different situations. Materialities are not only instruments used to accomplish their intended purpose, i.e., usage and aesthetics, but are also "targets of feelings, sensorial access, and perceptions" (Mondada, 2019a, p. 50). People have different ways to "sensorially engage in the material world, using multimodal resources not only to communicate or make their interactions accountable but also to express, manifest and display their sensory access to the world" (ibid, p. 50). As it has been shown in the chapter, the linguistic landscapes found in the community are different from the ones available in the school environment.

The use of local languages in the linguistic landscaping within the community, seem to signal a special status for this language: weddings (fans), status (for women) on *lesos*, to live out their religious convictions (the quotes from the Bible). The English language does not appear as often. Therefore, the local languages are accorded significant status: they are used to celebrate, to testify, to invite. It seems a part of people's lives. The fact that teachers do not acknowledge the use of local languages in the classroom implies that they are effectively distancing the school from the community. People value literacy in the local languages – it is all around them, but not in the school. However, when you link the linguistic landscape to the perceived lack of parental involvement, you can see that the school and its language (English) are not part of their lives. The school's currency, namely the languages of instruction, are literally outside of the community's literate lives because it does not use the languages that they value. Its small wonder then that parents are not involved in the literacy of their children.

CHAPTER 8: CRITICAL INTERVENTION

8.1   Introduction

Text creation is a literacy practice that involves more than just writing words on paper. Text development is about creating historically and culturally bound meaning by using the available and emerging multimodal resources accessible to the designer of the text. Therefore, creating a text is a literacy practice (Pietikäinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2013). This chapter will look at literacy practices from the social framework as described by Barton & Hamilton (1998), Baynham & Prinsloo (2001), Blommaert (2008), and Street (1984). I will focus on literacy events in which multilingual grade 3 learners of Tsana Primary School worked towards producing their own participatory multilingual and multimodal stories. I will examine the meaning-making resources available to them and how the children used them while designing the stories.

8.2   Background of the story-crafting

As indicated earlier in my methodology chapter (Chapter 5), the children's narratives comprised additional data in response to previous data which indicated that the learners were not exposed to reading storybooks at home or at school. The children mentioned reading schoolbooks to improve their academic performance. The previous data also showed that these children do not have materials in their homes that they can read for leisure, such as storybooks. In response to this lack of storybooks at home and at school, I decided, together with the children and teachers, to create stories. These stories will be made into little books and distributed to the learners who participated in the study for use in their homes.

The story-crafting exercise involved 14 children. I spent eight weeks with some of the grade 3 learners between October and December 2020. We met for two hours on weekdays at the school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, learning institutions were closed except for the primary and secondary school candidate classes, which were recalled during this period. I took advantage of this opportunity to also involve the children in this data collection process. I sought permission from the school's headteacher and the parents to engage with their children during this period.

The first task I gave to the children was to ask them to write the letters of the alphabet. My aim here was to see if they could still remember the alphabet after staying at home for more than seven months. The result was that not a single child was able to write these letters correctly. This could be because the learners did not involve themselves with school activities at home during the COVID-19 lockdown. Most of them confessed that they only played and never read at home. An alphabet chart was produced for them in the class. I provided the learners with storybooks from different genres and

in different languages, namely Kipfokomu, Kiswahili, and English. In the first few days, the learners were reading these storybooks as well as telling stories. Individual reading and shared reading experiences were encouraged during the reading process, and I also read some stories to them. The learners were exposed to different stories before they began the task of writing their own.

During the initial process of writing, Teacher Nanzora and Teacher Buduko were very resourceful. The first story-crafting session as a class was initiated by Teacher Nanzora. She gave the learners an overview of how a story should be. She involved the learners in crafting a story together as a class. I instructed the teachers to let the learners select the language and genre of the stories. The language policy decision reflects the LiEP of Kenya, which allows the children to select the language in which they are comfortable communicating. The teachers and I agreed on the language policy because all three languages are also used in the school. The learners' language choice for the first story they crafted was Kipfokomu. The story that they developed came from their daily life experiences as they interacted with their environment. It was about two boys who were bitten by safari ants while collecting wild fruits called *makoma*. It is worth noting that the *makoma* fruits were in season at that time, and children usually go to the bush to get these wild fruits. In these bushes, there are also safari ants. Therefore, the children's first story was about their personal experiences, and the language they used was Kipfokomu since they could access their Pokomo vocabulary quicker and easier. In critical literacy, learners' cultural backgrounds, knowledge, and multimodal literacy practices are vital in building the curriculum. Therefore, they learn best when they can associate what they are learning with their daily lives (Vasquez, 2012). The second exercise was to translate the story into Kiswahili, a language they also use to communicate. With the help of the teacher, the learners translated the story into Kiswahili. The children had some challenges finding the Kiswahili equivalents for some of the Pokomo words, but the teacher helped them. This exercise aimed to show the learners that stories can be written in all the languages with which they are familiar.

After the children had crafted the first story, Teacher Nanzora then taught the children the components of writing a story which include the following: *Setting* – where and when the story took place and the characters in the story; *Introduction* – how the story starts and what happens first; *Middle* – what goes wrong in the story; and *End* – how the problem is fixed (English Literacy Activities: Teacher's Guide for Grade 3, 2018). She used their story as a template. They again developed another story together, following the components of story-writing. This time, the children developed the story in Kiswahili. She then put them into groups and asked the learners to rewrite the story in English. But before that, the learners identified the vocabularies and translated them into English. When the learners mastered these story-writing skills, they could write different stories in groups and pairs. During this process,

there were many consultations between the learners, me, and the teacher about some English words and spellings. A lot of the questions were about English words. Sometimes the learners would ask and answer the questions among themselves. There were some arguments about their writing, but I would sometimes let them agree on what to settle on. However, whenever they were in doubt, I would guide them on the right words or sentences to write. But most of the time, the children came up with answers to their questions themselves. The learners later graduated to personal story-writing. I allowed them to write stories in the languages they were more comfortable in, and they were also free to select the themes of their stories.

In some of the stories the children wrote, they created problems and demonstrated possible solutions to their problems. They tried to address day-to-day issues that occur in their environment. In these stories, the learners provided moral lessons to be learned and applied in real life, thus providing opportunities for transformation. Through this activity of multimodal story-writing, the children were able to express their ideas in different ways. While the learners were strongly encouraged to write the stories, some learners preferred to narrate their stories orally. The oral narrated stories were audio-recorded.

8.3   Language of the stories

The children were provided with enough writing materials with which to write their stories. The instructions were to write stories on topics of their interest. They were also asked to write in any language that they were comfortable using and also to draw pictures that tell their stories[35]. Concerning the language selection, the children were more confident writing in English when they were asked to write the stories in groups. Most individual stories were written in Kiswahili, except for a few students who wrote their stories in English. However, only one student was able to write some of his stories in Kipfokomu. In total, I collected 76 stories for my study. Most of these stories were written in English, followed by Kiswahili, and then a few stories were written in Kipfokomu, as shown in Figure 41 below. Despite Kipfokomo being the main language of the community followed by Kiswahili, most of the stories (53%) were in English which were written in groups. Followed by (53%) which were mostly individual stories, learners have a strong command of the language. Lastly (4%) of the were written in Kipfokomu. Majority of the learners did not choose Kipfokomu due to the lack of knowledge on how to use it in writing. The stories in Kipfokomu were written by only one student, Bonaya. I will talk about his linguistic repertoire later in the chapter.

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[35] In this story writing activity, I did not encourage multilingual writing. but rather asked the authors to choose a language they were comfortable to use. Multilingual writing is something I will explore in my follow-up activities in the community.
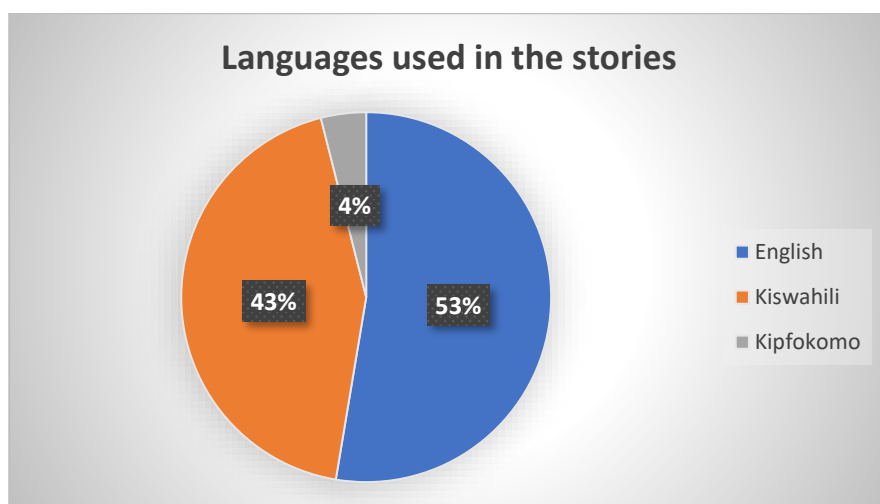
Figure 41. Distribution of language use in the children's narratives

8.4 Integration of multimodality

To ensure multimodality in the task, it was essential to involve both written text and drawing activities, as the literacy skills varied among the children. The children were therefore expected to design stories that were multimodal that included both images and texts. The inclusion of drawing for these learners came naturally as it is an everyday school activity for them. With the resources provided for them, the learners were encouraged to use whatever was available around them to complete the task. The learners were provided with plenty of coloured pencils and crayons for the drawing.

In this process of multimodal meaning-making, the children illustrated some images related to their written texts. They also coloured in their drawings accordingly. Some learners were good at writing the stories while others were good at drawing; others were also good at telling the stories orally, and the audio recorder was used to record their stories. The students who were good at drawing helped the other learners who were not good at that skill. The multimodal nature of this exercise offered the learners alternative means of expressing themselves (Nikula & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2008; Pietikäinen & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2013). The children considered the work meaningful and exciting because they worked actively and enthusiastically throughout the task.

At their level, the children were able to write short stories following the features of the Labovian narrative model (1997). In Labov's framework, a narrative consists of the following components: (i) *Abstract* – a signal that the story is about to begin; (ii) *Orientation* – the introduction to the setting and the characters; (iii) *Complication action* – the emergence of the problem or what happened in the story; (iv) *Evaluation* – the crucial point of the story which refers to the reason the narrative is being told; (v) *Resolution* – attempts to resolve the problem or what finally happened; (vi) *Coda* – the relevance or moral lesson of the story. It is through the coda that the narrator indicates that the story

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has come to an end (Labov, 1997). Some of the children were able to write longer stories than others. However, some children were not able to write stories even after several sessions of training. They were perceived as "slow" learners by their teachers, however, these children narrated their stories in class and were audio-recorded. Some learners were more imaginative and creative than others. I will discuss the themes of the stories in the following section. I will use multimodal semiotic analysis to analyse the images in the stories by drawing on the works of Van Leeuwen (2011), Van Leeuwen & Jewitt (2007), and Machin (2007). The semiotic analysis model includes visual grammar, modality, typography, iconography, colour, and positioning.

8.5   Themes of the stories

The themes of the stories were not predetermined. The students were given free rein to write the kinds of stories they wished to write. The children chose different topics with a variety of backgrounds and justifications. Most of the topics arose from personal experiences, including the narration of events on farming and grazing, survival of snake bites, dog bites, bee stings, and road accidents. There were a few fables, myths, and Bible stories. In designing their texts, the children put their own past experiences and personal historical events into the stories, which is in agreement with the views of Ormerod & Ivanič (2000). In the next sections, I will give the themes of the stories the children wrote.

8.5.1   Stories about snakes

Most of the stories that the children wrote were about snakes. Some of the children wrote about their encounters with snakes. The stories they wrote varied in specific topics, including encountering snakes in the fields, within the village, and even in their homes. In their writing, the children showed didactic elements in these stories in that those bitten by snakes were rushed to hospital for treatment.

Since most of the learners wrote stories about snakes, I developed some questions to know more regarding what they knew about snakes. I put the learners in groups to discuss the questions among themselves and shared their responses in class (see Appendix 9). From their discussions, they confirmed having seen snakes several times in their lives. They encounter them in the fields, on their way to the farms and school, and even in their homes. From their experiences, these children could identify the different types of snakes around their locality. They were able to tell me eight different types of snakes with their specific characteristics, the venomous and non-venomous ones. The children even explained to me how to perform first aid on someone who has suffered a snakebite. They also shared with me how the venom is removed using a specific stone. They added that after first aid has been administered, the next step is to rush the victim to the hospital to get medical treatment. I learned a lot from the children as I did not know most of the snakes.

The children's responses above show that snakes in Tsana Village can be found anywhere within the environment. I confirmed this because, during my stay in this village, I encountered snakes three times. The children have acquired knowledge from home on how to deal with snakes. According to these learners, knowledge about snakes is not taught at school, but they wished for such content to be taught at school, despite having acquired the knowledge from home.

8.5.2 Farming and grazing

The children wrote stories about going to the farms and animals grazing. Children in Tana River County usually accompany their parents to the fields during farming season. They help in planting, weeding, and chasing birds and baboons who sometimes invade their crops. The stories revolved around the activities related to the farms and fields.

In Tsana Village, goats and a few cattle are kept. It is usually the children who take these animals to the fields for grazing. In these stories, the children narrated incidents of having encountered wild animals such as snakes, hyenas, and elephants in the fields. In their stories, they indicated how they developed survival skills in the fields. They mentioned running away from the dangerous animals. One pupil showed in one of her stories that she resorted to going to the fields with a weapon. Since the Tana River region is primarily rural, it is common to find these wild animals in the environment. Sometimes animals such as elephants and hippopotamuses eat and destroy the crops on the farms, especially at night. Occasionally, animals like hyenas and lions prey on the grazing farm animals.

8.5.3 Stories about bees

The children also wrote stories about bees. The stories involved children going to collect mangoes or wild fruits in the bushes and being attacked by bees in the process. Their stories involved the main character(s) intentionally or unintentionally disturbing the bees and ending up being chased by them. Some wrote about being stung by bees and ending up being taken to hospital for treatment. In these stories, the children showed that they survived the bee stings and always indicated a crucial social lesson to learn from the story: not to throw stones or sticks at beehives.

8.5.4 Stories about accidents

The learners also wrote stories about accidents, such as road and fire accidents. These stories about road accidents may have resulted from the children hearing on the radio or watching on television the news about road accidents in different parts of the nation. The accidents that the children are familiar with within the region are those involving motorbikes, as this is the standard mode of transport within the villages in the area. However, there was no single story the children wrote which involved the

topic of motorbike accidents. Other accidents the children wrote about were of children playing with fire and getting burnt, and about fire explosions in the house.

The other themes of the stories that the children wrote about included fables, family stories, and stories from the Bible.

8.6   Designing of multilingual and multimodal picture stories

The meaning-making of designs in pedagogy is one of the critical aspects of multiliteracies. Cope & Kalantzis (2009b) contend that "the logic of multiliteracies recognizes that meaning-making is an active, transformative process, and a pedagogy based on that recognition is more likely to open up viable life courses for a world of change and diversity" (p. 175). The concept of design is fundamental (Stein, 2007). Humans are designers of meaning; people select designs from the designs available according to their interest at that moment (Freire, 1996; Kress, 2000; The New London Group, 2000). Design is the process of representing meaning for yourself through reading, watching, listening, and making meaning in the communication process for others through writing, speaking, or taking pictures (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009b). In multimodal forms of communication, "language is decentred as well as the traditional boundaries between language, image, page layout and document design" (Iedema, 2003, p. 33). From a pedagogical perspective, the multimodal learning approach "treats all modes as equally significant for making meaning and communication" and acknowledges that all modes enable cognition and development (Jewitt & Kress, 2003, p. 2). Students are encouraged to innovatively make meaning according to their interests because the different modes are recognized as having various potentials for learning and shaping their identities (Bock, 2016).

Multiliteracies is an approach that views literacy as socially constructed and resonates with the belief that "learning starts from the local, everyday experience of literacy in particular communities of practice" (M. Hamilton & Barton, 2000, p. 379). A multiliteracies framework is tailored with a critical theoretical approach to lifelong learning which confirms that people learn through their own past experiences and prior knowledge (Brookfield, 2011). Learning starts when educators begin finding out what the learners already know. Educators can therefore create opportunities to link that knowledge and those experiences while challenging the learners to critically reflect on their existing assumptions and frameworks of knowledge (Dirkx, 1998; Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Multiliteracies help learners decode, make meaning, and critically analyze different multimodal learning methods for numerous purposes in diverse contexts (Luke & Freebody, 1999). On the other hand, critical literacy entails designing and producing multimodal texts to address issues and provide opportunities for change

(Vasquez, 2012). Therefore, critical literacy and multiliteracies are essential approaches in this literacy practice. I will discuss some of the stories written by the children in the following sections.

8.6.1 Case 1 – Pokomo story: *Habida Kavurika* by Bonaya

The first story I will discuss was designed by an author named Bonaya, first mentioned in Chapter 6. Bonaya was nine years old at the time that he wrote his story. He is a multilingual speaker. His parents are Giryama[36] and therefore speak Kigiryama. Since he was born and raised in Tsana Village, Bonaya also speaks fluent Kipfokomu and Kiswahili. For him, English is a language that he is exposed to at school. While at home, his parents speak to him in all three of his local languages – Kigiryama, Kipfokomu, and Kiswahili – but they mostly use Kipfokomu to communicate. Bonaya lives in a rich linguistic environment. The other children did not attempt to write their stories in their MT – Bonaya was the only writer of this language. At school, the learners do not learn to be literate in their MT because it is not taught as a subject. Therefore, learners are not confident in writing it because of the lack of writing skills. However, Bonaya was a very impressive pupil with his selection of the language. When I asked him why he wrote some of his stories in Kipfokomu, he responded that when he writes them in this language, they sound more interesting than in the other languages. However, the boy never wrote any of his stories in English. He commented that writing the stories in English was difficult for him. His stories were written in Kipfokomu and Kiswahili.

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36 One of the coastal Bantu communities in Kenya where Kigiryama is spoken.

"Habida Kavurika" story	*'Habida Fainted'*
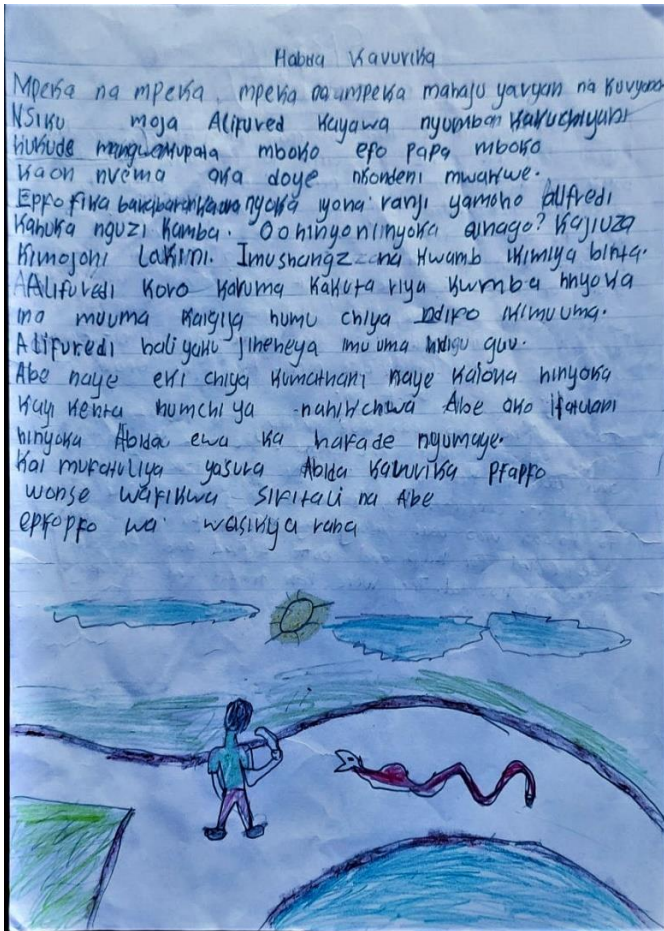
Ages and ages ago, kings were born and born. Once upon a time, there lived a man called Alfred. One day Alfred left his home to go to 'Mangweni'[37] *to drink palm wine. After drinking his palm wine, he decided to go to his farm to monitor his crops. On his way, he saw a red snake. He was astonished and asked himself, "What kind of a snake is this?". He was even more shocked when he saw it swallowing a live duck!*

Since he was drunk, Alfred did not think that the snake would bite him. He decided to hold the tail of the snake. Alas! The snake bit him. While Alfred was struggling with the snake, it bit his leg again. Abe, who was also going to his farm, saw the snake. He cut its tail and head with his machete. While Abe was throwing the snake, Habida was right behind him. He threw the snake right into her face. Habida fainted on the spot. They were both taken to the hospital and got treatment. Abe felt happy when they were both healed.

Figure 42. Habida Kavurika – Bonaya's story

Bonaya chose to write his story, entitled *Habida Kavurika* ('Habida Fainted'), in Kipfokomu – see Figure 42. The story is a narration of an incident that happened in Tsana Village a few days before it was written. Thus, Bonaya's choice of story was derived from the environment around him. Freire and Macedo (2005) elaborate on this critical literacy practice when they noted that reading the word should simultaneously be about reading the world, and thus should reconcile with the learner's day-to-day life experiences and spaces as well as the languages they use. Children create stories from their past experiences and their environments. In addition, the skills of reading and writing are facilitated by causes and effects of lived realities, which are the potential tools for social transformation (Freire & Macedo, 2005; Vasquez, 2016b). However, in this story, the author is not narrating his personal experience but rather reporting an incident that happened in the village. In his story, he gave

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37 An illicit palm wine den where this alcohol is sold without a license.

pseudonyms to his characters and changed the setting of the space in which the incident took place. He also altered the story a little. This redesigning of the story is in line with Ormerod and Ivanic (2000) who observed that "[…] literacy practices are dynamic, fluid and everchanging, both for the individual children themselves and for the sociocultural environment that sustains them, representing a fast-changing period in the development of technologies of literacy" (p. 106).

The reasons why Bonaya altered the original story could be out of respect for or fear of the participants involved. In the real-life incident that happened days before, the snake was thrown at a parent of one of his teachers at the school. Therefore, he might have altered the original story out of fear of being reprimanded for using her real name. Also, the story was probably altered because transmission via oral communication usually results in a level of change in the meaning of the story. Here, we see recontextualization and resemiotization of knowledge whereby content expressed in one context is subsequently transformed and reused in a different context (Connolly, 2014). Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanic (2000) point out that no literacy practice remains static, but existing practices are transformed and new ones are created. The process of meaning-making is a transformative action that changes the object being transformed as well as the person who is the agent of transformation. Rick Iedema refers to the process of how meaning-making shifts from one context to another as "resemiotization" (Iedema, 2003, p. 41). Different material realizations are accrued during the process of meaning-making, hence it becomes "rematerialized" and because of that, the meaning attached to the object fundamentally shifts (Iedema, 2003, p. 50). How individuals represent their meaning may be limited by the available semiotic resources and by students' competence in design (Stein, 2007).

In his writing, Bonaya explained the story in an exciting way that could not have been captured better in the other languages. He began by using the traditional Pokomo way of introducing a story; it could be that he did not know the whole story introduction, i.e., '*Mpeka na mpeka, mpeka na mpeka, mahaju yavyaana na kuvyaana. Kuvyajwa jwa ḍanda ya dzuu, haju jwa ḍanda ya nsini, haju jwa mbo, haju jwa moongo, na haju jwa kahi ya mudzi. Hapfo kae kwiwa na …'* ('Ages and ages ago, kings were born and born. Kings of the north, kings of the south, kings of the east, kings of the west, and kings of the central village. Once upon a time…'). This traditional way of introducing a story is not commonly known nor used by the current generation of children. However, in his story, he used the first part of it. He also used some Pokomo idioms to explain some of the events in the story, such as *kupata mboko* and *kuchia kumadhani* which directly translates to 'to get a gourd' and 'going to hunt/fish', respectively. Nowadays, the idiom *kuchia kumadhani* may be used to mean 'going to look for a job, money, or anything that may put food on the table'. In the context of this story, *kupata*

mboko has been used to mean 'to get a gourd of palm wine / to get alcohol', while *kuchia kumadhani* has been used to mean 'going to the farm'.

Bonaya's choice of language and how he used it for his story keeps his readers captivated. He could have picked up some of this from the Pokomo storybooks that I exposed them to. However, in his writing, Bonaya could not spell some of the Pokomo words correctly. The reason could be that the children are not familiar with the Pokomo alphabet. They do not learn in their MT at school as they should do, as stipulated in the LiEP of Kenya.

The author's drawing has some connection with the written text: it gives an illustration of the narrative text. When looking at it, one can see the main character, Alfred, is on his way to his farm, holding his farming tool in his hand. Beside him is the red snake on the footpath. The snake has a lump in its body, indicating that it had just finished swallowing the live duck, which Alfred witnessed and was shocked by. Bonaya's use of multimodality in his story is well integrated. His drawing is a visual explanation of the written text. Barthes & Heath (1977) argue that the meaning of images is always dependent on and, in a sense, related to verbal text. The relation between text and image is that the image extends the meaning of the verbal text and vice versa.

8.6.2   Case 2 – English story: *Charpy the Squirrel* by Hasango

The next author of a picture story is Hasango. Hasango was nine years old when the stories were made. Hasango, as I mentioned in Chapter 6, is among the few students who were exposed to a variety of different literacy practices in the home. She was exposed to storybooks, watched television, watched YouTube cartoon videos, amongst others. She comes from a home that takes print literacy seriously because her grandfather, who is her guardian, likes reading and therefore reads with her. Hasango is also fluent in reading and speaking in Kipfokomu and Kiswahili. She is also good at reading texts in English.
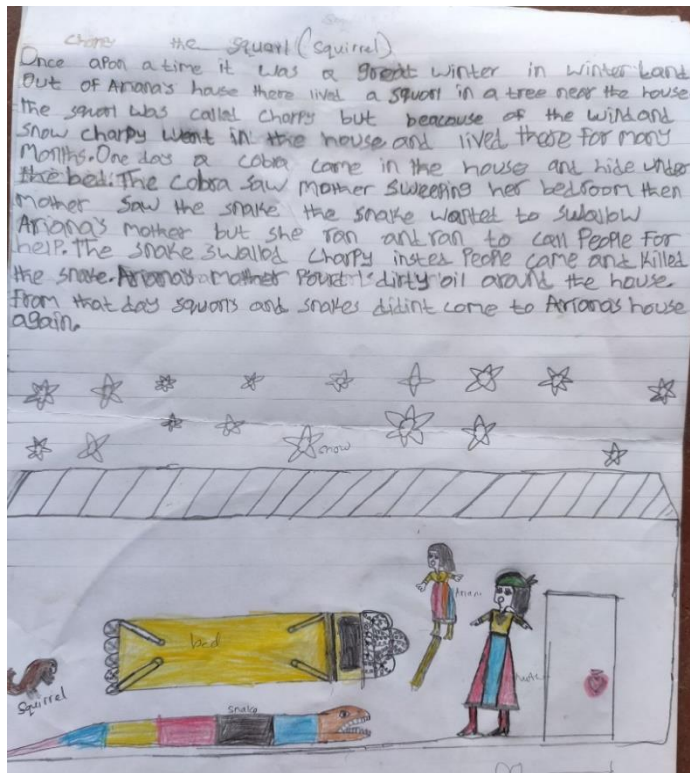
Original story	_Charpy the Squirrel_
	Once upon a time it was a great winter in winter land. Out of Ariana's house there lived a squirrel in a tree near the house. The squirrel was called Charpy but because of the wind and snow, Charpy went in the house and lived for many months. _One day a cobra came in the house and hide under the bed. The cobra saw mother sweeping her bedroom then mother saw the snake the snake wanted to swallow Ariana's mother, but she ran and ran to call people for help. The snake swallowed Charpy instead. People came and killed the snake. Ariana's mother poured dirty oil around the house. From that day squirrels and snakes didn't come to Ariana's house again._

Figure 43. Charpy the Squirrel authored by Hasango

The title of Hasango's story in Figure 43 is _Charpy the Squirrel_. Hasango's story is set in an imaginary location of "winter land". The snowy weather does not reflect the Kenyan weather pattern: she might have read about it or watched something involving snow on the television. She adopted her character, Charpy the Squirrel, from the storybook _The Adventures of Chippy the Squirrel_. She also mentioned watching a movie about the character when she was around five years old. She used the character's name and transformed it into a new story that is familiar to her life experience. In her story, she wrote that after the people came to kill the snake, Ariana's mother poured used engine oil around the house. In her context in Tsana Village, people believe that dirty engine oil is a snake repellent, thus her story's concluding sentence is "From that day, squirrels and snakes did not come to Ariana's house again". In the group discussion, the children discussed several ways to avoid snakes. Among them, the children mentioned using dirty engine oil poured around the house as a repellent. This is practiced in the Tsana community, among other communities in Kenya.

The story is written in English, and Hasango uses phrases like "once upon a time" and "one day" to signal that she is writing a story in English. She also shows how events unfold in her writing, making it clear and straightforward for her readers to understand. Her use of English is suitable for a child who is still learning the language, and the story is written in clear and legible handwriting.

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The description of the drawings suggests that the squirrel under the bed was running away from the snake. The snake wanted to swallow Ariana's mother, hence the mother dropping the broom. Ariana was also in the house. Hasango even drew the snow falling from the sky outside the house to show the weather described in her story. Her drawings also try to convey the same message visually as the written text. By looking at the pictures, one can understand the connection of the drawings to the story. The illustrations were drawn meticulously to fit the space well and were also coloured in, although she miscoloured the type of snake mentioned in her story, which is a cobra. The illustration of her story reflects what she has written in the text – one can easily understand and interpret the drawing.

In this story, Hasango made use of resemiotization, we see that part of the meaning shifts from a movie (multimedia format) and another meaning from familiar (spoken) knowledge into written text. She applied the elements that are familiar to her to the story. Kress (1997) argues that children use different modes and materials to make meaning and they do not experience difficulties in navigating between and across these modes. The way they recycle the semiotics in a creative and transformative way is driven by what captivates their interest at that moment. Kress adds that the creativity in transforming and redesigning meaning is an important way for developing children's sense of agency and voice.

Resemiotization, as contended by Stein, reshapes children's knowledge, and stimulates their learning, which is key to unleashing their creativity. It shows that children can take elements of an existing story and add some new elements to transform it into a new story, as demonstrated in Cases 1 and 2 above and 3 below. This kind of creativity shows that the meaning of the original story is altered and creates a new ground for meaning that the children deem most important. Their creativity in showing that they know how to put different elements together to redesign a new story can be adopted and developed in the classroom. It teaches the generic skill of how to construct a story and combine the visual with the linguistic. Teachers can tap into this kind of resource from the learners and build it into the classroom as a way of multimodal learning. Teachers should therefore create a multimodal learning environment where learners can use their representational resources according to their interest and intention (Pahl, 2003; Stein, 2003). To nurture children's sense of voice and agency, their learning spaces, where possible, should be "unpoliced zones" to allow them to have the freedom of choice in terms of the "stuff" of their representation (Stein, 2003, p. 124). It is also important for the teachers to have an understanding of what multimodality is and the application of its key concepts to interpreting children's multimodal textual products so that they can teach the children how to create and improve their multimodal texts (Stein, 2007).

8.6.3   Case 3 – My Dream: The Beach Vampire by Hasango

Original story	*My Dream: The Beach Vampire*
	One day, my mother, her work partners, and I travel to one of Nigerian's villages to examine the beach water. When we arrived, there was no one. One woman said "come on, lets go to the other side of the beach". Mother replied. "no thanks you go if you want to". When the woman went away, we heard him screaming "Aaaah!!!! Aaaah!!!! Vampire!!!". Then we heard someone laugh, "Ha!!! Ha!!! Ha!!! Ha!!! Ha!!!" then we saw a stone vampire. My mother and I started running. The vampire said, "I am going to use you!" he told a man. The vampire turned the man to a vampire then the man started chasing after us. My mother and I went in a car. The car took my mother and I back home. We didn't know what happened to the others. From that day, my mother and I didn't go to Nigeria again.

Figure 44. My Dream: The Beach Vampire authored by Hasango

Hasango's second story is about a dream she had where she encountered a vampire on one of Nigeria's beaches, thus giving it the title *My Dream: The Beach Vampire*. Her inspiration for this story was from a dream she had about vampires, and the rest of it is her imagination and creativity. Resemiotization has been applied again when she used the idea of her dream and transformed it into an interesting new story. In Cases 2 and 3, Hasango relies on her imagination and innovation. Holloway & Gouthro (2020) suggest that within multiliteracies, "attention is paid to the social contexts in which people learn" (p. 5). Teachers can tap into the strengths of the learners by acknowledging the value of what learners bring from their informal learning in their homes and community-based learning backgrounds to their formal education (ibid).

Hasango's writing skills were also good as she made use of dialogue in her story. She also used punctuation marks which makes her story interesting to read. In her story, Hasango is recounts that they traveled from Pokomo land to Nigeria. She seems excited to be in Nigeria to examine the beach

water. Upon arrival at the beach, she did not mention her mother's work partners but mentioned a stranger calling them to go to the other side of the beach. But the mother does not easily trust strangers. Thus, the author communicates something significant: we do not just follow strangers if they tell us to do something because they might have been victims of the vampires. Also, she advises what to do in case of danger – that one must run away. Hasango and her mother ran to the car and went home when the vampire was chasing after them. She leaves her audience in suspense, like in the movies. Hasango states that they did not know what happened to her mother's colleagues because she and her mother went home and never returned to Nigeria again.

8.6.4   Case 4 – Tom and the Gorillas by Komora

Komora was nine years old at the time he authored his story. At his home, he has access to a television. Komora mentioned in his interview having read two storybooks. It is mainly his mother who helps him with his schoolwork. His language of communication at home and school is Kipfokomu and Kiswahili, just like most of the learners at Tsana Primary School.
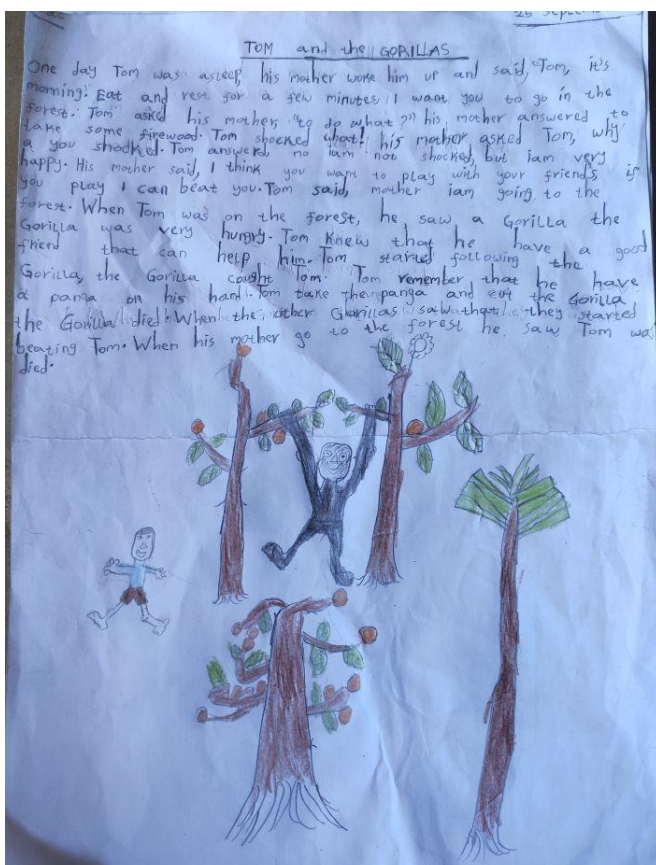
Original story	*Tom and the Gorillas*
	One day Tom was asleep, his mother woke him up and said, "Tom, it's morning! Eat and rest for a few minutes, I want you to go in the forest". Tom asked his mother, "to do what?" his mother answered, to take some firewood. Tom shocked what! His mother asked Tom, why are you shocked. Tom answered, no I am not shocked but I am very happy. His mother said, I think you want to play with your friends, if you play, I can beat you. Tom said, mother I am going to the forest. *When Tom was on the forest, he saw a gorilla the gorilla was very hungry. Tom knew that he have a good friend that can help him. Tom started following the gorilla, the gorilla caught Tom. Tom remember that he have a panga on his hand. Tom take the panga and cut the gorilla. The gorilla died. When the other gorillas saw that, they started beating Tom. When his mother go to the forest he saw Tom was died.*

Figure 45. Tom and the Gorillas authored by Komora

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Komora's story is written in English. The author explains what happens to the main character of the story at home and then in the forest where he was attacked by a gorilla. In my opinion, the story is short based on how the events unfold. This story did not follow the Labovian model[38] of narrative structure because of the missing information. There are many unanswered questions such as: When Tom went to the forest, what made him think that the gorilla was a good friend? What was his first reaction when the gorilla caught him? Did he try to run, or did he think he would fight the gorilla because he had a panga? Did Tom shout when the other gorillas started beating him? Did he try running? And how did Tom's mother know that he was dead? This story has no *resolution,* and the reader ends up with a lot of unanswered questions after finishing the story.

Komora is creative in terms of the visual and the use of language. He used quotation marks in instances of dialogue, as well as using question marks and exclamation marks. The learner is creative and is trying to connect the story to the reader. However, in his writing, there are instances of direct translation from his MT into English. Komora is not able to articulate the content in English. If he had used Kipfokomu or Kiswahili, the story would have been more precise and enjoyable for the reader. Komora is struggling with his local language(s), Kiswahili or Kipfokomu. He is imitating the sentence structure of his local language(s) in English which results in some meaning being lost. Also, some sentences like "when his mother go to the forest, he saw Tom was died" are not grammatically correct. This shows that the English language is still developing since he is still learning the language.

Concerning the use of multimodal semiotics, Komora seems to have an idea of how to integrate the visual with the written language. He drew the gorilla as a big animal, and coloured it in black, which reflects the colour of the gorilla. This is in line with Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006), who agree that illustrations can exemplify the real object being represented.

8.6.5   Case 5 – *Mtoto na Moto* by a group of child authors

In this case, I discuss a story that a group of children wrote. In this exercise, the learners were also allowed to write stories in groups. The groups included both children with weaker and more robust writing abilities. The learners were provided with an image (see Figure 46) and were asked to look at it, discuss it, and to develop and write a story based on it.

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38 There are other different models of stories but in Linguistics, Labov's is the most influential, and the children are taught this model at school.
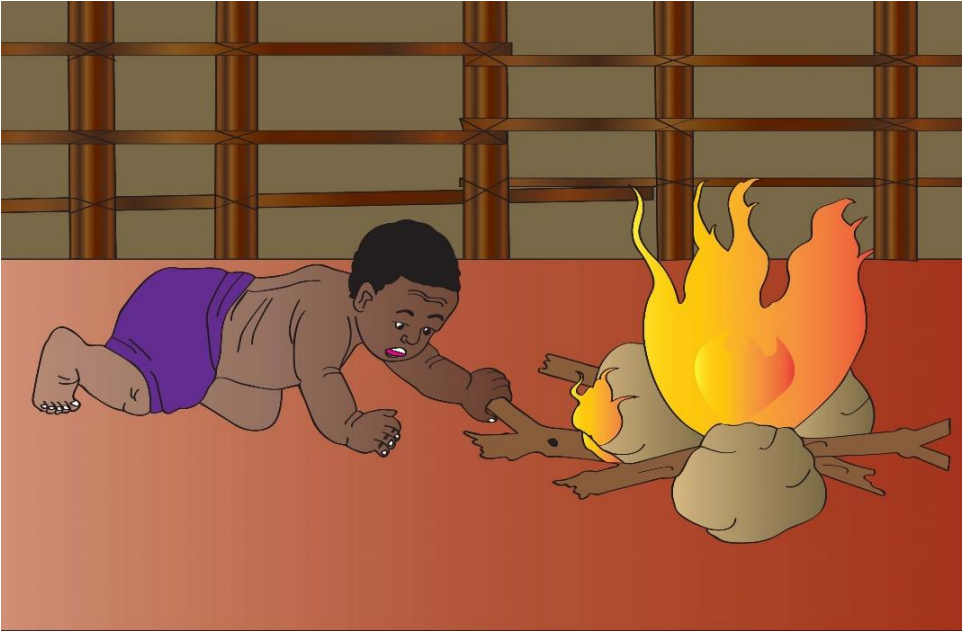
Figure 46. An image used to guide the children to develop a story (Retrieved from BTL's MTE resource materials)

I will talk about one story authored by one of the groups of children. The children gave the story's title as *Mtoto na Moto* ('The baby and the fire') – see Figure 47 below. I selected this story because the events unfold systematically, making it easy to understand. Also, the story is not just for entertainment; it has many moral lessons that children could learn from. The authors of this story chose to write the story in Kiswahili, a language that they are more comfortable using in the text. Compared to the stories in Cases 2, 3, and 4, this story is a bit longer. This could be due to the combined ideas and efforts of the learners, which may have increased their confidence in using Kiswahili.

Original story	_The Baby and the Fire_

One day Kazungu was left at home to look after the baby. Kazungu lit a traditional three-stone cooking fire and went to play. Kazungu woke the baby up and went to play. The baby crawled to the kitchen. When the baby was in the kitchen, he took an ember and started playing with it. The baby burnt himself with the fire and started crying while Kazungu continued playing outside.

The baby cried until mother came and did not find Kazungu at home. The mother heard the baby crying. The mother rushed to the kitchen and found the baby crying. The mother took the baby out of the kitchen. Mother started calling Kazungu, "Kazungu, Kazungu". Kazungu did not respond. The mother took the baby to the hospital. When she arrived, the baby was given first aid. The baby started feeling better. Mother took the baby home. When mother arrived home, the baby was sleeping, and she took him to bed. Mother went out to search for Kazungu. Mother found Kazungu. Mother called Kazungu. Mother took Kazungu home. When they reached home, mother punished Kazungu. Kazungu apologized and mother forgave him.

Figure 47. Mtoto na Moto authored by a group of child authors

The authors of this story followed Christina Pappas' (1985) elements of stories which include: _placement of the story_ – the setting and introduction of the characters; _initiating event_ – the emergence of the problem in the story; _sequent event_ – attempts to resolve the problem; _the final event_ – problem resolved or not resolved; _final_ – a restoration of the normal state of affairs or a new state of affairs; and _moral_ – the moral lesson of the story (Pappas, 1985). The content of the story is more revealing because the authors explained the sequence of the story. The unfolding of events makes it clear for the readers to understand the story. The authors also used short sentences that ease understanding. However, in their writing, the authors had some incomplete or misspelled words. It could be that they were in a hurry to finish writing and were not keen to edit their story after writing it.

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In the story, the authors also tried to convey important messages. The children depicted the danger of leaving the baby unattended in the house because an accident may, and did, occur. Secondly, when the mother came and found the baby alone and hurt, she immediately took the baby to the hospital. This shows that when one is hurt or injured, it is important to respond immediately by taking them to the hospital for medical treatment. Thirdly, it is not good to play far from the house, especially when you are supposed to be looking after a baby. In the story, they showed that Kazungu was not playing in the neighborhood, meaning that he could not hear the baby crying, and even when his mother called his name, he did not respond because he was not nearby. Kazungu's mother had to go and search for him and bring him home. He was punished for that mistake. Another important message that the authors put across is the act of forgiveness. When one has made a mistake, it is important to apologize, and the offended party should accept forgiveness. Forgiveness is an important part of Pokomo culture which children learn early on. Consequently, multiliteracies consciously, constantly, and explicitly rely on cultural diversity as an asset in learning. It also recognizes the significance of cultural diversity among learners whilst also offering them support in and innovative approaches to language acquisition (Gee, 2004; Ntelioglou et al., 2014).

The authors seem to be creative in their use of multimodality. We see that they have integrated the visuals and the written language very well. In this multimodal text, as with the rest, language comes first, giving meaning to the images that follow. The authors illustrated a kitchen, employing the generic description of a kitchen. Hence the illustration could be replaced by other images of a kitchen without losing much meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Despite them being provided with an image, the children went further to illustrate the event happening in the house. In their drawing, we see that they have shown the baby crawling in the kitchen, heading toward the three-stone cooking fire. They have also labeled food items like "rice", "milk", and "*unga*[39]" in the kitchen. In their visual meaning-making, they had a representation of what they had in mind and a reader could interpret this image with minimum effort.

8.7 Conclusion

In exploring the above literacy practices, there are some instances in which learners have engaged in activities that offered a platform for the "four concepts of multiliteracies" to take place. These concepts of multiliteracies are "situated practices, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformation". For example, for "situated practice/experiencing" to take place, learners are required to delve into "familiar"

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39 The Swahili term for 'flour'.

experiences to have a "new" experience, as argued by Cope & Kalantzis (2009b, p. 185). For instance, the stories authored by Bonaya and Hasango – *Habida Fainted* and *Charpy the Squirrel*, respectively – gave us examples of creative writing where the learners created stories from past experiences. Bonaya, for instance, borrowed an idea from an incident that happened in the village. By using his imagination and creativity, he transformed the incident into a new story while using a different semiotic resource. In Hasango's story, she used an idea from a movie, incorporated other ideas from her lived experiences, and transformed these ideas into a new story. These examples showcase instances where literacy practices were based on the learners' lived experiences. The activities were meaningful to them as they described ideas from their past lived experiences.

The literacy practices also involved the "overt instruction/conceptualization" process of knowledge. This is where students are given explicit instructions to engage in literacy activities. For example, in most of the activities the children were involved in, they followed the given instructions meticulously and adhered to the organization of writing stories as explained by their teachers. To meet the criteria of a story, their teachers, for example, insisted that each character in the children's narratives must be given a name. Additionally, the authors were also required to provide the context of the story. Furthermore, when the children were provided with an image of a baby crawling toward a firewood cooking stove, they were instructed to look at the image and write a story about it. The learners, as shown in Case 5, followed the instructions and created a story about this image. Following the explicit instructions given by their teachers contributed to the learners' success of their writing tasks.

An instance of "critical framing/analysis" was also demonstrated by the participants when we had an informal discussion about snakes and how we could protect ourselves from them. In the discussion, the learners mentioned that "people should drink their alcohol in moderation or better still, they should drink in their homes". I inquired further as to why they had all agreed to this response. They criticized the incident that happened in the village about the man who was drunk and decided to hold the snake. According to them, excessive alcohol consumption may distort one's judgment and may endanger one or more lives, just like the man in *Habida Fainted*. In the discussion, the children mentioned that if one must drink excessive amounts of alcohol, they suggest that this should rather take place at home because it is safer there and one does not have to walk around in dangerous places when already drunk.

"Transformed practice/applying" in this literacy practice has been demonstrated in most of the learners' written stories. Here, learners are encouraged to produce knowledge that is relevant to them and the world around them – knowledge that can be appropriately applied in real-world situations and to actual problems (Cope & Kalantzis, n.d., online). In the story-writing activities, the learners demonstrated that their stories were not just for entertainment, but also contained moral lessons to be

learned, as we have seen in Cases 1, 2, 3, and 5. For instance, in Case 3 about the beach vampire, we learn that when there is danger, it is important to run away from the scene and go to a safer place. In addition, the story also teaches us that we should not trust strangers – we always need to be careful of the people around us.

As suggested by Cope & Kalantzis (2015b), for the "knowledge process" to be complete, "weaving" must take place. Weaving is the moving back and forth between and among the four pedagogical concepts of knowledge processes, as elaborated on in the previous paragraphs. In the literacy activities that my participants engaged in, there were some instances of weaving that happened partly or incidentally. For example, there was weaving between overt instruction and situated practice when the learners followed the explicit instructions given by their teacher. Learners were provided with an image (situated practice) and were instructed to create a story about it (overt instruction). Another example is the "pedagogical move" of the learners critiquing the story of the drunkard, Alfred, who got bitten by the snake. The moral lesson learned from the incident (i.e., the effects of alcohol) could be applied in the world around them – this could stand as an example of a transformed practice.

Literacy learning is not a static set of skills, but rather should be treated as a transformation of skills through actual literacy design that could open, release, and stimulate the imagination of learners. At the same time, teachers should narrow the gap between academic literacy and other forms of literacies by introducing activities that "focus on the strengths of the learners and providing content relevant to their lived experiences[;] through this, teachers can meaningfully address academic standards" (Ramirez & Jimenez-Silva, 2015, p. 92). In this changing world, learners are living in a postmodern era and literacy is multifaceted and disseminated through various modes. Knowing about the interests and affinities of the learners would help teachers map a vast range of students' literacy topics, thus enabling these students to feel that the school also values their lived experiences (Aljanahi, 2019). Therefore, teachers are encouraged to allow learners to engage in literacy practices of their interest, such as giving them the freedom to select their themes in writing activities.

In this chapter, we looked at literacy as a social practice. The children were provided with the available resources in their environment and used these resources to design picture stories. In most of the stories, the learners created narratives inspired by their social experiences and the world around them. All the stories in this chapter began with an "abstract", which indicates that the story is about to begin. The stories also involved an "orientation", where the characters were introduced, and further information was given as to what they were doing in the stories. The authors also brought in the "emergence of conflicts" and their "resolutions". Most of these stories follow the Labovian description of narrative

(Labov, 1997). However, the story in Case 5 falls more within Pappas' narrative structure, especially regarding the element of restoration to the normal state of affairs (Pappas, 1985).

This activity has shown that literacy practices are never static; they change according to the designer's meaning-making. It is also in agreement with Vasquez (2016a), who argues that critical literacy is about reimagining texts and images and redesigning them to convey different messages that are more responsive to social injustices and inequalities. This is exemplified in Bonaya's story, *Habida Fainted*. The designer of the story transformed the actual incident in the village into a new story featuring different character names in a different setting. Another example is Hasango's story, *Charpy the Squirrel*. Here, the author used the names of characters from a movie and created a new story about her social experience in an imagined space of "snow land". In the case of Hasango's two stories in Figures 43 and 44, her imagination moves across cultural, linguistic, and geographical boundaries. The examples in Cases 1 and 2 show the level of creativity that the children can manifest when using their critical and creative skills. The children's imaginary mobility demonstrates a new stance on local resources and facilitates literacy transformation. It appears that their relationship in meaning-making has an emotional link to their homes and to their out-of-school experiences, and that their relationship to writing is intimately linked to their experiences of schooling (Stein, 2007).

Through their different stories, the children have shown agency, voice, and imagination that the teachers can tap into to enhance literacy. As Freire suggests, teachers and learners could become partners in the learning process by engaging in critical thinking in pursuit of mutual harmonization; importantly, both their efforts must correspond (Freire, 2005). Therefore, teachers could use such child-driven initiatives to improve literacy practices instead of relying on textbooks with a curriculum that does not speak to the worlds of these learners. Stein (2007, p. 4) states that "classrooms have the potential to become 'transformative' sites in which students' representational resources can be used productively and critically to develop curricula and pedagogies which speak to the diversity of global societies and the development of student's voices". Through the modes which the students are allowed to utilize in order to make their meanings, it links the building of democratic cultures (Freire, 2015; Henry, 1992; Luke, 2004; McLaren, 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2004).

From a pedagogical point of view, the cases of these stories provide much food for thought. The creativity of these learners' works is revealed in explicit ways. The ordinary way of viewing creativity as a "special talent" that is possessed by certain people may be challenged by this perspective, which says that creativity and innovation in all humans is a normal condition in the meaning-making process (Kress, 2001). Such a perspective on creativity "enables teachers to see their students' textual products and processes in a new light and can influence curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices" (Stein,

2007, p. 73). In addition, teachers should provide multimodal spaces and materials that encourage contextualization and resemiotization, both of which are important in learners' innovative creations of new meanings. Scholars also agree that creating such spaces both within and outside the classroom helps in stimulating imagination, experimenting, and learning. Most importantly, it helps the children in developing a sense of voice and agency (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 2000; Pahl, 2003; Stein, 2003).

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I summarize the findings that have been drawn from the data analysis and the dissertation in its entirety. Firstly, I commence with a discussion of a summary of the findings by addressing each research question as they were introduced in Chapter 1. Secondly, I give my recommendations on the areas that could be improved. Thirdly, I discuss the limitations of the study as well as giving suggestions for further research, beginning with the acknowledgement that more research is needed concerning literacy practices in multilingual contexts. This study has focused on the connection between literacy practices in and out of the school in the community of Tsana Village. The linguistic ethnography perspective of this study has provided a complex picture of the community. In this dissertation, Chapters 6 to 8 presented the data I worked with. I have provided an elaborate discussion of the data collected that related to the sub-questions of this study and which helped to assist in answering the main research question. In Chapter 6, I presented the findings related to the literacy and linguistic practices in school and home, primarily focusing on the status quo of Tsana Village. In Chapter 7, I discussed the data relating to the local languages and local knowledge, which opens up new possibilities for the use of the local languages to express important information to the community. Finally, in Chapter 8, I discussed storytelling as a literacy practice that involves the learners as authors of stories. I examined their multimodal meaning-making resources and how they used these resources in the story-designing process.

9.2 Addressing the research questions

This study is not aimed at solving the problems in Kenya's educational system but rather aimed to present an ethnographic description of the situation in one particular village. The observations from this ethnography can be used to improve the integration of in- and out-of-school literacy practices. The study was guided by a main research question and four sub-questions, the latter of which were used to answer the former.

The study sought to answer the following main research question: What are the literacy practices that are used within the school environment and in the community in multilingual Tana River County?

The questions and summary of the answers to each sub-question are given below.

Research sub-question 1: What kinds of literacy practices are children exposed to and which do they engage in within the community and in the school context?

The findings of this study reveal that there are several literacy practices that children are exposed to at school and within the community at large. In the school, there is literacy content displayed within the school environment that varies from the educational to inspirational to hygienic. Some of this content was developed by professionals while others were produced by the learners themselves. In the classrooms, the walls were decorated with charts created by the teachers. Learning materials such as textbooks written in English were available in the classroom. However, MT learning materials that were available in the school were not presented to the learners in the classrooms, hence, learners were only engaging with the textbooks written in English. In addition, although the school has storybooks in all three languages for the learners, both in softcopy and hardcopy, the teachers were not making them available to the learners.

In the classrooms, especially those of the lower grades, the classroom layout was arranged in such a way that it facilitated peer-to-peer interaction. This is what Kalantzis & Cope (2012) call "authentic classrooms". The study found that the children consulted each other and discussed different topics amongst themselves. This kind of literacy practice has been confirmed by their teachers to be helpful to the learners, especially the shy learners who experience difficulty in expressing themselves to the teachers. In addition, the teachers confirmed that they usually allow the learners to explore learning by themselves through discussions amongst themselves and then presenting their findings in class. This type of literacy practice shows that learners and teachers can be co-constructors of knowledge.

Within the community, the literacy practices are mostly articulated in the local languages. Communication amongst the community members takes place in Kipfokomu because the village is dominated by Kipfokomu-L1 speakers. Children use Kipfokomu and Kiswahili to communicate in the community and use those languages while playing both at school and at home. Important village announcements that are made regularly by the village crier are made in Kipfokomu. Posters containing important messages that were written in English, Kiswahili, Kipfokomu, and Sheng were visible in public spaces such as at the trading centre, the hospital, and the school. Linguistic landscapes and signs containing business advertisements in this village were also multilingual and multimodal. Children could engage with these kinds of communication due to their being available in public spaces.

Community members of this village also communicate through different traditional artifacts, as shown in Chapter 7, section 7.4.1. These artifacts, such as mats, handheld fans, and food covers, are not only made for their intended usage but also have inscribed texts on them to communicate messages to their intended audiences. *Kanga/leso* is the most common piece of clothing that every woman in this village owns. These items of clothing also carry different messages with various

metaphorical meanings that can be applied in multiple situations. The inscriptions on the *leso* act as a medium for women to display various linguistic skills and poetry in society.

Cultural information and knowledge are shared verbally in this community as well as through digital media. For example, knowledge about herbal medicines, their directions for use, and how to prepare them is shared verbally, while traditional stories are circulated through social media. Knowledge about traditional practices is passed on orally across generations. Children are exposed to a variety of literacy practices within this community using modern technology but also traditional technologies that have been in use in the community for centuries.

Research sub-question 2: How do teachers and parents engage in literacy practices with children?

The study revealed that there are several ways in which parents and teachers engage in literacy practices with the children. In the homes, it was evident that there are limited literacy materials available for the learners, except for the Bible and schoolbooks. However, the parents in some of the families provided their children with storybooks, magazines, and newspapers in addition to the Bible and schoolbooks. The research revealed that parents and children read to pass the formal examinations. Apart from print resources, some homes have televisions and radios. In some homes where they do not have televisions, parents allow their children to go and watch television programs at their neighbours' houses.

With the advancement of telecommunication, at least every home has a mobile phone. Some have smartphones and others could only afford analogue phones. However, not all parents allow their children to play with their mobile phones; these parents only allow their children to use their phones when necessary, especially to help the parents communicate or to do transactions through M-Pesa, a mobile money transfer application. Some children, who have access to the internet and are allowed to play with their parents' phones, watch YouTube as well as accessing other literacy materials available on the internet.

Some parents read with their children. This study revealed that parents who had higher levels of formal education valued print literacy practices more.

Research sub-question 3: How do parents and teachers articulate their views and perceptions of literacy practices?

The study revealed that, despite Kipfokomu being the learners' preferred language of communication at home and school, the teachers reported that they preferred using translanguaging between English and Kiswahili. The MT is only used to clarify difficult concepts that even Kiswahili cannot explain clearly. The findings also showed that the school has MTE resource books, but these are not in use in the

classrooms. The teachers do not implement the LiEP, and do not teach the MT subject as they are expected to as required by the curriculum. This has resulted in the learners not choosing their MT as the language of choice when writing their stories, as shown in Chapter 8, because they lack the knowledge on how to use their MTs in writing due to their different orthography from English.

This study also revealed that teachers and parents perceive reading to be primarily for passing examinations as the learners are tested in English. This is evidenced in the school by the availability of English textbooks only in the classroom. Despite having other MT resource books in the school, the books are not presented in the classrooms for the learners to use. Furthermore, the school has provided storybooks in all three languages for the learners, but the teachers are not making them available to the learners. The teachers of the lower grades were aware of the availability of the storybooks but claimed not to know that there were also storybooks available for their learners. The learners had not been exposed to storybooks at school or at home – they only read in preparation for the exams and did not read for entertainment. However, some homes are rich in literacy resources that are available for the children of these families; these remain exceptions.

Parental involvement in a child's education is important in the learning process. However, this study has revealed that there is minimal parental involvement in the learning process of the children. The teachers complained that parents do not help their children with homework, with the result that some of these teachers resorted to not giving the learners homework that would require the help of their parents. These teachers have come up with ways to help the learners to be able to complete their homework on their own without help from their parents. Parental input is a requirement of the new curriculum; however, the results have shown that most of the parents have minimal input in the formal learning of their children, despite some of these parents having gone to school. Some parents do, however, help their children in literacy development, specifically those who understand the importance of their involvement in the learning process of their children. Some parents have shown their commitment to their children's learning by providing literacy resources for their children. Some parents, though illiterate, also show interest in helping their children with schoolwork by involving relatives or neighbours who have gone to school.

    i.   Research sub-question 4: What kinds of literacy practices and resources do children bring to a guided storytelling intervention?

In the story-writing activity, the learners were given the freedom to choose the themes of their stories, resulting in them writing stories on different topics with a variety of backgrounds and justifications. Most of the topics arose from personal experiences, ranging from the narration of events on farming

and grazing, dreams, and survival of snake bites, dog bites, bee stings, and accidents. There were even a few fables, myths, and Bible stories. When designing the texts, the children incorporated their own past experiences and personal historical events in the stories. Some of the stories they wrote had important lessons to learn from, which shows that the learners not only write to entertain their readers but also to convey critical social lessons. The children's imaginary mobility demonstrates a new stance on local resources and facilitates literacy transformation. It appears that their relationship in meaning-making has an emotional link to their homes, to their out-of-school experiences, and that their relationship to writing is intimately linked to their experiences of schooling. By acknowledging the value of what learners bring from their informal learning at home to school, teachers can tap into the strengths of the learners and build on these in the classroom as a way of multimodal learning.

9.1 The theoretical contribution of the study

The concepts of critical literacy (besides Freire's conceptualization thereof) and multiliteracies have mostly been developed and used in Northern contexts. There has been much focus on digital literacies and the benefits of integrating digital resources into the classroom, especially within the multiliteracies paradigm. In the context of my study, where digital literacies are scarce, I have focused on a relatively underexplored component of multiliteracies, namely the local cultural modalities and meaning-making processes. In many Southern contexts, the multiliteracies frame needs to be supplemented by more decolonial approaches which move beyond Western ideas of modalities and binaries between digital and print. I discovered how materialities and cultural artifacts introduce and use various forms of sophisticated meaning-making resources using metaphorical language (as is the case with *leso* cloth) and understandings of different artifacts within the landscape (as is the case with oral linguascaping). These kinds of meaning-making resources within the multiliteracies framework are much less discussed and explored in comparison with their digital counterparts. My study shows that it is time to decolonize multiliteracies.

Linguistic citizenship has identified the need to preserve minority languages. Just like proponents of the theory have argued how people are not passive actors in the face of linguistic colonization, some marginalized speakers have resisted by taking the initiative to challenge agents of language colonization, such as English and Kiswahili. Examples include acts of linguistic citizenship beyond education, such as in music, comedy, and theatre. I have observed that this is also happening in Tsana Village. One way of decolonizing multiliteracies is to supplement the existing multiliteracies with insights from linguistic citizenship. Using this framing has enabled me to go beyond the problems found in the educational system, which so many studies on education in African contexts document. I am able

to focus instead on glimpses of resistance, otherwiseness, and the integration of local knowledge, even if only in very temporary and transient ways. Linguistic citizenship has provided me with the theoretical framework to make these glimpses visible, thus providing concrete ways of changing the educational setting with resources and approaches already available to and used by the community.

9.2   Future Interventions I would like to do in the community

It is a standard practice that PhD dissertations include recommendations in the final chapter. However, as I was writing mine, I became increasingly uncomfortable with giving recommendations with the hope that anonymous others will implement it. The recommendations also rang hollow, with me writing things like the parents should be encouraged to be more involved in the school. Knowing the circumstances in the community and the long hours that parents work, I felt that this recommendation seemed somewhat condescending to the community. Instead, I decided to think about what I could do in collaboration with the community, to improve the literacy practices in Tsana. In this section I thus propose concrete interventions that I would like to go back to the Tsana community and implement.

This research mission inspired me to register a Community-Based Organization called *Bright Tana Initiative,* of which one of its objectives is to complement government initiatives towards achieving inclusive quality basic education. Through the Community-Based Organization platform, I would source for funding to implement community projects. One of the projects that I intend to do is to set up a community library. I would form a committee to oversee the community library and seek funding for its survival. Once the library has been set up, I would source literacy materials from donors and well-wishers. The community library would be furnished with literacy resources and equipment such as computers, the internet, and printing machines, among others. The library would be accessible to learners, teachers, parents, and all community members. The availability of a fully functional community library would help the Tsana community members to have access to additional literacy resources and would also enhance a reading culture in the community.

To keep the library functional, I would also recruit part-time volunteers who would be willing to keep the library open and accessible. These volunteers could be teachers, high school graduates, and university students. These volunteers would also be assisting learners in reading and writing activities and ensuring that all the rules agreed by the library committee are followed.

I would like to help the community to view their local knowledge differently. At the moment, they value their knowledge in different spaces but not in the school. I have seen the success of the children's creative narratives activity when I first worked with this community. The children brought their

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resources and demonstrated their ability to create and transform knowledge, as shown in Chapter 8. Therefore, I would like to develop further the story-writing project, with the stories ultimately being compiled into a booklet and circulated to the children. I would also be partnering with the drama teacher and facilitate printing of his Pokomo stories and making them available in the community library. I would also connect teacher Duda with the *"African storybook project"* - a digital platform where the teacher could get his work published online. I would also involve the community members who have ancient knowledge about economic, social, and cultural knowledge that we could gather and make a booklet. These activities would facilitate the production of more literacy materials for the learners and the community and will instill in the community a sense of pride in their culture and language.

This study revealed that there is minimal parental involvement in the learning process of the children. Parental input is important in a child's education process and, as such, has been included in the new CBC. To ensure that parents are engaged in their children's learning, I would work closely with the community administration, community health workers, and educators. These key stakeholders would initiate conversations with parents. I would do this through advocacy training to enhance awareness of the importance of parental involvement in their children's learning. As pointed out by Ngwaru (2012), when parents are not made aware of their capabilities in supporting their children's education, they tend to think that they are unable to nurture their children's literacy and social emotions, believing instead that this is the role of the teachers. To also enable parents to become more involved in their children's schooling, I would involve them to take part in the story writing project where they would work together with their children. As suggested by Ngwaru (2012), "parents should not have any reason not to engage in literacy development except for the lack of awareness" (p. 35).

The world today is rapidly advancing in technology, and multimodal learning has become the order of the day. As such, teachers should not only rely on textbooks but should also incorporate other modes of learning. Teachers in this study confirmed using children's group discussions, storytelling, and dramatization in teaching, which is important in the learning process. However, most of these teachers did not report using digital technology in their instructions despite having digital resources in the school. To ensure that teachers are digitally literate, I would be working closely with the Ministry of Education, to facilitate the training of some teachers who will in turn pass on the acquired skills to other teachers in schools on how to navigate the use of digital resources in their schools. For example, the teachers would help one another learn how to operate these gadgets for the benefit of the students. Such teachers would then pass the skills to learners, for instance, on how to meaningfully use the internet, which is a key resource in making them global citizens. In addition, exposing them

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to these devices at a young age would enable the learners to keep abreast with the rapidly advancing technological world.

Implementing the foregoing proposals and, possibly, others that would come from the community, I believe that I would be able to facilitate the children in the Tsana community to have access to more literacy practices. This would not only enable them to read for exams but also enhance their reading for leisure, practices that could lead to improved learning outcomes in the school and to a thriving community.

9.3   Limitations and direction for further research

Naturally, this study has some limitations. To start with, due to the restrictions put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some data collection methods could not be used to their full extent. The research was supposed to take place in two different socio-economic contexts within the county, but due to the lockdown, the research was conducted in only one location. Therefore, one cannot generalize the findings. However, qualitative research design does not aim at generalizing findings; rather, it aims at providing an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. Furthermore, due to the lockdown imposed by the Kenyan government during my data collection period, I had minimal opportunity for classroom observations in order to give a concrete interpretation of the literacy practices in the CBC. In this study, I purposely avoided talking at length about the implementation of the CBC because there is currently an ongoing debate on the topic. Therefore, I suggest that further research should be conducted on the literacy practices in the new CBC. Additionally, only learners who were active participants in class and who were comfortable communicating with me in my role as researcher took part in this study. Future research could address some of the abovementioned limitations and other areas that I discuss below.

9.4   Conclusion of the study

This study stemmed from my having worked in the non-governmental sector where I implemented different educational projects within Tana River County. In my life and work experience in this rural part of Kenya, I confirmed what has been reported in the media: that Tana River County has one of the poorest education standards compared to other counties in the nation. Learning outcomes have historically been low in schools from this community which has led to high dropout rates, early marriages, and a poor quality of life. I strategically selected my dissertation topic – *Literacy practices in and out of school in multilingual Kenya: An ethnographic study of Tana River County* – which was aimed at creating an understanding of the literacy practices in this community to inform policy and

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practice regarding the implementation of support structures for the Children's Education and Education for All goals. Consequently, with the growing interest in interdisciplinary research, the findings of this study could initiate conversations with other researchers from a wide range of disciplines and specializations, exhibiting a common interest in learning more about literacy practices in a multilingual rural setting. In addition, the findings may provide a foundation for further research on literacy practices, particularly from the perspective of sociolinguistics which has not (yet) been fully ventured into, especially in rural areas such as Tana River County. Furthermore, the findings of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge that has already been and continues to be developed on literacy practices but from different perspectives.

By enabling teachers, parents, and children to talk about literacy practices in this community, this study has also created a space for the assessment of the implementation of the LiEP in the school. As pointed out by many other studies, there is a disconnect between the policy and its actual implementation. Despite having MT resource materials in the school and the teachers being Pokomo-L1 speakers, these teachers are not using these resources nor are they making them available to the learners to interact with. This can only be changed when the Pokomo speakers start viewing their language as important and rethinking their language in broader political terms. This contests the notion that a lack of material resources in the L1 is a challenge that affects the implementation of mother tongue-based education (Gacheche, 2010; Musau, 2003; Prah, 2009; Rubagumya, 2009; Smith, 1985; Stephen Krashen, 2007).

Moreover, the study shows that the school has digital resources available for learning, but there is minimal evidence of the use of multimodal teaching approaches in the school. It has been reported to be due to the teachers' lack of digital knowledge. This study challenges the notion that the availability of digital technologies plays a significant role in learners' multiliteracies development, as argued by Cope & Kalantzis (2015), Cox (2012), Gee (2005), Mills (2010), Neumann & Neumann (2017), and Simpson et al. (2013). The message is clear that a radical change needs to happen within the education system, the teachers, and the parents for the benefit of the learning outcomes of Tana River's children. The school needs to come up with various strategies to ensure that there is effective literacy learning, that parents fully involve themselves in the learning process of their children, and that both parties work together for the benefit of the learners. My study has also given glimpses of where these changes can occur by going beyond what is lacking in schooling and looking at how community practices can be used in the classroom. Cultural practices, narratives, family experiences, and linguistic landscapes and artifacts available in the lives of these learners could be used to enhance literacy in a way that incorporates their worlds.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Social, Behavioural and Education Research Approval

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

1 October 2019

Project number: 10423

Project Title: Literacy Practices in and out of school in multilingual Kenya: An ethnographic study of Tana River county

Dear Ms Rahama Abiyo

Your response to stipulations submitted on 17 September 2019 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
29 August 2019	28 August 2020

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (10423) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Budget	Research Budget	14/06/2019	version 1
Parental consent form	Parent or legal guardian consent form Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Assent form	Child assent form Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Data collection tool	Teacher's in-depth interview guide Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Data collection tool	Parents in-depth interview guide Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Data collection tool	Children's in-depth interviews Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Data collection tool	Texts and Images which will be analysed for this study Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Data collection tool	Classroom observation checklist Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Request for permission	Request for approval letter Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Informed Consent Form	Consent form for parents Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Data collection tool	literacy practices observation tool Rehema	23/07/2019	1
Informed Consent Form	Consent form for teachers Rehema_Updated	13/09/2019	Revised Version
Research Protocol/Proposal	Rehema Proposal edited 13th September	13/09/2019	Revised

| Default | Response to REC stipulations | 13/09/2019 | 1 |

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

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Appendix 2: National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation Research Licence

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 508513

Date of Issue: 10/October/2019

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Ms.. Rahama Abiyo of Stellenbosch University, has been licensed to conduct research in Tanariver on the topic: Literacy Practices in and out of school in multilingual Kenya: An ethnographic study of Tana River County for the period ending : 10/October/2020.

License No: NACOSTI/P/19/2054

508513

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document,
Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

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Appendix 3: Research Authorization

THE PRESIDENCY

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telegrams "DCC" Tana Delta

Telephone 020 2408466"Hosla"

E-mail dctanadelta@yahoo.com
When replying please quote

Ref. No. TDSC/ ADM.1/12 VOL.(96)
And date

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COUNTY COMMISSIONER

TANA DELTA SUB COUNTY

P.O. BOX 1-80201

GARSEN.

DATE : 23ᵀᴴ JANUARY, 2020

THE CHIEF
NGAO LOCATION

THE CHIEF
SALAMA LOCATION

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Reference is made to a letter from National Commissioner, Science, Technology & Innovation Ref.No. **508513** dated **10ᵗʰ October, 2019** on the above subject refer.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that, **Ms.Rehema Abiyo** of **Stellenbosch** University has been authorized to undertake research at Ngao and **Hewani** villages in **Tana Delta** Sub-County as from **January, 2020** to **October, 2020**.

Kindly accord her necessary assistance.

Thank you.

CHARLES AKWANALO
DEPUTY COUNTY COMMISSIONER
TANA DELTA SUB-COUNTY

COPY TO:

THE ASSISTANT COUNTY COMMISSIONER
TARASAA DIVISION

THE ASSISTANT COUNTY COMMISSIONER
GARSEN DIVISION

Appendix 4: Sub-County Director of Education's Approval

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

Rehema Bona Abiyo
Stellenbosch University
Student No.: 23439637
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
South Africa

20th January 2020

Director of Education
Tana River County
Kenya

Dear Sir,

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT ARAP MOI AND GADENI PRIMARY SCHOOLS

My name is Rehema Abiyo, a Kenyan and a PhD student at the Stellenbosch University in South Africa. I am conducting a research project entitled *Literacy Practices in and out of school in multilingual Kenya: An ethnographic study of Tana River County*, to fulfil the requirements of my studies towards a PhD in General Linguistics. The study is under the supervision of Dr. Marcelyn Oostendorp of Stellenbosch University, Department of General Linguistics.

I am hereby seeking your **approval to approach Arap Moi and Gadeni primary schools** in Tana Delta Sub-county. I would like to have an access to (four) pupils of grade 3 and their class teachers for each school, who will participate in in-depth interviews. I will also be doing classroom observations while teaching will be taking place. However, these participants (pupils and teachers) will only participate if they give informed consent.

The research is estimated to take up to three months for each school. However, in the course of the three months, I will also be doing the same exercise with some community members in the two villages. Therefore, I will be in schools from time to time. The meetings with the teachers and pupils will take place at the schools.

I attach herewith copies of my permissions to conduct the research from Stellenbosch University Human Research Ethics Committee, and the Permanent Secretary, Higher Education and Science Council of Kenya.

For further questions please contact me at +254738919757/ +254721655919. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Rehema Abiyo

CC: Sub-county Director of Teachers Service Commission, Tana Delta
       Sub-county Director of Education, Tana Delta

Appendix 5: Parent/legal guardian consent for a child to participate in the research

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

My name is **Rehema Abiyo,** a student from the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University. I would like to invite your child to take part in a study conducted by me. Your child will be invited as a possible participant because what they read, write and interact with inside and outside the classroom will help in the understanding of Literacy Practices that are available in school and the community, for the children.

1. WHY AM I DOING THIS STUDY?

The reason for this study is to understand literacy practices that children are exposed to and to also understand the literacy practices that the children are engaging with, especially in an environment that they speak and learn in English, Kiswahili and Kipfokomo.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF MY CHILD?

If you consent to your child taking part in this study, I will then approach the child for their assent to take part in the study. If the child agrees, he/she will be asked to participate in an in-depth interview. I will ask him/her to talk about his/her perspectives about reading and writing, and also collect some of their drawings, writing, and crafts. The interviews will be audio-recorded, and I will take photos of the drawings and writings. He/she will be also observed in the classroom while the teacher conducts lessons.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I do not expect that your child will be distressed by the research but if it happens, the child may stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO THE CHILD OR THE SOCIETY

There is no direct benefit to the child. However, this research will give a first-hand opportunity to children to express themselves, share their views and experiences about reading and writing. Whatever the children will tell me is also likely to help in the improvement of literacy practices in Tana River and Kenya at large. Their information will help to let more people know about literacy practices in a multilingual context.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research is purely voluntary. There will not be any payment in form of cash or material items that will be given to you or your child for participating in this research

6. PROTECTION OF YOU AND YOUR CHILD'S INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND IDENTITY

Any information you or your child will share with me during this study and that could identify you or your child will be protected. This will be done:

- I will take strict precautions to safeguard you and your child's personal information throughout the study. Your information will be stored in my personal computer whose password I know alone. I will share the data with my supervisor as necessary using secured internet network connections.
- Your information will be kept without your name on it and personal identifiers will be removed, and you will be given pseudo names to protect your identity. The in-depth interviews will all be digitally recorded, and the files will be kept safe on a password-protected laptop.

- After data analysis, the collected data will be stored in places only accessible by me (in the personal computer for softcopies and a safe for hardcopies). I will destroy them when the research is completed.
- Some of the research may get published and presented at conferences but your identities will always remain protected.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You and your child can choose whether to be part of this study or not. If you consent to your child taking part in the study, please note that your child may choose to withdraw or decline participation at any time without any consequence. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions they don't want to answer and remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw your child from this study if;

- the child changes his/her mind about participating and withdraws their informed consent
- the child shared information that could put them at risk.

8. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact

Researcher: Rehema Abiyo

Email: 23439637@sun.ac.za

Phone: +254738 919757 / +2784 5435923

Supervisor: Dr. Marcelyn Oostendorp

Email: moostendorp@sun.ac.za

Phone: +2782 0850521

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Your child may withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. Neither you nor your child is waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because you are

participating in this research study. If you have questions regarding your or your child's rights as a research participant, contact Ms. Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARENT/ LEGAL GUARDIAN OF THE CHILD-PARTICIPANT

As the parent/legal guardian of the child I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.

- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.

- All issues related to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ *(name of parent)* agree that the researcher may approach my child to take part in this research study, as conducted by Rehema Abiyo.

_____   _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian   **Date**

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator,** I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the parent/legal guardian. I also declare that the parent/legal guardian was encouraged and given ample time to ask any questions.

_____ _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   **Date**

Appendix 6: Child assent form

ASSENT FORM FOR MINORS

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Literacy Practices in and out of school in multilingual Kenya: An ethnographic study of Tana River County.

RESEARCHERS' NAME(S): Rehema Bona Abiyo

RESEARCHER'S CONTACT NUMBER: +254 738919757/ +2784 5425923

What is RESEARCH?

Research is something we do find **NEW KNOWLEDGE** about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about children and teenagers and the things that affect their lives, their schools, their families, and their health. We do this to try and make the world a better place!

What is this research project all about?

This research is about knowing how you read and understand information written in the forms of texts, pictures, music, videos, etc. I will also ask you about the languages that you use to read and write, e.g., English, Kiswahili, and Kipfokomo.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

You are invited to this research because your views will help us to understand more about how children in Tana River learn and understand what they read.

Who is doing the research?

I will be the one to conduct the research. I am a student at Stellenbosch University and doing this research is a requirement needed so that I finish my studies.

What will happen to me in this study?

You will take part in an interview, and I will ask you general questions about the reading. You will be free to talk to me in Kipfokomo or Kiswahili. I will also come to your classroom and observe how you participate in the learning process. You can ask questions at any time. I will take notes and record your voice to get all that you will say. I will also ask your permission to take photographs of your drawings, writing, and any other art that you made.

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Can anything bad happen to me?

Nothing bad will happen to you. But in case you are not happy as a result of being in the study, you should tell **your** parents.

Can anything good happen to me?

Yes. You are allowed to share your views and experiences and what you tell us, is likely to help other children. I will come back to the school after my study is completed and tell you what I found.

Will anyone know I am in the study?

Your participation in the research will be kept secret. However, information about you will be given to my study supervisor. I will not mention your name in the reports arising from the discussion.

Who can I talk to about the study?

If you have any questions or problems related to this research, you can contact me or my supervisor using the contact details given below. You can also ask your parents or class teacher and/or headteacher to contact me.

Contact Details of the Researcher

Name: Rehema Abiyo

Mob no.:+254738 919757 / +2784 5425923

Email: abiyorehema@gmail.com / 23439637@sun.ac.za

Contact Details of the Supervisor

Name: Dr. Marcelyn Oostendorp

Mobile No.: +2782 0850521

Email: moostendorp@sun.ac.za

What if I do not want to do this?

If you don't want to do this, you can refuse to take part in the study even if your parents have agreed to your participation; and there will be no problem. You can stop being in the study at any time without getting into trouble.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

YES   NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES   NO

Do you understand that you can STOP being in the study at any time?

YES   NO

_____   _____

Signature of Child   Date

Appendix 7: Consent form for teachers

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

My name is **Rehema Abiyo,** a student from the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University. I would like to invite you to take part in a study conducted by me. You were approached as a possible participant because your views will help in the understanding of Literacy Practices that are available in school and the community, for the children.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand literacy practices that children are exposed to and to also understand the literacy practices that the children engaging with, especially in an environment that they speak and learn in English, Kiswahili and Kipfokomo.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in in-depth interviews, I will ask you to talk about your perspectives about literacy practices. The interviews will be audio recorded. Your lessons will be observed and audio recorded with your permission.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I do not expect that you will be distressed by the research but if it does become distressing, you may stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO THE SOCIETY

There is no direct benefit that you will get. However, you are allowed to share your views and experiences about literacy. The information you will tell us is also likely to help in the improvement of literacy practices in Tana River County and Kenya at large. Your information will help to let more people know about literacy practices in a multilingual context. You could also learn about other literacy practices that you are not familiar with, that may help in your profession.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research is purely voluntary. There will not be any payment in form of cash or material items that will be rendered to you for participating in this research

6. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

Any information you share with me during this study and that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected. This will be done;

- I will take strict precautions to safeguard your personal information throughout the study. Your information will be stored in my personal computer whose password I know alone. I will share the data with my supervisor as necessary using secured internet network connections.

- Your information will be kept without your name on it and personal identifiers will be removed, and you will be given a pseudo name to protect your identity. The in-depth interviews will all be digitally recorded, and the files will be kept safe on a password-protected laptop.

- After data analysis, the collected data will be stored in places only accessible by me (in the personal computer for softcopies and a safe for hardcopies). I will destroy them when the research is completed.

- Some of the research may get published and presented at conferences but your identities will always remain protected.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and remain in the study.

However, I may excuse you from this study if;

- you change your mind about participating and withdraw your informed consent.
- you reveal information that puts you at risk.

8. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact

Researcher: Rehema Abiyo

Email: 23439637@sun.ac.za

Phone: +254738 919757 / +2784 5435923

Supervisor: Dr. Marcelyn Oostendorp

Email: moostendorp@sun.ac.za

Phone: +2782 0850521

9.   RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because you are participating in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms. Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.

- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.

- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by **Rehema Abiyo**

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator,** I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. Also, I would like to select the following option:

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.
	The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this "Consent Form" is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   **Date**

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Appendix 8: Consent form for parents/guardians

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

My name is **Rehema Abiyo,** a student from the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University. I would like to invite you to take part in a study conducted by me. You were approached as a possible participant because your views will help in the understanding of Literacy Practices that are available in school and the community, for the children.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand literacy practices that children are exposed to and to also understand the literacy practices that the children engaging with, especially in an environment that they speak and learn in English, Kiswahili and Kipfokomo.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in in-depth interviews, I will ask you to talk about your perspectives about literacy. The interviews will be audio recorded.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I do not expect that you will be distressed by the research but if it does become distressing you may stop participating at any time without any negative consequences. If you become distressed by any of the procedures in this research, I will refer you for counselling if necessary. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO THE SOCIETY

There is no direct benefit that you will get. However, you are allowed to share your views and experiences about literacy. The information you will tell us is also likely to help in the improvement of literacy practices in Tana River County and Kenya at large. Your information will help to let more people know about literacy practices in a multilingual context.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research is purely voluntary. There will not be any payment in form of cash or material items that will be rendered to you for participating in this research.

6. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND IDENTITY

Any information you share with me during this study and that could identify you as a participant will be protected. The following will be done;

- I will take strict precautions to safeguard your personal information throughout the study. Your information will be stored in my personal computer whose password I know alone. I will share the data with my supervisor as necessary using secured internet network connections.

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- Your information will be kept without your name on it and personal identifiers will be removed, and you will be given a pseudo name to protect your identity. The in-depth interviews will all be digitally recorded, and the files will be kept safe on a password-protected laptop.

- After data analysis, the collected data will be stored in places only accessible by me (in the personal computer for softcopies and a safe for hardcopies). I will destroy them when the research is completed.

- Some of the research may get published and presented at conferences but your identities will always remain protected.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and remain in the study.

However, I may excuse you from this study if;

- you change your mind about participating and withdraw your informed consent.
- you reveal information that puts you at risk.

8. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact

Researcher: Rehema Abiyo

Email: 23439637@sun.ac.za

Phone: +254738 919757 / +2784 5435923

Supervisor: Dr. Marcelyn Oostendorp

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9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

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DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.

- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.

- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by **Rehema Abiyo**

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator,** I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. Also, I would like to select the following option:

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.
	The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this "Consent Form" is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   **Date**

Appendix 9: Children's Group Discussion (Question and Answers)

1. Where do you find snakes in Tsana Village?

   - Bush, trees, school, farm, near the river, in the house, toilets, in the bathroom.

2. What do you do to avoid snakes?

   - Do not sit under a tree.

   - Do not play in the bush.

   - Pour dirty oil around the house, bathroom, and toilet.

   - Keep a cat in the house; it kills snakes.

   - Burn a rubber near the house. The smell of rubber drives snakes away.

   - Drink alcohol in moderation or drink alcohol at home.

3. In case someone has been bitten by a snake, what should you do?

   - Tighten with a belt the area above the affected area of the victim. It helps to avoid the circulation of the poison to the rest of the body.

   - Remove the teeth of the snake in the affected area.

   - If you have the antidote stone, place it on the affected area to remove the poison.

   - Take the victim to the hospital immediately.

   - Call his/her family member.

4. Do you learn about snakes at school?

   - No

5. Do you want to learn about snakes at school? If so, what content?

   - Yes.

     - We want to know how to kill snakes.

     - How do we avoid snakes?

     - We also want to know if you are sleeping and find a snake crawling on the mosquito net. What are you supposed to do?

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Appendix 10: Nyuni jwa Rhikimo (Pokomo and English translation)

NYUNI JWA RHIKIMO na JBaraka

Wiya

Nigije mpompowe, nigije mpompowe mwana madzi ya kipepo mfalme madzi ya hangaike x2

Mpeka na mpeka, mpeka na mpeka, mahaju ya vyaana mpaka mwiso kuvyajwa Dumimba jwa Madinka. Dumimba ekiishi kadzidzi ka Murhikicha. Kadzidzi haka kewa kahikahi ya tsana ndeya ya Mwanapaka kwa danda ya muyao dzua, na maziwa kadhaa; Maziwa haya yewa Nchikobwe dyiyokuwa ziwa dya maalate ya winzi wa binensa dza nguu na ngwena, Silowa ambadyo diwa ziwa dya kushoma nteku za nswi, mabudi ya mamba na kuloa mapare ya ntuku na mpumi nkuunkuu.

Dumimba ewa muyume jwa muke mmodza na mwana mumodza ee kuwa galitama. Ewa muntu mufufi mweye ngaro zakwe na bagwi ya nsimba, kisa munkundu tswee dza mwana atsawaa. Dumimba ewa na matso makuu na masikiyo ya kujinka. Ewa ni bariedha jwa maalate ya binensa wonse wa badani, madzini na hata nyuni wa angani. Ingawa miedha minji Dumimba ekimusaidia mukaziwe heduli kuima mumpunga rhrikimo ya dombe ya tsana ya Mwanapaka.

Buwa ya chimo ipfofika Dumimba kamurata kumudaraba mukaziwe kusabvara mumpunga. Dza kawaida yao warooka yunkuku jwa vitatuzi watsukuya magembe na mpanga kwenda Rhikimo. Iwa hatua ya waho wa kuvusa mapae ya kutosa. Ela wafika mapfema chima cha saa modza. Heduli kambika matsaza ya matimbe kisa kasimika nyungu ya marika ya ngwena ipfodabva kuhokoha kaungana na Dumimba kuumaliza humuyomo wiwokuwa na pfaiya dya ndago nyinji.

Muntu namukaziwe waima na kuunga ndago, miganga nguyuwe, mubaya na manga. Wewa mahiri kutahora muganga nguyuwe viwi ambu kudzigijiya mubaya basi, koro ntainawasha hat ana kuyeha pfee. Dzua dya musikahi wauja andani kuongeza nguvu. Dumimba kayashada muuno hamarika, kazitsowatsowa hizi nyama; kuzidya nakudzilamba hividowe. Heduli ae jeje ee tsaka matimbe, kagija kazi ya kuyashurupa koro yewa moho. Wende fwiya, kivwii kipfoperuka wagala gembeni yupfii.

Dza nikwambievyo Dumimba ewa muyume jwa kiwawaa, dzuwa dya kupfowa muyomo chima cha ngwee ntandahu ewa kawisa na wagala nyumbani mapfema.

Huude siku Dumimba kayaa dza gogo dya munyambembe koro ewa na matsofu muuno, ela chamukoche warauka dza kawaida na masofu kwenda kuusabvara humuyomo waimiyeo dzana. Wajufukuta yuguu maana wachelewa kusuka chikoni na maho yonse yehwajwa na wagangana wakijo koro kwiwa na jila ya ngadzi. Wavuka na chiko cha haushooo…chambe wafike ndago zonse waimiyezo dzana zimeya kipya ishinu zimafika chima cha nkuhi.

A! a! yusiku yumodza tuu? Basi ngaadze, "hidi si dzamo dya kiyada". Dumimba kaduguma heketu. Mojowe uwa muziho muuno, muyume muzima kalengwalengwa na mitsozi. Ela humuke kamungiza mojo na kamushika moo na mwisowe waiujiya kawii iide kazi.

Maguraniye warooka kawii kwenda kudoya kwamba dze? Kuyamukadze Rhikimo? ela wapfofika hali iwa nyumu zaidi, koro imea vyumuni chima cha marura…..Dumimba kavunza nkuhi gere ye nkondeye kukidisa chiiyo na kumuuza murumbizi kwamba kamutsoweya munamba mpaka

atongane na kichale hikide chima? Baada ya sosobva na gumacha ya kitemo kiyeya Dumimba kakubali kuiiujua iide kazi ya kuima uude muyomo, ela nae kayapfa kukabiliana na hidabvu ya kuyameza hamani.

Baada ya gembe dya musikahi muzima, kenda kakenta ndihi mfungahe za mtsungunsungu kafuya nsae za matante yeyo na sumu ya nyongo ya ngwena. Kalekanya uha wa mkoi na miriji ya kufurudwa nkongweni. Chioro kipfofika kamusindikiza mukaziwe mpaka chikoni kahikikisha kwamba kavuka naghea ela jeje kauja kulacha mumeza hizi ndago.

Ewa na gudufa ya jonee ya magura ndiyo aidiyeyo miyoro na shai ya kukaanga ingizijweyo vumba. Siku unaa mwezi ungara dza musikahi wa tswee. Rhikimo kwinyamaa mya ntakuwa na hata twi ya binadamu, lamuda sauti za nguu 'I o o o o o! gunga za nsimba simba 'mmmmm! Mmmm! Uuu! Uuuu! Sauti za madzongoo 'cha hohohoho' rhwerwerwe za vyuya na hoooo za mke jwa mbu. Yosa! kusikika muvumo mkuu uubijwewo na kivvii kikuu cha kaf, "bvuuuuuuuuuu"

Dumimba kadojo kamuhenda kachuchu koro ni dzambo asidza tongana nadyo hangu kuvyajwa. Hapfade mabuani adzifitsiepfo kadzinyamaza mya! ishinu kadzikunaha zaidi kayavya hakadzito tu apate kuona hamachiiyochiiyo urembo. "Mambo maku! Sapfa nsongo mkuu hataa kii!" Dumimba kanena kimojoni. Kadizinga hidipara miedha miwi kisa kahama ga! Dumimba Kamuchimiza kiyada, ewa chimo cha mababalona wawii ela nkewa na ntandiko za maguu, hayakwe yewa manene yeyo kuwa na nyaa dza za natodhe jwa guba. Ewa na muyomo wakichale wiwo na shufa ya kuhusya na matso makuu zaidi ya whichi, mweusi ti! Aturie nyoja nahapfa otini.

Kakwira mutso dzua da na adzifisiyepfo Dumimba, dabasa dya mwii muzima dimusumama na woga. Mbuu wewa mbwa kupfakusa Ela nkendesubutu kunusa hata yukopfe, kadzimiza kiyume. Nyuni kayowa mkono tsonso na mkono kuyume kisa kamumpa mongo Dumimba. Gororo dya Dumimba dimuhenda yukerekere wakutsaka kukoowa, ela iwa ntaiwezekane kividevyonse mbele ya huyu binensa. Nyuni kataraga kisa kayavya sauti nkuu 'koooooooo' kisa kadabva kukwimba

Gumgum mani nuka x3

Dumimba nkadzaviyona meshi vya nyuni kwimba dza benadamu. Ela chakumakisa muuno ni kwamba akwakwimbani hizindako zakumeyani.

Gumgum mani nuka x3, ndago za kumeyani,

'ooo! Ooo!' Ukimakiswa na cha Mpogwa Sijenge unatongana na dya Liongo Fumo, "koro hayahaya nayo ni mambo ga?" Dumimba kadziuza kimojoni. Kisa kayavyva nsae modza kauneha hu uha na ujangina wakutsayavya hata tsa! Nsongo kalita kukwimba tu, ela nae Dumimba kamurata kuisa duguda wa kuujia kuima ndago za kila nsiku. Kaineha urembo kamulenga huoti da, kaimwandika ya ngewa.

Nsongo kabiga chamburu cha kutsaka kuguuka ela kaku, tante dimuyawa mpoza na muyomoni mpaka doreni. Dumimba nae ewa kesakumuchankia na mundu wa oti. Chambe nakutsaka kumukenta nsongo kawaha wiya ungine mupya.

Ni kenta mpowempowe, nikenta mpowempowe mwana madzi ya kipepo mfalume madzi ya hangaike. X2

Kuti Dumimba kahambuya kwamba huyu nkewa mdondo jwa kiyada ela maroye ya kuipfiza kisasi wifika, kamukenta na nguvu kutawanya hikitswa na humwii. Nyuni katapatapa nakukuntukakuntika hata kabada dugha.

Huwohuwo siku kahi Dumimba kamupfaza kiwawani muzima kugala nae mdzini Mrhikicha. Ela nsongo kagija kukwimba tu.

Ni hwae mpowempowe, nihwae mpowempowe mwana madzi ya kipepo mfalume madzi ya hangaike. X2

Dumimba dura kadojo kawoga kamunjia kapfachuu amuyatse, ela mojo amwamba, *''muhwae nawe ukavunze nyongonya koro hachi kakuhuti muuno''*. Kadzibiga mojo konde kaendelea na charoche uwo siku.

Sika kadabva kugunga na mababato, mpepfe na ruvuto. Yosa mvuya idabva kuhika mbvuuuuu, nsii yonse injiya mpepfo na ipfyehuka inaza si, kiza cha go. Dumimba kaendelea kuchokoba obani huku mvuya ya tsitsitsi iwa imahunika. Wapfokomu wamba myuya ya tsitsitsi ntaimuvingire mugeni kwenda kwao, nae nkukuona dubi yakumkojesa, kafuudha modya kwa modya hata chikoni kwa Salomo. Siku huude ntakwiwa na waho hata mumudza hujude yombe, maho yonse yewa hudombe danda ya Mrikicha.

Kadema kuhana kwa muda muyeya, *"uuuu! Uuu! Uuu! Wayume nidza na windzi"*, ela ntakumuntu amwambukue kidechonse. Lukati Kakenta mikonango kalekanya kapereya kakumuvusya hudombe. Apfofika dombe mvuya iwa isakucha na wantu wasikiya idzwidye nao wadza kumupfokea na wiya.

Maalate yawaaa,

siku iki hivi sasa waifata,

wana wanaiya

howa howa hoo.

Dumimba kamanjia

Hoyaye hoyaye

Ai

Hoyaye hoyaye hoyaye.

Chambe wamupfokeye nsonngo kadabva kukwimba huku hata kitswa kakintu.

Pfokeyani mpowempowe, pfokeyani mpowempowe mwana madzi ya kipepo mfalume madzi ya hangaike. X2

Kula muntu kaupfanta na njiyaye maana diwa dzambo geni muuno na dyakumakisa na kuhusya. Dumimba kadema kuwahana ela gu, hata hawade wasumamiyeo kizani na jwakuye nao waara

kimumudzi hata wasia pfu. Heduli kenda kisa kauja koro iwa adha kwakwe kumutangera mumewe, ela kavihenda na woga mwinji.

Wapfofika kafumpani mwao kamweleza vichiyevyochiyevyo, kisa kamwamba humuke amulekanye huyu nyuni uwo siku koro kakutamanini nyama nyeupe muuno. Heduli kavikubali kitsonsotsonso koro hachi tambere adzizie kamanya endedya ipfi modza tu dya mfunda. Kahokosya madzi dumurani kamungiza huyu nsongo, chambe amufutse nsongo kadabva kwimba kawiii…

Nifutse mpompowe mfalme, yeo ni nyama mfalme unaona mambo mfalme x2

Heduli nkakuona dya kufwiya na kiumbe kifwiyecho ela chichokuimbani. Kamba, "be! heri uniyage na mkonowo kuliko kutaragiyana na aini ya huyu nyuni jwa Rhikimo. Dumimba kamunjiya kamufutsa mwenye mpaka kamwisa huku nyuni naye kendelea kukwimba. Ewa na nyoja za kulingikia nyuma hizide zinyookeyezo Dumimba kazimega jimpfu apate kuzisonea nsae.

Akwakumutsinzani huyu nyuni kendeleya na wiyawe. Nitsinze mpoompowe mfalme yeo ni nyama mfalme unaona mambo mfalme x2

Ela Dumimba kadziona byeka jwa mabyeka kadzibiga bagwi Kamba mimi Dumimba mwana jwa Madinka nakudya tu yeo. Eti ewa kanona ti, nyama nyema muuno zizokuwa na madhunya menji ya ranji nyeupe. Fati zikokuhokohani pwapwapwapwa, ziwa na harufu nyema muuno, chikwe si chikwe, kilengende si kilengende. Mahe yamuruwa hata Ndunguru mwanamkewe. Mamajwe Ndunguru kamuseresa mwanamukewe atsedema hata kuzitata. Dumimba kazoroga na yumwoka kisa kazitata. Kazongeza vidzunyu na kangiza na kidanga cha membe mpunda.

Ki! Heduli katura raha, kadaramia kwa muyamuwe mukuu ahanijwee Mahonge jwa Madinka. Mahonge kadza na mukaziwe Haguruka uwo siku, kumurai atsemudya. Kamwambukuya kamwamba, "Dumimba mwana wehu viyatse mununangu huyu si nyuni jwa kiyada." Ela gu Dumimba kahenda nyahi nkahoreke, kasindiya kamumbika mpaka kawivya huku kakukwimbani.

Kazikakanya nchikobweni kazikaiya chihako kamuhana murumbizi, Mudherumudheru ndiwe bwana. Amina." Kahunahuna pilipili shaufu na jwaa, dubva kadabva kuzihafuna na kumumutsa. Humu chikobweni gumgum maninuka kaendelea kukwimba tu.

Hafuna mpoompowe mfalme, yeo ni nyama mfalme unaona mambo mfalme. X2

Dumimba kaziramba tswee mpaka humbo dimupushuka. "Waaaa! Nindefwiya Mimi mwana Jwa Madinka. Sasa enda ukazimeze hizi ndago kawii humo humboni, gooofa!"

kapfachu, nsongo kadabva kubiga yuuzi humu humboni mwa Dumimba, "hayahaya nayo ni mafara ga?" Kuti Mahonge kamaka. Kila juuzi jukiiya Dumimba humbo dinamuvimba. Dumimba kadabva kubiga mabanano ya viiyo "woyo babo woyo mamo". Kadzilita vidowe vya kanwa akapate kwogoka ahapfika ela nkakufuya dafu.

Wagangana wonse mzee Makanduka na wenziwe hahanwa wagobeyana na ngoma za kiganga.

Ooo ni uyawe.

Oo ni uyawe.

Ni uyawe.

Nyunii jwa Rhikimo na uyawe.

Aaa ni wantu wa ae mama.

Mmm x2.

Zinaiaia sana katumbaku, hutseze na uterembe na uyawe .

Oooh

Hooo

Yombi dya wagangana

Yombi dya wagangana.

Yombiyoo eee

Yombi dya wagangana.

Nao wadema na adha mpaka nsii icha ela vidziza, humbo dyendeleya kuvimba tu. Humbo dimupfyehuka ranji ya moho na hweka dimuhika dzinji dza madzi. Nduzi nazo humboni zimoha nakuhamamata. Mbimbiza hii ibasisa na humbo dya Dumimba dibaika na kitamanji kikuu pakachaaa.

Musikizi jwangu, unatara kwiwa na hali ga Mrhikicha hayohayo magura? Viiyo vinji vya wake na wana kudzifatulafatula koro Heduli na Ndunguru wamawa wachiwa. Wayume nao wakaa vidzomba vidzomba wakokudidawiyani hidi dzambo dya huyu nyuni jwa Rhikimo. Wenji wao walaumu kwamba Dumimba ewa na musindiyo muuno na tabiya yakuona wenziwe mafurulenge.

Wantu wa kwehu tsana, Musindiyo si mwema. Ntakumuyume jwa wayume wala muke jwa wake. Ukienda njia ya ngokoma ukimbijwa dziuje na nyuma nkuwe mujinga.

Kaye ntakwiwa na hekalu wala dini. Iwa ni kazi ya wagangana kumuzika afwiyee, wana wekifitswa kuye watseshuhudiya mazishi.

Baada ya mazishi, nsiku ya juma Heduli kapfikwa kwa Ndogohi jwa sindo wa karya na karuhusijwa kuhenda shulize ela adzibige yuhadzi nakukwihachuure mbeerani kwa mumewe kwa nsiku miyongomine.

Mwanda ipfofika wafunguya chikapfu na wadalisa. Kwiwa ntakunguwo dza yeo. Iwa ni misembanyo miwii ya nkanike na mwonjola mumodza wakudzihagaza hapfa bagwini, kwiwa na vitside za kuvywaa otini na ntinye zapfa chunoni kuyanga kwamba kachiya kochame ya mobe. Mahonge kapfegwa msembanyo wa mafiya koro ndiye ahaniyee waganga kumujwaza ndugujwe, kisa kamupfegwa Heduli amutudze dza mukaziwe jwa dala.

Ngano yangu isiiya hapfo.

Mwiso

THE BIRD OF RHIKIMO - BY J.BARAKA

Song

Hold me gently, hold me gently child, these are evil waters of the king, don't trouble the waters.

Long long ago, the kings bore sons until Dumimba, son of King Madinka was born. Dumimba lived in a small village called Murhikicha. This village was located on the eastern sides of River Mwanapaka and it neighboured several lakes. The lakes were Nchikobwe, (which was a habitat of large aquatic animals like the hippopotamus and the crocodile) Silowa, (which produced different kinds of huge fish: catfish, tilapia, and also mudfish.)

Dumimba was married to one fine lady and together they were blessed with a daughter. He was a very short muscular man with a very big chest and had a light skin complexion like the Swahili people. Dumimba had big eyes and ears. He was of a different kind among all creatures, both wild, aquatic creatures and even from birds of the air. Despite all, Dumimba was of much help to his dear wife Heduli, when it came to the cultivation of rice on the other side of the River Mwanapaka.

When the cultivation season came, Dumimba took his wife to help in cultivating rice. As their usual routine, they woke up very early carrying their working tools headed for Rhikimo. It was quite a long distance from where they lived, thus sailing their canoes for a long while but still managed to arrive before 7 a.m. Heduli (the wife) prepared *Matimbe (porridge made from fermented maize flour*) and also cooked some crocodile meat. When it was boiling, she joined her husband in finishing up the portion of land they had started cultivating since it had too much grass.

The man and his wife dug all kinds of grass from the field. They were very careful not to come into contact with any kind of harmful or itchy grass since they would suffer skin rash.

In the noontime when the sun was scorching enough, they took a rest and had something to eat to boost their energy. Dumimba really enjoyed the crocodile stew, picking up each piece of meat while leaking his fingers. As for Heduli, she would enjoy the porridge. She would carefully take the sips in fear of getting burnt because it was too hot. This gave them quite some relief and they would again go back to the field shortly after resting.

Just as I had told you earlier that Dumimba was such a muscular man, he would clear up a quarter an acre by sunset and return home.

That night, Dumimba was held in deep slumber just as a log since he was extremely tired, but the next morning they woke up intending to cover up another portion of land. This time they had to walk because they were late to arrive at the river and all the canoes had been occupied already and taken by others who were going for a circumcision ceremony across the river. They had to cross over shallow water and by the time they were there, the grass had already sprouted again and was tall enough.

Oh my! It is just but one night! How could this be? This is not normal, Dumimba silently spoke to himself. He could not understand how it happened and he became much burdened over the issue. A strong man as he was, almost cried but his wife was there for him and encouraged him and finally, they agreed on re-doing the work they had done.

The next morning, they all woke up very early to go and check Rhikimo, the place they were working on. On reaching, the situation was even worse than before, since then grass became much taller. Dumimba knelt on one corner of the field and cried while talking to his God, asking Him if he had wronged Him to deserve such a punishment. After a while of being consoled, Dumimba agreed to dig up the grass once again but he also swore on dealing with the cause of the whole mess.

After a whole day of digging, he went to prepare seven strong arrows which he applied some poison from Crocodile's bile. When it was sunset, he escorted his wife to the riverbanks and ensured she crossed safely and he returned to the field, to look for the reason for the abnormal growth of the grass.

He had prepared himself with *jonee* (traditional banana bread), that's what he took as his evening meal with some spiced tea. The night fell and the moon shone so bright as the day. Rhikimo became as silent as the grave since there was no one at that moment. What could be heard was the sound made by hippos and the roaring of lions. The millipedes too made their noise, accompanied by the croaking of frogs and whining of mosquitoes. Immediately there was a pin drop silence, followed by heavy darkness that covered the whole land.

Dumimba was left panicking because he had never encountered such a situation in his entire life before. He remained silent in his hiding place, in fact, he coiled himself, just leaving an eye to peep the occurrence. 'What a shocking creature! It is a very big bird!' Dumimba murmured to himself. It blew its wings twice then landed. Dumimba carefully observed the bird. It was like two huge hawks but this one had gigantic legs with very long protruding claws. Its beaks were threatening and had bigger eyes than an owl, as black as night! It lacked feathers on its neck.

It faced the side of the setting sun, just where Dumimba hid. He could feel all the hairs of his body reacting to the frightening scenario before him. Mosquitoes kept sucking his blood painfully, but he could never even dare blink an eye. He tried keeping calm. The bird looked to its left, then to the right then faced the other side, giving the man its back. Dumimba felt like coughing up since his throat became irritated, but it wasn't easy for him to make any noise before this wild creature. The bird spread its legs and released a very loud sound KOOO!! and then started to sing,

> '*Green grass grows X3*'

Dumimba had never heard a bird sing before, like a human being. Amazingly, as it was singing, the grass kept growing,

> '*Green grasses grow X3*' and it grew.

Wonders never cease!! 'What is happening?' Dumimba spoke to himself. Then he took an arrow and managed to place it on the bow without making any noise. The bird kept on singing but Dumimba was already tired of digging grass daily. He perfectly aimed the bird and it landed on the neck.

The bird tried to flap its wings to fly but was not able to. Blood kept dripping from its mouth to the ground. That's when Dumimba came out with his machete ready to strike. Immediately the bird started singing another song.

'Gently slaughter me, gently slaughter me, child, these are evil waters of the King, don't trouble the water' X2

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Dumimba noticed that this wasn't a normal bird but still he had to take revenge. He angrily cut the bird separating the head from its body. He ensured the bird breathed its last.

That same night, Dumimba carried it on his back, going with it to the village of Mrhikicha, but the bird kept singing.

"Gently carry me, gently carry me, child, these are evil waters of the King, don't trouble the water" x2

At first, Dumimba was gripped with fear, almost leaving it behind but he convinced himself, "just take it home, this will help relieve you from the anger and revenge for it has really angered you." He built up some courage and continued with his journey to the village that same night.

Raindrops started falling, lightning stroke the land then a sound of great thunder followed. The place became very cold and the breezes became rough, the darkness even worsened. Dumimba could hardly see anything before him. The rain would not stop and this wouldn't prevent him from going to the village, since he didn't have any shelter. He reached the river banks and could not find any canoe that would help him cross to the other side. All the canoes were on the other side of Mrhikicha.

He tried calling for help for quite some time, "help! Help! Help! I have arrived with enough meat," but all his efforts were to no avail for nobody responded. He thought and decided to make a very small canoe made of sticks, to help him sail across. Luckily after sailing, the rain stopped and now the villagers heard his voice and all came with a song.

> *Men get up*
> *It sun-rise so listen,*
> *The children are crying*
> *Sing a lullaby*
> *Dumimba has arrived*
> *He is victorious*
> *Let us all celebrate*

But before they could help him offload the heavy bird, it started singing again, even with its head chopped off.

'Gently offload my body, gently offload my body child, these are evil waters of the King, don't trouble the water' X2

Everyone got astonished by such an incident for such an occurrence had never been seen nor recorded before and they all departed each one on their route. Dumimba tried calling them but even those standing in the dark far away from the scene also had walked away. Heduli who had also walked away from the scene had to walk back to welcome his husband for it was mandatory for her too. She was also gripped with fear as she walked home with her husband and the unusual creature.

When they arrived home, he explained to his wife everything that occurred and instructed her to remove all the feathers that same night for he longed to have white meat. Unwillingly, Heduli had to do as instructed for she was sure that if she had refused to do so, she would receive a hefty blow on

her smooth cheeks. She boiled some water in a big cooking pot and immersed the whole bird in it. Before she would start removing the feathers, the bird immediately began singing…

'Gently remove my feathers, King, today I am made meat King, you will witness unseen things King' X2

This was extra-ordinary for Heduli, seeing a dead animal that kept singing. She said, "I would rather die in your hands than handle such a strange bird from Rhikimo."

Dumimba took over the duty and removed all the feathers as it kept singing. It had beautiful feathers, both coiled and those rolled, facing its back and also straight feathers. Dumimba took a few of them, that would help him in making arrows.

As he started cutting the bird into pieces, it continued with its song…

'Gently slaughter me, King, today I am made meat King, you will witness unseen things King' X2

Dumimba gathered all courage and said, "I am Dumimba, son of Madinka and for sure, I will make meat out of you today."

The bird was big enough to produce a lot of meat, which was covered in layers of fat. That showed how delicious the meat would be.

As it boiled, it produced a very sweet aroma, not like that of any other common bird, name them all. His daughter, Ndunguru, salivated at the sweet smell of the boiling bird. The mother forbade and warned her daughter NEVER to taste even a piece of the meat. Dumimba used a cooking stick to roll and he tasted the meat. He then added some salt and some pieces of unripe mangoes, to give some sour taste to the meat.

Heduli became restless and ran to the brother-in-law, Mahonge of Madinka, who hurriedly rushed with his wife that same night to his brothers' house and began begging him not to eat the meat. He greeted and began, "Dumimba my brother, don't do that my younger brother, this is an unusual bird." Dumimba became furious and could not listen to anyone, he insisted on cooking as it kept on singing until the meat was ready.

He poured the meat in a bowl and took a seat, prayed for the meal, "oh holy one, you are the Lord, Amen!"

He took some hot pepper and cut it using his nails and fingers and began chewing the meat as he licked his fingers. He would not stop thinking about how the bird made the grass grow again yet while still in the bowl, it kept singing.

"Chew me gently, King, today I am your meat King, you will see unseen things King" X2

Dumimba finished up his meal and his stomach became bigger than usual. "Ooh! What a punishment you gave me, Dumimba son of Madinka. You can now go and make the grass grow in my stomach."

After a short while, the bird started whistling in the stomach, "What is happening?" Mahonge (the brother) asked. The stomach grew big and bigger the more the bird whistled. Dumimba started crying out loud, "oh my father! Oh, my mother!" He tried inserting his fingers deep in his throat, to help him vomit but it never worked.

All the traditional healers and witch doctors gathered together with their drums and started to sing,

Oooh you must come out
Oooh you must come out
You must come out!
Bird from Rhikimo come out
These are our mother-land people
Mmmh X2
Our drums will not cease beating, we will dance, come out
Oooh
This is a witchcraft's prayer
A prayer, yes it is
A Witchcraft's prayer.

They all tried their best until the sun rose but nothing happened, his stomach became much bigger and became red. His whole body became wet, soaked in sweat. The whistles would not stop. The condition became persistent and his stomach burst with a loud ear-deafening sound.

My precious listener,

Can you imagine the condition that was in Mrhikicha that morning? Women and children would not stop mourning, rolling in dust for Heduli had become a widow and Ndunguru an orphan. The men too sat in groups around corners, discussing this whole scenario caused by this bird from Rhikimo. Most of them blamed Dumimba for being rude and not listening to peoples' advice, instead, he despised them all and took them to be fools.

My good people from Tana River, it's good to head to advice. There is no mightier man than other men, neither a mightier lady than other ladies. When advised to take the right path, please do so. That will not make you a fool.

In the past, we had no Churches, neither religion. It was the duty of these traditional healers to bury the dead. The children would be hidden away, never to witness any burial.

After the burial, on that first Sunday, Heduli was taken to the elder of the Karya clan and was allowed to go on with her daily activities, but covering her head and face. She was also instructed to pour food on the grave of her late husband for forty days.

Monday came, and as a tradition, they had to give away all that belonged to the late Dumimba to the rightful heirs. They didn't have the modern clothes that we now have but some traditional garments covering their waists and another passing by the chest. They also had some necklaces and another one worn on the waist, to show that they had passed through the traditional rites. Mahonge was given the best garment of the late because he was the one that called the healers to help his brother. He was also given Heduli, as an inherited wife to him.

That is the end of my story.

THE END

Appendix 11: Interview guide for the drama teacher

1. What is the importance of drama?

2. How does drama help to promote child literacy?

3. I have seen your drama dance during the previous drama festivals, and you used Kipfokomo, why is it so?

4. I have listened to some of your audios on WhatsApp narrating folktales for children in Kipfokomo, please tell me more about them… why do you use Kipfokomo and not any other language? In your opinion, how are the stories help the child develop literacy?

5. As a teacher, what are the mode of teaching do you use in the classroom while teaching?

6. Is there anything else you want to share with about your drama and storytelling experience that may help to promote children's' education?

Appendix 12: Teacher's in-depth interview guide

What kind of literacy practices are children exposed to and engage in, in school and the community?

1. Could you give me a brief description of your classroom? Such as the diversity of your pupils in terms of culture, language, and socio-economic background.

2. Do you have any learning and teaching strategies that work for you in reading and writing? Which ones? Why do they work?

3. Which language(s) of instruction do you use in the classroom?

4. Do you have a preferred language over another? Why?

5. What are the challenges that you face in your classroom, with regards to teaching? How do you overcome them?

6. Describe how you could be assisted in becoming a more effective literacy teacher.

7. What supports or kinds of professional development would assist you in becoming a more effective language and literacy teacher?

8. Do you always follow the subject guidelines? Why?

9. Do you think the subject guidelines work?

10. Do you think the current curriculum prepares the learners for the world?

11. In your class do you combine reading and writing?

12. How do you assess reading and writing given the number of learners you have?

13. Tell me your views about the level of reading and writing in Grade 3?

14. Which activities do you think the children in your class enjoy the most?

Appendix 13: Parents in-depth interview guide

What kind of literacy practices are children exposed to and engage in, in school and the community?

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.

1. Does your child like to read? If so, what?
2. Where do you think children are supposed to learn literacy and why?
3. Please tell me all the resources your child has at home for reading and writing?
4. Do you read with your child at home? What do you read?
5. Do you write with your child at home? What do you write?
6. As a parent, what do you think is your role as far as literacy development is concerned?
7. What role do you think home plays in enhancing success at school?
8. Which language(s) do you use to communicate at home?
9. Which language does your child use when playing with other children?
10. What kind of technology does your child use at home? How does he use it?
11. Specifically, what activities are done at school that, in your opinion, are most helpful in developing your child's literacy?
12. What activities are done at home that, in your opinion, are most valuable in developing your child's literacy?
13. What demonstrations of literacy learning (either at school or home) are you most excited about?
14. What kinds of values and behavior do you think are important for a child to acquire to be a full member of your community? Are there any things they need to learn (e.g., language, cultural practices) or do? (for example rituals).

Children's in-depth interviews

What kind of literacy practices are children exposed to and engage in, in school and the community?

1. What kinds of stories do you like to read during the reading period?

2. Why do you think you need reading in your life?

3. What kind of reading and writing activities would you like to have in the classroom?

4. Of all the things you do in school (in the classroom and outside), what do you enjoy the most?

5. Do you ever read/write outside school? Yes/No. If you do, tell me about it.

6. Do your parents read with you?

7. Do you ever read /write for pleasure? If yes, tell me about it.

8. Do you watch TV at home? If yes, tell me about your favourite program(s).

9. Do you listen to the radio? What do you listen to?

10. Do you ever use your parents' or siblings' mobile phones? What do you do with the phone?

11. Which language(s) do you use to communicate with your friends when playing?

12. What kinds of after-school activities do you do and which do you enjoy the most?

13. Besides school, which places do adults read and write the most?

14. Tell me what you do during the December school holidays?

15. What kinds of family and communal activities do you do during the Christmas season? What do you enjoy the most?

Appendix 14: Children's in-depth interviews

What kind of literacy practices are children exposed to and engage in, in school and the community?

1. What kinds of stories do you like to read during the reading period?

2. Why do you think you need reading in your life?

3. What kind of reading and writing activities would you like to have in the classroom?

4. Of all the things you do in school (in the classroom and outside), what do you enjoy the most?

5. Do you ever read/write outside school? Yes/No. If you do, tell me about it.

6. Do your parents read with you?

7. Do you ever read /write for pleasure? If yes, tell me about it.

8. Do you watch TV at home? If yes, tell me about your favourite program(s).

9. Do you listen to the radio? What do you listen to?

10. Do you ever use your parents' or siblings' mobile phones? What do you do with the phone?

11. Which language(s) do you use to communicate with your friends when playing?

12. What kinds of after-school activities do you do and which do you enjoy the most?

13. Besides school, which places do adults read and write the most?

14. Tell me what you do during the December school holidays?

15. What kinds of family and communal activities do you do during the Christmas season? What do you enjoy the most?