

**GENDER DISPARITIES
COMPARING READING PRACTICES OF GRADE 10 ISIZULU
READERS**

By

BONISILE CYNTHIA MABASO

UNIVERSITY OF WITSWATERSRAND

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

APPLIED LANGUAGE AND LITERACY EDUCATION

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Declaration of Original Work:

I, _____, know and accept that by submitting this research report for evaluation, I declare that **GENDER DISPARITIES**

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies maintain that the concept of a gender gap in literacy remains a large concern, as the gap between boys' and girls' reading literacy is reflected in studies conducted globally in which females consistently outperformed males. Therefore, this study discusses how perceptions about gender and reading practice are fabricated from a societal point of view. It presents the social cognitive theory of gender disparities in reading practices of grade 10 isiZulu First Additional language readers. Additionally, my study discusses how the readers with different language background and proficiency in isiZulu operate and respond when reading texts that are influenced by their own reading preferences. As a result, it identifies a variety of influences to be considered in gendered reading practices such as; the readers, the type of text, the activity, the language context, and the social and the cognitive aspects of reading practices.

This qualitative research project investigated how six learners of isiZulu First Additional grade 10 level, from various language backgrounds made meaning of informal texts over the course of four weeks. . Hence, I used a range of text types as a research tool in order to attend to this issue. To collect data, I therefore designed a series of questions through questionnaires, and observation schedule as means of authenticating the learners' responses to institute the findings. Subsequently, by examining Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension, which focusses on cognitive and affective domains of reading, I conclude that reading is not only important for academic success, but also for negotiating our way through all aspects of life in an increasing bureaucratic society. Additionally, having background of reading literacy practices may grant chances of participation in the that society, as a result, those societal perceptions are likely to change if and when reading practices also grant chances to accommodate interests of the readers. Findings endorse that learners should be granted a chance of choosing texts that interest them so they can respond positively and accordingly, as, boys' scores disagreed with previous research in a particular, comprehension component where they outscored the girls.

KEY TERMS

- Gendered Literacy Gap
- Text selection
- Cognitive thinking

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent studies maintain that the concept of a gender gap in literacy remains a large concern, as the gap between boys' and girls' reading literacy is reflected in studies conducted globally in which females consistently outperformed males. One of the widest current gender gap for learning achievement recorded by standardized measures is in the area of literacy (Smith & Wilhem, 2002). For instance, in a study by the Australian Centre for Youth Literature, adolescent boys were found to be less frequent readers than their girl counterparts (ACYL, 2000), with similar findings in England (CUHK Study, 2006). Related to these concerns, International large-scale Assessment studies, one implemented at the end of grade 4 (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS]; Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012), one for students at the age of 15 (Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], Berdard, 2010), and one for the U.S. context (National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP]; Robinson, J. P., & Lubienski, S. T. (2011), have revealed significant reading achievement gaps between boys and girls, demonstrating a slight advantage for girls. In that light, South Africa used benchmarking to collect information relevant to its language instruction from these international studies. However, according to Howie et al (2012), only English and Afrikaans languages were tested in the actual study of PIRLS conducted in 2011, out of almost 200 000 learners in 400 schools who participated in a pre-PIRLS study, which included 9 other official languages, of which isiZulu was one of them in South Africa. Internationally, a significant gap was identified as girls still outperformed boys on all eleven South African official languages when reading practices were conducted in the study of PIRLS.

Therefore, since PIRLS is an international, national and local assessment of reading comprehension that is conducted every five years, 2016 could be the possible year of investigating whether these trends still occur in the South African context, particularly in reading practices of isiZulu First Additional context.

On the other hand, it should be considered that reading literacy requires more than just the ability to decode letters, words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Importantly, the reader's challenge includes using knowledge of other texts and of the world in order to question what they read. Not only does a reader require knowledge of these extra textual details but he/she also needs to make inferences and draw conclusions from the texts they read (Mgqwashu, 2014). Therefore, to succeed in the educational structure, I believe that one's attitude, motivation and responses towards reading should be influenced by comprehending the meaning from various text types. However, other possible aspects of reading literacy constructs may have impact to such responses to reading because of the reading trajectories

that are implemented by the educational system. For instance, although English has grown over the centuries, which today assumes enormous importance as a world language, it has major implications for those who speak it, as well as those who cannot. As a result, the South African Educational system, with a dominant number of non-native English speakers (including both teachers and learners) has systematized other official language curriculums in reading literacy to be incongruent with that of English. This is evident in an overview of policy programs reported by Baatjies (2003). In this overview, Baarties exposed that The South African School's Act (No. 84 of 1996) introduced the national education system to address a range of issues. However, those related to reading that provides high quality for all; the protection and advancement of South African diverse cultures and languages; upholding the rights of all learners and setting of uniform norms and standards for education of learners at schools. However, Kamwangamalu (2000) rebukes the language practices in education by concluding that South African languages are still not treated equally, regardless of the language policy's intention to promote equal status for all eleven official languages. Among these eleven official languages of South Africa, isiZulu is the second most communicative language, following English.

However, it seems as if the isiZulu language is diminishing slowly due to the post 1994 constitutional changes that allowed parents to enroll their children in a school of their choice. Most black communities believe that English is the world language and find it more appealing in education and therefore prefer English to other African languages due to the stigma that was associated with apartheid era (Pretorius, 1995 & Kamwangamalu, 2000). As a result, isiZulu ends up getting very limited attention from the schooling system. Within this context, Makalela (2015) concludes that the 'traditional' language teaching profession has always treated languages as separate and bounded units to avoid the pollution of one language by the other.

Furthermore, Aitchison & Harley (2006), in a survey on the illiterate South Africans in the country, reported that the country had 93% of illiterate Black adults. On the contrary, the 2011 census concluded that isiZulu is the mother tongue of 22.7% of South Africa's population, followed by isiXhosa at 16%, Afrikaans at 13.5%, English at 9.6%, Setswana at 8% and Sesotho at 7.6%. Therefore, isiZulu is the language of South Africa's largest ethnic group, and yet is still marginalized, which is why with research contributions towards reading practices in its context, much better value can be granted to the value it deserves. Another solid evidence that isiZulu is remarkably gaining ground, is the massive number of reading texts such as the newspapers: Isolezwe, Ilanga, Ilanga langeSonto, Bona magazine, Drum magazine, television programmes, intensive code-switching from English to isiZulu in different South African domains such as business and educational institutions etc.

Therefore, the above discussion reflects a concern over reading practices in isiZulu. So, ways of addressing this problem is to look at the influence of the gender, cognitive issues, other contributing factors such as language background, which may be assumed to be one of the influences in the learner's social context in reading practices of isiZulu First Additional language grade 10 learners.

The study

In view of the significant gap highlighted by different scholars in reading literacy between boys and girls, Barrett's (1968) levels of cognitive engagement suggested the need for attention in this area to verify whether cognitive issues can be one of the contributing factors to this gap. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating a connection between the language and skills learners use when reading, the text types learners choose or prefer to read, context that reading takes place and the audience in relation to gender and reading practices. Therefore, due to the limited scope of this study, only reading practices are considered. This means that further research should still be conducted in relation to the variety of other literacy practices involved in language learning, such as, reading for effective writing of transactions, reading aloud, responding to listening comprehensions, literature and poetry reading and so on. Additionally, it investigated the cognitive skills that boys and girls employ, when assigned to reading in-class comprehension tasks. After all, PIRLS reading framework maintains that during and after reading, readers use a repertoire of linguistic skills, cognitive and metacognitive strategies as well as background knowledge to construct meaning (Mullis et al, 2016).

To achieve these aims, the specific objectives were:

- To identify the reading issues related to reading that are raised by different gendered groups of learners with regards to their choices of texts.
- To gain sight into boys' and girls' in-and-out-of-school reading practices by allowing them to choose material of their special interest.
- To examine the influences of cognitive level approach on reading practices in the classroom.
- To explore on learners' attitudes and behavior when discussing gendered reading literacy issues.

To complement these objectives, Merisuo-Storm (2006) concludes that learners are very different as readers, and they are motivated to read very different books and texts. He

emphasizes that the reader should find the topic of the text interesting and possess enough previous knowledge related to its subject matter. Therefore, it is crucial to allow students to choose material of their special interest. Hence, I propose to use a range of text types as a research tool to attend to this issue. To conform to these objectives, I designed a series of questions through questionnaires, and observation schedule (to be discussed later) as means of authenticating the learners' responses to institute the findings of the study. This contributed towards a record of other possible reading factors that needed attention, to improve the gendered reading literacy gap. Moreover, the study hoped to give answers to the two central questions:

1. What does the Gendered Literacy Gap look like in one isiZulu First Additional Language classroom?
 - What do boys and girls read, in-and-out of school? Why? What is their attitude and perceptions towards it?
2. Do learners know (implicitly or explicitly) about the gendered literacy gap? How do they understand it, if at all?
 - Do learners think they contribute or challenge the literacy gap? If they do, in what ways?
 - What relationship do learners see between their out-of-school reading practices, in-school reading, achievement and gender influences?

Consequently, interview questions and a variety of comprehension tasks that counterpart the learners' choices were developed to collect data.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study arises from a series of recent studies which concluded that, the widest current gender differences in this area of literacy has created a gap between males and females. There are many studies focusing on the relationship between reading literacy and gender differences on languages. In addition, previous findings are significant because they provide a much-needed depiction of the actual reading practices of learners who have remained classified as being outsmarted by the other, such as boys being outscored by the girls. Furthermore, many studies conducted in South African schools and other countries focus on the English language (Pretorius & Machet 2004; 2008; Pretorius 2009). Therefore, research in similar areas in South Africa is scarce and has never been done in an isiZulu (First Additional Language) classroom. Additionally, research conducted about isiZulu and in isiZulu is very limited. They are usually focused on grammatical structures (Nkosi et al. 2014). Their study, suggests the methods of teaching isiZulu to non-mother tongue speakers in a university setting. They adopted Krashen's (1981) second language natural theory of second language acquisition by developing isiZulu course for non-mother tongue speakers and incorporated it with situational approach. For example, the structure of this course was arranged into thematic units such as umndeni (family), ikhaya (home), isikole (school), iNyuvesi (university) and so on. With these themes, they reinforced reading, grammatical structures, content knowledge, vocabulary and so on. They concluded at the end that the approach they used, was successful because students acquired more knowledge, as they portrayed confidence in communicating with mother-tongue speakers of isiZulu. As much as Nkosi et al (2014) approach is useful, it did not attend to the reading problems that the GET phase is faced with. Some of these studies are focusing mostly on the challenges and they do not really come up with the solutions that can help the learners to read and write effectively and independently at the end.

Moreover, none of the studies outside South Africa has been conducted on isiZulu language, even though there are citizens that have isiZulu as their native language elsewhere other than South Africa. To date, no study has investigated the relation between reading literacy and gender cognitive levels of thinking for students in isiZulu First Additional Language context. Therefore, this will give more value to the research focus as it integrates gender differences and their achievement in reading as well as cognitive dissonances in a single classroom.

Theoretical Framework

To clarify and update the theoretical framework guiding the investigation into gender disparities in reading literacy practices, a review of previous research examining these differences in academic achievement, with a focus on reading, is required. I begin with a review on exploring the gendered gap that has been identified by several studies, followed by a discussion on what the research says about the choice of reading materials with which boys and girls interact. From there, I examine what the literature says about the cognitive engagement of boys and girls in reading. Thereafter, methods of addressing the issue of gender disparities in reading are deliberated. Thus, a socio-cognitive perspective is the umbrella approach that aligns very well with this study because; the current study integrates the nature of mind and its processes, behavior and the social context. If language is crucially a form of social action and/ or a tool for performing social action then it must be learned in, for, and by virtue of the social world (Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino, & Okada, 2007).

On the other hand, Atkison (2002) argues that, as a way of capturing the integrated nature of mind-body-world in which behavior, cognition, and learning take place, the term 'Socio-cognitive' is appropriate for this notion.

Reading is not only important for academic success, but also for negotiating our way through all aspects of life in an increasing bureaucratic society (Kirsch, de Jong, LaFontaine, McQueen, Mendelovits, & Monseur, 2002). This concludes that having background of reading literacy practice may grant chances of participation in that society. In order for that society to succeed socially, educationally, economically, technologically and politically, the country is dependent on the literacy skills of its people.

As mentioned earlier, the significance of gender disparities in reading literacy practices has been recently highlighted. There are many studies in the fields of language study, which deal with the interrelation between social and cultural aspects of language. However, while this study is framed in reading literacy as a social and cognitive practice, it is also framed under the influence of Barret's (1968) Taxonomy of reading comprehension. The Barret Taxonomy (Barrett, 1968) focuses on cognitive and affective domains of reading comprehension. The Barrett Taxonomy (Clymer. 1968), designed originally to assist classroom teachers in developing comprehension questions and/ or test questions for reading. It includes five categories that provide special kind of teaching and learning system that promotes cognitive development and thinking. That is: level one, lower order thinking requires literal thinking by mostly extracting words from the text; level two, similar to level one which is reorganizational thinking, however, requires mostly paraphrased concepts from the text; level three, the middle order thinking that needs learners to infer and relate text meanings to their views, which also

invites comparison. Then, the taxonomy involves level four and five, which are higher order thinking levels that demand justification of ideas and more elaborative responses to text.

Thus, a model of the development of individual differences in reading achievement and related cognitive processes seem to align with the theory that this study intends to follow. That is, socio-cognitive theory. In an attempt to understand the process used in this study, I have structured the concepts that I have used as a framework of my work on **Figure 1**.

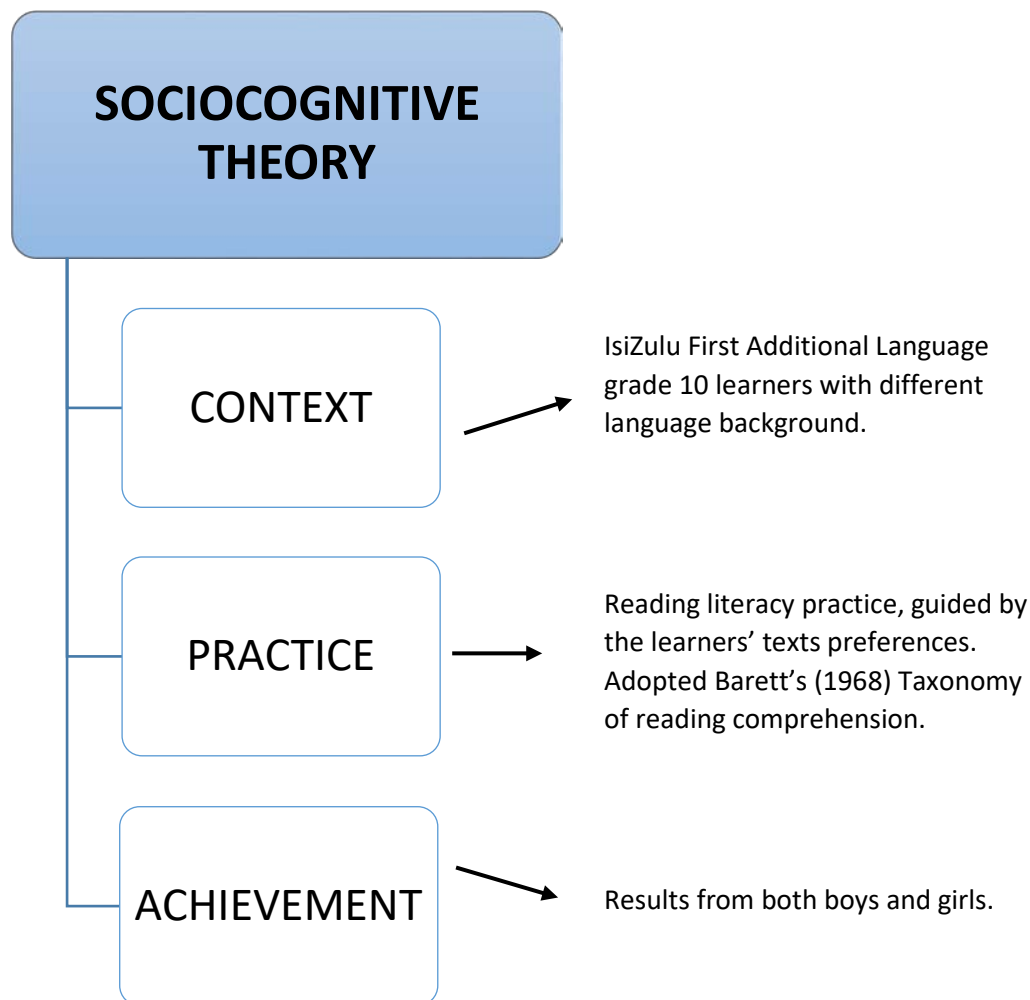


Figure 1. The framework concept of the study

Exploring the Gap

Smith & Wilhelm (2002) conclude that the widest current gender gap for learning achievement recorded by standardized measures is in the area of literacy. So far, nothing has been done to close this gap. Gee (2002) defines literacy as “Control of secondary language” where discourses are socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a social group or “social network” (p. 532). Gee further elaborates that his definition means that primary discourses are acquired in the home through socialization with family members, which takes place mostly in oral form. Therefore, Gee’s (2002) definition grants us a solid impression that literacy, is a social practice in which individuals interact with one another to construct different components of literacy.

In a study conducted in the University of Granada on gender differences in an English foreign language classroom, Arellano (2013) describes and elaborates on physical, emotional, social and cultural attributes of both male and female of which he believes that findings of other researchers were mostly biased as they investigated the fictional subjects, which seem to advantage females. Arellano (2013) claims that males devote themselves in the public sphere and they are better at spatial, numeric and mechanical tasks while, females tend to confine themselves to the private domain. He stretches his focus on reading by using practical subjects such as Mathematics, Science and Technology. Correspondingly, his study involved learners whose mother tongue was not the same as the medium of instruction used at school. Additionally, cognitive factors from his participants was integrated in his study, which resonates with my study. However, Arellano (2013) conducted a statistical global survey on reading comprehension development in relation to student’s gender, and, his findings revealed that female students achieved better than males when confronted by comprehension tasks. He elaborated that female students obtain better results in particular objectives such as getting specific information, getting general information, understanding textual structure and deducting meaning from the context. In addition, his findings were dependent on the analysis of the textual output of learners, compared to first hand exposure that the current study intends to explore. For instance, the research in my study context is conducted in my own school and classroom where data reflects the experiences, practices and understandings of learners in that classroom.

Choice of material

Within the area of choosing reading material, a few language theorists have been influential in the field. For instance, Coles & Hall’s (2002), findings on children’s reading interests has proven elusive even though reading interest studies have been conducted with children since the late 1800s. In their study of Gendered Readings, Coles & Hall (2002) conclude that texts read in schools and colleges are read in the context of a multitude of other texts, both literary

and visual. They further elaborate that there is no reason to believe that 'unofficial' texts are any less important in shaping learners imaginative capacity and view of the world than those promoted by the curriculum.

Thus, a research question that focusses on the choices that boys and girls make in their reading in-and-out-of-school becomes necessary. In their articulation, Coles & Hall (2002) emphasise the influence of gender on reading texts such as boys being more adventurous and spatial and girls being drawn to more fictional works.

In a further study, Mead (2012) argues that students need the opportunity to select books based on their individual needs. In his findings, he further substantiates that girls prefer young adult material with female protagonists, realistic teen fiction while boys chose non-fiction books. Mead (2012) also provides a list of factors that contribute to reading such as initial glance, skimming through the book, recommendation from others, images and so on.

Learners are very different as readers, and they are motivated to read very different books and texts. The reader should find the topic of the text interesting and possess enough previous knowledge related to its subject matter. Therefore, it is crucial to offer learners a wide variety of reading material (Merisuo-Strom, 2006). Coles (2002) echoes by concluding that, an array of books representing a variety of topics, levels of difficulty, and genres of literature is necessary (p. 335). It is, however, a very challenging task for the teacher to choose reading material for his or her learners. They may have special personal interests, and the material available may not always meet their hopes. This endorses the theory of offering learners a wide variety of reading material in order to accommodate their interests.

A further contribution by Oakhill and Petrides (2007) compared the reading comprehension of 10 and 11-year-old boys and girls. They reported that comprehension was significantly affected by the content of reading passages for boys and they performed significantly better; on texts, they were interested in reading. In contrast, girls' performance was the same regardless of their interest in the text. Oakhill and Petrides (2007) also investigated poor participants' performance, and determined that the relationship between text interest and reading performance remained significant for boys but not for girls, regardless of comprehension level.

Therefore, Oakhill and Petrides suggest that reading assessments be made less homogeneous by offering choices of topics and genres, and that they contain both fiction and non-fiction sections, as boys may be encouraged to persist when reading with content they find interesting and motivating. In addition, they argued that students should be taught the necessary strategies for reading comprehension regardless of personal level of interest. Besides, social interaction and communicative skills should be developed as they read texts

that its content relates to their interest and familiar contexts, which contributes to cognitive development, as they become critical thinkers.

In congruence with the national curriculum, Grade 10 learners should be confident, independent readers in their First Additional Language when selecting their own texts. Furthermore, this is one of the three reading phase activities that are stipulated by the CAPS document for Further Education and Training (FET) phase. CAPS further stipulates that well-developed reading and viewing skills are considered central to successful learning across the curriculum, as well as for full participation in society and the world of work. Thus, this strategy of exploring on the learners' choices hopes to give an effective guide to teaching and learning the components of reading when using different texts. Additionally, it enables the learners to communicate in class, using their own words. Besides, vocabulary knowledge is one of the best indicators of verbal ability (Graves, August & Mancilla-Martinez, 2012).

Based on the research that has been conducted, there are multiple viewpoints that share similar thought on accommodating learners with texts that complement their interests. However, little research exists that investigate how unofficial texts influence the choices that learners who learn a non-native language as a subject, make while engaged in the act of making meaning, particularly, in isiZulu.

Cognitive Engagement in Reading

Reading is regarded as the engagement with written text for understanding the meanings it represents. This understanding is called reading comprehension (Weiner & Bazerman, 2006). Therefore, gaining necessary skills in reading comprehension is a necessary requirement of the participants in order to be able to communicate using isiZulu as one of the prevalent and official languages in South Africa. This is the component of reading, which is identified as the process of making meaning by engaging with text. It involves a close reading of the text and learners are expected to answer questions about the meaning of text and text construction.

Hancin-Bhatt and Nagy (1993) conducted a study on English language learners in grade six and eight who were non-native speakers of English language. Their study investigated factors influencing the English word identification performance of Spanish-speaking beginning readers. To collect data, they administered Spanish phonological awareness, English and Spanish word recognition, and English and Spanish Oral proficiency. Therefore, with the Spanish instructions, they asked the participants to read English words and English pseudo-words (English and Spanish mixed and matching word segments). In other words, they used cross-language transfer that had the related sounds. Consequently, the Spanish or English word replacements were not clearly pronounced as Hancin-Bhatt and Nagy (1993) found incomplete decoding, guessing and errors. In other words, they ended up guessing the

meanings of English words by trying to associate them with those of Spanish words. However, they managed to decode the word segments regardless of the meaning behind. Thus, phonological awareness was a significant predictor of performance on word recognition tests both within and across languages. Therefore, these non-native Spanish-speaking beginning readers differed to the native-speakers of English, in that they lacked vocabulary knowledge, but not word recognition. In other words, they were not proficient in English because they had limited vocabulary, which made them struggle with words and wording. However, Hancin-Bhatt and Nagy (1993) concluded that the recognition of words were at the same level.

On the other hand, Nagy, McClure and Monteserrat (1997) looked at Spanish bilinguals in English only classes and bilinguals in bilingual classes. Their findings suggested that first language syntax influenced guesses of meaning of words in the second language. Geva and Ryan (1993) investigated English-Hebrew bilinguals and found that cognitive processes such as phonemic decoding and letter recognition require memory work in first and second language study.

The previous research, gives a clear indication that similar research in the South African context is lacking, particularly in an isiZulu First additional context. On that basis, I aim to explore whether or not some of the conclusions made by these theorists are identified as being the same for First Additional Language isiZulu learners in a South African context. Thus, to compensate on that, my study has evenly engaged an equal number of learners, age, culture and gender and their levels of abilities in order to avoid generalising and in order to compare fairly.

In a further study, Halpern (2004) argued that cognitive processes are categorised in the taxonomy as favoring women or men based on the results of the multitude of empirical studies. She further elaborates that women have more rapid access to phonological, semantic, and episodic information in long-term memory, and obtain higher scores on tests of verbal learning and the production and comprehension of the complex prose. Therefore, Halpern (2004) conducted a global study on 15-year-old male and female cognitive patterns, which compares male and female achievement in reading literacy among 33 countries. Those countries involved Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, Iran-Islamic Republic, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, England, Scotland and United States. Her findings indicated that girls still outscored boys in all countries involved. However, Halpern's study was unevenly represented with regard to gender as it had more females than males. This could have advantaged the girls. Undeniably, South Africa was not

part of Halpern's study and it has not been done in the current study context. In addition, the current study was evenly gender represented.

However, Halpern (2004), attempts to formulate an understanding of student performance via cognitive gender differences. In her '**Cognitive Process Taxonomy**' (my emphasis), she argues that both boys and girls have differential strengths and weaknesses in problem solving.

Consequently, Halpern (2004) categorizes underlying cognitive skills in reading as follows.

The Cognitive Process Taxonomy

- *Boys perform better on tests of verbal analogies, which involve mapping verbal relationships in working memory, as well as tasks involving transformations in visuo-spatial working memory.*
- *Girls are able to more rapidly access phonological, semantic, and episodic information from long-term memory; they show the largest advantages in other memory tasks, as well as a strong advantage in writing.*

Halpern's approach also addresses the differing levels of performance of boys and girls due to type of test: girls tend to receive higher grades in school, especially when the teacher's test material closely resembles what was taught, while males obtain higher scores on standardized tests, where test material tends not to be as similar to what was taught in class. She also, dismisses the suggestion that this difference is simply due to girls' learning in more rote methods than boys, noting that girls' superior performance in writing constitutes a "highly creative act" that is above and beyond rote learning (Halpern, 2006). Halpern (2006) argues that biological and environmental influences may be too closely intertwined to be isolated, making the gender gap a difficult one to address. Nature and nurture do not simply interact; they mutually influence each other in cyclical ways.

Therefore, I view Halpern's (2004) theory as a complementary approach towards the theories that this literature has suggested above. For instance, her cognitive process theory is aligned with what other studies concluded, regarding the choices and interests that boys and girls have in reading. Particularly, where she suggests test material that is not similar to what was taught in the classroom. Additionally, its focus is in the context of applied linguistic theory, in which reading and testing are considered.

Correspondingly, these theories cohere with Department of Basic Education (2011) in South Africa, under the guidance of CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement). The CAPS document aims to provide clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis of which reading and viewing is one of the language skills that need to be developed and assessed in First Additional Language. One of the aims that CAPS entails is

that Grade 10 learners should be confident, independent readers in their First Additional Language, selecting texts for their own interests and tastes. It further maintains that at the start of the year it is necessary, therefore, to assess learners' reading comprehension and to plan teaching accordingly. As a result, this interplay among social contexts, choice of material, cognitive engagement becomes particularly important to consider in the current study.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on a four-week research into isiZulu First Additional language classroom context and learners' reading literacy practices involved. This study has enabled me to explore the range of issues boys and girls in one classroom face in terms of social and cognitive aspects, gender, reading choice material, language background and its impact to their reading abilities. In addition, it should be noted that all institutions and participants' names I have used in this report are pseudonyms, to maintain confidentiality.

Context of the study

Data collection took place at St Paul's Comprehensive school in a suburb of Sun Heights in Johannesburg. It is an independent, Anglican school with a population of 593 learners, starting from grade eight to twelve. It comprises the population of 109 Grade Ten learners of which 17 are doing isiZulu as a first additional language. Gender is unevenly balanced within the segment of this language with only 7 boys and 10 girls.

The medium of instruction is English for every subject with the exception of isiZulu First Additional language (FAL), Afrikaans First Additional language (FAL) and French Second language (SL). The language policy does not restrict learners with their conversational methods during breaks. However, due to the dominating language usage and the home language used by the majority, English is a dominant language in this school.

Despite challenging and resource-constrained conditions with regard to isiZulu reading texts in education per se, as well as the school resource center at the site of research, isiZulu classroom itself has a stream of reading material that learners use during learning. For example, 'Isolezwe' is the newspaper printed in isiZulu, is a subscribed reading material that is delivered daily, during the week. It is usually used for reading assessments (prepared and unprepared reading) as well as pleasure. These reading material also include; Drum magazine that is also a subscription delivered weekly which serves the same purpose as Isolezwe newspaper; prescribed and un-prescribed poetry books; novels; short stories; drama story books; different themed charts displayed on the classroom wall; grammar and comprehension textbooks; study guides; dictionaries and video tapes. Over and above these textual materials, there is a classroom projector screen, with which reading and viewing is practiced during learning. Learners and I use this digital technology, interactive projector when we present our work such as written and visual text. As a result, showing presentations and information via interactive projector screen at one time, for a group of learners gives them the ability to read shared notes and engage in reading at once. In the light of such investment, knowledge of actual use, especially for reading purposes rather than administrative and display purposes,

is vital. It is vital because we live in a digital age. Technology has grown so much all over the country, particularly in the new generation's lives. Whether we use cellphones, iPad, computer or other types of devices, most offer features which enable us to communicate while reading takes place. In addition, these devices have grown exponentially in popularity this decade. With all-in-one convenience, most offer reading practices. Bennett, Maton & Kervin (2008) conclude that "digital natives", who are basically the generation of today, learn differently compared with the past generations of students. Therefore, learners are encouraged to use interactive projector screen, over and above printed texts now and then to improve their reading skills.

Moreover, Department of Basic Education (2011) with particularly, South African language curriculum has three different focusses and expectations for reading in Further Education and Training grade 10 to 12 phase, with which the participants in the current study have obtained in the classroom before the study took place. Firstly, learners have practised intensive reading of short texts for comprehension, note-taking and summary. Special attention has been drawn to language features of these texts for an integrated study of language. Secondly, learners have studied set work, with a focus on the aesthetic and cultural qualities of texts such as poems, plays, films, novels and short stories. Thirdly, learners have been involved in extensive reading of a variety of written and visual texts prior to the current study. They know how to access classroom, school or public libraries, films and the internet where available. As a teacher, I have guided them in selecting texts of the right level which are interesting and accessible. Moreover, they have been granted opportunities to read texts of their choice and present a book review in front of their peers. Hence, as a researcher, I have been teaching isiZulu First Additional Language at the school where the study was conducted.

Therefore, my study aligns itself with curriculum instructions as it involves selecting texts, comprehension and language awareness.

Research Design

The study followed a qualitative approach to examining the literacy lives of Further Education and Training (FET) for boys and girls, which focusses on reading literacy practices within the grade 10 South African Curriculum. For Neuman (2006), qualitative research allows for the integration of varied methods and methodologies of construing data in order for the research to generate a reasonably high degree of reliability and accuracy in its findings to the study. In addition to being subjective, in-depth, exploratory, interpretive and open-ended in nature, qualitative studies are conducted on entities in their natural settings, as opposed to quantitative studies, which are conducted in controlled settings (Falconer & Mackay, 1999). Therefore, in the context of the current study, these qualities aimed at ensuring that my

research yielded rich, detailed and in-depth data from participants. I chose a qualitative research over a quantitative one because, in quantitative studies, participants are restricted with regards to their voice being heard, they are reduced to numerical data in a study, and this type of research does not yield the information-rich data that qualitative data promises (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2006). A qualitative case study design, thus, was used to draw methods of data collection. However, attention has also been paid to the issues, theories and reading strategies employed by some of the research studies mentioned in the literature review. The reason for my choice is to emphasise that language can also be visually analysed instead of being too grammatical and formal. Therefore, this research is framed broadly within two issues: Exploring the gap and investigating a connection between the language and skills learners use when reading. Also using comprehension strategies to investigate on the connection between language used in reading by the different gendered groups, the strategies involved and its contexts as well as the text types learners choose or prefer to read.

Therefore, in order to conduct an in-depth study on gendered patterns in reading practices, as part of literacy, the focus was on the way in which learners read and respond to isiZulu comprehension texts, their behavioral patterns, attitudes towards reading. Because this study also involves their experiences and the influences through the society, an interpretivist paradigm was used. The interpretivist paradigm aims to capture the lives of participants in order to understand and to interpret the meaning of a particular situation (Henning *et al*, 2004: 19) and allows for different sources, methods and different processes of observation (Henning *et al*, 2004: 20). Therefore, this paradigm fits in well with this study because gendered reading practice is the social aspect as one might associate reading texts with particular genders, depending on what they perceive to be influential on different contexts.

Sampling technique

Throughout the period of collecting data, a population of 17 participants from grade 10 isiZulu First Additional learners were initially researched. However, these 16-year-old learners, with 10 girls and 7 boys participated in this study's questionnaire phase. This is because it was an initial stage where the study began with the whole class. The intention was to select participants that could give information that is related to what the study is aiming to achieve and to select an even number of participants that would represent specific characteristics. Hence, a group of six learners, three boys and three girls were purposively chosen according to different characteristics. These characteristics were representative of gender, language background and the levels of abilities in class, using their previous academic results and language of focus, isiZulu proficiency. Firstly, I present a brief

Siyanda (a pseudonym) is 16-year-old male learner whose native language is isiZulu; however, he is not proficient in isiZulu. He lives with only his mother as his parents are divorced. Siyanda and his mother speak English most of the time and very limited isiZulu comes in there and then. Siyanda is an average learner who usually asks for clarity if he is unsure of the requirements.

Zime (a pseudonym) is a 16-year-old isiZulu speaking female learner who speaks isiZulu fluently. She was born and brought up in one of the townships in KwaZulu-Natal, and only came to Johannesburg three years ago. Zime has had her primary schooling in a boarding school that accommodated learners and teachers who spoke isiZulu natively. During data collection of the current study, Zime resided with her aunt and cousins who are isiZulu native speakers. She is proficient in all components of isiZulu and English language, and, she is also a diligent candidate in class.

Lindsay (a pseudonym) is a 16-year-old female learner whose native language is Kinyarwanda, a local language of Rwanda. She lives with both her parents with whom they speak mostly French at home (Johannesburg, South Africa). Additionally, Lindsay, her siblings and her parents speak English, Swahili and Lingala (Congolese languages). Lindsay is an average learner who is always attentive in class and hardworking.

Vukani (a pseudonym) lives with both parents and his native language is Shangaan. He is a 15-year-old male learner and they always converse in Shangaan and English at home. Vukani struggles with understanding isiZulu due to limited vocabulary, however, his results are always above average. He is a hardworking and a responsible candidate who is always attentive in class.

Simiso (a pseudonym) is a male student, who is 16 years of age. His father passed away when he was five years old and therefore, he refers to his stepfather as 'dad', whom he lives with and his mother. Simiso's native language is isiZulu and they communicate through English, isiXhosa and isiZulu with his family. He seems to understand isiZulu very well even though he is not achieving marks that complement his potential. This is probably because he is a learner who is constantly distracted and is disorganised in class.

Zerani (a pseudonym) is a 16-year-old female learner who lives with her mother, since her father stays in another province because of the job that he is doing. Otherwise, both her parents are married. Her home language is isiXhosa, which is closely related to isiZulu with slight differences since they both fall into Nguni languages. Zerani and her family communicate in both isiXhosa and English. She is a diligent learner who always works cooperatively in all aspects of isiZulu.

The results of reading practices that these participants achieved prior to the data collection of the current study are presented in **Table 3.1**.

Learner's name	Prepared own choice reading	Unprepared reading	Comprehension (Reading and Viewing)	Listening comprehension	Overall Result
	20	20	25	20	85
Females					
Zerani	16	15	20	19	70
Zime	18	18½	21	19	76½
Lindsay	11	10	16	11	48
Males					
Vukani	13	11	13	15	52
Simiso	10	9½	15	19	72½
Siyanda	10	10	18	18	56

Table 3.1: Reading practices results before the study occurred.

By harnessing this grouping, this study hoped to determine whether the gap is influenced by cognitive levels, language and social background or gender influences in more depth. The idea was to strengthen my findings by collecting data from all angles in terms of socialisation and all other contextual aspects that the participants might have. Pseudonyms were used for the participants in order to protect their confidentialities. Thus, anonymity took place in my study to certify ethnicity.

Data Collection

The current study relied on data collected from a variety of instruments: questionnaires, observation, semi-structured one-on-one interviews and written comprehension tasks. Over and above this, an activity on text selection with the whole population of 17 participants was conducted and field notes were taken during the discussion, after responding to questionnaires. English was the dominant language used throughout the study to invite

confidence from the participants since most of them were non-native speakers of isiZulu. Even so, the native speakers of the current study are not proficient speakers of isiZulu language themselves.

However, switching from English to isiZulu and/ or vice versa, was also encouraged in order to preserve vocabulary of the isiZulu. For instance, all discussions accommodated 'Translanguaging strategies' to emphasise flexible use of the target language, their different home languages as well as English (Makalela, 2014). Makalela (2014) defines translanguaging as a complex phenomenon that involves a high degree of social sensitivity and selectivity within short time intervals during a communicative act. It is a strategy that has been recently adopted in South African classrooms for flexible communication purposes, particularly, among multilinguals. Seeing that the participants of the current study hold the benefit of speaking more than two languages (**Table 3.2** summarises this) for effectiveness of the study, translanguaging invited the need in this study.

	South African official languages				Foreign languages
	English	IsiZulu	IsiXhosa	Shangaan	Other
FEMALE LEARNERS					
Zerani	√	√	√		
Zime	√	√			
Lindsay	√				Kinyarwanda/ Lingala & French Swahili/
MALE LEARNERS					
Vukani	√			√	
Simiso	√	√	√		
Siyanda	√	√			

Table 3.2: Language proficiency distribution of participants

As shown in **Table 3.2**, all participants were proficient speakers of English. Besides being practiced at home, English has been used as a medium of instruction at this school and they have been learning it at a home language level during their whole schooling career thus far. Then, as indicated on **Table 3.2**, a corresponding number of participants, with regards to gender had a background knowledge of isiZulu, as they did have exposure to it, from home. Otherwise, all learners who took part in this study do have exposure to isiZulu, even though their understanding of it is not the same. Another comparable category of isiXhosa speaking inheritors was from one male learner and one female learner whose parents have this language practice at home, thus, they have exposure to its practice. Lastly, least categories, in which a female learner is competent in French, one of the African languages which is a recently introduced additional language in schools, over and above the First Additional compulsory South African languages. This participant, Lyndsay is also a fluent speaker of Kinyarwanda, her birth country, Swahili and Lingala, languages practiced in Congo, where one of her parents was born.

On the other hand, one male learner had the benefit of Shangaan, one of the official South African languages, as one of the languages of practice at home. Therefore, with this cocktail of languages among the group of learners who participated in the current study, translanguaging played a significant role in providing the participants and myself the effective and convenient communication and understanding of the content. It serves as an aiding tool of an effective communication where individuals are challenged by the instruction language and to accommodate those who may feel isolated from that conversation. Therefore, with the influence of Hancin-Bhatt and Nagy's (1993), Makalela's (2014), work on giving instructions in English, as the language that the learners are familiar with, translanguaging took its course in the current study.

To provide a more complete and a multidimensional understanding of instruments that I used to collect data, I have provided a flow chart below as representatives of the subheadings (see Figure 2).

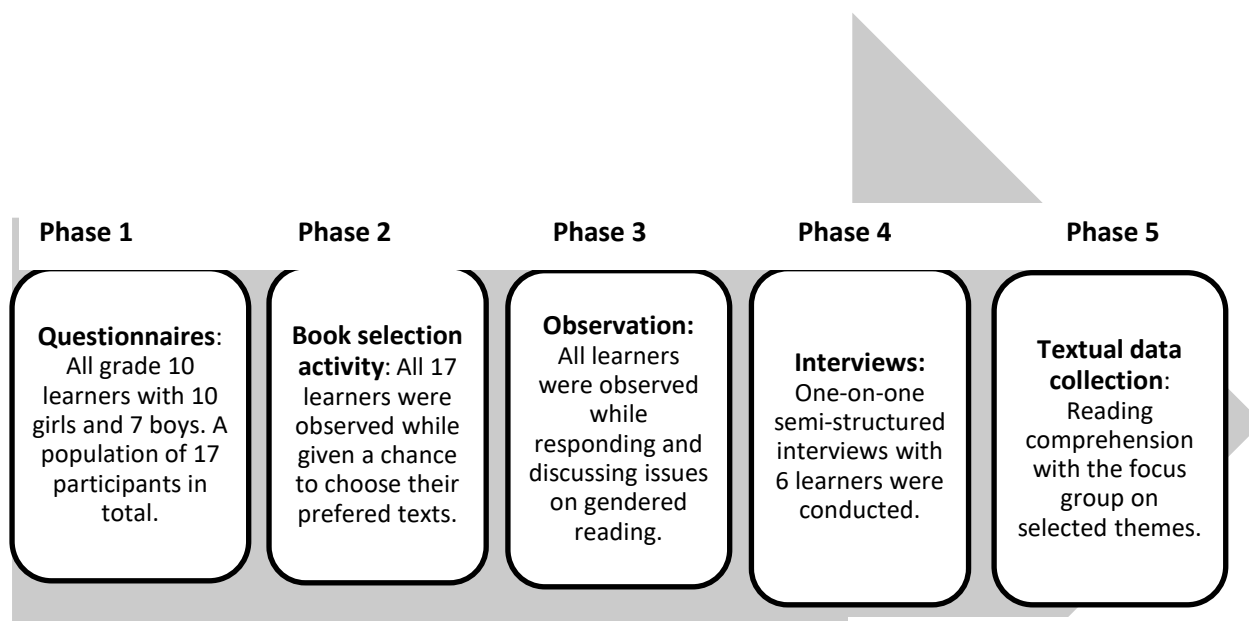


Figure 2: Data Collection Flow Chart

Participants in the current research are the contributors in education; these are the learners of isiZulu First Additional language in grade 10. Therefore, data was collected from these learners by running five phases: questionnaires, reading selection activity, observation, one-on-one semi structured interviews, and textual data collection.

- **Questionnaires**

Over a large group of learners, questionnaires suggested an overview of what the whole class thinks.

According to Yin (2003) a case study design should be considered when a focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions and one cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study. In that light, my intention was to explore what the gendered literacy gap (focusing specifically on reading and reading practices) looks like in one isiZulu First Additional Language classroom. I was interested to know what boys and girls read in and out of the school, why they make these choices, and how they feel about reading. In order to investigate this, and to validate data, questionnaires have been administered as an instrument as they

indicate the way the learners feel, rate themselves and think, about the use of isiZulu language and mainly reading as one of the required components in their subject repertoire. (see Appendix A).

Therefore, questionnaires were distributed and conducted in the first phase of data collection in order to gather this information. It took approximately 10 minutes to complete the whole process and there were no questions or any hustle from the participants, related to this process. As participants of this study were not very much proficient in isiZulu language and in order to ensure the comprehensibility of its items to all learners, I used English in the questionnaire sheets, which is their everyday use of language, to promote efficiency. The questionnaire composed of six questions addressing areas of interest, abilities and skills in the context of reading practices. I designed these questionnaires with the aim of getting answers on the following issues:

- o The learners' confidence in reading texts that are in their home languages.
- o The learners' confidence when reading isiZulu language texts.
- o Their views on isiZulu comprehension texts.

Furthermore, using questionnaires had the advantage of allowing the participants' time to think about their answers. It is therefore likely that the responses they gave were a true reflection of their thoughts or feelings towards the concept.

- **Reading selection activity**

This was the second phase of data collection, which occurred after the questionnaire phase. As Oakhill & Petrides's (2007), Merisuo-Strom (2006), Coles & Hall's (2002) suggested, a variety of printed texts, with different themes was placed on the table in front of the class. I asked the learners to select text that they prefer to read. Most texts they had to choose from had different themes such as sports, love and relationships, technology, cars and leisure. They were all drawn from a variety of sources such as newspaper, magazine and different reader books for poetry, novels and short stories. The reason behind this activity was to gain sight into boys and girls' in-and-out-of-school reading practices by allowing them to choose material of their special interest.

After text selection, I asked just one follow up question; what were the reasons for their choices? During that discussion, I took field notes that also aided in developing a more accurate understanding of their text selections.

- **Observation**

In order to determine whether learners know about the gendered literacy gap, and, whether they understand it or whether they think they contribute to or challenge the literacy gap, I observed learners during a double lesson time of 1 hour and 20 minutes (each period is 40 minutes) in the classroom for a third stage of data collection. In preparation for that, I asked them to separate into three groups. The intention was to see how they react, in terms of their attitude and gestures. Who do they chose in their groups, in relation to gender? What utterances do they make? Thereafter, I divided them into two groups of four and one group of six. Each group of four had the same gender and the one group of six had three male learners and three female learners. One of the three extra female learners were absent, one chose not to participate and the other one volunteered to pull out so that data is collected from an even number of genders per group to create balance. This activity happened during the initial stage, with the whole group. However, to create an even representation concerning gender, other learners opted not to participate during this stage. Actually, this was before I started working with the purposely-selected group of six learners. The idea behind was to listen to responses from the whole class so I could get the indication on how boys and girls think and converse in their natural settings. Hence, this observation stage, informed me of how boys and girls think about reading practices. Merriam (1998) defines education as 'a process' and school as a 'lived experience' (pg. 4) within which meaning is made by the participants, and it is in understanding the meaning that insight is gleaned by deductive enquiry. Merriam's (1998) definition is substantiated by this particular activity as, it is a live experience whereby learners have freedom of expressing themselves by saying what they think and how they feel under the guidance of educational context. Therefore, to investigate deductively, I projected four questions on the whiteboard by initially asking them to read and respond to every question so that I could observe the whole process without distracting or imposing on them. These questions were:

1. Do you think boys and girls read different texts? Why?
2. What do boys and girls read in-and-out of school?
3. What do you think boys and girls should read more? Why?
4. Who do you think achieves better marks when it comes to reading? Explain.

Therefore, to capture the essence of their attitude change and behavior, I observed the boys and girls while discussing gendered reading issues with each other. However, my intention was not to capture the learners' responses to these questions, but to capture data on the notion that shared their social behavior, interaction and attitude, towards gendered reading practices. Attached on (Appendix B), is the observation schedule that gave guide and insight

to this section. During the observation, I took detailed and descriptive field notes that allowed me to assess and analyse data that was collected during this engagement.

- **Semi-structured one-on-one interviews**

Additional source of data occurred through semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to gain an in-depth picture of the participants' views on a topic (De Vos et al., 2002). On the other hand, Louise Barriball & While (1994) suggest that conducting interviews to collect data has the potential to overcome the poor response rates of a questionnaire survey project and a convenient time can be arranged for the interview. Since this method of data collection enables flexibility for both researcher and participant, I, therefore deemed this methodology was appropriate to employ. Certainly, pre-determined set of open questions (Appendix C) helped me to explore certain topics of discussion as I progressed with the research. This is one research method I viewed from a social theoretical perspective. Interviews can generate data, which illuminate what is being learnt about reading material itself, on the other hand, interviews can generate data, which illuminate what being a reader and experiencing readership means (Hodges, 2015). Thus, with Hodges's (2015) influence, I investigated on what individual participants had to say about reading as an activity and reading material itself. Thus, an audio-recorder was used to collect data on one-on-one semi-structured interviews with six participants. These interview sessions lasted for about 2-5 minutes each on separate time slots that were convenient to the participants. The participants involved all six learners that participated in the current study. Drawing on the recorded conversation with the participants, interview transcripts helped me to generate the collected data for data analysis chapter.

- **Textual Data Collection**

Drawing from the participants' responses in their one-on-one interview and the questionnaires, I administered three types of comprehension tasks that matched their interests and choices of texts (Appendix E). It should be noted that these texts entailed isiZulu language only, and this includes reading texts and their accompanying questions. Therefore, in order to measure the reading comprehension ability of learners, I designed reading comprehension texts, which included three parts. The first part complemented interests of both genders, the Reading and Visual text on 'birthday' theme. The reason behind this choice was the majority guide that opted for Marvel and cartoon strips during the text selection process. Therefore, this was a non-gender bias text that geared more towards both male and female participants. Besides reading within the speech bubble and viewing of the pictures in this section, it assessed

vocabulary knowledge, invited recalling, retelling, synthesizing and evaluating on the story context.

In addition, all six participants were given time allocation of an hour to complete three comprehension tasks. All three texts were in isiZulu as well as the accompanying questions (see Appendix E). A variety of comprehension questions was administered, each dealt with different aspects of reading competence and levels of thinking. The primary focus was on measuring learners' achievement after using isiZulu as a vehicle of thought in content that matches their interests. Therefore, in order to collect data from this method, Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension was used to formulate a variety of questions in order to attend to a range of cognitive levels in the assessment.

Firstly, an unseen 45-word (TEXT A, appendix E.) cartoon strip, a visual text extracted from the internet: (<http://comicskingdom.com/blog/2014/07/15/tuesday-s-top-ten-comic-strip-critic-edition>.) Text 1 used familiar and basic vocabulary question words for them not to struggle with understanding of the questions, as well as the basic theme for the comprehension that the learners have dealt with, in class. Its purpose was to inform and entertain and it entails an emotive and descriptive style of writing. However, it was used due to the guided popular demand from a questionnaire stage. If we can recall, the dominant preferred reading texts was on dialogue as well as Visual Literacy.

Therefore, the cartoon strip below (English version) catered for the interests of both boys and girls as a neutral reading and most preferred comprehension text. **Figure 3** below is the translated version to maintain the language used in this study report.



Figure 3: A combination of a dialogue and Visual Literacy

The other two comprehension tasks entailed content that aligns with what each gender mostly opted for, particularly, the themes. Thus, I downloaded an online story on celebrities to ally with most female learners' choices and an article with a sports theme that is associated with most male learners' choice. **Figure 4** and **Figure 5** translated versions are presented below:

Itumeleng Khune says Hlompho Kekana is a great player who absolutely deserves his Bafana Bafana chance and all the plaudits coming his way.

The Mamelodi Sundowns man is still the talk of the town following his wonder-goal against Cameroon in Limbe last weekend, with many suggesting it's a sure-fire candidate for FIFA's Puskas Award.

Khune, who captained Bafana in the two matches against The Indomitable Lions, says Kekana's goal from inside his own half will long be remembered.

"It was breathtaking, hence I also went all the way to where the guys were celebrating to join the celebration. Even the coach was there," Khune says.

"It's not the first time he has scored such a cracker – even a week ago for his club in Congo [in the CAF Champions League] he scored a similar cracker, so you can see that the guy is really working hard on his technique, on his accuracy, and it paid off." Khune adds: "Hlompho is a great player. He has had a good season at his club and he brought that experience into Bafana, which us something we needed.

"Players who are performing very well at their clubs deserves a run in Bafana so that they can help this country achieve goals and move forward." Khune will have to try and keep out Kekana's thunderbolts Chiefs face Sundowns on 30 April.

Figure 4: An English version of reading comprehension assessment mostly preferred by boys

Cape Town – Jennifer Lopez will be heading to South Africa for her first-ever performance as ANN7 is lining up more American artists for its 3rd South African of the Year Awards. J.Lo will join **Robin Thicke**, announced earlier this month as the award show's main act, at ANN7's (DStv 405) third SATY Awards 2016 that will take place on 25 November at the Ticketpro Dome in Johannesburg, and will be broadcast live at 18:00 on the day. The SABC's Top Billing presenter trio of Bonang Matheba, Jonathan Boynton-Lee and Jeannie D will be the three main presenters. Her SATY Awards 2016 appearance will be her first performance in South Africa, Jennifer Lopez who is currently doing her Las Vegas concert residency at the AXIS Theatre and is producing the second season of her TV drama series, *Shades of Blue*. According to ANN7, Jennifer Lopez will perform her biggest hits throughout the ceremony alongside South African artists.

"The SATY's are the epitome of what it means to be South African," says Moegsien Williams, ANN7 editor-in-chief. "This year the theme is 'Reflection and Progression.' We take the time to remind people what it means to be South African – as the country commemorates 40 years of youth empowerment."

The SATY 2016 will award prizes to the country's musicians, artists, conservationists, sport, youth and business leaders with ANN7 viewers voting for the nominees in various categories.

Figure 5: An English version of reading comprehension assessment mostly preferred by girls

Furthermore, reading comprehension texts such as these provide reliable, valid and fair measures of the achievements of learners in the subjects offered (National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12, 2012). The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R- 12 is a formal curriculum in South African schools that promotes knowledge in local context while being sensitive to global imperatives.

As a result, these three texts portray meaning that provokes thinking while they donate new knowledge to the learners, regardless of their ability levels. As a result, learners are expected to maintain relationship between language and thought when reading and responding to questions that are related to the three texts. Therefore, in order to meet these specific needs and other linguistic needs of all learners, an effective assessment tool such as this test is necessary for teaching comprehension strategies and developing certain skills that enhance reading.

In relation to the conclusions stated by Moodley (2015), Frederiksen & Collins (1989) as well as Messick (1996), Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension has received considerable attention and has been used to formulate a variety of questions in order to accommodate all cognitive levels in the summative assessment. Many scholars and educational specialists today (Pardo, 2004; Dooley & Mathews, 2009; Aarnoutse & Schellings, 2003) conclude that reading is an ongoing process that involves development of several distinct but inter-related skills. These skills, which may be viewed as building blocks of reading processes include phonological awareness (pronunciation), Syntax (sentence structure and grammar), decoding (interpret), and lexical (vocabulary). As mentioned before, candidates of this assessment are non-native speakers, meaning having these skills in mind enhances their ability to understand, think and relate the meaning of text with that of their opinion effectively.

Concerning the design and technicality, this test scores have been coherently and well developed and scaffolded. Every question has mark allocation stipulated on the sheet and all is presented clearly next to their relevant instructions respectively. Furthermore, all these marks provoke all orders of thinking, as it required students to infer and comprehend, to apply, analyse, evaluate and synthesise. Barrett's Taxonomy of Comprehension analysis presented on **Table 3.3**, endorses this influence.

Table 3.3: A Comprehension Analysis grid: Cognitive levels according to Barrett's taxonomy (Questions translated into English).

QUESTION		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	Total Marks
1	TEXT A Cartoon section: A dialogue (COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE QUESTION)						
1.1	Khetha igama elilungile. (Choose the appropriate word) 1.1.1 Umnumzane Smith (ujabulile, uphatheke kabi, ukhathele) lapha. Mr Smith (is happy, sad, tired) 1.1.2 Lesi yisitolo (sezinto zokutshala, sezinto zokuxhumana, yezinto zokuthutha). This shop sells (seeds, gadgets, transport)	2					2
1.2	Phendula ngokuthi NGAMANGA noma YIQINISO . (Say whether is TRUE or FALSE) 1.2.1 Kukhona indali kulesi sitolo. There is a sale in tis shop. 1.2.2 Umnumzane Smith ungumuntu ocebile. Mr Smith is a rich person.		2				2
1.3	Bhala umqondofana walawa magama alandelayo. Izimpendulo uzozithola engxoxweni. Write synonyms of the following words. Find answers from the dialogue. 1.3.1 Uyazidayisa. sells 1.3.2 Emtoti. Nice one			2			2
1.4	Bhala umqondophika walawa magama alandelayo. Izimpendulo uzozithola engxoxweni. Write synonyms of the following words. Find answers from the dialogue. 1.4.1 Eshibhile cheap one 1.4.2 Elibi the ugly/ bad		2				2
1.5	Ungayinika siphi isihloko le ngxoxo? Kungani uyinika lesi sihloko? What title can you give to this dialogue? Give a reason for your answer.				1	2	3
1.6	Wena ucabanga ukuthi umnumzane Smith uthathe isinqumo esihle yini ngalokhu akwenzayo? Sekela impendulo yakho. Do you think Mr Smith to the right decision? Provide a reason for your answer.					3	3
TOTAL MARK DISTRIBUTION FOR TEXT A		2	4	2	1	5	14

2	TEXT B Sports news: Narrative (CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS)						
2.1.	Obani amagama abadlali le ndaba ekhuluma ngabo? Who is the story talking about?	1					1
2.2	Igama elithi 'Lions' ngesiZulu lithi: (amabhubesi, ibhubesi, izibhubesi)? Khetha kubakaki. The word 'Lions' in isiZulu means: (words are grammatically twisted). The question is looking for the plural translation of 'lions' which is the first one.		½				½
2.3	Unozinti: (uvimba epalini, udlala ngepali, uphonsa ipali). Khetha kubakaki. The goal keeper (This is also grammatically twisted, the question required the correct verb done by the goalkeeper)		½				½
2.4	Chaza ukuthi uKekana ungumdlali onjani. Bhala amaphuzu amabili. Describe or discuss Kekana's character.			2			2
2.5	IBafana Bafana yiqembu lebhola elisebenza kahle kakhulu. Uyavumelana noma uyaphikisana nalo mbono? Sekela impendulo yakho. Bafana Bafana is a football team that plays effectively. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer.				3		3
2.6	Ikhuluma ngani le ndatshana? Finqa ngamagama angu 35 kuya ku 40. Ungabhali imisho njengoba injalo. What is this story talking about? Summarise in 35-40 words.		2	1			3
	TOTAL MARK DISTRIBUTION FOR TEXT B	1	3	3	3		10
3	TEXT C Celebrity news: narrative (CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS)						
3.1	Obani amagama abantu besifazane okukhulunywa ngabokule ndaba? Who is the story talking about?	2					
3.2	Umculi (Owesilisa, wesilisa, wabalisa) kuthiwa uzocula. A singer (this is grammatically twisted) they had to choose the correct prefixed noun.		1				
3.3	Ake uyiphe indikimba le ndatshana. Give this story theme.				1		
3.4	Khetha umuntu wesifazane oyedwa kulaba bese uchaza ukuthi ungumuntu onjani ngokubhala amaphuzu amabili.			2			

	Choose one of the persons mentioned I this story and describe and discuss her character.						
3.5	Chaza le nkulumo ukuthi isho ukuthini. “Walala, wasala!” Explain what this idiom means.			2			
3.6	Ikhuluma ngani le ndatshana? Finqa ngamagama angu 30 kuya ku 35. Ungabhali imisho njengoba injalo.		2				
	TOTAL MARK DISTRIBUTION FOR TEXT C	2	3	4	1		10
	GRAND TOTAL MARK DISTRIBUTION FOR ALL TASKS	15	9	10			34
	%age	44%	26%	29%			100%

An analysis grid of this test using Barrett’s Taxonomy

KEY:

Level 1	Literal comprehension	Lower order questions
Level 2	Recall/ Re-organisational	
Level 3	Inferential Comprehension	Middle order questions
Level 4	Evaluation	Higher order question
Level 5	Appreciation	

CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Although this is a qualitative study, it does incorporate quantitative elements such as tables, which are used to present quantitative data. These quantitative data are then explained in detail in a qualitative form. There was no way that the use of quantitative data could have been avoided in this study. Saunders et al. (2000: 326) state that “virtually all research will involve some numerical data or data that could usefully be quantified to help you answer your research question(s).” However, the use of quantitative data does not change the fact that this is qualitative research.

Therefore, as this is qualitative research, the intent is not to generate quantitative or statistical evidence of boys and girls results in their comparative reading practices. On the contrary, this study looks at the causes of the problem. It therefore answers the 'why' and 'how' questions and then suggests amicable solutions to the problem, which is the gender gap problem in reading.

On that basis, the results of this study were similar to the various sources that were used in the literature review. The forms of data were collected by doing an analysis of questionnaires, reading selection activity, observation and learner interview lead to some initial findings regarding how the participants made meaning of the chosen information texts.

4.1. Findings and discussion

- **Social theoretical standpoint**

While the main issue of this study is gendered literacy/ reading gap, the results of this qualitative research were somehow related to the various sources that were used in the literature review. Moreover, this study aimed at investigating a connection between the language and linguistic skills learners use when reading, the text types learners choose or prefer to read, context that reading takes place and the audience in relation to gender and reading practices. Therefore, in this section, I focus on the data generated from questionnaires, observation and semi-structured one-on-one interviews, a research method I viewed as particularly from a social theoretical point of view and that supplements the study aims. On first contact, I distributed questionnaires among the whole population of 17 learners in which they remained anonymous. Thus, the findings from the questionnaire stage are generalised in the questionnaire discussion section, according to the data accumulated by the whole population of grade 10 learners. Regardless of their anonymity, each questionnaire had

a part where learners had to indicate whether they were male or female, which was a great help for me as I was able to categorise and compare boys and girls responses accordingly.

Questionnaires

Findings from the questionnaire phase below were necessary from the participants to form part of this research. Since the subsequent analysis relied on the responses from the questionnaire, with regards to boys and girls reading preferences and how they feel about reading practices, the tables below were computed, to highlight gender disparities from the participants' point of view.

Table 4.1, below shows the participants language background, as reflected on the questionnaire sheets.

Table 4.1: Participants language background

	Age	IsiZulu	English	IsiXhosa	isiNdebele	French	SiSwati	SeSotho	SeTswana
Male Learners	15-17 years old		1	1	2		1	1	1
Female Learners	15-16 years old	3	2	3	1	1		1	1

Table 4.1 presents a total number of language spoken by the participants at home. Some of the languages spoken by the participants are duplicated because they have the ability to switch from one language to the other. For Example, two questionnaire sheets, whose respondents were female learners, reflected two home languages for each participant. One had both isiZulu and SeSotho indicated, whereas, the other one had isiXhosa and English.

Table 4.2: Rating scale on reading confidence

	MALE LEARNERS					FEMALE LEARNERS				
	Scale 5	Scale 4	Scale 3	Scale 2	Scale 0-1	Scale 5	Scale 4	Scale 3	Scale 2	Scale 0-1
Confidence in reading aloud in their native language	1	1	2		2	3	3	3		1
Confidence in reading aloud in isiZulu			3	3			4	2	3	1
Rate of understanding isiZulu comprehensions			2	2	2		3	2	4	1
Confidence in answering isiZulu comprehensions		3	1	2			4	1	1	4

Table 4.2 indicates that the majority of learners, both male and female learners have average confidence in reading. Most of the male learners rated themselves at 3rd scale, whereas the female learners placed themselves on the 4th scale.

Moreover, the study aimed at identifying the reading issues related to reading that are raised by different gendered groups of learners with regard to their choices of texts. Therefore, detailed analysis of the learners choices are presented on **Table 4.3**, below.

How often do you read? (In any language of your choice)	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Hardly	Only when I am asked to
	2 female learners	3 female learners 2 male learners	3 female learners 3 male learners		2 female learners 1 male learner
My most preferable type of isiZulu reader is a/an:	Novel	Drama/ play	Magazine	Newspaper	Adventure
	2 female learners 1 male learner	4 female learners 1 male learner	4 female learners 2 male learners	2 female learners 2 male learners	

Table 4.3: Reading responses

I prefer this type of assessment for a comprehension:	A dialogue	A narrative	Reading and viewing		
	• 9 female learners • 5 male learners	• 1 male learner	• 2 female learners • 1 male learner		
I enjoy reading about this theme:	Relationships/love	Sports	Technology	Adventure	Crime
	• 10 female learners • 2 male learners	• 4 male learners		• 2 female learners • 2 male learners	• 6 female learners
I get the idea of isiZulu storyline when:	I read aloud	I read silently	Someone else reads to me	Listen to music	
	• 6 female learners • 5 male learners	• 1 female learner • 2 male learners	• 7 female learners	• 1 male learner	
To answer questions in the comprehension I:	Think in English first then translate	Think in isiZulu	Visualize and answer	Use matching words in the story with words in the questions	
	• 6 female learners • 5 male learners	• 4 female learners • 3 male learners	• 2 female learners • 1 male learner	• 6 female learners • 4 male learners	

Table 4.3 shows a simple correlation between boys and girls choices of reading genre and a reading type of text. For instance, four female readers and two male readers chose magazine reading. In addition, out of 10 female learners, nine opted for a dialogue comprehension, and, out of six male learners, five opted for a dialogue reading comprehension. However, with regard to answering comprehension questions, responses from male participants disagree with Halpern's (2006) theory, in which she stated that boys work with visual-spatial memory. This is because their responses to the questions that asked if they visualize first before answering questions, boys responded by saying that they translate from isiZulu to English first, and only one among the six male learners said he visualizes.

Since this study aimed to gain sight into boys' and girls' in-and-out-of-school reading practices by allowing them to choose material of their special interest. **Figure 6** below is a summary of reading preferences that the whole group of learners (females and males) have chosen.

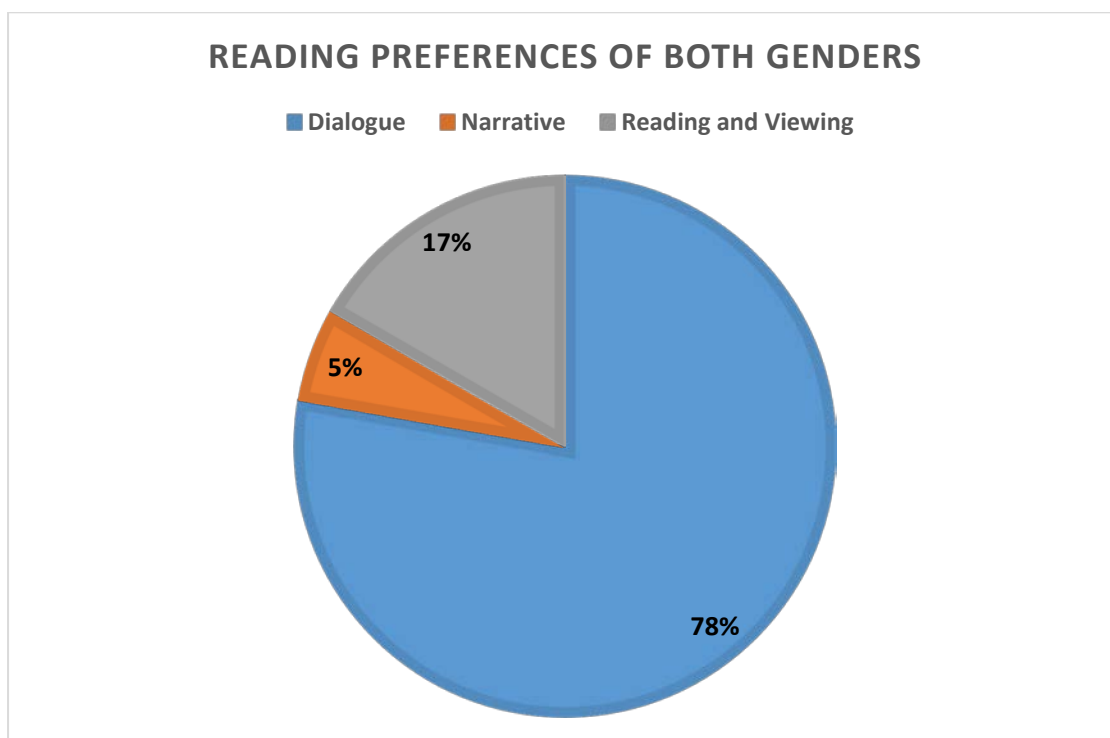


Figure 6: A summary of reading preferences of both males and females

Figure 6 shows us that 78% of all the learners preferred a Dialogue Comprehension text, 17% opted for Viewing and Reading and 5% chose a Narrated texts. This is probably because dialogue resembles spoken language rather than written language. Furthermore, its style of writing possesses user-friendly language, as it has a tone that resembles drama contexts. Therefore, these features portray entertainment benefits, to the readers. Correspondingly, the majority of our learners are starting to show interest in drama as a subject in South Africa. As a result, dialogues become more accessible even in written texts since they can be easily turned into live settings.

Observation

The observation phase was conducted to analyse further, what happened during the study to examine how boys responded when they were given instructions and related information in comparison with the girls or vice versa. Thus, I took field notes to record all behavioral aspects portrayed by the participants as I observed. **Table 4.4** below entails data on this aspect.

Table 4.4: Observation report on group discussion activity.

Criteria	Differences	Commonalities
Instruction: - Do learners listen attentively? - Do they ask questions? - Are the learners quiet when necessary? - Do they follow instruction in the same way? - How long does it take to respond to the instruction?	- Most boys are fidgety compared to girls who were listening attentively. - Girls asked more questions than boys. - Girls were talkative and did not wait their turn to speak - Boys were taking longer than girls to respond to the instruction.	No commonalities were identified
Verbal behavior and interaction: - Who speaks to whom and for how long? - Who listens more? - Who initiates interaction? - What language variations or dialects occur? - What is the tone of voice used?	- Girls spoke for a longer time than boys. - Boys listened more as girls were talking more. - Girls initiated the discussion, in most cases. - They used mostly English and isiZulu, except Sesotho words such as “<i>Hhe bana!</i>” which is used to express shock. One boy was shocked by the response from one girl who said girls achieve better marks in reading at school. He was defending the side of the boys which could have offended him. - Girls were using provocative tone in most cases, whereas boys’ voices indicated that they became victimised by the girls’ comments. This was evident from the tone of their voices as they were talking loud while defending their reputation towards the judgemental girls.	Both boys and girls tone was fluctuating as they were raising up their voices due to arguments they had.
Physical behavior and gestures: - How much space or distance is created as they discuss? - What expression is shown by the opposite gender as the other one speaks?	- Some girls were consistently moving from their seats to get up and they were using gestures when they talked. On the other hand, most boys stayed in their seats and there was not much body movement. - I noticed that most of the girls had a tendency of looking at one another when the discussion took place, whether they were the ones talking or listening.	

The results of **Table 4.4** present field notes that I took while I observed boys and girls during their discussion on gendered reading. As indicated on **Table 4.4**, girls were dominant speakers and they were using gestures in most cases, compared to the boys. According to Tannen (1985), males feel comfortable doing “public speaking” while females prefer “private” speaking. She extends by saying that girls criticize peers who try to stand out and appear better than others. They (girls) feel comfortable where they feel at home. Thus, I assume that participants in this group were comfortable with each other since they had been with their peers for the past three years of high school. Moreover, they had been spending most of their time with their peers, which could have felt like a family domain. In that light, boys preserved their talk for public speaking. From childhood, men learn to use talking as a way to get and keep attention (Tannen, 1985).

One-on-one semi-structured Interviews

Conforming to Coles & Hall (2002), the current study adopted their theory in their study context, the learners were also allowed to express their views on the choices of texts, in-school and out-of-school to determine whether this holds true for them as well, or not.

After the interviews were transcribed and checked by the participants for accuracy, two of the participants, to authenticate data read written dialogues. Therefore, interview transcripts helped me to explore how talking together leads to thinking together about reading. In Hodges' (2015) terms, if a teacher engages in a research which is informed by principles of classroom talk of this kind, it is hoped that the process will benefit the learner participants as well as the researcher. As a result, a one-on-one interview conducted with this group of learners revealed the following responses from two of the participants:

RESEACHER: Do you read isiZulu texts outside of school? Please explain.

LINDSAY: No I do not. Because I am not an isiZulu speaker and I find it hard for me to read in isiZulu.

VUKANI: I don't, but I would like to. I don't because I wouldn't be able to understand it. So maybe if I had a tutor or something, then I would get to read more to grow my vocabulary.

Lindsay and Vukani's responses have an indication of binary in this case since, according to their views, reading isiZulu texts is difficult. In addition, the responses they gave have an implication that difficult reading needs to be done when studying and reading for enjoyment should be easy. The reason behind this is because, they both read in isiZulu and read isiZulu texts simply because, isiZulu is one of their subjects at school and it is compulsory for them to choose it as one of the

First Additional Languages at school. Therefore, this may imply that, they have no choice but to read in this language that they may not just do voluntarily.

RESEACHER: What kind of texts do you enjoy reading? And why?

LINDSAY: I like a lot of fiction books. I like them because I find them very interesting and sometimes relatable, but I find it comforting to know that the bad stuff happening within may not always be true, so I like that about fiction.

VUKANI: Is this just in general?

RESEARCHER: Yes

VUKANI: I enjoy, in terms of novels, genres like fantasy and mystery because it's interesting, and also crime, and by the way (pointing at me) cartoons are my favourite, that's about it.

SIYANDA: I like reading about sports and poetry, and I like them because they are just things I like reading about. And they are informative and they're creative.

Clearly, Lindsay (female) and Vukani (male) are non-native speakers of isiZulu language. However, isiZulu is one of their first additional language choices, which, according to the CAPS instructions in the South African curriculum, is compulsory to learn. Therefore, regardless of their reading practices out-of-school, particularly, in isiZulu, their choices of text may not always match with their interests as well as the genre preferences when considering in-school reading choices. However, the curriculum allows the schools to select prescribed genres from a choice of two literature books as a choice of isiZulu genre every year in grade 10. Likewise, the South African language curriculum allows different types of reading themes to be used for reading practices such texts that entail themes that match with the learners contexts and their interests.

Consequently, Text A, used a comprehension task that was on Reading and viewing to accommodate their interests.

- **Cognitive theoretical standpoint**

Textual data collection

In this part of data collection, I discuss three reading texts with which I explore the average comprehension score that was achieved by each learner across all reading text types. **Table 4.5** presents its results below.

Table 4.5: Reading comprehension scores of six learners on different themes.

Participants	Text Cartoon Score	Text Sports Score	Text Celebrity Score	Total Average Score	Average time taken
	14	10	10	34	60min
Females					
Zerani	14 (100%)	8 (80%)	9 (90%)	31 (91%)	55min
Zime	13 (93%)	8.5 (85%)	8.5 (85%)	30 (88%)	40min
Lindsay	11.5 (82%)	3.5 (35%)	5 (50%)	20 (59%)	45min
AVERAGE	38.5 (91%)	20 (67%)	22.5 (75%)	81 (79%)	140min
Males					
Vukani	6.5 (46%)	6 (60%)	6 (60%)	18.5 (54%)	50min
Simiso	10 (71%)	7 (70%)	7 (70%)	24 (70%)	30min
Siyanda	8 (57%)	8 (80%)	5 (50%)	21 (61%)	32min
AVERAGE	24.5 (58%)	21 (70%)	18 (60%)	64 (61%)	112min

As indicated in **Table 4.5**, Zerani scored 14 out of 14 in the cartoon section. However, she did not maintain this result in the second section, then, the third section comprised of 10 marks, in which Zerani scored a total of 9. Regardless of similar questions with the ones in sports comprehension, she managed to answer all questions as per instructions, with the exception of the required length from the summary, in which she presented a shorter length.

Zime scored 13 out of 14 marks in total; I assume that she was focusing more on the surface text in the speech bubbles more than the images. However, she managed high level thinking

questions. Looking at Zime's result in the sports comprehension section, she managed to score 8.5 out of 10 where she had all the correct answers but limited number of words in summary for both, text B text C.

In her responses, Lindsay gave short sentences that were straight to the point. It is of my opinion that Lindsay was trying to play safe in this regard by giving the exact content, quoted from the text instead of elaborating more, to avoid making language errors. Also, Lindsay achieved a higher mark in the first section. According to Stanovich (1986), the more difficulty a reader has with reading, the more she relies on the visual information. He further concludes by stating that this statement applies to both fluent reader and the beginner due to the inability to make full use of syntactic and semantic redundancy of non-visual sources of information. This necessitates Lindsay's language background and challenges she encounters in understanding the language, meaning, her achievement may have relied on visual information. However, based on the two comprehension sections, Lindsay scored two distinct results of 3.5 out of 10 for the sports section and 5 out of 10 for the celebrity section. Lindsay left some blank spaces in the text B and limited responses in text C.

As indicated, Vukani received 6.5 out of 14 in the cartoon section. Unpredictably, the two other sections gave him a result of 6 each out of 10 marks. This shows a positive relationship between understanding of text and question structure versus content per se. On the rest of his question paper, Vukani translated the key question words into English. This gives an impression that he either starts by reading questions before he reads the story which makes it easier for him to figure out what relates to those questions from the story.

Simiso received a score of 10 out of 14 in the initial section of the whole task, text A. He completed all questions, however, he did not support his answers where he was required to substantiate. Moving on to the other two sections of the comprehension, Simiso maintained an average of 70% (7 out of 10) in both sections, getting all questions right but underachieved in both summaries. I was under the impression that Simiso was screening the questions instead of reading them thoroughly; besides, he knew that doing this assessment was not going to be of benefit to him, as it was not going to affect his grade results.

Out of 14, Siyanda scored 8 marks in the cartoon section as he did not elaborate where needed, instead, he provided one-word answers. Siyanda left spaces where he needed to fill in with answers that required him to look for synonyms and antonyms. On the other hand, the result of the sports comprehension section was a bit higher than the rest. As demonstrated on **Table 4.5**,

Siyanda scored 5 marks out of 10 due to not attempting some of the questions by leaving blank spaces and a very brief summary in this section.

4.2 Discussion

The current study aimed to identify the reading issues related to reading that are raised by different gendered groups of learners with regard to their choices of texts. Also, to gain sight into boys' and girls' in-and-out-of-school reading practices by allowing them to choose material of their special interest. More specifically, I attempted to employ possible type of texts that could fairly accommodate their interests in accordance with what the learners have chosen. The results revealed a significant effect of gender disparities in reading achievement, with female readers having better scores than male readers. However, the average result of reading comprehension, remarkably, in the 'sports themed' text, disagreed with the known findings. Changeably, the boys outscored the girls in this particular component of reading. Therefore, my findings in this specific texts are in accordance with several studies which found out that learners need the opportunity to select books based on their individual needs and should be supplied with a variety of reading material and topics (Coles & Hall, 2002; Mead, 2012; Merisuo-Storm, 2006; Petrides, 2007).

Not to mention, CAPS invited the consideration of close reading of text that is supported by the teacher's questions such as how word choice, use of language and imagery as well as post-reading which is used to interpret text as a whole such as synthesising, comparing and drawing conclusions. Therefore, all these components of reading were considered in the three comprehension tasks. With regard to cognitive levels of thinking, this is the reading activity where participants monitored their own reading which, according to McAllister & Irvine (2000), it has impact on meta-cognition learning. Meta-cognition is a psychological noun meaning high-order thinking that enables understanding, analysis, and control of one's cognitive processes, especially when engaged in learning. Subsequently, the employed approach of Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension, and, conforming to Halpern's Cognitive Taxonomy and her views on gender and testing, boys scores improved in a comprehension text that accommodated mostly, their interests.

Furthermore, interviews and observation generated considerable amounts of data. Consequently, that has informed the study with the learners' perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of the gendered reading issues and practices in more depth. For example, thought that they are the best readers compared to the boys and that they outsmart the boys most of the time. Additionally, that the girls are more dominant during discussions as they have more to say, while boys utter fewer

words. That has enabled me with the insight into how specific learners behave, think and talk, about reading and gender per se.

Moreover, it has been confirmed by the results that the girls become better prepared and the boys depend on choices of text. The overall scores for girls exceed those of boys on two out of three reading assessment components. This is a testimony of robustness on the female side since the results are consistent with the previous researches I have mentioned above (Smith & Wilhem, 2002; CUHK Study, 2006; Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS]; Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012).

The factors related to the learners' gender, reading and comprehending skills, previous experiences, and interests. The purpose of reading literacy practices plays an important role in individuals lives. For instance, a learner who is reluctant to read in school may read outside school, with great interest, texts that he or she considers of more importance and the ones with the content with which they can relate. For example, findings endorse that learners should be granted a chance of choosing texts that interest them so they can respond positively and accordingly. This has been testified with the results from the comprehension task, where boys' scores disagreed with previous research in a section where they outscored the girls. In addition, home has a strong influence on a child's attitudes. The development of his or her attitude towards reading and writing is based on the reading environment at home, that is how important a role reading and writing have in the lives of other family members. In addition, the derivation of gender is a debatable issue from many different angles. One may believe in biological differences between the two sexes, one in social and environmental influences. In that light, I suggest that the next study targets more reading materials that facilitate boys' interests in order to investigate the core and the cause of this outcome and to investigate the subject on biological differences.

4.3 Limitations

Participants were all represented by different racial and cultural groups and they have been assessed on non-mother tongue language. Even the ones considered as isiZulu speakers use English as it is the dominant language at school and they use it (English) when they are with their peers. Results could have been different if they were all proficient in isiZulu.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, I set out to investigate a connection between the language and skills learners use when reading, the text types learners choose or prefer to read, context that reading takes place and the audience in relation to gender and reading practices. It investigated gender disparities in reading literacy practices by adopting suggested theories that necessitate socio-cognitive approach, while also addressing a variety of influences such as, preferred genre, preferred theme and preferred text type that have impact on readers' achievement in the classroom. To determine those influences, three male learners and three female learners from isiZulu First Additional Language class were selected to participate.

Findings show that there is a reciprocal relationship between reading engagement and reading achievement. Using the questionnaire and interviews informed me on how to change some of the conclusions that the previous research had towards gendered reading practices. For instance, the gap that has been identified by the research before, girls outscoring boys in reading has been adjusted in my context due to the guided literature on translinguaging as an effective instruction (Makalela, 2011; Hancin-Bhatt, et al. 1993). Also, reading comprehension strategies (Barrett, 1968; Halpern, 2004 & Halpern 2006) and allowing access to reading preferences and interests (Coles, M., & Hall, C. 2002). However, the findings in my study revealed that learners should be given the opportunity to select text that is based on their preferences and interests.

Therefore, based on these findings, these are the recommendations for how can use the findings in the classroom. Teachers should keep in mind that, in order to motivate reading in the classroom, regardless of gender, they should allow access to reading texts that complement learners' personal interests. In addition, the strategy that teachers need to follow when conducting reading practices should include initial discussions with the learners in order to get their perspectives in reading and reading practices. Notwithstanding, having only researched learners with different language background, it would be interesting to see if this instruction differs in a classroom with only isiZulu native speakers. This is due to the findings as they revealed that it is not necessarily the influences that close the scoring gap between boys and girls, concurrently, the improvement occurs. This is evident in the results, as I have discovered that even though girls still outscored boys in the current study, boys surprisingly outsmarted the girls in a reading comprehension section of their interest.

Thus, both genders should be familiarised with reading texts that are enjoyable and necessary for them to be able to participate effectively, in the society. As stated in my introduction, to succeed in the educational structure, I still believe that one's attitude, motivation and responses towards reading is influenced by comprehending the meaning from various text types.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON READING PRACTICES

Age: _____

Gender: MALE [☐] Female [☐]

Home language: _____

Fill in by using the numbers on the rating that mostly applies to you with the guide on the scale.

SCALE	RATING
Excellent	5
Very good	4
Good	3
Average	2
Weak	0-1

	Rating 1-5
1. How confident are you when you read aloud in your home language?	
2. How confident are you when you read aloud in isiZulu?	
3. Rate of understanding isiZulu comprehensions.	
4. Confidence in expressing yourself in answering comprehensions	

Choose by using a tick to answer the following.

1. How often do you read? (in any language of your choice)

- Always []
- Most of the time []
- Sometimes []
- Hardly []
- Only when I am asked to []

2. My most preferable type of isiZulu reader is a/an:

- Novel []
- Drama/ play []
- Magazine []
- Newspaper []
- Adventure []

3. I prefer this type of assessment for a comprehension:

- A dialogue []
- A narrative []
- Reading and viewing []

4. I enjoy reading with this theme:

- Relationships/ love []
- Sports []
- Technology []
- Adventure []
- Crime []
- Other [Specify: _____]

5. I get the idea of isiZulu textual story line when:

- I read aloud []
- I read silently []
- Someone else reads to me []
- Listen to music []

6. To answer questions in the comprehension I:

- Think in English first then translate []
- Think in isiZulu []
- Visualise and answer according to what I imagine []
- Use matching words in the story with words in questions. []

APPENDIX B

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5. Do you think boys and girls read different texts? Why?
6. What do boys and girls read in and out of school?
7. What do you think boys and girls should read more? Why?
8. Who do you think achieves better marks when it comes to reading? Explain.

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW ONE-ON-ONE QUESTIONS

1. What isiZulu text do you study at school? What kinds of text do you like and dislike? Why?
2. Do you read isiZulu texts out of school? Please explain.
3. What kinds of text do you enjoy reading? Why?
4. What would you like to read but don't have access to?

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

GENDER DISPARITIES AMONG GRADE 10 ISIZULU LEARNERS

Critical Question: What differences and commonalities are being portrayed?

DATE:

DURATION: 1 Lesson

Criteria	Differences	Commonalities
Instruction: • Do learners listen attentively? • Do they ask questions? • Are the learners quiet when necessary? • Do they follow instruction in the same way?		

• How long does it take to respond to the instruction?		
Verbal behavior and interaction: • Who speaks to whom and for how long? • Who listens more? • Who initiates interaction? • What language variations or dialects occur? • What is the tone of voice used?		
Physical behavior and gestures: • How much space or distance is created as they discuss? • What expression is shown by the opposite gender as the other one speaks?		

Other noticeable aspects

APPENDIX E

COMPREHENSION TEXTS Funda le ngxoxo bese uphendula imibuzo elandelayo ngokubhala ezikhaleni.



<http://comicskingdom.com/blog/2014/07/15/tuesday-s-top-ten-comic-strip-critic-edition>

1.1. Khetha igama elilungile.

1.1.1 Umnumzane Smith (ujabulile, uphatheke kabi, ukhathele) lapha. (1)

1.1.2 Lesi yisitolo (sezinto zokutshala, sezinto zokuxhumana, yezinto zokuthutha). (1)

1.2. Phendula ngokuthi **NGAMANGA** noma **YIQINISO**.

1.2.1 Kukhona indali kulesi sitolo. (1)

1.2.2 Umnumzane Smith ungumuntu ocebile. (1)

1.3. Bhala **umqondofana** walawa magama alandelayo. Izimpendulo uzozithola engxoxweni.

1.3.1 Uyazidayisa. (1)

1.3.2 Emtoti (1)

1.4. Bhala **umqondophika** walawa magama alandelayo. Izimpendulo uzozithola engxoxweni.

1.4.1 Eshibhile _____ (1)

1.4.2 Elibi _____ (1)

1.5. Ungayinika siphi **isihloko** le ngxoxo? **Kungani** uyinika lesi sihloko? (3)

1.6. Wena ucabanga ukuthi umnumzane Smith uthathe isinqumo esihle yini ngalokhu
akwenzayo? **Sekela** impendulo yakho. (3)

[14]

[TEXT B]

UKhune akawuvali umlomo ngoKekana

2016-03-31 13:30

Johannesburg – Unozinti u-Itumeleng Khune uthi umdlali weMamelodi Sundowns, uHlompho Kekana, ungumdlali onohlonze futhi kumfanele ukuba sesikwatini seBafana Bafana.

UKekana namanje useyindaba egudwini kulandela igoli lakhe elihlabahlosile alifaka ngempelasonto eyedlule bedlala neCameroon, eLimbe, kubika iKickOff.com.

Abaningi bathi akungabazeki ukuthi leli goli lizobalwa nalawo azoqhudelana ngePuskas Award ye-FIFA.

UKhune, obengukaputeni weBafana kuyona yomibili imidlalo ne-Indomitable **Lions**, uthi abantu basekude ukulikhohlwa igoli likaKekana.

“Linghlaba umxhwele, yingakho ngasuka epalini lami ngayojabula nabafana. Ngisho umqeqeshi wayekhona kujatshulwa,” esho.

“Akukona okokuqala ebhakuzisa inethi ngendlela engajwayelekile. Ngesonto eledlule wenza okufanayo iSundowns idlala eCongo kowe-CAF Champions League.”

UKhune uqhube ngokuthi uKekana ungumdlali ozimiselayo kanti isizini yakhe ibe yinhle kakhulu.

IKaizer Chiefs izobhekana neSundowns koweligi ngomhlaka-30 Ephreli.

Igama _____

Funda lesi siqeshana bese uphendula imibuzo elandelayo.

2.1. Obani amagama abadlali le ndaba ekhuluma ngabo? (1)

2.2. Igama elithi 'Lions' ngesiZulu lithi: (amabhubesi, ibhubesi, izibhubesi)? Khetha kubakaki. (½)

2.3. Unozinti: (uvimba epalini, udlala ngepali, uphonsa ipali). Khetha kubakaki. (½)

2.4. Chaza ukuthi uKekana ungumdlali onjani. Bhala amaphuzu amabili. (2)

2.5. IBafana Bafana yiqembu lebhola elisebenza kahle kakhulu. Uyavumelana noma uyaphikisana nalo mbono? Sekela impendulo yakho. (3)

2.6. Ikhuluma ngani le ndatshana? **Finqa ngamagama** angu 35 kuya ku 40. Ungabhali imisho njengoba injalo. (3)

[10]

[TEXT C]

Uza eMzansi umculi waphesheya, uJennifer Lopez

2016-10-31 13:33

Cape Town – Kulindeleke ukuba azonandisa eNingizimu Afrika okokuqala ngqa umculi waphesheya, uJennifer Lopez, emcimbini wesiteshi sikamabonakude sezindaba, i-ANN7 (DStv 405).

Lo mculi kanye nabanye abaculi baphesheya bazonandisa emcimbini wesithathu we-ANN7 wama-South African of the Year Awards (SATY).

U-J.Lo uzojoyina u[Robin Thicke](#) kulo mcimbi ozobe umhlaka-25 kuNovemba 2016 eTicketpro Dome eGoli kanti uzosakazwa bukhoma ngo-18:00 ngalolu suku.

Abethuli bohlelo lukamabonakude lwakaSABC, iTop Billing, uBonang Matheba, uJonathan Boynton-Lee kanye noJeannie D yibona abazobe bengabaphathi bohlelo.

Ukunandisa kwa-Jennifer Lopez kulo mcimbi wama-SATY kuzoba okokuqala ngqa eNingizimu Afrika.

Kuyimanje lo mculi umatasa nokudidiyela isizini yesibili yohlelo lwakhe lukamabonakude oluwuchungechunge, i*Shades of Blue*.

Ngokusho kwe-ANN7, uJennifer Lopez, uzonandisa ngezingoma zakhe ezake zashisa izikhotha nalapho ezobe eshiyelana khona inkundla nabanye babaculi baseNingizimu Afrika.

Kulo mcimbi kulindeleke ukuba kukonyeliswe abantu emikhakheni eyehlukene, okubalwa owezomculo, owamaciko, ezemidlalo, ezamabhizinisi kanye nentsha. **Walala, wasala!**

<http://isizulu.news24.com/Ezokuzijabulisa/uza-emzansi-umculi-waphesheya-ujennifer-lopez-20161031>

Igama _____

Funda lesi siqeshana bese uphendula imibuzo elandelayo.

3.1. Obani amagama abantu besifazane okukhulunywa ngabo kule ndaba? (2)

3.2. Umculi (Owesilisa, wesilisa, wabalisa) kuthiwa uzocula. (1)

3.3. Ake uyiphe indikimba le ndatshana.

(1)

3.4. Khetha umuntu wesifazane oyedwa kulaba bese uchaza ukuthi ungumuntu onjani ngokubhala amaphuzu amabili.

(2)

3.5. Chaza le nkulumo ukuthi isho ukuthini. **“Walala, wasala!”**

(2)

3.6. Ikhuluma ngani le ndatshana? **Finqa ngamagama** angu 30 kuya ku 35. Ungabhali imisho njengoba injalo.

(2)

[10]

APPENDIX F

CONCERN LETTERS



Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

Invitation for your child to participate in a research and participant information letter

November 2016

Dear Parent/s

My name is Bonisile Mabaso and I am your child's isiZulu First Additional Language teacher. However, I am also a Masters student of the WITS School of Education in University of the Witwatersrand.

I am conducting a research study on investigating **Gender Disparities in Reading Practices** for a four week cycle in the classroom, and I would like to invite the Grade 10 isiZulu learners to participate in this study.

In this study I am interested to know what Gendered Literacy gap (focusing specifically on reading) looks like in one isiZulu First Additional Language classroom. I am interested to know what boys and girls read in and out of the school? Additionally, why, and how do they feel about it? Thus, in order to investigate this, I will ask your child to complete a questionnaire to ascertain his/her perceptions of Reading Practices. Seeing that there is a significant gap between boys and girls that is identified by many scholars and researchers in reading literacies, I would also like to find out whether learners know, implicitly or explicitly about the gendered literacy gap and how do they understand it, if at all?

Furthermore, the study intends to investigate whether boys and girls think they are the contributors or a challenge to the literacy gap, and if yes, in what ways? Thus, after the questionnaires have been administered, observation procedure will take place to address this aspect of the study in more detail. This is where the participants will discuss issues related to gendered reading literacy in three groups. There will be one group with only female participants, another group with only male participants, third group represented by both genders, in no particular order. Additionally, this study also intends to investigate whether boys and girls think they contribute or challenge the gendered literacy gap, and if so, in what ways? The observation hopes to identify the differences and commonalities that are likely to be portrayed by both genders during discussion, such as behavioral patterns. For example, how they react towards each other, how they react towards discussed topic, their gestures and so on. In order to report on the observation process, details will be documented on the observation schedule for record purposes.

Furthermore, the semi structured one-on-one interview questions will be set, in order to collect a detailed, qualitative data that is collected from a group of learners. The semi structured one-on-one interview is an interview that has pre-determined set of open questions that will help me to explore certain topics of discussion and as we

progress with the research. Your child's (8 learners) responses are likely to inform me with some topics that will be further discussed thereafter. Therefore, a semi-structured one-on-one interview will be conducted with a specific group of learner participants that I will evenly chose in terms of gender and other comparable aspects that might be guided by the observation process, levels of thinking demonstrated by these participants as well as their results from previous reading assessments that were conducted before study.

This study will also examine and suggest a connection between the language used in reading, strategies involved, the context and the audience by drifting my focus to gender and reading practices. Additionally, it will consider cognitive levels of thinking involved when boys and girls are assigned to reading and viewing as a skill, which is language skill that is congruent with the curriculum. Thus, Bloom's Taxonomy levels of thinking will be exhibited through comprehension skills in this aspect to which this component adheres to the Department of Basic Education's (2011) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS]. CAPS provide a clearer specification of what is to be taught, learnt, and be assessed. In that light, your child will be tasked to do an activity on Reading and Viewing accordingly. It will also present an empirical research on differences between girls and boys in the Tenth Grade and their reading attainment in isiZulu as a First Additional Language. An empirical research is based on experience or observations, often without due regard to system or theory. It will then describe and discuss your child's level of reading comprehension and reading extracts of his/her choice in isiZulu while directing its focus to his/her levels of thinking.

While all of the learners will participate in the lessons, data for the research will only be collected about those learners who have agreed to participate in the research and have been given permission to do so. Thus none of the Grade 10 isiZulu learners will be disadvantaged in any way. In that light, the research participants will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty.

You are also assured that the names and the identity of the school and your child will be kept confidential at all times and that all information relating to the project will be stored safely in a locked cupboard at my home. This data will be destroyed between 3 - 5 years after I have completed the study research. In writing up my research, pseudonyms (fake names) for both the school and learners will be used to ensure the participants anonymity.

Please be aware that your child will not be directly rewarded for this study; however, I believe that this research is likely to benefit his/her learning and contribute to the school's efforts of developing more effective reading and educational practices.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Bonisile Mabaso
911545
Bonisilem16@gmail.com
083 340 1665 (All hours)

Supervisor

Dr. Navan Govender
navan.govender@wits.ac.za

Research Project: Reading Practices: Gender Disparities among Grade 10 isiZulu Learners

Protocol Number: 2016ECE042M

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your child to participate in the research project called: Reading Practices: Gender Disparities among Grade 10 isiZulu Learners.

I, _____ the parent of _____ hereby

	Circle one
Permission to review/collect documents/artifacts/test Agree that my child's assessments can be used for this study.	YES/NO
Permission to observe my child in class Agree that my child may be observed in class.	YES/NO
Permission for questionnaire Agree that my child may complete a questionnaire for this study.	YES/NO
Permission for audio-taping Agree that my child's responses may be audio-taped for this study	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my child's name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that no identifying information will be revealed.
- he/she does not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Sign _____ Date _____



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Invitation to participate in a research and participant information letter

November 2016

Dear Learner

I am currently studying my Masters at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

In this study I am interested to know what Gendered Literacy gap (focusing specifically on reading) looks like in one isiZulu First Additional Language classroom. I am interested to know what boys and girls read in and out of the school, in general? Additionally, why, and how do they feel about it? I would also like to find out whether learners know, implicitly or explicitly about the gendered literacy gap and how do they understand it, if at all?

Furthermore, this study will examine and suggest a connection between the language used in reading, strategies involved, the context and the audience by drifting my focus to gender and reading practices. Additionally, it will consider cognitive levels of thinking involved when boys and girls are assigned to reading and viewing as a skill, which is language skill that is congruent with the curriculum. Thus, Bloom's Taxonomy levels of thinking will be exhibited through comprehension skills in this aspect to which this component adheres to the Department of Basic Education's (2011) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS]. CAPS provide a clearer specification of what is to be taught, learnt, and be assessed. In that light, you will be tasked to do an activity on Reading and Viewing accordingly. It will then describe and discuss your level of reading comprehension and reading extracts of your choice in isiZulu while directing its focus to your levels of thinking.

I would like to invite you to participate in the following ways:

Observation

I will observe the lessons during discussions and I only ask that normal classroom procedures be followed. Only interactions during lessons and regarding your discussions will be documented. I am interested in your reactions and ways of talking about gender and reading. No names will be noted to maintain a level of confidentiality.

Questionnaires

I will provide you with questionnaire sheets entailing not more than two pages of short questions. In these, you will be required to complete on the page, however, you will be allowed to fill in any part of your preference. Please do not write your name on this questionnaire so I may maintain a level of anonymity and/or confidentiality.

Interviews

With your permission, I would also like to tape record your responses to questions pertaining information on reading in general. This is a one-on-one interview where you will be asked questions with which you are allowed to express yourself in the way that you feel. This device will help me in terms of playing back what I have recorded for memory purposes so that I can write what is coming directly from you. You will also be allowed to indicate if you need to have the recorder paused at any time and you may ask for a copy at any time. If you need a replay after the interview, I will do so. Fake names will be used in my report to maintain a level of anonymity and/or confidentiality to substitute names used during our conversation, including the school name.

Written Tasks

I would also like to collect your final written tasks as a source of data. Please keep in mind that my research interests will not affect your marks for this term as all my marking will be for the research purposes and will be moderated by Dr Navan Govender (my supervisor). All names will be removed once these tasks are graded and permission for the research use is given from you.

Please note:

You may refuse participation at any time, without any fear of threat or consequent to your reputation in school, marks or interaction with me. All participation is voluntary: there are no contractual obligations should you chose to participate in this research study.

While you and your classmates will participate in the lessons, data for the research will only be collected about those learners who have agreed to participate in the research and have been given permission to do so. Thus you will not be disadvantaged in any way. In that light, you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential, and where possible, anonymous, you will be given pseudonym (fake name) in the written report.

You may have full access to my research report during its drafting process. You may also review how I have used statements and participation in class. Should you want any changes be made, I will glad to redraft.

You are welcome to request a PDF copy of my final research report free of charge, should you be interested.

Please be aware that you will not be directly rewarded for this study; however, I believe that this research is likely to benefit your learning and contribute to the school's efforts of developing more effective reading and educational practices.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Bonisile Mabaso
911545

Bonisilem16@gmail.com

083 340 1665 (All hours)

Research Project: Reading Practices: Gender Disparities among Grade 10 isiZulu Learners

Protocol Number: 2016ECE042M

Learner Consent Form

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in my study called: Reading Practices: Gender Disparities among Grade 10 isiZulu Learners.

My name is: _____

	Circle one
Permission to review/collect documents/artifacts/test I agree that information from the assessments that I will do, can be used for this study.	YES/NO
Permission to observe you in class I agree to be observed in class.	YES/NO
Permission for questionnaire I agree to fill in a questionnaire for this study.	YES/NO
Permission for audio-taping I agree to be tape recorded for this study.	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Sign_____ Date_____



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Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

Protocol Number: 2016ECE042M

Request to conduct research at St Peter's College

November

2016

Dear Mr. Morais

I am an educator at St Peter's College who is currently studying a Master of Arts in Education at the Wits School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. This involves conducting a research project and mine is on **Gender Disparities in Reading Practices**.

I would like to invite your school to be part of this research. If your school chooses to participate, the project would involve investigating differences in Reading Practices between boys and girls, for a four-week cycle, with the Grade 10 isiZulu class that I teach.

In this study I am interested to know what Gendered Literacy gap (focusing specifically on reading) looks like in one isiZulu First Additional Language classroom. I am interested to know what boys and girls read in and out of the school. Additionally, why, and how they feel about reading. Thus, in order to investigate this, I will ask the learners to complete a questionnaire to ascertain their perceptions of Reading Practices. Seeing that there is a significant gap between boys and girls that is identified by many scholars and researchers in reading literacies, I would also like to find out whether learners know, implicitly or explicitly about the gendered literacy gap and how do they understand it, if at all?

Furthermore, the study intends to investigate whether boys and girls think they are the contributors or a challenge to the literacy gap, and if yes, in what ways? Thus, after the questionnaires have been administered, observation procedure will take place to address this aspect of the study in more detail. This is where the participants will discuss issues related to gendered reading literacy in three groups. There will be one group with only female participants, another group with only male participants, third group represented by both genders, in no particular order. Additionally, this study also intends to investigate whether boys and girls think they contribute or challenge the gendered literacy gap, and if so, in what ways? The observation hopes to identify the differences and commonalities that are likely to be portrayed by both genders during discussion, such as behavioral patterns. For example, how they react towards each other, how they react towards discussed topic, their gestures and so on. In order to report on the observation process, details will be documented on the observation schedule for record purposes.

Furthermore, the semi structured interview questions will be set, in order to collect a detailed, qualitative data that is collected from a group of learners. The semi structured interview is an interview that has pre-determined set of open questions that will help me to explore certain topics of discussion and methodology as we progress with the research. The learners' (8 learners) responses are likely to inform me with some topics that will be further discussed thereafter. Therefore, a semi-structured one-on-one interview will be conducted with a specific group of learner participants that I will evenly chose in terms of gender and other comparable aspects that might be guided by the observation process, levels of thinking demonstrated by these participants as well as their results from formative and summative reading assessments that were conducted before study. These participants will be evenly represented by four girls and four boys.

Furthermore, this study will examine the connection between the language used in reading, the strategies involved in reading, the context and the audience, focussing on gender and reading practice. Additionally, it will use a sociocognitive approach to explore how boys and girls think about and engage in reading activities. Thus, Bloom's levels of thinking will be used to measure students' engagement with reading in this regard.

Therefore, by harnessing this grouping will determine whether what they think is influenced by language background, cognitive levels or gender influences. Pseudonym names (Fake names) will be used for the participants in order to protect their confidentialities. Thus, anonymity will take place in my study to certify ethnicity.

Furthermore, this study will also examine and suggest a connection between the language used in reading, strategies involved, the context and the audience by drifting my focus to gender and reading practices. Additionally, it will consider cognitive levels of thinking involved when boys and girls are assigned to reading and viewing as a skill, which is language skill that is congruent with the curriculum. Thus, Barrett's Taxonomy levels of thinking will be exhibited through comprehension skills in this aspect in order to align with CAPS. In that light, students will be tasked to do an activity on Reading and Viewing accordingly. It will also present an empirical research on differences between girls and boys in the Tenth Grade and their reading attainment in isiZulu as a First Additional Language. An empirical research is based on experience or observations, often without due regard to system or theory. It will then describe and discuss the learners' level of reading comprehension and reading extracts of their choice in isiZulu while directing its focus to their levels of thinking.

While all of the learners will participate in the lessons, data for the research will only be collected about those learners who have agreed to participate in the research and have been given permission to do so. Thus none of the Grade 10 isiZulu learners will be disadvantaged in any way. In that light, the research participants will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty.

The participants will also be assured that the names and the identity of the school and the learners will be kept confidential at all times and that all information relating to the project will be stored safely in a locked cupboard at my home. This data will be destroyed between 3 - 5 years after I have completed the study research. In writing up my research, pseudonyms (fake names) for both the school and learners will be used to ensure the participants anonymity.

The participants will not be directly rewarded for this study; however, I believe that this research is likely to benefit their learning and contribute to the school's efforts of developing more effective reading and educational practices.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

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Principal permission for research granted:

Principal signature

Principal Name

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