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Examining the Strategic Deployment of Paratext to Improve the Adoption and Accessibility of Indigenous Language Literary Classics for a Contemporary Readership

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2025
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Rhulani, Sidon . (2025). Examining the Strategic Deployment of Paratext to Improve the Adoption and Accessibility of Indigenous Language Literary Classics for a Contemporary Readership [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/48120

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Examining the Strategic Deployment of Paratext to Improve the Adoption and Accessibility of Indigenous Language Literary Classics for a Contemporary Readership

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Lorraine Nyamapfene, and co-supervisor, Dr Laetitia Cassells, for their invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout the course of this research.

My appreciation also goes to Mr Mandla Mona, Manager at the Centre for the Book, and the National Library of South Africa, for granting me access to the reprinted classics which were central to this study.

I further wish to acknowledge the financial support received from the Fibre Processing and Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (FP&M SETA), which made this research possible.

Contents

Plagiarism declaration i
Acknowledgements iii
Chapter 1: Introduction 1
1.1 Background 1
1.2 Purpose 4
1.3 Research problem 5
1.4 Research question 5
1.5 Objectives 6
1.6 Rationale 6
1.7 Overview of research methodology 7
1.8 Limitations 8
1.9 Breakdown of chapters 9
1.10 Conclusion 10
Chapter 2: Literature review 11
2.1 Introduction 11
2.2 Literary classics genre conventions 11
2.3 Conceptual frameworks relevant to the methodology 13
2.4 Paratexts and paratextual theory from Genette's foundational work 18
2.5 How paratext mediates between text, author, and a reader 20
2.6 Adoption, accessibility and contemporary readership 24
2.7 Decolonized writing and reading of indigenous language classics 25
2.8 Tradition and symbolism in South African indigenous languages 26
2.9 Intended readers' context 27
2.10 Conclusion 29
Chapter 3: Research methodology 30
3.1 Introduction 30
3.2 Research design 31
3.3 Research instruments and data collection 31
3.4 Data analysis and interpretation 32
3.5 Limitations and biases of the study 32
3.6 Conclusion 33
Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation 35
4.1 Introduction 35
4.2 Analysis of Front covers 37
4.3 Themes emerging from Titles 44
4.4 Self-discovery themes 47
4.5 Writers contributed to the reprinted classics 48
4.6 Spines of a book 50

4.7 Review of the blurbs of the classic books 50
4.8 Power and oppressive relations 60
4.9 Emphasis on Morality 60
4.10 The role of paratextual elements in influencing readership 61
4.11 How the paratextual elements represent cultures and traditions 64
4.12 Conclusion 66
Chapter 5: Discussion of results 67
5.1 Introduction 67
5.2 Change in audience and readership in reprint of classics project 67
5.3 International comparison 68
5.4 Trends in paratextual elements used in South African Classics Project 69
5.5 Recommendation for future research 70
5.6 Conclusion 72
Bibliography 75
Appendix 1 1
Annexure 1 1
Annexure 2 2

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the study's background, laying out the rationale and significance behind the research. It also introduces the study's purpose and research question, providing a clear framework for the exploration. Additionally, the chapter elaborates on the research problem and objectives, establishing the foundation for the literature review, methodology and data analysis that follows.

1.1 Background

This study explores paratextual elements of the classic texts written in the nine indigenous languages that have been reproduced over time. For centuries, South Africa was colonised - first by the Dutch and later by the British. As a result, the country's literature came to be dominated by Afrikaans (an adaptation of Dutch) and English (Fredericks & Mvunelo, 2003). Missionaries were the first to publish materials targeting natives in both English and indigenous languages in the 1800s with the objective of converting them to Christianity and what missionaries believed was to 'civilise' them (Fredericks & Mvunelo, 2003).

The main leading missionaries were Mariannhill in Kwazulu-Natal and Lovedale in Eastern Cape. Missionaries played three vital roles in the development of African-language literatures. Firstly, they reduced the languages to written form. Secondly, they translated Western texts, including the Bible, into African languages. Lastly, they took responsibility for publishing literature in these languages (Sibiya, 2023).

Kaschula (2008) contends that the natural development of natives' orature and literature in South Africa came to an end with the arrival of missionaries in 1799. What followed was the manipulation of indigenous languages to align with Western thinking frameworks. This control over indigenous expression persisted well into the apartheid era, shaping not only what was published but also how native voices were framed and received. From the 1950s onward, publishing in indigenous languages shifted from missionary control to commercial publishers, mostly from Britain and America. These companies maintained the same Western-

oriented themes in their publications, a trend further compounded by apartheid policies that governed the education system and censored literature published for schools and what could be published for the general market at the time (Kaschula, 2008). On his Jerusalem Prize Acceptance speech, JM Coetzee remarked that South African native literature during apartheid resembled the writings of people imprisoned by their circumstances (Coetzee, 1987/2003). Similarly, in 1965, Lewis Nkosi suggested that perhaps South Africans should suspend writing and publishing altogether until apartheid was successfully overthrown (Mkhize, 2001).

Yet, despite these constraints, significant works emerged - books that upheld African traditional and cultural values while showcasing remarkable artistic skills (Mkhize, 2016). Examples include *Ityala Lamawele (The Lawsuit of Twins) by* SEK Mqhayi first published in 1914, *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya (The wrath of the Ancestors)* by AC Jordan first published in 1940, *Mopheme*, *Mafangambiti (He who Dies of Anger)* by Maumela first published in 1956, *Kgorong ya Mshate (The kraal of the King)* by OK Matsepe first published in 1962, and many others that managed to find their way into circulation. The writers and producers of these titles are regarded as heroes by their readers, not merely for telling stories, but for preserving cultures and traditions, resisting the erasure of indigenous languages, and promoting the development of their communities (Williams, 1996). South Africa is said to have between 24 and 30 languages spoken in the country, following the transition to constitutional democracy, twelve of them are recognised as official languages including sign language (Finlayson and Madiba, 2002). These include Afrikaans, made up of Dutch and other languages, English, and nine native languages.

Various scholars have studied literary classics and drawn a number of conclusions about their enduring value. These works are widely praised for their rich creativity, ability to teach society about different cultures and people, preservation of historical facts, and for upholding societal ethos. Importantly, literary classics remain relevant across generations. According to Hunter (2017), a literary classic is a book one returns to repeatedly, discovering new layers of meaning with each rereading. Calvino (2014) supports this view, suggesting that classics help us understand who we are as a society and how far we have progressed. Hodgkinson (2021) emphasizes that such texts offer insight into human relationships, interactions between

nations, and the various approaches one might take in life. As Sullivan (2023) notes, these works are celebrated for their artistic and cultural significance.

Because of this relevance, classics often become widely recognized and culturally significant, to the extent that many people assume everyone has read them. Calvino (2014) even observes that some readers claim to be "rereading" a classic when in fact they are reading it for the first time perhaps out of embarrassment at not having read such a well-known book. At the same time, there are young readers who encounter these works at a formative moment in their lives, allowing the texts to leave a deep and lasting impression.

Cultural and Linguistic Importance of the indigenous literary classics

Hodgkinson (2021) states that the use of language in classics helps us construct meaning and build society. Culturally, it allows us to observe how people dealt with issues in the past and to understand the consequences of their actions. Over the years, African literature has played a critical role in preserving languages, cultural and traditional practices, identities, literacy, education, and representation (Kahiraba and Keita, 2024). South African classics are particularly important because they not only confronted colonialism but also resisted apartheid subjugation and the ongoing challenges of neocolonialism.

This research is grounded in the theoretical framework of paratext, as developed by French literary theorist Gérard Genette in 1987. Genette defines paratext as the elements that surround and accompany a text, which are dynamic and evolve in response to the culture and era of their existence (Genette and Maclean, 1991). According to Genette and Maclean (1991), paratext can be classified into two categories: peritext and epitext. Peritext includes elements closely associated with the text, such as titles, prefaces, footnotes, back and font covers while epitext refers to materials generated externally or later, such as interviews, reviews, or promotional content.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the paratextual elements in reprinted classical novels and to recommend strategic uses of these elements to promote and facilitate the adoption of the works. This study aims to broaden the understanding of paratext elements in indigenous language literature and to encourage further exploration and research into how these elements enhance the readers' engagement and consumption of literary content. This study focuses on the peritexts of indigenous language classic books reproduced by the National Library of South Africa's Reprint of Classics Project. Paratextual elements, whether internal or external to the text, play a crucial role in helping readers interpret and decode the meaning of the work (Adams, 2011).

Furthermore, this shows why it was important for government to highlight the classics from previous disadvantaged languages in South Africa. The *Reprint of South African Indigenous Language Literary Classics Project* was initiated by the government in 2008 to liberate these works from their colonial and apartheid context and to acknowledge their merit as literary pieces. According to Malotle (2022), the project aimed at recognizing and celebrating the authors, use the books to foster social cohesion, promote the reading of indigenous language literature, uphold literature as a custodian of South African heritage, and instil a love and respect for writing in indigenous languages. Achieving these objectives will require a deliberate focus on redesigning the paratextual elements of these books to meet the expectations of the post-apartheid readers. Drawing on Genette and Maclean (1991) insights, the central question is whether some of these books' paratextual elements should be updated for today's potential readership. To illustrate this, I refer to one of the most revered Xhosa classic novels, *Ityala Lamawele (Lawsuit of the Twins) [*1914]. Our initial understanding of the story comes from elements such as the title, author, blurb, cover, and other relevant information, but the actual narrative remains unknown until we read the text itself.

This study examines the role of paratexts in indigenous South African language novels, a subject that has received limited scholarly attention. The paratextual features of African literary classics warrant closer investigation, particularly in relation to their potential to support the protection and promotion of these works. According to Azar-Luxton (2009), the primary mandate of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in South Africa includes the

preservation, protection, and promotion of the country's cultural and natural heritage. In this context, the safeguarding of indigenous language classics forms a critical component of that mandate. A comprehensive understanding of how paratexts are employed such as covers, blurbs, and author information is therefore essential to assess whether they have been effectively used to enhance the visibility and value of these literary texts.

1.3 Research problem

The *South African Indigenous Literary Classics Project* is fundamental due to its political and cultural significance. Mukherjee (2010) lauds the characteristics of classic works of capturing past, present and future in one story. Pallo Jordan, the then Minister of Arts and Culture, stated that the project aims to celebrates the books and authors. He added that exposing indigenous communities in South Africa to these literary classics that can enrich their human experience. This view is supported by various scholars who argue that classics enhance societies by preserving traditional ethos, history, and languages (Calvino, 2014; Hunter, 2017; Hodgkinson, 2021; Sullivan, 2023).

Therefore, the study will investigate whether reproduced books were afforded paratexts that promote accessibility and improve appeals for new potential readership in order to realise the envisioned purpose of this collection more effectively. One distinct feature of classic work is that it remains relevant over the years leading to readers cutting across generations (Calvino, 2014). This research question explores the role of peritext in attracting contemporary readers for these classics.

1.4 Research question

In 2009, the former National Librarian John Tsebe pointed out that the initiative to reprint the classics books was to preserve and celebrate the literary heritage of South Africa while encouraging reading of books written in these indigenous languages (Azar-Luxton, 2009). Given these imperatives of reprinting indigenous literary classics, the key question remains how can paratextual elements be strategically deployed to ensure wide adoption of the classic series by contemporary readers? This question will be addressed by answering the following sub-questions:

How have shifts in audience and readership influenced the use and design of paratextual elements in the South African Classics Project?

What insights can be drawn from comparing international and local novels regarding potential modifications to the covers of literary classics' editions?

How do the paratextual elements of the indigenous literary classics influence their appeal and relevance to their intended target audience?

1.5 Objectives

This research aims to:

Explore the peritext of reprinted novels in indigenous literary classics series.

Compare the use of paratextual elements in reprinted indigenous classics to international paratextual elements trends.

Assess the traditional and cultural suitability of paratextual elements based on commentary made on the series.

Make recommendations on the use of peritext in classical works.

1.6 Rationale

Although South Africa's Constitution recognizes twelve official languages including sign language, publishing and reading in indigenous languages remain limited. Annual surveys by the Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA) consistently show low sales volumes in African languages compared to Afrikaans and English (Le Roux, Harvett, & Edgar, *2024), (*Le Roux, Treffry-Goatley, Anyang, & Harvett, 2025), and (Le Roux, Tshuma, Harvett, & Cassells, 2023). The National Reading Survey conducted by the South African Book Council, (2016), along with the National Reading Barometer published by Nal'ibali in 2023, highlights the urgent need for literature that is not only written in indigenous languages but also resonates with the aspirations of its readers (South African Book Development Council, 2016), (Polzer-Ngwato, Shilakoe, Morse, & Gyekye, 2023).

Despite policy recognition of indigenous languages, the production of literature for schools in these languages appears to be in decline. Centuries of colonial rule and decades of apartheid have significantly eroded the economic value, social status, and political power of African languages. One of the most debated issues regarding the consumption of Indigenous literature is its presentation and accessibility. Key questions arise: To what extent has these indigenous literary classics made accessible and available to potential readers and buyers in the contemporary South African book market? And how do the paratextual elements of the indigenous literary classics influence their appeal and relevance to their intended target audience? This research aims to explore how paratextual elements such as covers, blurbs, titles, and design can enhance the appeal and marketability of indigenous language books to modern readers.

This research aims to explore strategies for promoting the reading of indigenous language literature by focusing on the role of paratextual elements such as covers, and blurbs in attracting readers to classic books. The study compares the paratexts of reprinted classics to those of their original editions, assessing improvements and their potential to engage contemporary readers more effectively.

By developing a deeper understanding of how paratextual elements influence reader engagement, this study will inform future design practices for African literature. It will help ensure that African-language books are more appealing and adequately promoted. This could lead to increased readership and consumption of indigenous language literature. Furthermore, incorporating these insights into university curricula on book design will prepare future professionals to create content that speaks directly to African audiences. As a result, publishers may be more motivated to invest in indigenous language publishing, helping African literature gain the same visibility and market presence as works in Afrikaans and English.

1.7 Overview of research methodology

This study employs qualitative research grounded in paratextual analysis to examine the strategic deployment of paratext to promote adoption of the reproduced literary classics by the contemporary readers. Using Gérard Genette's framework of peritext (e.g., covers, titles,

blurb) and epitext (reviews), the study analyses novels selected from reprinted South African indigenous language literary classics to explore how these paratexts contribute to meaning-making, accessibility, and cultural positioning. Data will be drawn from both primary sources (physical and digital editions) by examining hardcopies and online covers of previous editions, and secondary sources (scholars, and reader commentary), allowing for a layered interpretation of the relationship between form, function, and audience reception.

This study employs a combination of thematic and comparative analysis to examine the paratextual elements of the novels selected from the reprinted indigenous literary classics published during three distinct periods in South African history: the missionary era, the apartheid period, and reprinted in the post-apartheid democratic era. Using thematic analysis, the research identifies recurring motifs and messages embedded in peritextual features such as titles, cover designs, and blurbs focusing particularly on how themes of identity, morality, cultural heritage, and authority are constructed and communicated. These themes are then explored further through comparative analysis, which allows for a systematic comparison of how the presentation and framing of the same or similar literary texts evolve across different socio-political contexts and publishing agendas. For example, while missionary publications may foreground religious and moral instruction, apartheid-era editions often reflect state-sanctioned narratives or educational control, whereas democratic-era reprints may highlight cultural pride, decolonial identity, and market-driven appeal. This dual-method approach enables a nuanced understanding of how paratexts both reflect and shape the cultural and ideological positioning of indigenous literature across time.

1.8 Limitations

The South Africa Reprint of Classic Project encompasses literary classics from nine South African indigenous languages, each rooted in distinct cultural traditions, customs, and symbolic systems. In order to facilitate clearer engagement and broader comprehension within this research report, it was necessary to provide English translations of the original titles. These translations are largely direct and serve as approximations intended to convey the thematic essence of each work.

Given my early involvement with the South African Reprint of Classics Project, I acknowledge the potential for subjective bias, particularly in evaluating certain titles' paratextual elements. However, the literature review was designed to mitigate this by anchoring the analysis in established scholarship within the field of African literature and publishing studies. By engaging critically with relevant academic sources, the research ensures that the discussion and findings are underpinned by carefully considered and theoretically informed perspectives. Since its inception in 2008, the project has reproduced 105 classic titles, with the most recent additions appearing in the 2023 list. Upon reviewing the full catalogue, it was determined that 58 of these titles are novels, which became the primary focus of this study due to their narrative depth and potential for rich paratextual analysis. The certificates provided in Annexures 2 and 3 serve as evidence of the measures undertaken to ensure that this research is conducted in an ethical and transparent manner.

Despite this limitation, the study includes sufficient representation of titles' paratextual elements to account for strategic deployment of paratext to promote discoverability and adoption of classics by new audience readers. The novels included reflect a broad spectrum of paratextual approaches, allowing for a comprehensive examination of how visual framing contributes to the preservation and revitalisation of indigenous literature.

1.9 Breakdown of chapters

Chapter 1 provided background in the study and discuss research question, the purpose and the rational of research. Chapter 2 of this report focuses on the literature review, providing context for the research questions. It discusses key themes to situate the research within existing scholarship, examining paratextual analysis as a methodology. Additionally, it explores the roles of colonialism, missionaries, apartheid, decolonisation, and the representation of culture and customs in relation to literary classics. Chapter 3 discusses paratextual analysis as the primary research method and outlines the research design for this study. It also examines the limitations of the chosen methodology. Chapter 4 focuses on data collection and presentation, detailing the observations and organising the findings for clarity. Chapter 5 analyses and interprets the data, drawing conclusions from the findings and offering insights and recommendations for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study will answer an important question for South Africa's book sector specially for publishers and authors concerning the use of peritext. An effective use of peritext will create more interest in readers of the indigenous language books by communicating the literary and cultural relevance and the value of the works. More importantly, this study will encourage scholars to further explore the use of peritext in indigenous literary works. By addressing the strategic deployment of paratext, it will shed light on how these elements can enhance the adoption and accessibility of indigenous language literary classics for a contemporary audience. The next chapter provides a literature review to further understand the use of paratextual elements in African literary classic novels.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review examines the concept of paratext and its pivotal role in introducing and contextualizing literary works, with a specific focus on South African indigenous literary classics. The study explores the significance of paratextual elements in facilitating the adoption of literary classics by new audiences and ensuring content accessibility across diverse markets. Paratextual analysis is employed as a research method to investigate the South African indigenous literary classics identified by the National Library of South Africa.

The review interrogates paratexts within the African literary context, considering the traditional and cultural backgrounds of both the authors and readers of these classics. It also explores international trends in paratextual elements, providing a comparative perspective. Furthermore, the study expands the understanding of paratext elements in reproduced literary classics, addressing the question of decolonization as it relates to contemporary readership.

The literature review delves into the traditional symbolism portrayed by paratextual elements across various languages presented in literary classics series. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural and linguistic nuances embedded within these paratextual features. By examining the interplay between paratext, cultural context, and contemporary readership, this literature review aims to provide insights into the complex dynamics of presenting and interpreting South African indigenous literary classics in the modern era. The review also discusses trends in international literary fiction series.

2.2 Literary classics genre conventions

The term genre originates from the Latin word genus, which refers to a type or class. However, defining genre is often described as a minefield due to its complexity and subjectivity (Bhatia, 1997). Additionally, genres are not static; they emerge, evolve, and sometimes fade away over time (Cohen, 1986). The concept of genre can be approached from various perspectives, including political, structural, historical, or geographical viewpoints.

Chandler (1997) defines genre as a specific type of text characterized by shared features. Similarly, Swales (1990) emphasizes that genres are defined by their communicative purpose, which is realized through structured moves and rhetorical strategies. This implies that a genre typically involves a community of authors or artists who share a common communicative goal and employ similar structural forms and rhetorical techniques to achieve it. A classic refers to literary works that have proven their worth over time and effectively capture the culture of a particular society (Malik, 2022). Malik (2022) distinguishes between the definitions of a classic provided by publishers and those understood by audiences. Publishers often identify classics based on features such as cover design, historical illustrations, and blurbs that justify why the book is considered a classic before what Malik calls the "pasts" meaning the relevance a story gains over time following its publication (Malik, 2022).

When T.S. Eliot addressed the Virgil Society on October 16, 1944, he noted that Virgil could not have known, at the time of writing, that his poems would become classics (Eliot, 1944). This illustrates that authors themselves are not necessarily aware, at the point of writing, that they are producing works that will later be recognized as classics. This raises the question of who decides if a work is a classic: elite literary professors, publishers, or audiences? Malik (2022) agrees with T.S. Eliot that the status of a classic must be widely acknowledged across a broad spectrum. In his address to the Virgil Society, T.S. Eliot argued that if the responsibility for defining classics were left solely to literary experts, he himself would not have been invited to speak, as he was not part of the literary elite at that time. Calvino (2014) adds that classics are books people re-read, rather than ones they agree they are reading for the first time. This reflects the idea that a book can become so famous and deeply entrenched in a culture that even those who have not read it are familiar with its story through societal interaction.

Traditionally, the term **"**classics**"** referred to Latin, Greek, French, and English works, often to the exclusion of African, Australian, and Caribbean works (Greenwood, 2019). In a postcolonial understanding, Greenwood (2019) rejects the notion that classics are the exclusive property of Europeans. She argues that other societies must be allowed to interpret and engage with classics according to their own cultural contexts. In his unpublished

commentary, Maake (2009) contends that a classic book, by virtue of being published, cannot escape public scrutiny. However, he emphasizes the importance of systems used by experts to analyse the structural form of classics.

For the purpose of this research, we examine the conventions of literary classics. Luzzi (2014) contends that one of the defining features of classics is their timelessness, with themes that resonate across diverse audiences, enabling them to be widely read and appreciated. Classics maintain relevance across generations (Lacy, 2018; Ezell, 1994). Historically, the term "classic" was associated with the author, but over time, it has come to be associated more with the work itself (Ezell, 1994). In modern book marketing, classics are assumed to possess a high level of cultural and literary value. The reprinted classics books are shaped through the history of missionaries, colonialism and apartheid which make valuable artifacts for natives as some of them hold traditional knowledge systems that have not recorded anywhere else.

2.3 Conceptual frameworks relevant to the methodology

Understanding South African indigenous literary classics requires an examination of the roles played by Christian missionaries, colonialism, and apartheid in shaping indigenous languages and publishing. This appreciation is necessary to promoting books from marginalized people as valuable classics and the marketing related to authors under a hierarchy of oppression.

2.3.1 Colonial and missionaries' language policies

Transitions from missionaries, colonialism, and apartheid are well illustrated through the history of the Lovedale Press. The Lovedale Press directorship of RHW Shepherd offers insight into these dynamics in publishing sector of the time, as he sought to control what is being published by ensuring that no outburst antiestablishment poems coming from Xhosa people (Peires, 1980). He proposed there should be one missionary's publisher per native language to save limited resources which meant that if a Xhosa book is reject by Lovedale Press, it will not be published anywhere else (Peires, 1980). However, he faced opposition from European-centred publishers, missionary publishers, and later, the apartheid government who thought he was helping natives (White, 1992). During his tenure, Shepherd oversaw the

publication of *Mhudi* and *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya (The Wrath of the Ancestors)* by AC Jordan published in 1940, as well as *Ityala Lamawele (The Lawsuit of the Twins)* by SEK Mqhayi published in 1914, a work he had supported even before becoming a director (White, 1992). These three titles were nationalist in tone, promoting African ways of life, and thus challenged the teachings of missionaries and colonialists.

Brouillette (2020) highlights that these types of actions lead to reading culture that prefer nonfiction, guides, and religious books. The consequences of these ways of developing African languages in countries like South Africa resulted in reading culture that prefer nonfiction reading as the National Reading Survey has found (South African Book Development Council, 2016). This report further identifies religious books as the main preferred reading materials in the country. When exploring London Missionaries Society, Cooper (2002) concludes that the use of writing to dominate voices and culture of the natives did not change much for the colonised, but it succeeded in spreading norms of religion, missionaries' culture and division amongst the local and European. In South Africa, the religious norms and missionaries' culture were successful in holding back a fight against colonialism systems with natives choosing talks over confrontation (De Kock, 1992).

As many scholars such as Mkhize (2001), Kaschula (2008), and Sibiya (2023) acknowledge, missionaries played a significant role in teaching indigenous people how to read and write. However, they also lament the damage caused to the natural development of literary works in native languages. Even scholars who are sympathetic to the missionaries, such as Iannaccaro (2022), concede that the primary objective of the missionaries was to convert people to Christianity. As a result, they often promoted 'good European' literature to indigenous communities. Gilmour (2007) concludes that missionaries were meant to establish British colonial order, standardise vernacular languages and develop literacy amongst the native to ensure good subjects for colonisers.

Missionaries faced the dual challenge of satisfying their colonial governments while spreading the gospel. Education, in this context, became a tool to subvert native cultures and make people more receptive to conversion (Iannaccaro, 2022). It is important to

acknowledge that we have seen classics works that challenged the powers of the time from missionaries like *Ityala Lamawele* (*The Lawsuit of the Twins*) by SEK Mqhayi published in 1914 that promoted Xhosa traditional legal system and *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (*The Wrath of the Ancestors*) by AC Jordan published in 1940 that promoted natives believe in the spirits of the dead. However, missionaries censored the native writers mainly based on religious and political reasons. *Chaka* by Thomas Mofolo was meant to be published in 1906 but was rejected as it was dealing with what was perceived to prehistory as told the story of rise and fall of a Zulu king (Iannaccaro, 2022).

The missionaries implemented their own editorial policies to control which books could be published, even though these policies were not legislated. The colonial government in South Africa took it further and made its first attempt to formally censoring publications with the Obscene Publications Act No. 31 of 1892, which banned the importation of pornographic materials. This was followed by the Customs Management Act No. 9 of 1913, aimed at restricting objectionable materials (Matteau, 2012). The Entertainment and Censorship Act No. 28 of 1931, which initially targeted motion pictures but was later extended to include books and periodicals (Matteau, 2012). These laws were not particularly aimed at indigenous language literature, but they portrayed development of culture of intolerant of divergent perspective in country's discourse.

2.3.2 Apartheid and Bantu education impact on African literature

After the National Party's victory and the establishment of apartheid governance in 1948, the government segregated education by creating the National Christian Education Department for white citizens and implementing the Bantu Education Acts for Black South Africans (Kantey, 1990). Kantey (1990) further notes that the government controlled the selection of books prescribed for Bantu schools through the Department of Education and Training Prescription Committee. This system heavily influenced the production of African language literature, as it incentivized publishers to produce books that aligned with the apartheid government's requirements. As a result, South African literature in African languages was primarily targeted at schoolchildren, with little to no content developed for adult audiences. This approach received wide condemnations around as the objective of the books was to

shape the minds of the young people that will support and defend the narrative of apartheid regime (Nishino, 2015).

2.3.3 Cultural devaluation and internalized oppression

Furthermore, the *Suppression of Communism Act of 1950* was broadly defined to include anything opposing apartheid ideology (Matteau, 2012). This granted authorities sweeping powers to suppress any book or story they deemed undesirable. Matteau (2012) also notes that the *Publications Act No. 48 of 1974* specifically targeted books and periodicals to ensure strict control over public narratives. In addition, the *Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953*, along with the *Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974*, significantly affected the publishing and readership of indigenous language literature (Wills, 2011).

Furthermore, publishers historically never developed distribution channels beyond sales to the Department of Education, leaving bookstores with no capacity and will to stock indigenous language titles. In 1990, Apartheid President FW de Klerk appointed a commission to investigate the Department of Education and Training's Textbook Prescription Committee. The commission uncovered that publishers had been engaging in corrupt practices, including bribing committee members and offering them royalties intended for authors (Nishino, 2015).

Additionally, exploring the culture and customs of both writers and readers is critical in a country where publishing conditions remains unfavourable to previous marginalised writers and readers. The democratic government, through the National Library of South Africa, plays a pivotal role as the custodian of these works, having initiated a programme to preserve and promote the series. Their efforts in recognising and elevating these classics are significant. Furthermore, the decolonisation of content serves as a vital conceptual framework for reclaiming these literary works as proud representations of indigenous languages and heritage.

2.3.5 Marketing and distribution of African literature and its economic value

Under apartheid, publishers were incentivised to produce African literature primarily for the school market, showing little to no interest in publishing for an adult readership (Mashishi, 2000). This narrow focus on educational publishing contributed to the underdevelopment of a reading culture for leisure in African languages a legacy that persists in post-apartheid South Africa (Möller, 2013). Even initiatives such as the African Classics Reprint Project have had to repurpose school-prescribed literature for adult audiences, underscoring the absence of a robust publishing culture catering to adult readers.

According to Van den Braber, Dera, Joosten, and Steenmeijer (2021), paratextual elements have always played a critical role in establishing the identity of literary series. Most literary series are identifiable by specific branding strategies. Ezell (1994) highlights collections such as Penguin Classics, Virago Reprint and Modern Classics, Oxford World's Classics, Signet Classics, and Everyman Classics as prominent examples of highly valued series characterized by visual coherence. For example, the iconic green spine of Virago Modern Classics gave the list a distinctive appearance (Withers, 2021). Notably, the Virago series was not only visually striking but also aesthetically curated, positioning the collection as both cultural heritage and literary text (Withers, 2021).

A historical comparison that offers valuable insight into the South African Reprint of Classics Project is the wave of cheap reprints of English classics that emerged in the 1830s. This publishing movement was driven by growing public demand for affordable access to literature, as the majority of people at the time could not afford books due to high costs. Publishers responded by reissuing out-of-copyright works at lower prices (Altick, 1958). Importantly, this reprint initiative developed during the Victorian period, when English literature had not yet achieved canonical status. These affordable reprints played a pivotal role in democratizing access to literature, fostering mass readership, and contributing to the eventual institutionalization of English literary heritage. Similar to the South African reprint initiative, these classics were first issued by various publishers. Cover and layout design serves as strategic paratextual tools aimed at broadening the appeal of classic works to new readerships in a reprint of classic (Walsh, 2016).

Liu and Zhang (2025), in their analysis of the *Library of Chinese Classics* which was less successful with audience outside China, found that several key paratextual elements were missing: the authors' names were not prominently displayed, the covers failed to evoke emotion or curiosity, and the designs did not effectively capture elements of Chinese culture. These shortcomings weakened the series' appeal to its intended audience. Classic works often function as historical documents, encapsulating the ideologies, moral concerns, and cultural contexts of their time, as well as the perspectives of their authors and original readers (Ezell, 1994). Mazisi Kunene emphasizes that classics should be rooted in the foundational stories of a society stories that address all dimensions of human life, explore humanity's relationship to the universe, and reflect on the supernatural (Field, 2017).

Paratextual elements such as prefaces, introductions, and cover designs play a crucial role in shaping how a book is interpreted and valued. These features serve as a point of negotiation between author, publisher, and reader, influencing how the genre, purpose, and meaning of a work are understood (Rasmussen, 2015). Speaking at the launch of the reprinted African classics collection, then-Minister of Arts and Culture Pallo Jordan remarked that these works address the same "human frailties, foibles, idiosyncrasies and human robustness found in other literatures" (SAnews, 2009). This study, therefore, explores the role of paratextual elements in enhancing accessibility and promoting the adoption of classic works among new generations of readers.

2.4 Paratexts and paratextual theory from Genette's foundational work

The paratext framework was first developed by Gérard Genette and published in 1987 as *Seuils*. It was later translated into English as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* in 1997 (Readioff, 2021). This theory provides scholars with tools to analyse the elements that define and support a main text, helping to understand how these components influence its reception and interpretation. Genette (1997) asserts that **paratexts are the elements that surround and extend a text**, serving to present or announce it to the reader. He further explains that the paratext functions as a **threshold**, introducing the text and shaping the reader's reception and interpretation. Genette's work inspired an academic movement focused on exploring the factors that shape a text's meaning and reader engagement (Readioff, 2021). Janine Barchas' *Graphic De-sign, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century* made a significant contribution

to this discourse by extending paratextual analysis into the bibliographic and material culture of prose fiction (Readioff, 2021). Berger (2004) concludes that paratext plays a crucial role in understanding the process of producing a book and identifying the various components that constitute it. More importantly, paratext helps situate a text within its cultural and contextual framework. Ruokkeinen and Liira (2017) argue that paratext cannot be fully understood without considering both the material aspects of documents and the abstract qualities of the works they represent.

A well-coordinated paratext can entice readership, create feeling of anticipation, spark curiosity and enjoyment of the content it represents (Edwards, 2022). Paratexts refer to the supplementary materials that accompany the main text, providing additional context or information. These can be either attached to the body text or exist independently (Ratner, 2018). According to Skare (2020), paratexts are what make a book a book, encompassing all the elements that help identify the format of a source of information. For example, the novel *Xisomisana* by FA Thuketani can be identified as such by examining the paratexts like front cover and blurb. Furthermore, it is through engaging the title and the blurb that one learns that book is a Xitsonga classic novel. This information helps the reader decide whether to pick the book or buy a different book. Genette, as cited by Ratner (2018), distinguishes between two types of paratexts: peritext and epitext. Genette formulates this as Paratext = Peritext + Epitext (Skare, 2020).

Peritexts are elements physically attached to or situated close to the main text, such as the cover design, preface, foreword, or title page of the book. Epitexts, on the other hand, are materials related to the text but not physically attached to it, such as author interviews, reviews, or advertisements (Skare, 2020). Understanding how the peritexts of literary classic series have been presented is crucial for promoting their adoption by contemporary readership. This study will examine the use of paratexts in introducing these stories to readers.

Historians, philosophers, and politicians have long regarded stories as powerful tools for guiding and changing beliefs and behaviours (Appel & Malečkar, 2012). However, not much

attention has been given to the signifiers that accompany these stories, whether the information is fiction or nonfiction (Appel & Malečkar, 2012). These signifiers, which Genette and Maclean (1991) refer to as paratexts, are related to the stories but are not the actual stories themselves. While some people have enjoyed indigenous language literary classics, the question remains whether enough attention and care have been given to their paratexts to attract more young readers and others who are unfamiliar with these books.

Another consideration is that many of the classics were published by missionaries, while others were published by companies that supported apartheid. Genette (1997) identifies the **publisher's peritext** as one of the most significant categories of paratextual elements, encompassing features such as the book cover, title page, and other related components. These elements are typically the responsibility of the publisher or are at least sanctioned by them. According to Genette, (1997) they play a crucial role in shaping the message a book conveys to its potential readers, influencing both its reception and interpretation. Mkhize (2016) points out that "African language prints were used over the years in Southern Africa as an ideological tool to create good and proper Bantus' literature". The series, selected and reprinted under democratic South Africa, provides an interesting case study of the cultural and decolonial use of paratexts in literature and how paratext mediates between text, author and the reader.

2.5 How paratext mediates between text, author, and a reader

Paratext provides context for a text, helping readers to interpret it more accurately (Sariaslan, 2024). For example, when a paratext labels a work as a novel, it guides readers not to approach it as non-fiction, poetry, or a collection of short stories. This background information equips readers with a better understanding of the text before they even decide to purchase it. Additionally, the name of a well-known author on the cover can influence a reader's decision to buy the book, while the title offers insight into its content. Neveu (2017) notes that revealing the translator's name on a translated poem builds trust, thereby increasing the likelihood that more people will adopt the work.

The paratextual elements of classic books are important in conveying the message about the stories contained in the main text and to appeal to sophisticated audience interested in stories at this level. It is vital that we understand the thinking about the design of the cover for example and how the readers process the imagery depicted on the covers. The concept of encoding/decoding help us to understand processes involved in producing paratext and how it is interpreted (Kropp, 2015). For many years communication has been understood in terms linear of transmission models until Stuart Hall published his article in 1980 describe the encoding and decoding model (Ross, 2011). This followed by many theories aimed at explaining encoding/decoding concepts and these are discussed below starting with Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding model.

Stuart Hall seeks to highlight the factors involved in mass communication, arguing that the linear transmission model is inadequate as it focuses solely on the sender, message, and receiver (Hall, 2012). Hall (2012) instead considers the broader communication infrastructure, including the producer of the message, the message itself, the receiver, and the "noise" surrounding the entire communication process. He further states that the success of communication depends on whether the communicator and receiver share a similar ideology, cultural background, and technical infrastructure, or at the very least, understand each other's perspectives. Furthermore, Hall (2012) identifies three ways of decoding a message: dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings.

Dominant reading occurs when the audience accepts the message exactly as the producer intended. Negotiated reading refers to a situation where the receiver accepts some aspects of the message but rejects or modifies others based on their cultural perspective or personal experiences. Finally, oppositional reading occurs when the receiver holds a view that directly contradicts the intentions of the author or producer (Kropp, 2015).

Moreover, Sociocultural theory was developed by Soviet psychologist, LS Vygotsky (Warschauer, 1997). Vygotsky (1986) explores the relationship between language and thought, highlighting the distinction between social speech, egocentric speech, and inner speech by tracing their evolution over time. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the

crucial role of culture in shaping psychological development of individuals. Sociocultural theories of literacy emphasize that literacy is not just a set of individual cognitive skills, but a social practice deeply embedded in cultural, historical, and social contexts (Perry, 2012). These theories' view reading, writing, and communication as activities shaped by the cultural tools, social relationships, and institutional settings within which they occur (Perry, 2012). These theories are rooted in the constructivist paradigm, which posits that learning occurs through engagement with social events, interaction with others, and participation in surrounding communities (Wang, 2011).

In addition, critical literacy is another theory in this space. Paulo Freire is recognized as a leading scholar in this decades-old field (Lee, 2011). Freire (1970) argues that literacy is not merely about decoding text, but rather about empowering individuals to interpret and transform the world. He critiques the assumption that learners should passively absorb knowledge, and instead advocates for an approach in which learners actively engage with texts and their social contexts, questioning assumptions, reflecting critically, and constructing new meanings. Critical literacy addresses questions of power relations, narratives, and identities in a transitioning world that strives to be just and humane (White, 2015). It encourages readers to critically examine what they are reading, including the author's societal and political position, as well as the identities and motivations of publishers. Critical literacy aims to empower oppressed groups by exposing unequal power structures and fostering societal transformation to achieve equality (Lee, 2011). This is particularly important for South African indigenous language literary classics, many of which were published during the colonial and apartheid eras.

Decolonial Theory in Content and Representation

This theory is closely related to critical analysis and focuses on constructing representations of the social, political, and economic realities of indigenous peoples, as opposed to imposed Eurocentric, colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial perspectives from Western countries (Elliot, 2019). Decolonial theory criticizes postcolonial theory for being indirectly linked to Eurocentrism, as it remains rooted in modernist frameworks (Mendoza, 2020). South Africa's *Rhodes Must Fall* and *Fees Must Fall* movements are pragmatic examples of decolonial theory, characterized by their direct confrontation of existing practices (Noxolo, 2017).

Decolonial theory amplifies the voices of the oppressed whether marginalized by race, gender, or social group and emphasizes the need to identify and dismantle oppressive systems (Mendoza, 2020). The reprint of classic programme is about promoting previous marginalised literature for indigenous people of South Africa.

This research explores how paratextual elements are used to promote the representation of local cultures and perspectives from the global South in the literary landscape. The theories and approaches discussed above have been applied to analyse these paratextual elements and offer recommendations on how they can be strategically utilized to enhance access to and adoption of indigenous language books by local populations.

These theories are essential for understanding the role of paratextual mediation in textual analysis. As Tan (2024) argues, paratexts serve as intermediaries between authors and publishers on one side, and readers or audiences on the other. In her paratextual analysis of Chaka, Sandwith (2021) finds that the meaning initially attached to the book and its author reflected the success of missionary efforts - a narrative of a convert who learned to write and produced a book about a valiant African king. However, over the decades, the paratextual elements began to suggest a celebration of an African leader who fought enemies and built a powerful kingdom. This shift illustrates that meaning is negotiated between the author and publisher on one hand, and the readers on the other, highlighting the dynamic nature of textual interpretation. Paratextual elements can be strategically employed by creators to reframe or guide the narrative. Additionally, sales and marketing professionals often utilize paratexts to enhance the commercial appeal of books and boost sales. For instance, the Reprint of Classics Project might have leveraged paratexts to alter the narrative framing or to promote these works to a broader audience.

In 1969, Johan Robert Jauss introduced Reception Theory, which marked a paradigm shift in literary scholarship (Kinoshita, 2004). This shift centred on placing the reader at the heart of the literary experience (Kinoshita, 2024). The reader’s interpretation of a text is crucial, emphasizing the importance of understanding their cultural and social background. It is essential to acknowledge that readers are not passive recipients of text; they actively interact

with it, bringing their own social and cultural experiences to its interpretation (Rockhill, 1996). Readers are active agents and meaning-makers in the reception process (Rockhill, 1996).

In the post-apartheid era, South African literature has sparked discussions around race, identity, reconciliation, and transformation (Nabasirye, 2023). To explore the strategic use of paratextual elements in indigenous language classics and how they can encourage adoption and accessibility, it is important to understand the target markets and how they engage with and interpret the content.

2.6 Adoption, accessibility and contemporary readership

Paratext, as a bridge between text, author, and readers, plays a crucial role in connecting limited reading materials in African languages. South Africa presents an intriguing case of readership patterns. According to the 2023 National Reading Barometer Survey, 97% of English speakers own at least one book in English, and 78% of Afrikaans speakers have at least one book in Afrikaans at home (National Reading Barometer, 2023). In contrast, according to the 2023 National Reading Barometer Summary Report, 68% of Xhosa/Zulu language speakers who read for enjoyment said they own at least one in their languages while only 64% of Sepedi/Setswana/Sesotho owns a book (National Reading Barometer, 2023).

Accessibility and adoption of books depend on intentional promotion, branding, and the effective management of online metadata. Although these books were identified and branded as ‘classics’ by the National Library of South Africa, the owners failed to ensure consistent branding and availability in bookstores. However, access to books in indigenous languages remains limited, with only 68% for isiXhosa and isiZulu speakers, 64% for Sepedi, 56% for Setswana, 52% for Sesotho and Sepedi 51% of readers that at least own a single book (National Reading Barometer, 2023). Sepedi, Siswati and Tshivenda numbers were too small to be included (National Reading Barometer, 2023). For these books to be widely adopted, they must not only be physically accessible but also affordable. Moreover, the paratext must meet high-quality standards associated with the appropriate literary fiction genre for the

readership as well standards to encourage individuals to invest in acquiring the books and to install a sense of pride in ownership.

Ratner (2018) expands the definition of paratexts by emphasizing their transitional role in guiding the reader to the main text, as well as their transactional role in influencing a reader's decision to pick a book from a shelf or purchase a book. Genette similarly describes peritexts and epitexts as transactional elements that assist audience to invest on certain book or the other (Skare, 2020). Furthermore, for something to qualify as a paratext, it must be written down and named, such as advertisements about the main text, prefaces, or forewords (Goh, 2023).

2.7 Decolonized writing and reading of indigenous language classics

The decolonisation of literature requires both the independence of language and the indigenisation of stories (Thiong'o, 1996; Megbowon & Uwah, 2022). Thiong'o (1996) emphasizes that the use of indigenous languages in speech and writing is a vital step toward dismantling colonial frameworks. He argues that communicating in a language familiar to the people allows for the transmission of knowledge that would otherwise be difficult to express in a foreign tongue. Thiong'o's decision to write in his mother tongue is an act of resistance against imperialism, underscoring the need for institutional support in publishing indigenous language classics.

Similarly, Megbowon and Uwah (2022) contend that the process of decolonisation is incomplete unless literature reaches and resonates with its readers. Their study on the decolonial reading of *Things Fall Apart* highlights the importance of accessibility and relevance in literary engagement. Kumalo (2021) furthers this view by asserting that decolonisation entails the democratisation of knowledge, enabling people to access and engage with ideas in their native languages.

Missionaries are credited with being the first to transcribe spoken indigenous languages into written text by teaching Africans to write and subsequently publishing their works (Sibiya,

2023). For example, Bill and Masunga (1983), note that the first fifty years of Xitsonga writing were dominated by Swiss writers. This reflects the authority and cultural dynamics that defined the era in which these works were written and published. Considering that the primary mission of these institutions was to convert people to Christianity and ensure their continued adherence, the writings needed to reflect these goals (Chauke, 1998).

Mothoagae and Shingange (2024) discuss the bicultural state in which Africans found themselves, where their culture and beliefs were demonized under the teachings of missionaries. According to Mothoagae and Shingange (2024), the treatment of indigenous people and the terminology used at the time clearly indicate that these efforts were more aligned with promoting the agendas of colonial governments than with purely religious imperatives. Mkhize (2016) remarks that the African literature has always been reduced to teaching of bad and good; it also used as tool promote cultures of the tribes and be different from nearby tribes. The reprinting of these classics is an attempt to reclaim books and stories that were written and published under colonialism and apartheid, restoring them to African ownership. This study examines the strategic deployment of paratextual elements of the reprinted classics and how they can be promoted to the contemporary readership.

2.8 Tradition and symbolism in South African indigenous languages

There is a strong sense of pride in writing in African languages. Renowned authors such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Mazisi Kunene, and Okot p'Bitek initially wrote their classic works in African languages before translating them into English (Ojaide, 1992). Recognizing the use of African languages is crucial for the decolonization of the mind and reflects the authors' commitment to writing for their own people first, while also ensuring broader accessibility through translation.

According to Ford and Tyson (2024) decolonised books' illustrations, cover drawings and cover colours should take into consideration the symbolism of African culture. Van Wyk (2003) alludes to this when looking at the use of beadwork of Xhosa and Zulu tribes. Each colour and each set of colours have cultural meaning in the language for example colour representing maternal or paternal ancestries of a person or royal colours (Van Wyk, 2003). An

illustrator from this background will capture these anecdotes in their works. Boyd (2017) indicates that Ndebele paintings' purposes include decorative messages like linage of family that is separate to the neighbours. The nature of decolonised content is that it should reflect various views of artists' background and learnt and lived skills. Illustrators from Ndebele community in a decolonised space should be able to experiment with this background in their works.

2.9 Intended readers' context

The *South African Reprint of Literary Classics Project* is primarily targeted at speakers of the country's nine official African indigenous languages: IsiNdebele, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Siswati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. The core readership comprises adult readers who are no longer in formal education and engage with literature primarily for enjoyment and cultural connection (Tsebe, 2010). This study, therefore, considers the broader historical and sociopolitical factors that have shaped the reading habits and literacy practices of African communities in South Africa.

To understand the complex relationship between African readers and literacy, it is crucial to contextualise reading acquisition within the country's colonial history. In South Africa, the introduction of literacy was deeply intertwined with colonial conquest and missionary activity, both of which sought to dismantle indigenous customs and belief systems (Prinsloo, 1999). For example, the earliest schools were established in the Cape to educate slaves of the Dutch East India Company employees in both the Dutch language and Christian doctrine. These lessons were often incentivised with alcohol, tobacco, and gum, highlighting the utilitarian and coercive methods of early literacy efforts (Prinsloo, 1999).

This foundation laid the groundwork for institutionalised racial segregation in education, which extended well into the 20th century. Under apartheid, the Bantu Education system and the infamous Afrikaans language decree reinforced white supremacy and cultural dominance. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 regulated what African people in South Africa were allowed to learn, the careers they could pursue, and the quality of education they could access (Gallo, 2020). The underlying purpose of the Act was to produce a labour force to serve the

needs of the South African economy and to reinforce the broader system of racial segregation (Christie & Collins, 1982). To ensure compliance, the government established school boards and language boards tasked with aligning educational content and practices with state objectives (Tsotetsi, 1999).These policies ultimately led to the 1976 Soweto Uprising, where students protested the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. During apartheid, African-language books including those now classified as “classics” were largely produced for the school market, with content and selection heavily influenced by the Department of Education and Training’s Prescription Committee (Möller, 2013).

The advent of democracy in 1994 marked a turning point. South Africa adopted one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, recognising eleven official languages, including both English and Afrikaans (Heugh, 2007; Kamwangamalu, 2000). While education during apartheid was designed to uphold white superiority, the democratic constitution affirms the right of all citizens to learn, use, and celebrate their home languages, cultures, and traditions (Chisholm, 2012). The Reprint of Classics Project aligns with this shift by making culturally significant texts available to adult readers in their indigenous languages reaffirming both the content and the authors as part of a broader process of cultural recovery and literary decolonisation.

At the time of South Africa’s transition to democracy in 1994, the adult illiteracy rate among individuals aged 60 to 64 was 29.2%, which declined significantly to 12% by 2011 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2023). As the population has grown and access to education has expanded, literacy rates have improved.

Paratextual elements must mediate effectively between the maturity level of the author and text, and the interpretive competence of the intended reader (Altmann, Bohrn, Lubrich, Menninghaus, & Jacobs, 2014). These elements play a crucial role in constructing a threshold for interpretation, adapting in form and function across publishers, media formats, and diverse readerships (Bansal, 2019). Sedlmeier (2018) emphasizes that for communication to be effective, the complexity and sophistication of paratexts must be calibrated to align both with the author’s intended positioning and the audience's interpretive expectations. The

paratext of the reprinted classics need to reflect post-apartheid society that readers have other choices to read, and they are free to be proud of the cultural heritages.

2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review provided definitions of essential terminologies crucial for understanding of the research topic. It also explored various theories and approaches that consider the culture, social and perspectives of the dominant groups in the regions where the books were published. This contextualization is vital for understanding the strategic role of paratextual elements. To comprehend the use of paratextual elements in African literary classic series, comparing these to international paratextual trends and offering suggestions for improving the use of paratextual elements in future classic reproductions, paratextual analysis emerges as a viable research methodology. As Fotheringham (2017) concludes that pretext cannot be ignored where cross cultural study of literature is involved. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology of analysing the paratext of this collection to establish trends and recommended future use of it in detail.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the approach used to find a solution to research problem (Mishra and Alok, 2011). Having a defined approach will guide the collection, storage and analysing of data for this research. Kothari (2004) agrees that research methodology is a systemic description of how research is done. The methodology encompasses methods, techniques and all the thinking about the research topic (Kothari, 2004). For this research, I propose to use paratextual analysis to examine paratextual elements to understand how readers perceive and interact with the literary classic series reproduced by the National Library of South Africa.

Paratextual analysis offers a new method for examining indigenous literary works. Sibiya (2023) contends that traditional methods used to understand African literature often reduce it to merely an art form. He suggests that scholars should explore new forms of analysis that provide a deeper understanding of the writing beyond its structural aspects. Paratextual element analysis offers an exciting avenue for scholars, publishers, and authors to discuss how they can enhance their works. This approach can result in aesthetically appealing and communicative works that engage readers with the main body text.

This method allows a researcher to unearth vast amount of information about a book that can be useful for readers, publishers, librarians and scholars (Pocoskie and Desrochers, 2013). By using historic paratext, Sandwich (2018) was able to trace variation of Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka* since its publication 1925, these are the mission text, the English colonial text, the French colonial production and the post-colonial text. This method is appropriate for exploring paratext elements of the classics and they can be deployed to encourage adoption by new generation of readers as discussed in chapter 2.

3.2 Research design

This research uses qualitative approach to examine how peritext of indigenous languages could influence the adoption of the reprinted editions. Qualitative research is an interactive process by which a better understanding can be found by scientific community found meaning (Aspers and corte, 2019). According to Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson (2002), qualitative research focuses mainly on language, description and interpretation as well as theory building by identifying commonality and patterns in qualitative data. In this study we analyse paratextual elements of the classics and identify commonality and connection of the design elements used in the books. Paratextual analysis will be used to examine how paratext elements can be deployed strategically to facilitate adoption of the classic series amongst the contemporary readerships.

3.3 Research instruments and data collection

The South African Reprint of Classics Project has reprinted 105 titles between 2008 and 2023. Out of the total of 105 titles 58 are novels. For this study, we have reviewed all 58 novels only. We are not going take other genres like drama, short stories, poems, and other historical texts. The novel genre was chosen for this study because it offers full creative scope for both the main text and paratextual elements, and because indigenous language fiction for adults is perceived to be underrepresented in the South African market. Novels allow writers give detail account of the scenes and characters in story. Birmingham and Wilkinson, (2003) state that research instruments are tools used to collect data for research. The following data elements have been collected and interpreted for meaning. The front and back cover images have been captured by a camera and stored in the laptop.

The captured pictures will then be inserted to the table where it was it was observed. The observations are captured and recording in the Annexure 1 table:

Front cover including the background colour, image/illustration, text such as title, author name and any other text.

Spine/binding method including text.

Back cover including, background colour, blurb, and other text.

Front cover of the previous editions

3.4 Data analysis and interpretation

The data collected has been captured on table provided as Annexure 1. The table captures title, publisher, year of publication, year of reprint, author, previous cover, spine and front cover of the 58 novels. The data is analysed by looking at the peritext elements' role in shaping reader's experience, guide interpretation and how it contributes to the understanding of the main text. The analysis is underpinned by the literature view conduced in Chapter. The are titles that the research did not have access to the cover previous edition before the classic paratextual elements. It was important to review the classics cover as a stand-alone body of work and review the use element of design used on the covers. See an example of the table and for full detail in Annexure 1:

No:	Title / s	Author	Publisher	Year	Reprinted	Front cover	Classic cover	Original cover	Spine	Back cover	Back cover image
	XITSONGA										
1.	Mulunguntima (An African Boss)	TH Khosa	JL van Schaik	1994	2008	Pale pink background colour, title of the book is written bold black colour at the top. Drawing of 3 formal dress men in a office setting is centred on the front cover. Name of the author is set at below of the drawing. The front covers two awards stickers, (Insert image)			The spine has title, author name and a company logo. Perfect binding is used	The blurb is just quote from the book, head a shoulder photograph of the author with his beneath. A paragraph that explains the classic project with logos of Department of Arts and Culture and National Library accompany the message. Publisher logo and barcode are placed at the bottom of the page.	
2.	Xisomisana (a name of main character)	FA Thuketana	Sasavona Books	1969	2008	Jonquil colour is the background colour of the cover with charcoal drawing of a tree and branch looks like it was cut. A person is setting on the branch. The title and the name of the authors written in red next to each other. The is bigger font size and bold. The classics logo is placed at bottom right comer.			Perfect binding with name of the author and title written in red on the spine	A paragraph that explains the classic project with logos of Department of Arts and Culture and National Library accompany the message.	
3.	Mibya ya nyekanyeka	BKM Mtombeni	Novel	1966	2008	Title of book is written at top in large font and					

Table 3.1 An example of the Annexure 1 which capture the analysed data

3.5 Limitations and biases of the study

The study examines how the strategic use of paratextual elements in indigenous language literary classics impacts the adoption and accessibility of these works by contemporary

readers. The series under examination encompasses 5 books in Ndebele, 8 in Pedi, 5 in Sotho, 5 in Swati, 7 in Tsonga, 9 in Tswana, 5 in Venda, 9 in Xhosa and 5 in Zulu, posing challenges related to potential misinterpretation of cultural nuances. Given my involvement in the early stages of this project over 14 years ago, I acknowledge the potential for subjective bias in evaluating certain book covers. To mitigate this, I will anchor my analysis in established scholarly literature on paratextual analysis and visual studies.

Furthermore, I will triangulate findings with data from comparable studies and historical publishing trends to enhance the reliability and objectivity of the interpretation. This approach ensures that personal familiarity with the material does not compromise the academic rigour of the research. The study looks at 58 reprinted novels in all 9 languages out of 105 titles that were reprinted between 2008 and 2023. This is a big enough sample considering that it is a review of books that achieved classic status. The collected data is analysed by comparing paratextual elements of the earlier editions of the titles to the paratextual elements of the classic editions.

There are no anticipated ethical concerns associated with this project, as it is based on accessing classic books from the National Library of South Africa, a public institution. The National Library of South Africa formally granted permission to access and use the materials, as acknowledged in the certificate attached as Appendix 2. This permission ensures that the use of all the materials complies with institutional guidelines and ethical research standards.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework used to investigate the strategic deployment of paratextual elements in the South African Reprint of Classics Project. By employing a qualitative research design anchored in paratextual analysis, the study aims to explore how cover designs, spines, and blurbs shape reader engagement with indigenous language novels. This methodology is underpinned by theoretical perspectives that view paratext as a meaningful site for interpretation, one that bridges the reader's encounter with the book and the main narrative content.

The research focuses on 58 reprinted novels across nine South African languages, selected for their representation of fiction and their creative scope for both textual and visual storytelling. The data collection process involved capturing and analysing key peritextual features such as front and back covers, spine text, and binding method through photographic documentation and structured observation. These elements were recorded in a comparative table (Annexure 1), allowing for both thematic and visual analysis of how classic texts have been repackaged for contemporary readers.

This methodological approach not only enables a detailed examination of individual design components, but also facilitates broader insights into the cultural, aesthetic, and symbolic work performed by paratext. Attention was given to potential limitations and biases, including language diversity, the researcher's prior involvement in the project, and incomplete access to a small number of titles. To mitigate these concerns, the study is grounded in scholarly literature ensuring a robust and reflexive analytical process.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

4.1 Introduction

In response to the question of how paratextual elements can be strategically deployed to ensure the wide adoption of the classic series by contemporary readers, this chapter analyses the titles, covers, blurbs, and spines of 58 reprinted novels through both comparative and thematic methods. The analysis is structured around three key themes that emerged from the data: self-discovery, the emphasis on morality, and power relations as reflected in the titles. The *Reprint of Indigenous Classics Project* offers a distinctive lens through which to examine governmental efforts to promote literary works and their authors within the African context. Celebrating and promoting both literary classics and their authors is of significant importance, particularly as Ezell (1994) observed that historical studies of classics have predominantly focused on authors rather than the works themselves. This initiative is particularly significant given the historical legacy of colonization and, in the case of South Africa, the subsequent era of apartheid, which profoundly impacted the preservation and recognition of indigenous literary traditions.

Examining the strategic use of paratext to enhance the discoverability, accessibility and adoption of literary classics published under colonial rule and apartheid regimes is undoubtedly a complex endeavour. However, it remains a necessary undertaking for nations that have historically endured oppression, as it contributes to the reclamation and revitalization of their cultural and literary heritage. The data collected and presented in Annexure 1 focuses on key paratextual elements, including titles, publishers, authors' names, years of publication, front covers, spines, and blurbs. These elements form the foundational basis for the analysis that follows.

This study found that only 86% of the classics reviewed had professionally bound spines, while the remaining 19% were stapled suggesting a lack of investment in presenting these works as culturally significant artefacts. Table 4.1 illustrates the extent to which the covers were complete, providing a quantitative measure of design intentionality and cultural

sensitivity in the reprint process. It records whether the books included blurbs, author biographies, or spines, elements that collectively signal the value attributed to these texts.

As shown in the table, only 75% of the reviewed books featured blurbs. Blurbs serve dual functions: they inform potential readers and promote the book's value (Grivina & Zirker, 2019). For a project intended to celebrate authors and promote indigenous literature, the inclusion of blurbs is not merely cosmetic but essential. Valor (2005) explains that to achieve its communicative purpose, a blurb typically follows three rhetorical moves: description, evaluation, and the author's biography.

However, the data indicates that only 16% of the reviewed covers included author biographies. This is misaligned with the project's strategic objective of acknowledging authors whose work was marginalized during the apartheid era. Furthermore, only 19% of the books included an author's photograph on the back cover. This may have limited value for readers unfamiliar with the authors, as a photograph alone may not contribute meaningfully to their decision to engage with the book. Additionally, 14% of the books were stapled rather than bound, which may suggest that they were designed for temporary use likely within the school market and not intended as durable, long-term artefacts. For a series of reprinted classics, the design should ideally reflect a high level of artistic and cultural investment.

When discussing the *Penguin Modern Classics*, Gea-Valor and Ros (2009) emphasize the importance of branding in appealing to target audiences. They highlight how Penguin developed distinct series, each with a unique look and feel, tailored to different reader markets. This underscores the necessity for intentional design in classics publishing not just to attract readers, but to affirm the cultural value of the texts.

Paratextual Elements			
No.	**Item**	**number of books**	**Percentage**
1	Books with blurbs	27	47%
2	Books without blurbs	31	53%
3	Books with Author biographies	9	16%
4	Books with Author photo but without bio	11	19%

5	Book with Bio and photo	4	7%
6	Book with spine	50	86%
7	Stappled books	8	14%
8	Changed covers from previous editions	16	28%
9	Total number books that mention authors on back cover	20	34%

Table 4.1 Completeness of cover design

4.2 Analysis of Front covers

Front covers are crucial paratextual elements that facilitate communication between the author, publisher, and readers. A study on newly released books in Lithuania found that book covers play a significant role in readers' decision-making processes (Gudinavičius & Šuminas, 2018). Drew and Sternberge (2005) further argue that once a book is published, it becomes a physical product of great cultural significance and historical importance. Furthermore, while examining the impact of cover images on fiction sales of international readers, Nielsen (2016) found that books with cover images sold 51% more than those without cover images.

The two covers presented in *figure 4.1* below illustrate the evolution of *Mafangambiti* [1956] by TN Maumela, with the original cover on the right and the updated "South African Classics" edition on the left. *Mafambambiti* represents Maumela's second major work, following *Elalweni* that was published in 1954. Maumela is widely acknowledged as one of the foremost contributors to Tshivenda literature (Sibiya, 2021). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was promulgated in 1953, the act was meant to offer substandard education to black South Africans (Khumalo, 2022). These were challenging time for indigenous languages books as apartheid intensify grab on them. The original cover features the title *Mafangambiti* prominently at the top, accompanied by the explanatory subtitle *The Story of a Bull*, which appears in English. The term *Mafangambiti*, derived from Tshivenda, translates roughly as "he who dies of anger," a name traditionally given to a bull in Venda culture. This cover employs pink borders and includes an energetic sketch of bulls in combat surrounded by people. The story is presented as a fairytale but it is about African people's ability to endure, to survive and to come back (Zimbler, 2004). The subtitle and illustrative style suggest a

folkloric or allegorical framing, likely intended to appeal to younger readers or align the text with didactic storytelling.

The inclusion of the English subtitle may have served a strategic paratextual function to ensure the book met the selection criteria of the Department of Education and Training's Prescription Committee under apartheid, which was responsible for curating literature for Bantu Education. This added phrase could signal genre classification and accessibility, fulfilling bureaucratic and pedagogical requirements.

By contrast, the updated "South African Classics" edition presents a streamlined, minimalist design. The author's name appears at the top, followed by the title in bold magenta, omitting the earlier subtitle. The imagery consists solely of two bulls in confrontation, with the human figures removed. A splatter of red dots against a stark white background subtly suggests blood, adding symbolic weight to the conflict depicted. This version is clearly intended for an adult readership, recontextualizing the novel within a serious literary tradition. The inclusion of the *South African Classics* logo further elevates the book's status, positioning it as a significant contribution to Venda and South African literature.

While the modern cover is visually compelling and culturally resonant, the physical production of the book specifically the stapled binding and slim 59-page format may diminish its perceived value as a literary artifact. The compact layout, with small font (approximately size 9 or 10) and tight line spacing, contributes to the reduced page count. A redesigned interior with appropriate spacing and a slightly larger font would allow for a spine wide enough to accommodate printed text, improving both the book's shelf presence and its marketability. Such revisions would enhance the book's aesthetic and functional appeal, making it more likely to be displayed, preserved, and celebrated as part of South Africa's literary heritage.



Figure 4.1. Front covers of earlier edition and recent edition of Mafangambiti

The *Figure 4.2* below presents two versions of the cover design for *Mitsheto ya Wa [1975]*, a Tshivenda novel. The title translates to *The Walls Are Falling*. On the left is the original cover, which features a green wall as the background, with the title in bold white font and the author's name positioned at the bottom. On the right is the classic edition cover, which exhibits a more coordinated and visually appealing colour scheme.

The title appears at the top, followed by the author's name, and beneath that is an image of a stone-built wall. At the bottom of the cover is the phrase *Nganea ya Tshivenda*, which translates to "Tshivenda Novel." The colours used in the updated design are reflective of Tshivenda cultural aesthetics. While the revised cover represents a successful modernization of the original design and would serve as a compelling visual artefact, the impact is slightly diminished by the book's brevity. The text spans only 79 pages, largely due to its condensed formatting, with minimal spacing between sentences and paragraphs.

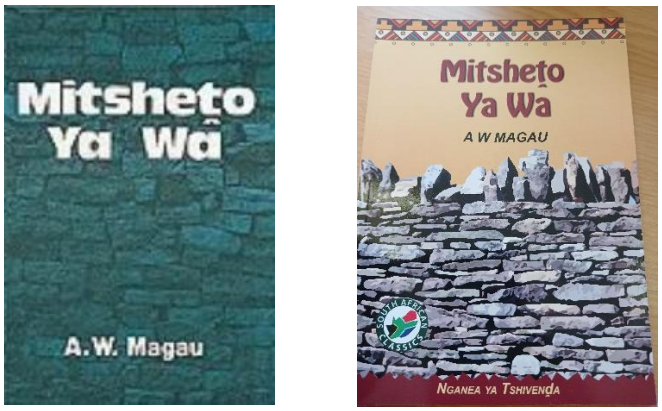


Figure 4.2. Front covers of earlier edition and recent edition of Mitsheto Ya Wa

The cover images in Figure 4.3 presents two editions of the cover design for *Bogosi Kupe (Kingship is Sacred)* [1967], a Setswana novel. This book was published in 1967 during apartheid South Africa, a context that was not only racially oppressive but also deeply patriarchal (Makgato, Chaka, & Mandende, 2018). The narrative depicts a female protagonist who confronts double oppression—as both a Black person and a woman (Makgato et al., 2018). Bogosi Kupe is the fourth novel by D. P. S. Monyaise and the fourth text to be recognised as a classic under this project. Monyaise, a high school teacher by profession, published all his major works between 1960 and 1970 (Lesete, 1994). What is particularly striking about this novel is Monyaise's ability to construct a feminist character who actively resists patriarchal domination (Mthembu, 2020). The cover on the left is the original edition, while the one on the right represents a classic edition. The original design features a grey upper section and a pink central panel. The title appears in bold black text against the pink background, with the author's name in black set against the grey portion. In contrast, the classic edition displays a more sophisticated aesthetic: the title is rendered in bold gold lettering on a black background, evoking a sense of formality and prestige.

The reference to royalty and leadership in the title is further reinforced by the imagery of leopard skins, a symbol of chieftaincy and royal authority in Setswana culture. The author's name appears at the bottom of the cover once again; however, given DPS Monyaise's significant contributions as a pioneering Setswana writer, greater prominence could have been afforded to his name in the overall design. Additionally, the book could have been physically enhanced by increasing the spacing between sentences and paragraphs to expand the number of pages. Such a format would elevate the book as a cultural artefact suitable for display in formal settings such as offices or living rooms.



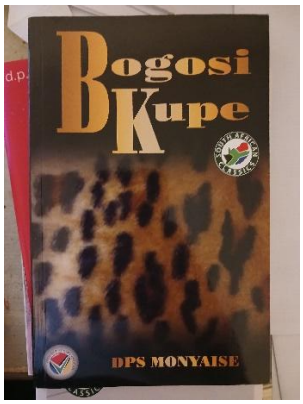


Figure 4.3. Front covers of earlier edition and classic edition of Bosi Kupe

The two covers of Thomas Mofolo's novel *Chaka* shown in *Figure 4.4* below represent the original edition on the left and a reprinted classic edition on the right. The original cover differs significantly in design from the others discussed earlier, particularly in its apparent appeal to an adult readership from the outset. The use of illustration, coupled with the thematic alignment of the artwork and title, suggests that the book was initially published for general public consumption. This is consistent with its original publication under missionary presses, specifically the Morija Mission in Lesotho, which catered to a broader audience beyond school curricula (Kunene, 1989). In contrast, many other African-language literary works were produced primarily for the school market, shaped by the ideological constraints of the apartheid-era Department of Education and Training's Prescription Committee.

The classic edition features a more refined and detailed illustration of the warrior-king holding a spear and shield. This visual update may be interpreted as a shift in narrative framing from the earlier missionary-influenced portrayal of Chaka as an uncivilised and tyrannical figure to a more decolonised representation of him as a nation-builder and a unifying force among his people (Mphahlele, 1974; Wright, 1973). This reinterpretation aligns with broader scholarly efforts to reclaim African historical figures from colonial and Eurocentric distortions. While the updated cover design reflects a more culturally affirming visual narrative, the book's presentation could benefit further from increased font size and more generous spacing between sentences and paragraphs. Such formatting changes would extend the book beyond its current 162 pages, enhancing its presence in libraries and bookstores and helping it to better compete for the attention of contemporary readers. A particularly notable omission is the absence of the author's name on the front cover. This omission undermines the intended purpose of reaffirming and celebrating the literary contributions of authors who were historically undervalued during colonial and apartheid eras. In the case of Thomas Mofolo, this oversight is especially significant, as his contributions extended beyond the realm of fiction. His work played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural and intellectual identity of the Basotho people.



Figure 4.4. Front covers of earlier edition and recent edition of Chaka

The message conveyed by a book cover extends beyond mere marketing; it also holds personal significance for the book owner and influences how the book is perceived within a library or personal collection (Drew & Sternberge, 2005). A cover design also capture era based on the design of that particular period. More importantly the cover must be aesthetic as product people wish to own and keep (Drew & Sternberge, 2005). Additionally, book covers must compete with hundreds of other titles in bookstores and libraries, making their design and presentation essential in attracting potential readers like modern readers that are not familiar with the titles (Pascu, Adîr, Adîr & Vîlcea, 2021).

The success of a book cover depends on the balanced and coordinated use of text, imagery, and colour (Pascu, Adîr, Adîr & Vîlcea, 2021). The covers of classic books have incorporated these elements to varying degrees. In some cases, book covers consist solely of text and a background colour, as exemplified by the covers of *Motimedi* and *Elelwani* on figure 4.5 below. the use one colour could be a means to save printing cost as well.

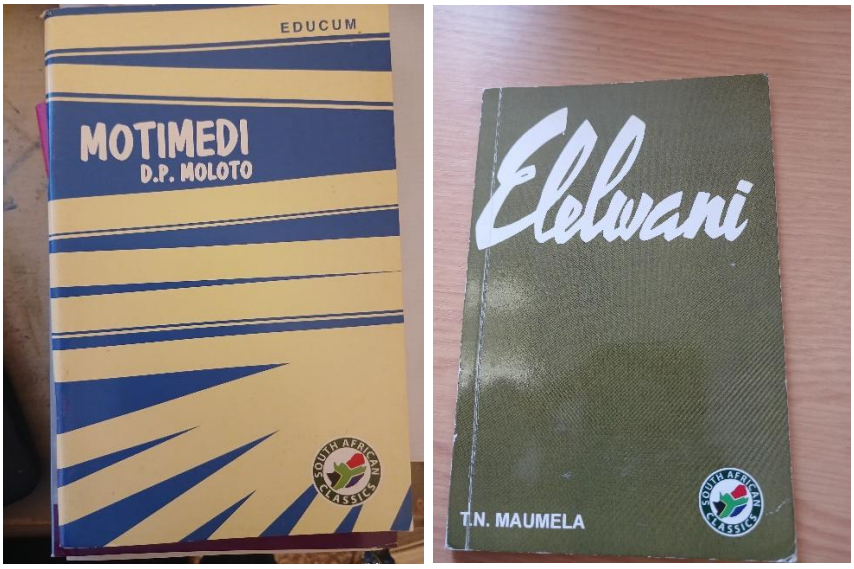


Figure 4.5. Front covers of Motimedi and Elelwani highlighting use of colours as cover of the novels

Mopheme's cover presented in Figure 4.6 below has the image text and background colour. The cover shows man riding a horse on mountains background which represent Sesotho speaking but the imaged is not centred or balanced with text. The figure can be identified as Mosotho because of the Basotho hat and blanket dress alongside the use of house and mountains background, these all symbols of Basotho country. The dialect relationship between form and content is clear (Hussein, 2018). A person who picks up the book will anticipate that the book is about Basotho and the story will take place in that background. The cover has not changed from previous edition to the classic edition. The second and third covers feature Ndebele colours and symbolic patterns, reflecting the Ndebele people's rich material culture, which is renowned for its vibrant wall paintings and intricate beadwork (Ndlovu, 2020). The fourth and final cover displays the distinctive symbols of Zulu warriors. Since the era of Shaka kaSenzangakhona, the Zulu people have been recognized for their warrior identity, with the spear (iklwa) and shield (isihlangu) becoming enduring symbols of their cultural and military heritage (Carton and Morrell, 2012). It is commendable that all these symbols in various cultures find expression on the covers of the classic books. See the covers below:



Figure 4.7. Front covers showing the use symbols to represent culture and nation of Basotho, AmaNdebele and AmaZulu

4.3 Themes emerging from Titles

In contrast to Penguin Classics, which began with translations from other cultures (Takkebos, 2020), the Reprint Project started by reprinting classics in their original languages to promote them to potential readers and preserve them for future generations. Reprinted titles kept their original titles. The titles on this list are as diverse as their authors and publishers. The titles analysed in this study are drawn from nine different South African languages, all of which were subjected to the same colonial and apartheid systems that shaped language policy and literary production. Notably, eleven publishers account for 74% of the 58 titles, indicating a significant concentration of influence. The remaining 13 publishers share only 28% of the titles, suggesting a limited role in the publication and dissemination of indigenous language literature. This concentration of titles among a few publishers reflects the historical dominance of publishing houses that were able to influence the Department of Education and Training's Prescription Committee, which was responsible for approving school texts during the apartheid era. It is particularly telling that the top three publishers collectively account for 74% of all titles on the list, highlighting their enduring control over the canon of prescribed literature. The table below presents the publishers who contributed more than one title, thereby illustrating the uneven distribution of publishing power within the Reprint of Classics Project.

Publishers with more than one titles in series		
No.	**Publishing Company**	**Number of Titles**
1	JL Van Schaik	10

2	Educum	9
3	Shuter and Shooter	6
4	Lovedale Press	3
5	Oxford University Press	3
6	Maskew Miller	2
7	Heinemann	2
8	Actua Press	2
9	Macmillan	2
10	Mazenod Books/Morija Press	2
11	Sasavona Publishers	2
	Total	**43**

Table 4.1 List of publishers with more than one title on the 58 *list.*

The themes that emerge from these titles include identity and self-discovery, power and oppression, morality, and history and legacy. However, titles such as *Xisomisana*, *Mambuxu, Elelwani, Mostuane, Mopheme,* and *Mokwena* are simply the names of the main characters in the stories. For a less sophisticated reader such titles need to be accompanied by paratextual elements such as cover design or a blurb to help potential readers determine whether they want to engage with the book. Using Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, the meaning of titles is negotiated with the sophisticated readers. As Eliot (1944) points out, readers must be as matured as the author to fully grasp the connotations of these names. The fact that these titles have achieved classic status suggests that readers have appreciated the works over time.

The National Library of South Africa initiated a public media campaign inviting South African readers to submit lists of books they considered literary classics in their indigenous languages (Tsebe, 2010). The submissions were subsequently reviewed by a panel of literary experts, who made the final determination on the classic status of each title (Tsebe, 2010).

This participatory approach reflects an intention to promote transparency in the selection process and underscores the literary discernment and cultural engagement of South African readers.

promotion and accessibility to a wider audience, a more explicit title could be beneficial. Other titles, such as *Elundini Lothukela (At the Hills of Thukela) [*1958*], Mulunguntima (African Boss) [*1994*], Mehlolo ke Dinoha (Wonders are snakes) [*1984*], Lidvume Laphangalala (Thunder that scatter) [*1983*]*, and *Mibya ya Nyekanyeka (The apron strings are loose) [1967],* employ symbolism, making it challenging for less sophisticated readers to discern their meanings without the support of paratextual elements such as cover design, blurbs, or introductions.

According to Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, oppositional reading can occur when a reader interprets a text differently from the author's intended meaning. This is particularly likely with symbolic or abstract titles, as readers may impose their own perspectives and cultural understandings. *Bangani (Friends) [*1984*], Ngaka, Mosadi Mooka (The necessity of female doctor*) [1965*], Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu (The VIP of Pietermaritzburg*) [1961], and *Mafangambiti (One who dies of anger*) [*1956]* are titles that may lead readers to develop expectations different from the author's intended narrative, as interpretations are shaped by cultural and personal experiences.

Naidoo (2007) commented on how the apartheid-era Department of Education permitted *Mafangambiti, [*1956] to be prescribed in schools, despite its portrayal of the African fighting spirit in the face of gun assaults. This decision was likely influenced by a surface-level reading of the title, as *Mafangambiti* refers to a fighting bull. However, within some African cultural traditions, a bull holds a spiritual significance, symbolizing the ancestral connection that links the living with their forebears.

This can further be seen in Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka (Shaka)*, where the title is open to readers' interpretation. While most people recognize the historical figure King Shaka, the title alone does not immediately reveal the novel's perspective or narrative focus. This ambiguity is even more significant considering that Mofolo was a Christian writer. The novel's content

itself is open to interpretation, scholars such as Es'kia Mphahlele and David Attwell have argued that *Chaka* reflects Christian ideological influences, reproducing the missionary education's negative portrayal of African leaders (Mengara, 2020). However, a critical reading of the novel suggests that Mofolo subtly 'justifies' King Shaka by depicting him as a leader who was hated, betrayed by his people, and ultimately killed a narrative structure that mirrors Christian themes of suffering, sacrifice, and redemption (Mengara, 2020).

Conversely, dominant reading is where the reader aligns with the author's intended message is more likely to occur with titles such as *Ityala Lamawele (The Lawsuit of the twins)* published in 1914*, Mbala Ngubaba (It is Really my Father)* published in 1994*, Kgorong ya Mosate (The kraal of the king*) published in 1962*, Swa Yila (It is a Taboo*) published in 1987*, Miyalezo (Beware of any pitfalls as you go through life*) published in 1973*, Kufundwa Ngamavu (*Over my dead body) published in 973, and *Ngifanele Ukuzenzela (I am supposed to do things for myself*) published in 1992.

While a reader may not necessarily agree with the author's perspective, they can still grasp the intended meaning. Dominant readings are particularly useful in attracting readers who are not habitual or frequent readers, as clarity in the title aids comprehension and accessibility. However, undeniable that these titles dealing with various themes in the human existence.

4.4 Self-discovery themes

Elundini Lothukela [1959] by JJR Jolobe, for example, explores the self-discovery of a Xhosa boy as he transitions into manhood. The boys are guided to understand themselves and their surroundings as they grow older. Jolobe portrays this space as one where boys learn about genealogy, traditions, bravery, and resilience (Madolo & Nhongo, 2024). The cover has two colours with the title and author's name is clearly written in bold on the front cover and there is no blurb. This is an indication that the book was meant for school market where promotion was not necessary. Another title that addresses identity and self-discovery *is Ubheka: Indaba kaBhekithemba noNomusa [*1961], this is a story of a boy and a girl who grow up believing they were brother and sister by DBZ Ntuli. In this story, two young people grow up believing they are siblings, only to later discover that they are not. The journey of self-discovery is fundamental to every individual's experience.

However, the process of finding oneself under colonization and apartheid presents distinct challenges. The apartheid regime sought to disrupt Black families and fuel divisions among clans and tribes (Moodley & Adam, 2000). The front cover has a picture of the young man and young woman standing looking at the green trees and mountains. This reflect deep thinking and exploring. The back has the blurb that talks about the story and the cover of the previous edition of the book. There is also the photo of the author but there is no mention of him on the blurb. This not aligned with the objective of the project to celebrate the authors and their writings.

4.5 Writers contributed to the reprinted classics

Ezell (1994) argues that the canonization of classic literature in the past placed greater emphasis on the author rather than the work itself, highlighting the significance of the writer. This section delves into the contributions of key classic authors. Despite their remarkable achievements, it is important to acknowledge that during the 1930s and 1940s, educational attainment among Africans was generally low, with very few individuals holding postgraduate degrees (Sibiya, 2023). Additionally, Sibiya (2023) notes that during this period, the focus of formal education was primarily on grammar rather than literature.

More significantly, the success of these authors was achieved despite considerable obstacles, including the missionaries' emphasis on promoting Christianity, political resistance to African education, and the lack of financial resources for publishing (Peires, 1980). To illustrate this, Peires (1980) cites Thomas Mofolo's brother, who explained that two chapters were removed from the original manuscript of *Chaka* because Mofolo could not afford the full cost of publication.

Many of these authors later published multiple works and contributed to society through academic institutions, teaching, and language boards. For example, Dr. T.N. Maumela's *Mafangambiti* prominently features his name above the title, suggesting that his recognition as an author may have been a stronger draw for readers than the title itself. Maumela has two works on this list, including *Elelwani*, which was recently adapted into an award-winning

drama film. Interestingly, while the back cover of *Elelwani* includes a photograph of the author, it does not provide any biographical information.

By contrast, Thomas Mofolo's name does not appear on the front cover of *Chaka*. Given the novel's significance and enduring influence, one could argue that his name deserves a more prominent placement. Similarly, Professor RC Bodibe's name appears above the title of *Bofelekwane, Botho kapa Bofokodi?*, potentially reflecting his broader contributions to academia, including his role in university teaching. LL Mokwena's name also appears at the top of *Motsuane*, indicating a similar level of recognition.

Dr OK Matsepe, one of the most prolific authors in Sepedi literature, has written numerous works, including three titles featured on this list. In recognition of his literary contributions, the University of South Africa awarded him a posthumous Honorary Doctorate on April 19, 2024. However, despite his significant literary output, his name has not been given prominence on the covers of any of his three listed works. Similarly, DPS Monyaise is one of the leading writers in Setswana literature, with four titles featured on this list of classics. However, out of the four, his name is given prominence on only one *Ngaka, Mosadi Mooka*. There is therefore a clear inconsistent practice of author honorariums and placements. Only 33% of the book covers make reference to the authors in the blurbs either through direct mention or by including a photograph without accompanying textual attribution. This practice runs counter to the stated objective of the Reprint of Classics Project, which aims to reaffirm and celebrate the contributions of indigenous writers. Recognizing authorship is central to restoring the literary and cultural visibility of these figures within the canon of African literature.

The table below presents the contributions made by authors across various South African languages, serving as evidence of their creative talent and enduring commitment to literary expression in their respective linguistic and cultural contexts.

Authors with more than one title on the list

No.	Authors	Languages	Number of Titles
1	BD Masango	IsiNdebele	2
2	CLS Nyembezi	IsiZulu	2
3	DP Moloto	Setswana	2
4	DPS Monyaise	Setswana	4
5	OK Matsepe	Sepedi	3
6	TN Maumela	Tshivenda	2
7	TH Khosa	Xitsonga	2
	Total		**17**

Table 4.2 showcasing contributions of some of the leading authors

4.6 Spines of a book

For a classic book, which is a cultural product intended to last for generations, perfect binding is essential. This not only aids in preservation but also enhances discoverability when books are placed on library shelves. The spine serves as an additional branding space, allowing for the inclusion of the title, author's name, and publisher's information. However, 14% of the books on this list are stapled, indicating that the publisher may not have expected them to endure over time. This could be due to their primary target being schools, where books are used for a year, or two before new copies are purchased by the government. Titles such as *Mafangambiti* by TN Maumela and *Megokgo ya Bjoko* by OK Matsepe are examples of stapled books. An improved text design that enhances legibility and readability will naturally support the production of extended formats, making the titles more suitable for perfect binding.

4.7 Review of the blurbs of the classic books

A blurb is a short description of a printed book's content, design, origin, and purpose, intended to inform potential readers about the book (Cherkunova & Ponomarenko, 2022). In

a competitive book market, the blurb is a key paratextual element used by publishers to promote books (Gea-Valor & Ros, 2009). It is almost instinctive for an intrigued reader, after viewing the front cover, to turn the book over to read the blurb. The blurb positions the book among others, providing potential readers with insights into its content and quality (Cacchiani, 2007). The functions of blurbs are to be informative and to pursued potential readers of the book (Demir, 2022).

To achieve these goals, a blurb typically consists of a catchy phrase, a brief description, endorsements or appraisals, the author's credentials, and technical details (Gea-Valor & Ros, 2009). However, 25 of the 58 recorded classic novels on this list lack a proper blurb, aside from a sticker provided by the National Library of South Africa. The following is a loose translation of the standard text found on the back covers of all titles reprinted under the *Reprint of South African Classics Project*:

"This book has been reproduced as part of the *Reprint of South African Classics Project*, with the assistance of the Department of Arts and Culture and the National Library of South Africa."

This statement does not explicitly inform the reader that the book is considered a classic in its respective language or why it was necessary to reprint these books. The blurb serves as a critical space to persuade potential readers to purchase a book; therefore, a well-crafted and informative promotional message is essential to connect potential; readers to book by informing the reader about and why they should invest money and time to read the book. Below is an image of the back covers of *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* by AC Jordan and *Mafangambiti* by TN Maumela, illustrating this issue.

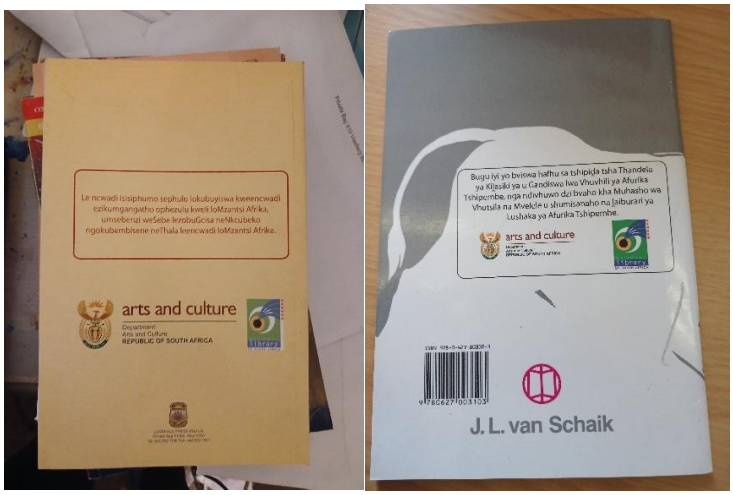


Figure 4.8. Back covers of Inqumbo Yemnyanya and Mafangambiti displaying SA Reprint of Classics Project branding

The image below features the back cover of the Xitsonga novel *Mulunguntima* by TH Khosa. The back cover includes several key elements: a blurb, a photograph of the author, a paragraph about the Reprint of South African Classics Project, the publisher's logo, and a barcode. For the purposes of this discussion, the focus will be on the blurb. The blurb accompanying the reprint of Thomas Howard Khosa's work offers a compelling entry point into the author's thematic and literary preoccupations. Opening with the English proverb, *"Give a man enough rope and he will hang himself,"* the blurb immediately signals a cautionary tone regarding moral choices and personal responsibility. This proverb, as a figure of speech, functions both as a metaphor and proverb that encapsulates the central idea of self-sabotage a theme frequently explored in African literature that deals with corruption, leadership, and the tension between tradition and modernity (Kunene, 1979).

The author transitions from this universal idiom into a culturally specific interpretation, referencing the Tsonga proverb, *"Nyoka yo yi vona a yi lumi"* ("A snake you can see does not bite"). This shift demonstrates Khosa's grounding in indigenous knowledge systems and orality, reinforcing the importance of African proverbs as epistemological tools (Finnegan, 2012). The metaphor of the snake becomes a recurring motif in the blurb, used to describe deceptive relationship a common narrative device in postcolonial African literature to critique those in power (Ngugi, 1986). Although this story is not about politics but the leadership in corporate environment follows similar narrative.

Khosa's prose in the blurb mixes metaphor, cultural idioms, and allegorical imagery. He likens evil or deceptive figures to a snake that is not in its natural habitat, thereby making its danger less obvious. The concluding lines reflect on the persistent challenges posed by fact two characters, Chabalala and Hlungwane fight over leadership whereas the real power sits with their white bosses.

Thomas Howard Khosa's blurb is rich in metaphor, cultural references, and political subtext. It functions not only as a promotional device but also as a microcosm of the themes that likely dominate his novel. By invoking proverbs, allegories, and symbolic figures, the blurb prepares the reader for a text that engages deeply with the moral and political challenges of contemporary African life. This approach or stance appears incidental to the title in question, as it does not reflect an intentional decision by either the publisher or the author. Similar to many instances where a book may feature an aesthetically refined cover design, proper spine alignment, or an effectively composed blurb, the observed outcome does not seem to stem from a deliberate business, political, or literary strategy. Rather, it suggests an organic or circumstantial occurrence rather than a calculated choice.



Figure 4.9. Blurb of Mulunguntima showing well written blurb with the photo of the author

The image in Figure 4.10 below is the back cover of the novel *Kungavuka AbaNgoni* (*Over My Dead Body*) by IS Kubeka. A significant portion of the blurb focuses on the author's biography, outlining details such as his place of birth, educational journey from primary school to university, and professional background. While informative, this section does not directly assist the reader in making a decision about purchasing the book. However, references to his university qualifications, professional experience, the number of books he has authored, and an honorary doctorate awarded for his contributions to education can serve as indirect indicators of his credibility and potential as a compelling storyteller. The final, shorter paragraph shifts focus to the novel's content, briefly outlining the plot and the transformative experiences of the main character. This narrative teaser is crucial for potential readers, as it builds anticipation and may influence their decision to purchase the book.



Figure 4.10. Blurb of Kungavuka AbaNgoni showing the author bio and photo as well as author's bio

The below blurb on the back cover of OK Matsepe's *Kgorong ya Mosate* (*The Kraal of the King*) [1962] opens with a brief biography of the author. The second paragraph highlights his

literary debut, noting that he went on to publish seven additional works, including six volumes of poetry. It also documents the literary awards he received and notes that he passed away in 1974. This information offers potential readers useful context for assessing Matsepe's stature as an author and may influence their decision to purchase or read the book. Notably, the blurb is written in English, which suggests that its primary intended audience may have been institutional gatekeepers such as the Department of Education and Training Prescription Committee as discussed in chapter 2.9 rather than the general reading public.

The books were published and prescribed specifically for use under the Bantu Education system, as mandated by the Bantu Education Act of 1953. Publishers produced African language books primarily on the basis that they would be prescribed by the state (Dlamini, 1990). The selection of books was controlled by government officials, with learners having no role in the decision-making process (Dlamini, 1990). As a result, publishers focused on persuading Bantu Education authorities to approve their books, rather than prioritising educational quality or relevance to learners' interests. The process of selecting the classics was led by the National Library and was conducted transparently, involving readers to create a long list and a panel of experts to shortlist it (Tsebe, 2010). The objective of the reprint was to celebrate both the works and their authors, while also promoting the reading of these books (Tsebe, 2010). The initial selection criteria were based on different reasons. For example, *Ngorong ya Moshate* by O.K. Matsepe, the novel is written in Sepedi, the actual reader must be proficient in the language, while the blurb's language choice appears geared toward administrative or prescriptive functions. Importantly, the blurb contains no reference to the novel's content, themes, or plot, which limits its effectiveness in engaging prospective readers. Furthermore, the blurb has not been updated for the classic edition, as it omits mention of the honorary doctorate O.K. Matsepe received from the University of South Africa (UNISA), a significant recognition of his literary and cultural contributions.

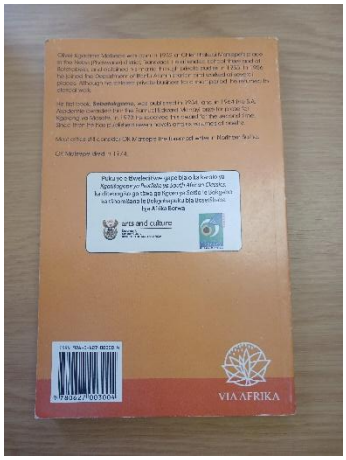


Figure 4.11. Back covers of Gorong ya Moshate - blurb written in English instead of Sepedi, the language of the book

The blurb featured on the reprinted edition of *Bangani* (*Friends*) offers a straightforward summary of the novel's plot. As a form of paratext, the blurb plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between the text and its potential readers by providing cues about the narrative and persuading readers to engage with the book (Genette, 1997). In this instance, however, the blurb falls short in several respects. It omits information about the author's credentials, literary background, or other notable achievements elements that could lend credibility and increase a reader's interest in the work. Nonetheless, the blurb does specify that *Bangani* is a

Siswati-language novel and proceeds to provide a brief outline of its content in the same language.



Figure 4.12. Back covers of Abangani - blurb narrates about the story but does not promote the author

The blurb for *Imiyalezo*, shown below, highlights various societal issues, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by parents raising children in contemporary society. The second part of the blurb positions the book as a practical resource that can assist both parents and children in navigating these difficulties. It functions as a persuasive tool, encouraging the reader to engage with the text. While learners appear to be the primary audience, the blurb also implicitly addresses decision-makers such as parents and the Department of Education and Training Prescription Committee, who are more likely to influence the purchase and circulation of the book. The assertion that the book will help produce good citizens aligns with the moral and ideological expectations of the apartheid-era education system. Moreover, the emphasis on the ability to "survive under difficult circumstances" seems directed at parents, speaking to their concerns about resilience and moral upbringing in a challenging socio-political environment.

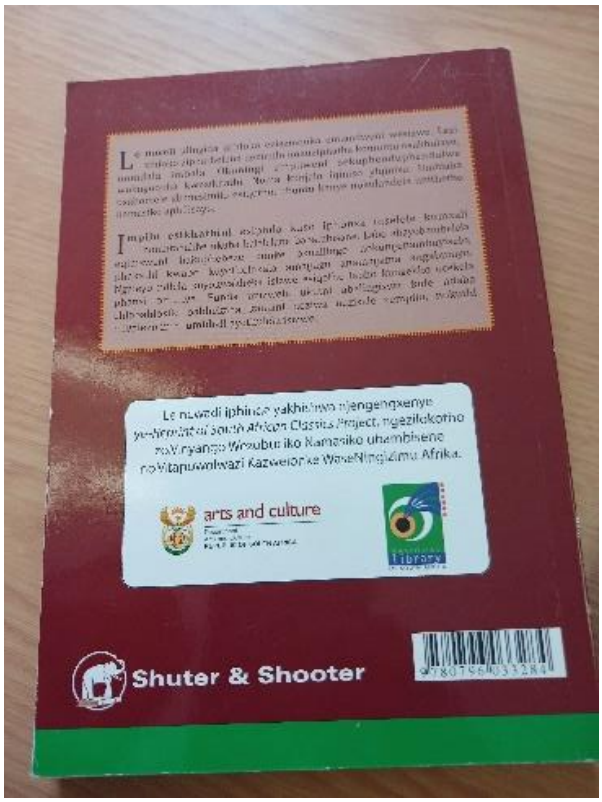


Figure 4.13. Back covers of Imiyalezo - blurb focuses on parents and educators who would like the children to read the book to get life guidance

The blurb of the novel *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli* (*The Civil Strife of Dzimauli*) [1970] presents the text as a historical narrative centred on the internal conflicts surrounding the Venda Kingdom. It positions the novel as a culturally and historically significant work in the Tshivenda literary canon, suggesting that it is essential reading for anyone interested in the history and heritage of the Venda people.

While the blurb does not provide any biographical information about the author or reference their academic or literary credentials elements that could further enhance the book's authority and appeal it nonetheless makes a compelling case for the book's relevance. By emphasizing its historical value and cultural insight, the blurb effectively appeals to readers with an interest in African history, indigenous governance, and Tshivenda literature.



Figure 4.14. Back covers of Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli – blurb inviting readers learnt about his of Vhavenda people

The blurb for *Amabatha* (*Unfaithful*) [1995], presented in *Figure 4.15* below, adopts a distinctive approach by presenting the author's direct appeal to potential readers. This personalized narrative voice is relatively uncommon in blurbs, and it seeks to emphasize the moral and educational value of the text. Though concise, the blurb highlights how reading the novel can benefit the reader, particularly in terms of character development and ethical reflection. This focus on didactic content aligns with broader trends observed in many indigenous language literary works prescribed during the apartheid era, where themes of morality, discipline, and education were prioritized. Notably absent are references to adventure, imagination, or entertainment, suggesting a narrow conceptualization of literature's role that adheres to the apartheid perception of the purpose of indigenous education in line with the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953 discussed above. The blurb offers no information about the author's background or literary credentials, focusing solely on the storyline and its instructive intent.



Figure 4.15. Back covers of Amabatha a Ndebele Novel

4.8 Power and oppressive relations

Since these books were written by the oppressed and published by the ruling class, directly addressing power and oppression was nearly impossible. As discussed, in Mafangambiti (One who Dies of Anger), TN Maumela used the bull as a symbol of resistance, encouraging continued struggle. Ityala Lamawele (The Lawsuit of the Twins) fictionalized the story of the twins to secure publishing approval while still providing an anecdote of how Xhosa royal councils resolved disputes and provided justice. The paratext of the reprinted classics do not enforce themes of these classics. Nyamende (2010) highlights that although the author, SEK Mqhayi converted to Christianity, he disagreed with the undermining of Xhosa legal systems and felt compelled to defend them through his storytelling. AC Jordan had to fight to keep the original ending of Ingqumbo Yeminyanya (Wrath of the Ancestors) because it did not meet the approval of the Lovedale Press editors as it promoted African believe of ancestors' spirits intervening in people's lives (Opland, 1990). There is no blurb on these books to comment on the contributions made by text, or the authors and the cover designs do not address the themes of these books.

4.9 Emphasis on Morality

Titles such as Madyisa Mbitsi (One who brings sorrow) [1978], Bofelekwane, Botho Kapa Bofokodi (Is it Deceit, Human Nature or Weakness) [1985], Mokomaditlhare (The Mischievous One) [1972], Vutomi i Vilwa (Life is a Wheel) [1995], and Ukuba Ndandazile (If I had known) [1967] primarily focus on morally correct behaviour, reinforcing societal values and expectations. The titles portray life as binary setup with good or bad, wrong or right, white or black and no negotiated understand amongst people.

Morality is one of the fundamental aspects of life that societies across generations and nations have had to contend with. One of the defining features of classic literature is its ability to capture these universal aspects of humanity (Luzzi, 2014). Missionaries ensure that most indigenous language books emphasize colonial morality, as they should, but there must be a balance with other themes such as adventure, travel, and exploration to provide a more holistic literary experience.

Reflecting on the first 50 years of Xhosa literature, Zotwana (1993) critically observed that early Xhosa publications could be described as "literature against its people." This was due to the expectation that writers denounce all aspects of traditional Xhosa life, including culture, religion, language, history, and aspirations except for the role of being obedient Christian British servants (Zotwana, 1993). This phenomenon was not unique to Xhosa literature but was widespread across all indigenous languages.

4.10 The role of paratextual elements in influencing readership

Only 28% of the covers reviewed in this study exhibited any form of redesign from their original editions. These changes primarily involved visual appearance rather than modifications to the size or format of the books. Figure 4.16 below illustrates this through a comparison of the original and classic edition covers of *Kufundwa Ngamava* (*Learning Through Experience*) [1951] by M. Dana. The original cover features a simple black-and-white illustration of two female figures engaged in what appears to be a heated discussion. In contrast, the classic edition presents a colourful depiction of two young male figures, seemingly situated in a prison setting.

These contrasting visual elements resonate with broader themes prevalent in both missionary and apartheid-era literature, particularly those that aimed to reinforce Christian morality and compliance with colonial authority. The updated cover is aesthetically more appealing and likely to attract contemporary readers due to its use of colour and emotive imagery. However, the shift from female to male figures in the visual narrative is not explained and raises questions about the intentions behind this change, particularly in relation to gender representation in the visual framing of indigenous classics.

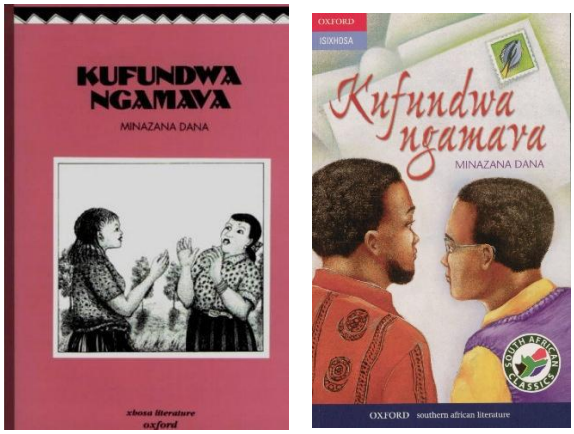


Figure 4.16 comparing covers of Kufundwa Ngamava Novel

Figure 4.17 below displays the original and updated covers of *Ukuba Ndandazile* (*Only If I Had Known*) [1967] by WK Tamsanqa. The redesign reflects a shift from a black-and-white illustrated cover to a full-colour version, intended to be more visually appealing and engaging for contemporary readers. The updated imagery reinforces the thematic concerns of the novel, which centres on moral reflection, regret, and the consequences of one's actions. As suggested by the title, the narrative encourages behavioural change through cautionary storytelling that advocates for socially responsible ways of living.



Figure 4.17 Comparing original edition to classic edition covers of Ukuba Ndandazile

Figure 4.18 presents the updated cover design of *Ubulumko Bezinja* (*The Wisdom of the Dogs*) [1962] by Rustum Siyongwana. The reprint features a vibrant and visually appealing

aesthetic, making it more likely to attract the attention of contemporary readers browsing bookshelves. In contrast, the original cover, shown on the left, is structured with distinct visual demarcations: the top half depicts residential dwellings, while the title is centrally positioned between two solid lines. The bottom half features illustrations of dogs, reflecting the book's central allegory.

Notably, *Ubulumko Bezinja* shares thematic and narrative similarities with George Orwell's *Animal Farm* [1945], as both texts use anthropomorphised animals to critique systems of oppression and explore themes of resistance and power. Given the allegorical nature of Siyongwana's novel and its subversive undertones, it is striking that the apartheid censorship regime did not prohibit its circulation. This raises important questions about the mechanisms and inconsistencies of literary censorship during that period.



Figure 4.18 Comparing original edition to classic edition covers of Ubulumko Bezinja

A visual comparison in Figure 4.19 reveals that the cover of the classic edition, shown on the right-hand side, is notably more appealing. Its vibrant design and modern aesthetic are likely to attract contemporary readers. When produced in a standard book size with quality finishing, such a cover enhances the book's value not only as a literary work but also as a cultural artefact something that readers may choose to display in their personal spaces after reading, reflecting both pride in language and cultural identity. As Tsebe (2010) stated the on the catalogue of classics, the aim of project was to highlight the importance of books and

promote for use in libraries. The Department of Bantu Education wanted to discourage academic aspiration Bantu people.

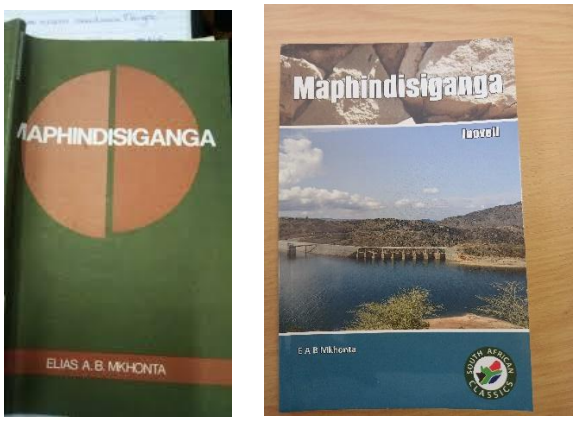


Figure 4.19 Cover of Maphindisiganga by Elias AB Mkhonta

4.11 How the paratextual elements represent cultures and traditions

The use of symbolic imagery in cover designs serves as a powerful visual tool to evoke the cultural heritage and traditions of African communities. In *Bogosi Kupe* (*Kingship is Sacred*) [1967], for example, the use of leopard prints is emblematic of chieftaincy and royal authority. Similarly, the depiction of raging bulls in Mafangambiti signifies ancestral strength and the spirit of resistance, while the elephant motif in *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli* (*The Civil Strife of Dzimauli*) [1970], evokes themes of wisdom, memory, and communal leadership.

Additionally, the use of vibrant Ndebele colours and traditional patterns is prominent in the cover designs of *Mbala Ngubaba* (*It is Really my Father*) [1994], and *Ngifanele Ukuzenzela* (*I am supposed to do things for myself*) [1992], as illustrated in Figure 4.20 below. These aesthetic choices are not merely decorative; they function as visual affirmations of African identity and cultural continuity, reinforcing the significance of indigenous literature as a repository of collective memory and symbolic expression.

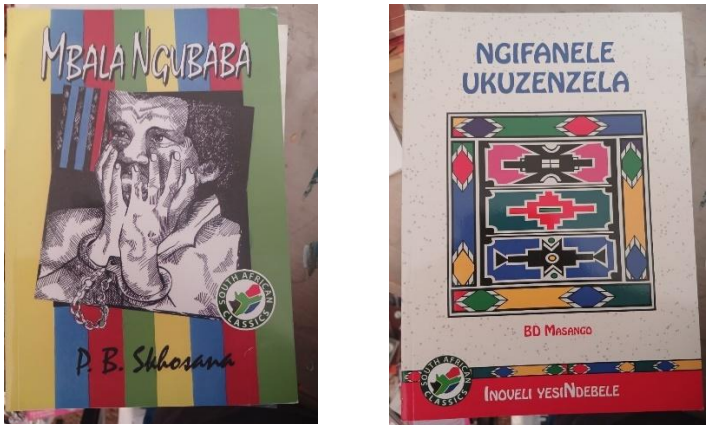


Figure 4.20 Covers of the Ndebele novels, Mbala Ngubaba and Ngifanele Ukuzenzela

Drawing on the discussion above, the analysis above demonstrates that the 28% of reprinted titles with updated cover designs contribute positively to the overall perception of the books. These refreshed visuals enhance reader appeal and may influence purchasing or reading decisions.

A more deliberate and unified approach to modernising all cover designs would have strengthened the project's impact. Such a strategy should aim to transition these texts away from the aesthetic conventions of missionary and apartheid-era schoolbook designs toward a distinctly decolonised, post-apartheid visual identity one that celebrates and affirms both authors and readers of indigenous literature.

African cultures have long embraced visual artistry and vibrant colour symbolism, as seen in the Ndebele-inspired designs featured in novels such as *Mbala Ngubaba* and *Ngifanele Ukuzenzela*. Similarly, the symbolic use of animals such as bulls, elephants, and leopard prints in titles like *Mafangambiti*, *Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli*, and *Bogosi Kupe* reflects deep cultural narratives. These elements illustrate the potential of cover design to serve not only as a marketing tool but also as a visual affirmation of African traditions, heritage, and storytelling.

4.12 Conclusion

According to Nielsen (2016), titles with complete and visually compelling cover images experience a 71% increase in sales, highlighting the significant role that cover design plays in attracting and persuading potential readers. This finding underscores the importance of visual representation in the published products and aligns with the objectives of the South African Reprint of Classics Project, which aims to revitalize interest in previously marginalized literary works.

However, without carefully designed covers including relevant imagery and well-crafted blurbs the reprinted classics are unlikely to resonate with contemporary readers. Cross and Latham (2017) emphasise that paratextual elements are critical in assisting readers to assess, navigate, and understand the content of the media that frames it. Paratexts are also powerful in directing and shaping readers' engagement with stories (Zadeh & Esfahani, 2024). The decolonisation agenda, central to the project, requires intentional visual communication that reflects and affirms the cultural heritage and lived experiences of its target audience. Mamdani (2019) concludes that for South Africa to move away from apartheid and achieve decolonisation, its leaders must prioritise the production of knowledge in indigenous languages as a foundation for sustainable development. Book covers must not only represent the content of the text but also draw inspiration from the traditions, aesthetics, and identity of the communities they aim to engage.

Chapter 5: Discussion of results

5.1 Introduction

To examine the strategic deployment of paratextual elements, this study addresses three key questions: How have shifts in audience and readership influenced the use and design of paratextual elements in the South African Classics Project? What insights can be drawn from comparing international and local novels regarding potential modifications to the covers of literary classics' editions? How do the paratextual elements of the indigenous literary classics influence their appeal and relevance to their intended target audience? This chapter addresses these research questions and presents the recommendations and conclusion.

5.2 Change in audience and readership in reprint of classics project

African-language literature published under apartheid (1948–1994) was primarily targeted at the school market (Möller, 2013). Leisure reading in indigenous languages was not a viable option, as publishers were incentivized to produce texts aligned with the educational objectives of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Chisholm, 2012). Consequently, many of the literary works now being reprinted were originally developed under these constraints, specifically for school use. It is important to note that African schools during this period were systematically under-resourced, further limiting the accessibility and appeal of reading materials (Chisholm, 2012).

The original audience for these books consisted mainly of schoolchildren who had no agency in their reading choices, as texts were prescribed by the apartheid-era government. In contrast, the objective of the National Library's reprint project was to reposition these works for a broader audience, including adult readers in a post-apartheid context (Tsebe, 2010). This new audience operates within a democratic and media-saturated environment, where individuals have far greater freedom in choosing what and how they read.

According to the *National Reading Barometer* (2023), 55% of South Africans engage with reading materials online, including news articles, blogs, magazines, and religious content. Moreover, there is a growing public investment in heritage and cultural expression through music, dance, and traditional attire manifestations of a decolonial consciousness that reflects pride in African identity (Rassool, 2000). This contemporary readership is therefore unlikely

to embrace cultural products that fail to align with their values or meet their aesthetic and cultural expectations. Out of the 58 titles only 28% have modernised covers, more work needs to be done to ensure that the covers address the new target market of post-apartheid South Africa.

Borrowing with from Gérard Genette's theory, the paratextual elements of the reprinted classics must serve as meaningful thresholds that reflect a shift from apartheid-era literary production to literature that resonates with post-apartheid sensibilities (Genette, & Maclean, 1991). These elements should signal the repositioning of the texts not only in terms of audience but also in cultural relevance and identity affirmation.

5.3 International comparison

Ezell (1994), Takkebos (2020) and Altick (1958) reviewed commentary by various scholars on other classic series worldwide, including Penguin Classics, Virago Classics, Oxford World's Classics, Signet Classics, and Everyman's Library. These collections maintain a consistent design approach, ensuring uniformity in cover design and paratextual elements. For instance, Penguin Clothbound Classics have repeated pattern with linen like cloth cover (Beautifull Books, 2020), Virago series are known by their green spine (Whithers, 2021) and Penguin Classics have bright colours. In contrast, as discussed in Chapter 2, the Reprint of South African Classics Project was conceptualized differently. While its primary aim was not commercial profit, it recognized the importance of making classic books accessible and widely read.

The study finds that while 28% of the covers were redesigned by National Library, 14% are stapled. The stapled books resembled simple booklets rather than publications that honour the significance of literary icons in their respective languages, books that are bound show heritage, prestige, and robustness (Vanderschantz, & Timpany, 2013). stapled books are difficult to put on shelves at the libraries and at the bookstores. Department of Education also discourages use of staple binding methods on books. The stapling methods reduce books to just a pamphlet. This severely limits their circulation stapled books. Instead, a 'South African Classics' emblem was placed arbitrarily on the front of the original covers. Additionally, a

message indicating that the book was reprinted appears on the back cover, accompanied by the logos of the National Library and the Department of Arts and Culture.

International classics feature well-designed covers with blurbs that establish the author's credentials, describe the text, and invite readers to engage with the book. In contrast, some books in the South African Classics Project lack blurbs entirely, while others include information about the author but say little to nothing about the story itself offering no direct invitation to open the book. It is understandable that books published for the school market during apartheid, particularly those intended for Black children, often lacked proper covers, blurbs, or even standard binding, relying instead on simple stapling. However, reprints intended to promote reading and enhance the discoverability of South African classics should be aesthetically designed and inviting to a new audience reader. As discussed above in 2.9, it important that the maturity level of paratext of the author should match that of intended readers (Altmann, Bohrn, Lubrich, Menninghaus, & Jacobs, 2014).

5.4 Trends in paratextual elements used in South African Classics Project

Genette, 1997 argues that titles, covers, prefaces, and blurbs are not secondary but integral to a work's interpretation. The cover design reflects the time and culture in which the book was published (Drew & Sternberge, 2005). Just as the content conveys historical and cultural significance, the cover also captures aspects of the author's and readers' cultural contexts. The interpretation of a book cover serves as a point of communication between publishers and readers. This interaction can be negotiated, guided by publishers, or left open to the reader's interpretation. Eliot (1994) emphasizes that the maturity of the author must align with that of the readers to facilitate effective communication.

No consistent trends have emerged from the paratextual elements analysed across the novels selected in the South African Reprint Classics Project. The study observed that a *South African Classics* logo appears on the front cover of all reprinted books. The logo consists of three concentric circles: the innermost circle is white, surrounded by a wider green ring bearing the words *South African Classics* in white lettering, and the outer layer features a white background with an outline of the South African map rendered in the colours of the

national flag. On the back covers of all the reprinted books, a standardised paragraph appears within a rectangular box, indicating that the book has been reissued as part of the South African Classics reprint project. While this paratextual addition serves to authenticate the edition and highlight its significance, its visual and communicative effectiveness could have been improved through more thoughtful integration into the overall cover design. Furthermore, the paragraph would have greater impact if it were tailored to each individual title acknowledging, for example, why a particular work is considered a classic in its specific language and literary tradition. Such an approach would not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also contribute to the cultural and historical framing of each text.

Decisions regarding the design and content of paratexts such as cover art and blurbs appear to have been left to the discretion of individual publishers or copyright holders. As a result, there is notable variation in the extent and nature of updates made to the classic editions. Of the 58 titles examined, only 16 featured titles updated front covers in their classic reprints. However, none of the titles revised their original blurbs, with the only addition being the *South African Classics* paragraph mandated by the reprint project. 53% of the 58 titles do not have blurbs except the National Library message at the back cover. This suggests a limited engagement with the promotional and interpretive functions of paratext, particularly in relation to the reader's evolving expectations and the contemporary literary market. A consistent branding strategy is needed to clearly identify the Reprint of Classics project as a cohesive series, using distinct visual and design elements beyond just logos and a descriptive paragraph. % of the classic came from Van Schaik, Educum and Shuter and Shooter these may represent the quantity that the three companies were producing for education markets because of their closeness to the Department of Education and Training Prescription Committee decision making of the time. This also meant that the publishers had to meet the requirements of the Bantu Education Act and morality adherence as per the Christianity and apartheid authority as discussed in section 2.3.2 and section 4.6.

5.5 Recommendation for future research

These recommendations address project leaders, publishers in general and future researchers. Paratextual elements are critical for any book, especially for African language literature, which does not receive the same readership as English and Afrikaans in South Africa.

Additionally, reading competes with other forms of entertainment, such as television and social media globally (Romer, Bagdasarov and More, 2013). Proper use of paratextual elements can make books more attractive, encouraging readers to take pride in owning and engaging with them as well widening the market for classics books. The project could consider publishing one title per year while investing more resources into updating typography and cover designs to align with 21st-century aesthetics, making the books more appealing to new readers. Currently, the project primarily serves readers who feel nostalgic about the covers they encountered many years ago in educational system. Although this approach may encourage original readers to revisit or repurchase the books, it does little to attract new audiences.

Blurbs play a crucial role in marketing books and honouring authors whose influential works remain overlooked. Writers such as Dr. OK Matsepe and DPS Monyaise deserve to be celebrated for their artistic contributions, yet their books do not adequately convey their significance in their respective languages. To effectively promote a classic, publishers must rely on paratextual elements such as reviews of the book and commentary on the author more especially on the era of internet where discoverability has become significate. The biographies of classic authors provide valuable content that publishers can utilise in the marketing and promotion of these works. Although the National Library made these works available through public libraries, certain publishers capitalized on their status as literary classics by distributing them for commercial sale, including through online retail platforms such as Loot.co.za and Exclusive Books Online.

The packaging of African language literature requires greater aesthetic consideration to appeal to contemporary readers, particularly in moving away from the utilitarian and prescriptive designs of the apartheid era, where such books were primarily intended for school use and faced limited competition. In the current context, these works should be treated as cultural artefacts that reflect and celebrate the rich, vibrant, and diverse traditions of the languages they represent which is the main objective of the project. Future research should explore strategies for enhancing the visual and material quality of reprinted classics, with the aim of attracting a broader readership and affirming their cultural and literary significance within South Africa’s multilingual heritage.

This study focused on the reprinted classics' paratextual elements, a further paratextual analysis is needed to explore how these elements can enhance the visibility of new African language books. Future research should explore how culturally resonant and aesthetically appropriate book design can enhance the appeal of indigenous literature, thereby encouraging greater readership not only of classic works but of indigenous literature more broadly. Finally, in an era where English dominates the spheres of commerce and academia, further research is needed to investigate the motivations behind readers' engagement with classic indigenous-language fiction. Readers' views on paratexts are an important part of assessing the effectiveness of paratextual elements. A survey focusing on the readers of classics would provide additional layers of understanding for both scholars and practitioners.

5.6 Conclusion

Historically, the literary production in indigenous languages has been shaped and often controlled by external forces: initially by missionaries, followed by colonial administrations, and later by apartheid-era institutions. These systems undermined the agency and creative authority of African authors, positioning indigenous literature within frameworks that often distorted or marginalised its cultural value. Publishers, authors, and all spheres of government need strategies to support writing and publishing in indigenous languages (Ngulube, 2012). In this context, the National Library of South Africa South Africa's Classics Project could assume full custodianship of literary classics previously controlled by commercial publishers. This would allow for the development of distinct and purposefully repurposed editions that not only honour the literary significance of these works but also ensure that they are positioned as culturally rich and historically vital texts. Such stewardship would contribute meaningfully to the broader goals of literary decolonisation and cultural reclamation in post-apartheid South Africa. The paratextual elements of the classics reviewed in this study need to be strategically aligned with the imperative strategic objectives of the South African Literary Classics Project to attract a contemporary readership and revitalising engagement with these classic works.

This study contributes meaningfully to both publishing studies and decolonial scholarship by foregrounding the often-overlooked role of paratextual elements in shaping the cultural and literary value of indigenous-language classics. It highlights how publishers, through design and editorial framing, function not merely as producers but as cultural mediators whose choices influence canon formation, reader reception, and the broader visibility of marginalized literatures. By critically examining the visual and material dimensions of reprinted paratexts, the study challenges dominant, often colonial cover designs of titles published under missionary and apartheid eras and advocates for more culturally responsive and inclusive decolonised design practices. The study also builds on work such as *History by Paratext: Thomas Mofolo's Chaka* (Sandwith, 2018), which shows how colonial and missionary paratexts have historically imposed aesthetic norms, and *Literary Translation, Symbolic Development and Inclusion in South Africa* (Botha, 2021), which demonstrates how material and symbolic exclusions affect visibility of local literatures.

Looking ahead, the findings have significant implications for language policy, publishing regulation, and educational reform. The reprint of classic is a good initiative however it does not go far enough to address the old poor quality of paratext of classics, and it does not advocate for decolonised and attractive covers production for indigenous literary works. There is a pressing need for policies that support the aesthetic and material investment in indigenous-language literature, not only to elevate its perceived value but also to foster language preservation and intergenerational transmission of it. Such arguments are supported by *Indigenous Language Policy in Academic Writing…Setswana* (Theledi & Masote, 2024), which outlines gaps in policy vs. practice, and *Exploring Intellectualisation of South African Indigenous Languages* (Mabela & Ditsele, 2024), which highlights how language prestige and institutional support remain weak. In the education sector, rethinking how classics are presented both visually and contextually can help integrate them meaningfully into school curricula and leisure reading culture, ultimately contributing to a more decolonized literary ecosystem in South Africa and beyond.

Recognising and appreciating the contributions of African classic authors is an essential step in the broader project of decolonising literary content. Such appreciation not only affirms the intellectual and creative legacy of these authors but also re-establishes literary expression as a

key site for the preservation and celebration of cultural identity and tradition. Understanding how paratexts in indigenous languages creatively embody and transmit cultural values is therefore of profound importance for both scholarship and national identity formation.

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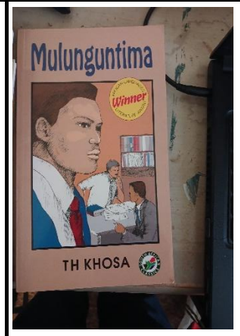
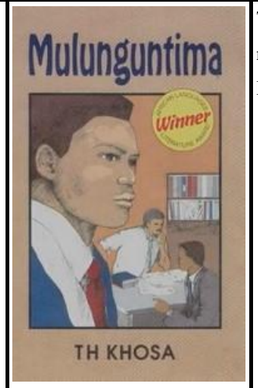
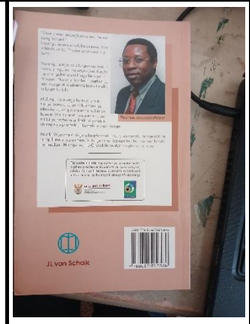
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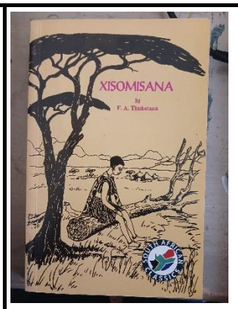
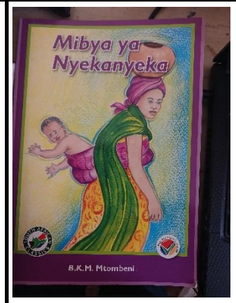
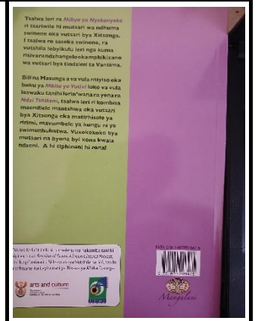
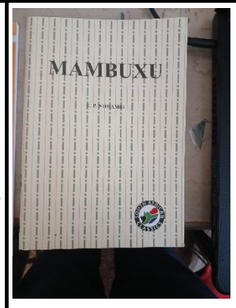
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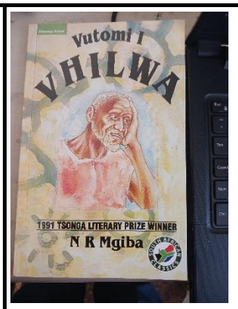
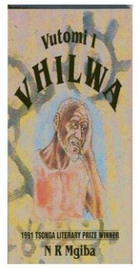
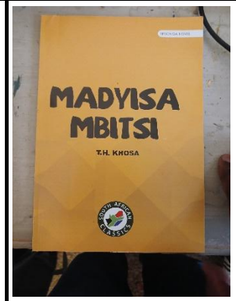
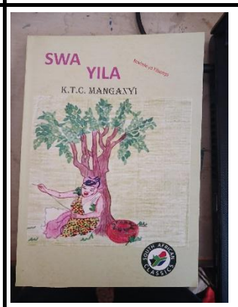
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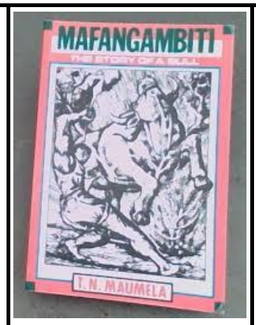
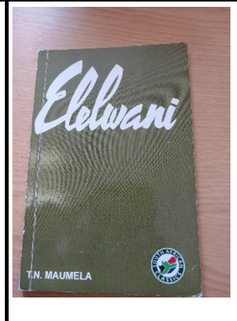
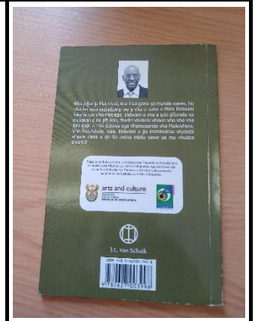
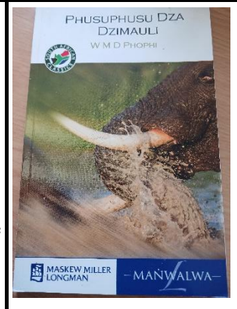
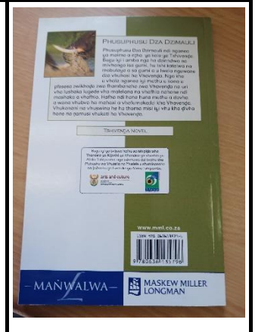
Appendix 1

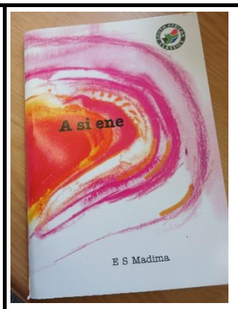
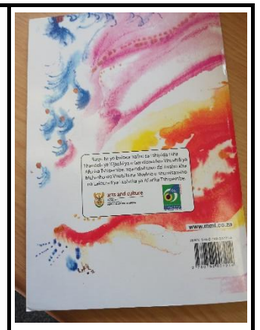
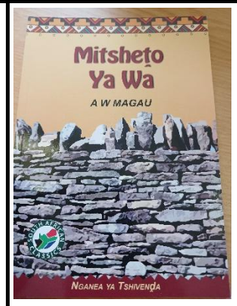
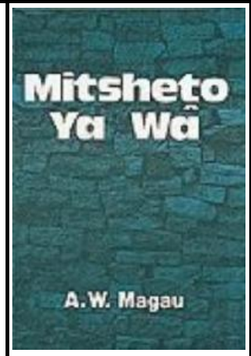
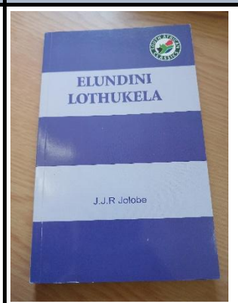
Appendix 1: List South African Literary Classics – Novels

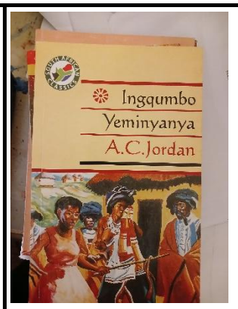
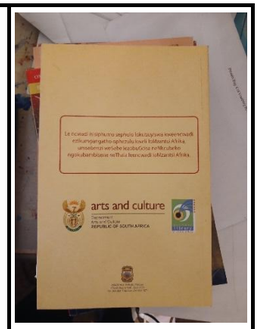
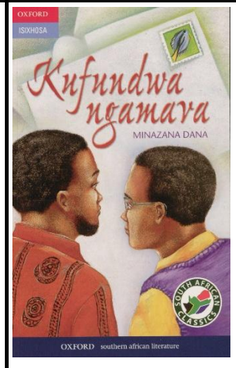
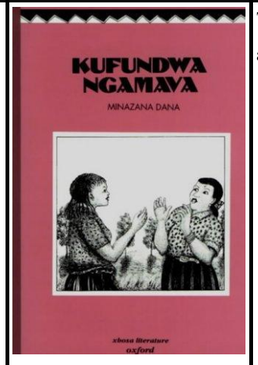
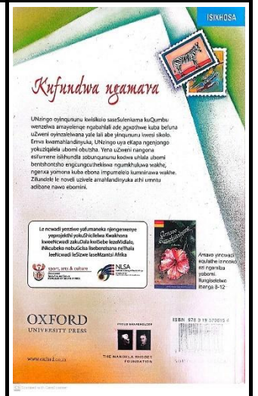
No:	Title / s	Author	Publisher	Year	Reprinted	Front cover	Classic cover	Original cover	Spine	Back cover	Back cover image
	XITSONGA										
1.	Mulunguntima (An African Boss)	TH Khosa	JL van Schaik	1994	2008	Pale pink background colour, title of the book is written bold black colour at the top. Drawing of 3 formal dress men in a office setting is centred on the front cover. Name of the author is set at below of the drawing. The front covers two awards stickers, The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			The spine has title, author name and a company logo. Perfect binding is used	The blurb is just quote from the book, head a shoulder photograph of the author with his beneath. A paragraph that explains the classic project with logos of Department of Arts and Culture and National Library accompany the message. Publisher logo and barcode are placed at the bottom of the page.	

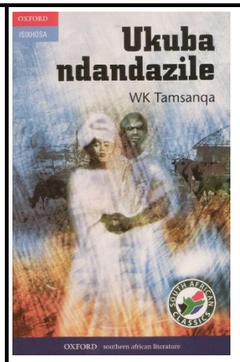
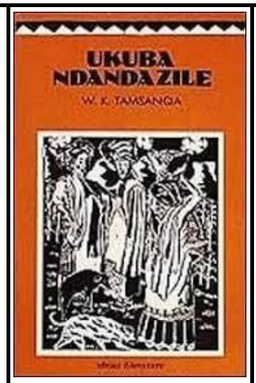
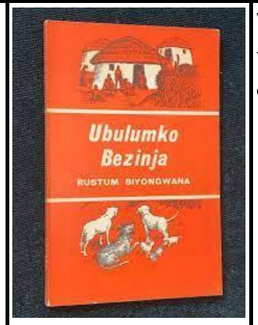
2.	Xisomisana (a name of main character)	FA Thuketana	Sasavona Books	1969	2008	Jonquil colour is the background colour of the cover with charcoal drawing of a tree and branch looks like it was cut. A person is setting on the branch. The title and the name of the authors written in red next to each other. The is bigger font size and bold. The classics logo is placed at bottom right corner.		The original cover was not accessed.	Perfect binding with name of the author and title written in red on the spine	A paragraph that explains the classic project with logos of Department of Arts and Culture and National Library accompany the message.	
3.	Mibya ya nyekanyeka (The apron strings are loose)	BKM Mtombeni	Mangalani Book Services	1966	2008	Title of book is written at top in large font and author is at bottom small font size. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			The book is perfect bind with the tittle written on it.	The blurb highlights work of the author, his immerse contribution in the Tsonga language and many other important books that he wrote. The blurb talks about his creative use of the language in his writings. It then invite the read t open and indicate that author's details are included inside the book	
4.	Mambuxu (name of the main character) It's a playful word referring to a child. People can grow with name if they are naughty or short. I implies that someone did not outgrow some of the things that they did while still a child	EP Ndhambi is regarded as one of leading writers and promoters of Xitsonga language	Sasavona Books	1953	2012	Light green with dark green doted vertical lines. The titles written in bold large font and the name of the author in smaller letters below the titles. The classics logo is placed at bottom right comer. The cover design could have meant something to the designer, the author or the publisher that is not universal.		The original cover was not accessed.	Saddle stitching method is used. No spine	A paragraph that explains the classic project with logos of Department of Arts and Culture and National Library accompany the message. Publisher logo and barcode are placed at the bottom of the page. Originally, the book was meant for school market.	

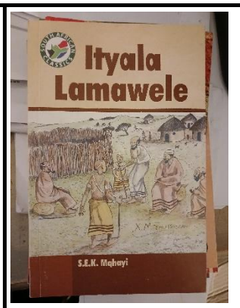
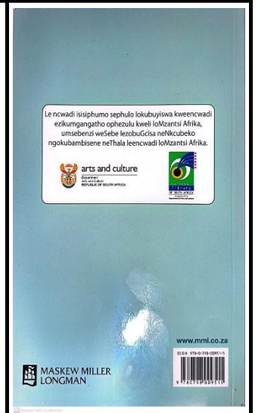
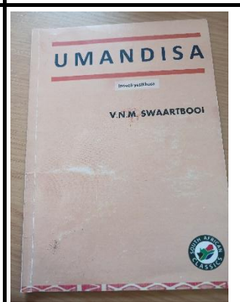
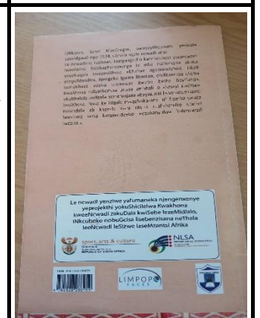
5.	Vutomi I vhilwa (Life is a Wheel of Fortune)	NR Mgiba	Heinemann	1995	2017	Tittle is written on large font followed by notice that book won awards in 1991. Then author are below in small bold font. A person came to realisation at senior years that you may have good life but you can have challenges later in life. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			Spine has the title and the name of the author	The originally the book was meant for school market hence no blurb	
6.	Madyisa Mbitsi (the one who causes the sorrow)	TH Khosa	Limpopo Faces and THK Publishers	1978	2021	The prominence is given to tittle with centred large bold font. Author's name is written in small letters		The original cover was not accessed.	Spine has the name of the author and the title of the book	Book meant for school market. No blurb	
7.	Swa Yila (It is a taboo)	KTC Manganyi	Educum in 1987, Limpopo faces in 2023	1987	2023	Tittle written in a bigger font size and author small. The person knitting under the tree may mean sone in deep in though and regretting things that she was told not to do		The original cover was not accessed.	Spine has the author name and the tittle.	No blurb	
	TSHIVENDA										

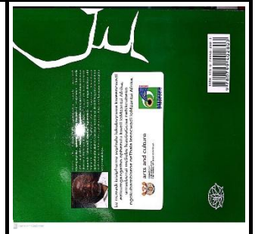
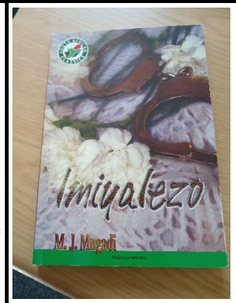
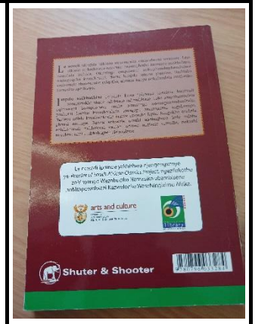
8.	Mafangambiti (One who dies of anger)	Dr TN Maumela	JL Van Schaik in 1956	1956	Reprinted by Via Afrika in 2008	The author's name is written first in white and tittle written in but with font size larger. The cover depicts two bulls fight. The old cover gave prominence to the title with the author at bottom of the cover. This could mean the author did more works and become household name over the years			Book is stitched with no spine.	No blurb indicating that the book was meant for school market	
9.	Elelwani (Name of the main character meaning to 'remember or recall')	Dr TN Maumela He was warded honorary doctorate by the University of Venda in 1998 for his contribution in promotion of the language. He wrote many books across genres. He has two books in this list,	Jl Van Schaik and reprinted by Via Afrika	1954	2011	Title is given prominence at the to with italic fond and the author's name at the bottom left in white as well with green full dark green background			Spine does not have text on it. it is narrow owing to the number of pages of the whole	The head photo of the author is at the top of the back cover with the blurb giving summary of the story	
10.	Phusuphusu dza Dzimauli (The "Civil Strife of Dzimauli)	WMD Phophi	Maskew Miller Longman	Educam in 1970	2011	The title is at the top on a larger font than the author name. the middle of the page has elephant that look like is fight with beautiful green background with water. Followed name of the publisher at the bottom. The book tells a story of the survival of one of the Venda tribe		The original cover was not accessed.	Spine has title, the author and logo of the publishers	The blurb gives the summary of the book and its importance. The elephant picture is inserted at the top left corner	

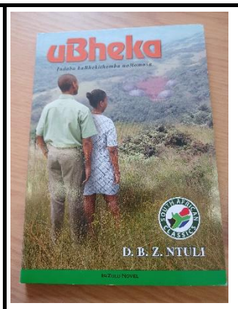
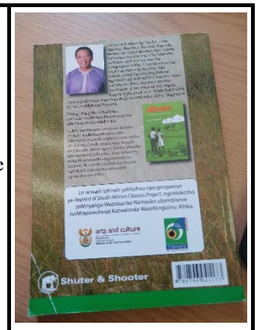
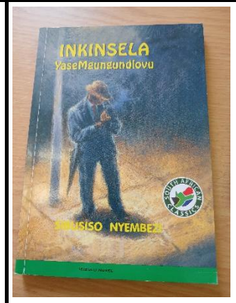
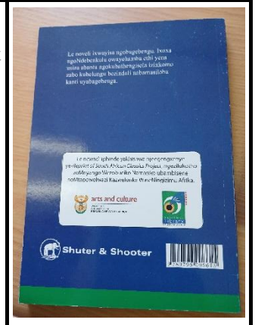
11.	A si ene (A Victim of Circumstances)	ES Madima	Educum	1954	2010	The cover has the back various degree of read and white colours. The title is written in black and middle of the cover and name of the author at the bottom		The original cover was not accessed.	The book is stitched, no spine	No blurb	
12.	Mitsheto ya Wa	AW Magau	Mpuntknowledge Publishers	1984	2017	The cover design has shapes and colours associated with Tshivenda dress which followed text in bold fonds and author's name in a smaller text. The lower part has rocks like building block in a wall formation. The old cover had wall built of rocks as the background with the title in white on top			Spine has the name of the author and the title	No blurb	
	ISIXHOSA										
13.	Elundini lothukela	JJR Jolobe	Educam Publishers	1976	2008	The cover has simple colours		Original cover has not been found	Spine has no writing	No blurb	

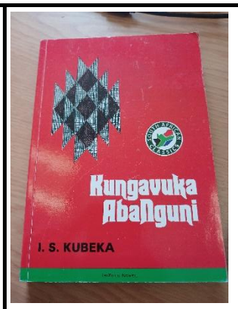
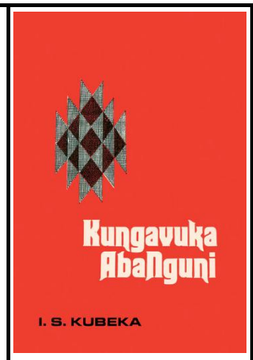
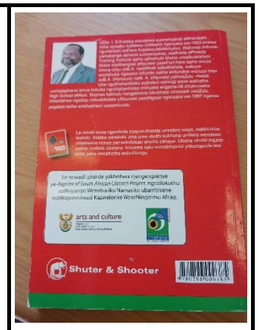
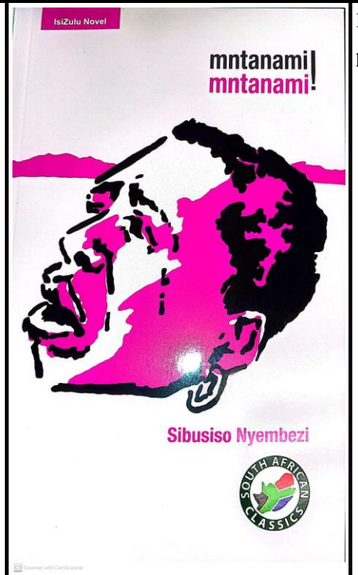
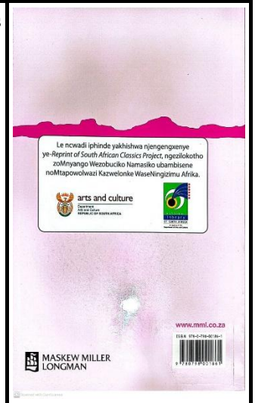
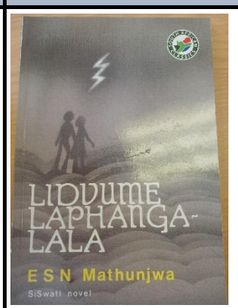
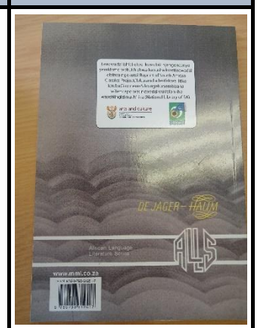
14.	Ingqumbo yeminyanya	Prof AC Jordan First person to receive PHD in African Languages studies at the university of Cape Town	Lovedale Press	1940	2008	Golden yellow back round. On this cover, classic logo is placed at top right corner of the cover. Bold sold red line run from the side of the logo to the edge of the cover on the right. The title of the book start below the sold line and each word in black colour is underlined with red solid lines. The author follows below the tine in red underlined by black solid coloured line. The second half cover has drawing of 4 African people in hunts background.		Original cover has not been found	Perfect binding spine has title written in bigger font and author in small fonts all in red	Back cover has classic message and Arts and Culture emblem and NLSA logo. Lovedale Press logo is placed below with the contact details.	
15.	Kufundwa ngamava	Minazana Dana	Oxford University Press	1951	2011	Front cover has title written in italic in white letters. Drawing of two man on the cover. The Classic logo is at the bottom left corner of the cover			The spine is standard with author, title and publisher.	The blurb give synopsis of the book and conclude by say you should read the book to hear about challenges that pet experience in life.	

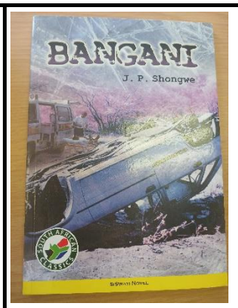
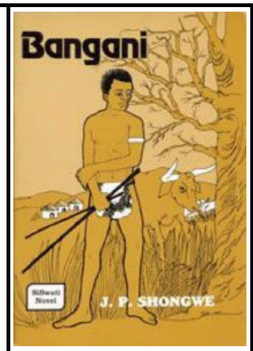
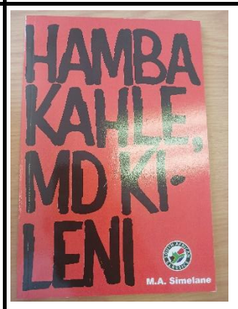
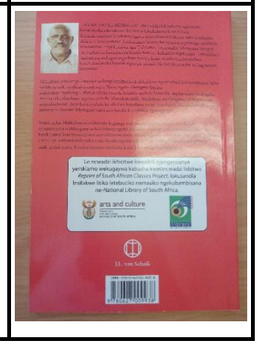
16.	Ukuba Ndandazile	WK Tamsanqa	Oxford University Press	1967		The background has white and blue colour with drawing of man and woman holding each other. The title is at the top with large bold black colours, below it is the author name. the classic logo is placed at the bottom left			The spine has the title, author and publisher name	The blurb gives synopsis of the book, call you to read the book to get full story. It uses the front cover drawing as background. It also advertises other book on the blurb. There is no author bio,	
17.	Ubulumko Bezinja	R Siyongwana	Oxford University Press	1962	2008	the background has blend of warm colours. Top left corner has the word ‘Oxford’ written in white on a red strip. Below it is the word ‘Isixhosa’ written in white n a light green. The title of the book is written at the top half of the cover in white colour in italic. At the centre of the cover, there is drawing of 4 dogs seems to be running away from cooking place where a pot fall from fire. Classic logo is placed at the bottom right corner. That name of the author is written below in white colour. the strip of nave is placed at the edge of the cover with the name of publisher written on it.			The spine is perfect bind with the tittle and the name of the publisher	A light green strip with the word ‘Isixhosa’ a paragraph talks about what the book is about and encourage a reader to read the book. This is followed with classic message with DAC emblem and NLSA logo. These followed by the publisher’s logo and barcode. The nave strip lays at the edge with Company name written in white.	

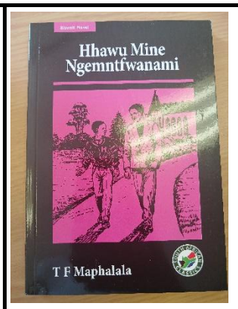
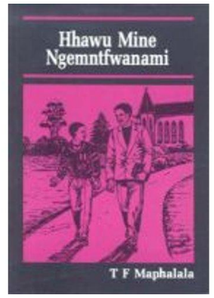
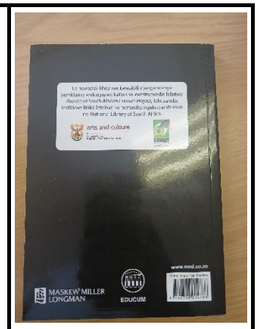
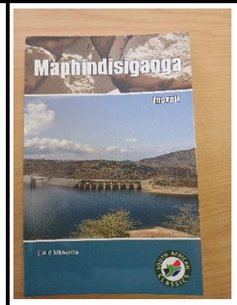
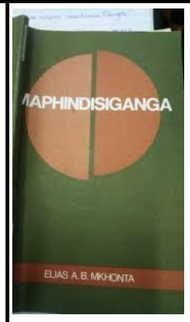
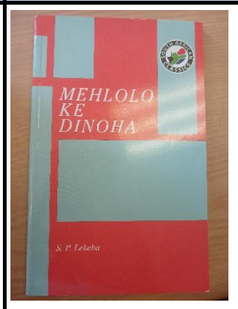
18.	Ityala la Lawele (The Lawsuit of the Twins)	SEK Mqhayi	Lovedale Press	1914	2008	The classic logo is placed on top right corner with the title written in bold brown colour at the middle top part underlined with bold brown line. Followed with African homestead with people seating around in a form of gathering and other people standing. They look like they are in conversation		The original cover was not accessed.	Perfect bound spine with both title and author's name written on it.	A paragraph about the classic project followed by DAC emblem and NLSA logo. The logo of the publisher is placed at the bottom middle of the cover	
19.	Izinto Zodidi (Valuable things)	GI Malunga Mzamane	Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel	1959	2022	The cover is plain with the title repeated on the in blue and white. That name of author is written below the title. The classics branding was inserted on the previous edition's cover.			Spine does not have text written on it.	The back cover does not have blurb or biography of the author.	
20.	*Umandisa*	VNM Swaartbooi	Lovedale Press	1957	2012	The cover is simply classic clours of Lovedale Press. The red horizontal lines next to the tittle		The original cover was not accessed.	Spine does not have text.	The blurb talks about the book and encourage people to read. Mandisa is the main Characters that female and fight partrich system of the time including denouncing marriage was revolutionary at the time. The blurb includes the quote from Janet Macgragor who is former girl superitender of Lovedale Girls and Principal of Mgwali in 1934.Janet Macgragor praises the author who is female for creative work	

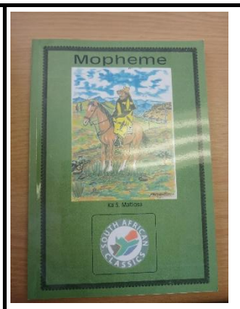
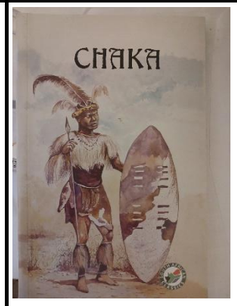
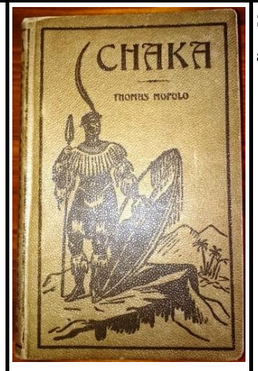
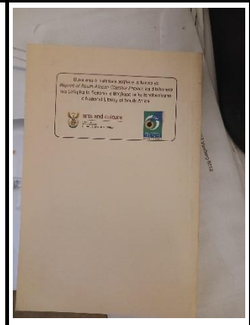
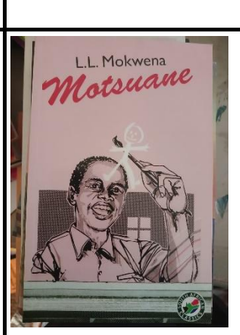
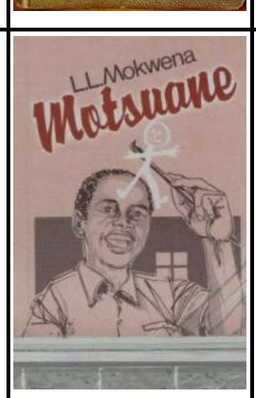
										and hope people enjoy reading the novel and grow Xhosa language	
21	*Udingezweni*	PT Mtuze	Via Afrika	1966	2011	The cover did not change from previous edition. Almost three dimensional drawing of a person;s head fills the from cover on a gree background. The title of the book is written in white making it stand out on the green background but the author's name is written black on green background, it looks like its hidden.			The spine has the author name and the tittle of the book.	The blurb is synopsis of the story	
	ISIZULU										
22	Imiyalezo (Beware of any pitfalls as you go through life)	MJ Mngadi	Shuter and Shooter	1979	2008	The back over has the classic logo at the top right hand side. The background is a white cloth with flowers at the top and police handcuffs are placed on the top of scattered flowers. The tittle of the book is place beneath in italic font, it is followed with author's name in small letters. Green ribbon runs at the bottom of the cover with black text 'IsiZulu' Novel.		I could not find the cover of previous edition of the book	Spine has the title, author's name and logo of the publishers	The blurb gives synopsis and inform the read of what to expect in the book.	

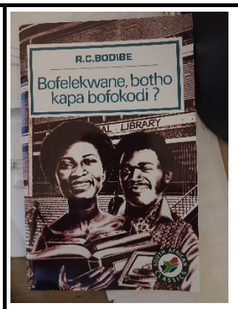
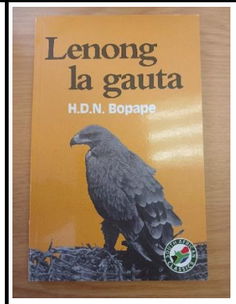
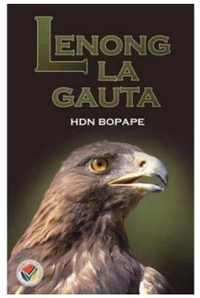
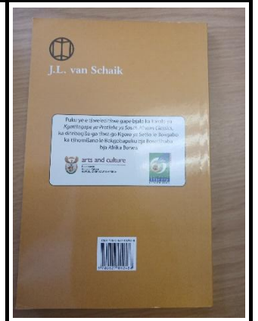
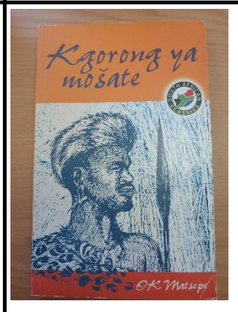
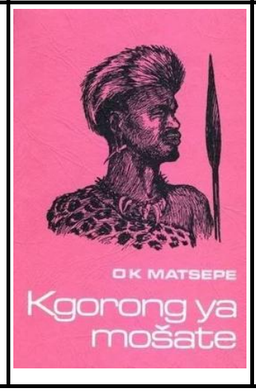
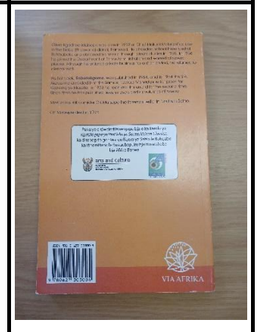
23..	UBheka Indaba ka Bhekithemba noNomusa	Prof DBZ Ntuli	Shuter and Shooter	1962	2010	The background is drawing of green landscape with tree, hills and grass. The first phrase of the title 'uBheka' is written in bold large orange colour. The remaining part of the title is written in black smaller font size. Picture of young man and woman standing face the hills. The logo of classic is placed bottom left followed by the Name of the author written bold white colours. A green ribbon written the words 'Isizulu Novel' runs at the bottom edge of the cover		I could not find the cover of previous edition of the book	Perfect bind spine with the 'uBheka' in black letter and name of the author in white as well as the logo of the company are the spine.	The back cover has blurb that explain what the book is about. The picture of the author is place beside blurb with no mention of him. The picture previous edition of the book is also placed on the right hand side of the text. The blurb is paragraph about classics with DAC emblem and NLSA logo. The logo of the publisher and barcode form last part of the back cover.	
24	Inkinsela yaseMgungundlovu (The Richman of Pietermaritzburg)	Prof S Nyembezi	Shuter and Shooter	1961	2008	The background of the cover is picture that shows night with a western dressed gentlemen drawing. The title of the book is at the top and the name of the author at the bottom. The classic logo is placed at bottom left side, the green ribbon runs across the edge of the cover with text 'isiZulu Novel' in black			Spine has the title, the author name and logo of the publisher. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.	The blurb provides description of what the book is about	

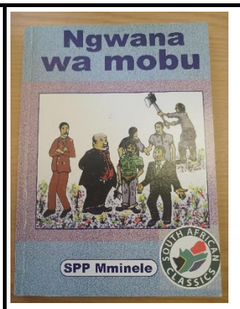
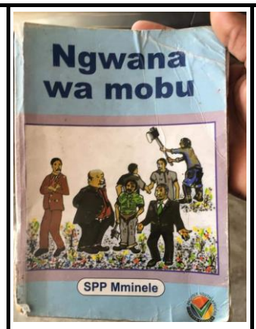
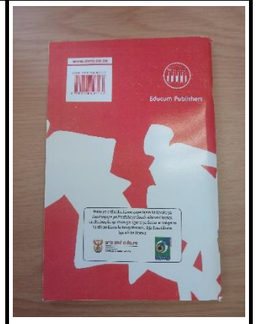
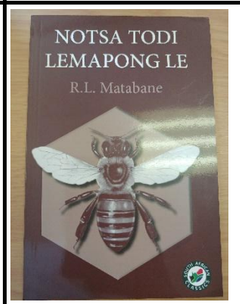
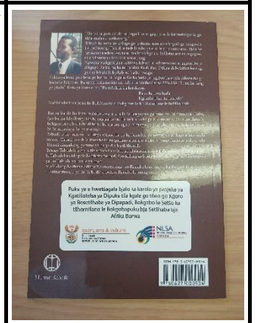
25.	Kungavuka AbaNguni (Over my dead body)	Dr IS Khubeka	Shuter and Shooter	1973	2013	The cover has read background with tittle written in white and author's name ib black			Spine has the title, author name and the logo of the publisher	The back cover has photo and a background of the author abd the blurb	
26.	Mntanami! Mntanami! (My Child! My Child)	Prof CLS Nyembezi	Educum	1950	2013	The cover identify the title as IsiZulu novel at the top which helps for non-language speakers. It has dominants of black and pick colours on the front cover. The title is written in black and pick colours. The drawing of the head is at the centre of the cover, it looks someone surprised and crying. This goes together with acclimation marks on the title. The authors name is written in pink.		I could not find the cover of previous edition of the book	The spine has the first part of the title in black and second part in pink. The authors name is pink	There is no blurb or author's bio on the cover.	
	SISWATI										
27.	Lidvume laphangalala	ESN Mathunjwa	De Jager-HAUM	1983	2010	The background of the cover is a stormy weather with lightning and water waves. Images of two people can walking on stormy weather. The logo of classic is place at the top right corner of the cover. The tittle is written in white large font and author's name is written in yellow		I could not find the cover of previous edition of the book	The spine has the title and the author name	No blurb	

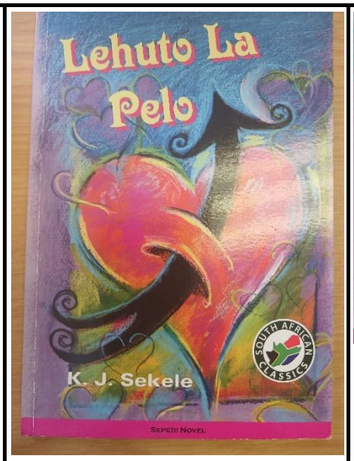
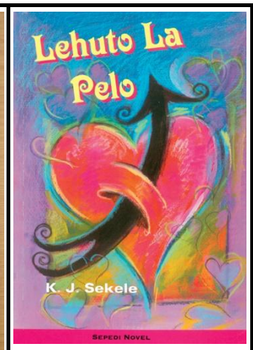
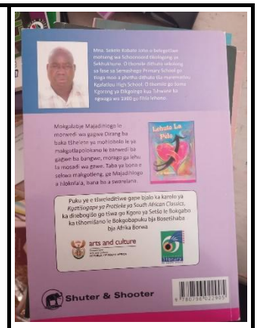
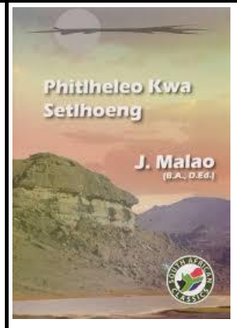
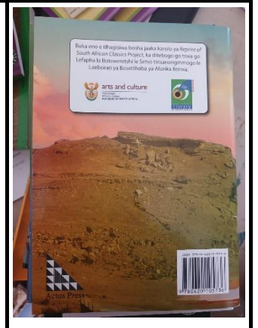
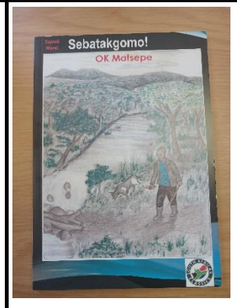
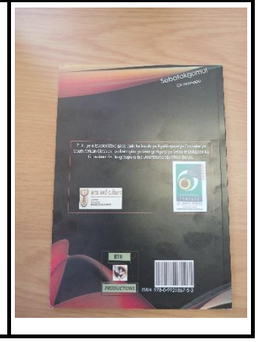
28.	Bangani (Friends)	JP Shongwe	Shuter and Shoter	1984	2010	Tittle is written in larger font on top broken glasses background. Authors written in small below it. The cover shows car accident where a private car over turned, ambulance and emergency services officials taking care of injured people. The logo of classics is place at the bottom right corner of the cover with yellow line running across the bottom of the cover with 'Siswati Novel' written on it in black letter. The old cover is different with a person setting under and the tree looking like he is in a difficult situation			Spine has author's name, tittle and the logo of the publisher. It is perfect bind	The blurb explain what the book is about and old edition is place by the side of the blurb. Paragraph about the classic is placed below the blurb followed by DSAC emblem and NLSA ogo. The company logo and barcode follows.	
29.	Hamba kahle Mdikileni (Fareweel Mdikileni	MA Simelane	Van Schaik	1975	2011	The tittle the large part of the cover with the name of author in a small on at the bottom right-hand cover in white		The original cover was not accessed.	The spine does not have text	The blurb talks about the book and encourage people to read this book	

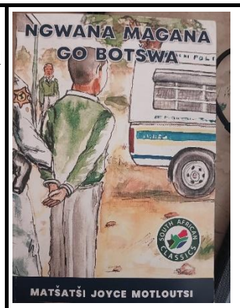
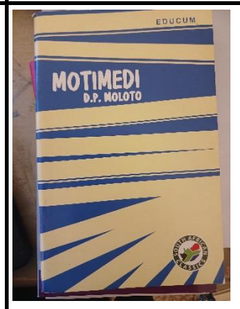
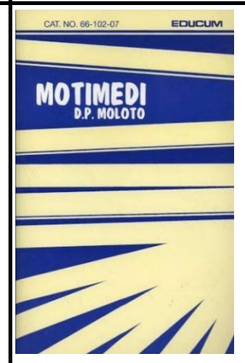
30.	Hawu mine ngemntfwanami (My Child! My Child!) translated from Mntanami! Mntanami!	TF Maphalala (Translator) from Prof CLS Nyembezi's Mntanami! Mntanami!	Educum	1989	2009	The picture looks like a man walking with his teenage son. The old cover look the same with the current one. The theme pink and black colour was kept from IsiZulu The logo of classic is the only different feature. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			The spine has the author name and the title of the book	No blurb. This book is translated from IsiZulu *Mntanami! Mntanami!* by CL Sibusisi Nyembezi. This is unique in this list as this is the only title translated from other language. This should have been on the blurb.	
31.	Maphindisiganga	EAB Mkhonta	Macmillan Education	1990	2020	The title occupies the upper of the cover. The centre part have dam, mountains and blue water. The bottom half has blue background with the title in white and the logo. The old cover is total different			Spine carries the title, author name and publisher logo	The blurb talks about the book and that is aligned with CAPS. The blurb was not edited from the previous edition.	
	SESOTHO										
32.	Mehlolo Ke Dinoha	SK Lekeba	Educum Publishers	1971	2008	The designer just played with the colours		I could not find cover of the previous edition	No text on the spine	No blurb	

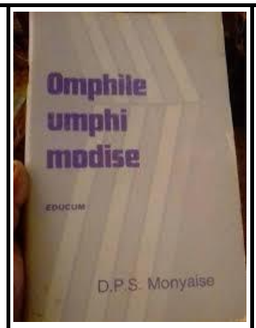
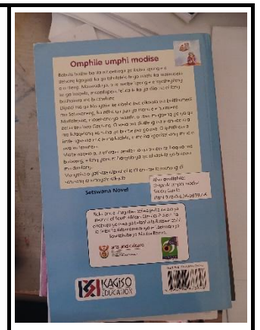
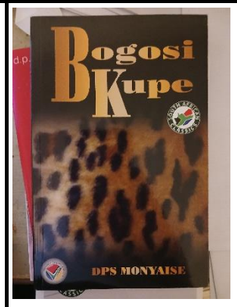
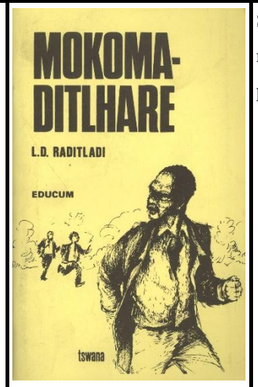
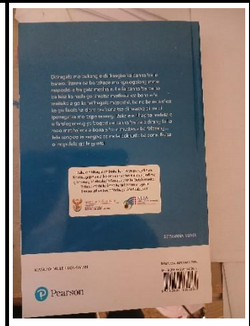
33.	Mopheme	S Matlosa	Mazenod Book Centre	1982	2010	The cover depict a men on a horse dressed Sotho blanket and hat		I could not find the cover of the previous editions	The spine has the title and author name	No blurb	
34.	Chaka	T. Mofolo	Moria Printing Press	1925	2015	The cover has title at the top and the drawing of Zulu warrior in his full gear.			Spine has the name of the author and the tittle	No blurb	
35.	Motsuane	LL Mokwena	Via Afrika	1985	2015	The author name is at the top followed by title. Then a drawing of a man holding brush and drawing. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			Spine has the name of the author and the tittle	There is a picture of the author and blurb detailing the story and encourage people to read this book	

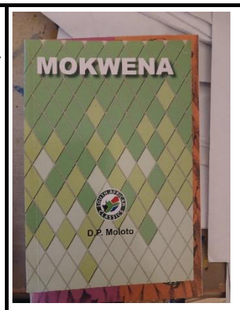
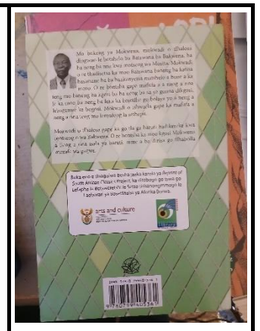
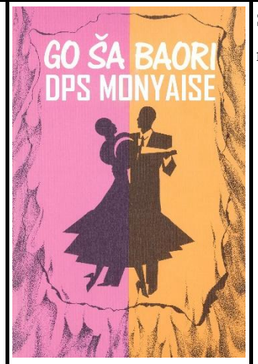
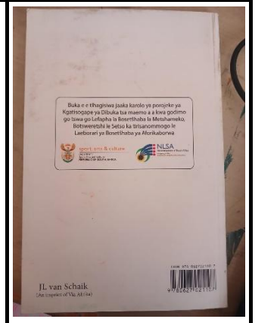
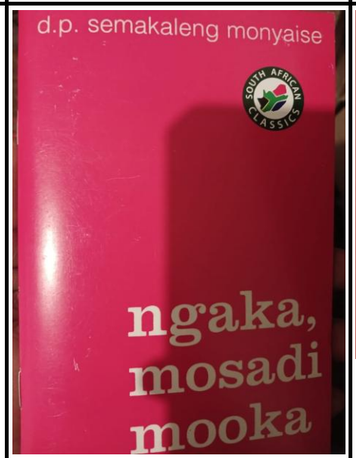
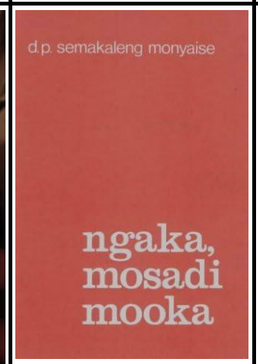
36.	Bofelekwane, botho kapa bofokodi? (Is it deceit, human nature or weakness?)	Prof RC Bodibe	Van Schaik Publishers	1985		There is a book on the upper part of the cover where a tittle put at the top and underlined followed the tittle of the book. Below the box is the image of students coming out the library		I could not find the cover of the previous edition	Stitched, no spine	No blurb	
	SEPEDI										
37.	Lenong la Gauta (The golden eagle)	HDN Bopape	Van Schaik	1982	2008	The title take prominence and authors flows. The eagle is standing still. The old cover, the eagle looked uncertainty			The spine has title and author name	No blurb	
38.	Kgorong ya Mosate (The kraal of the king)	Dr OK Matsepe	Van Schaik Publishers	1962	2009	Tittle at the top, in the middle is drawing of man with spear like a security office			The spine has title and author name	The blurb talks about the author's life, the date of birth, schooling, working, awards and year he passed on. The blurb is in English. OK Matsepe is the leading writer in Sepedi, it might encourage to read the book by talking about him	

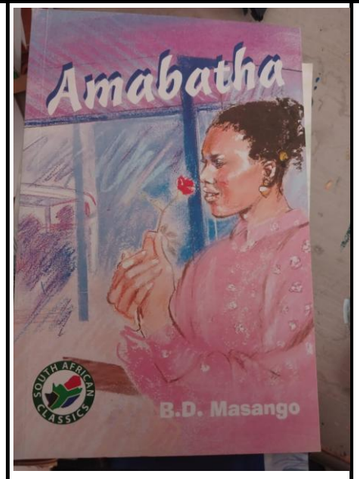
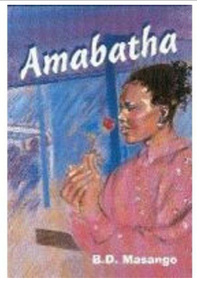
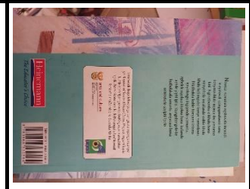
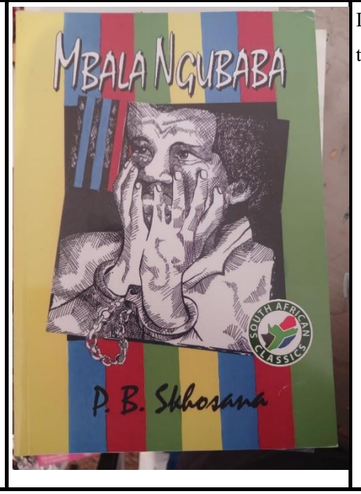
39.	Ngwana wa mobu (Child of the soil)	SPP Mminele	Sharp Shoot Publishing	1983	2008	The cover depict poorly dressed people doing hard labour and well dress just standing. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			The spine has name of the author and title	The back cover has photo of the author dressed in academic gown. No mention of the author details	
40.	Megokgo ya bjoko (Tears of brian)	Dr OK Matsepe	Educum Publishers	1968	2010	The cover have silhouette images in a motion. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			Stapled, no spine	No blurb	
41.	Notsa todi lemapong le	RL Matabane	Van Schaik	1972	2022	The title written in bold white letter on brown colours followed by author name. The part of page has a bee		I could not find the cover of the previous edition	No text on spine	The blurb is the summary of the story	

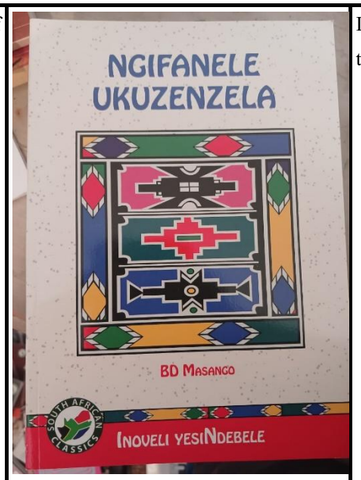
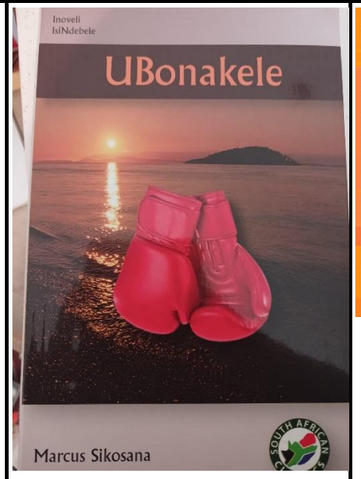
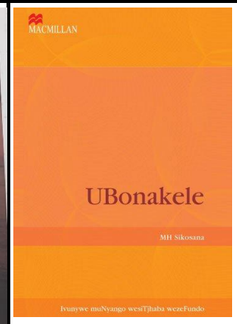
42.	Lehuto La Pelo (Broken heart)	KJ Sekele	Shuter and Shooter	1998	2013	The depicts a broken heart. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			The spine has the title, author and logo of the publisher	The back cover has background of the author and description of the story.	
43.	Phitlhelelo kwa Setlhoeng *'Achievement in the Wilderness'*	J Malao	Actua Press	1987	Not mentioned on the book Only second impression in 1987	The word Phitlheleo should be Phitlhelelo. the cover looks like painting sun rising with mountains. The title is written a the top with the author name in the middle.		I could not find the cover of the previous edition	Stappled, no spine	No blurb	
.44.	Sebatakgomo!	DR OK Matsepe	HTO Production	1982	2017	The title is prominate over the author even though this is the third title by OK Matsepe on this list of classic. The cover shows a man working beside the river in the forest holding a stick. He look shepherd.		I could not find the cover of the previous edition	No text on the spine	No blurb	

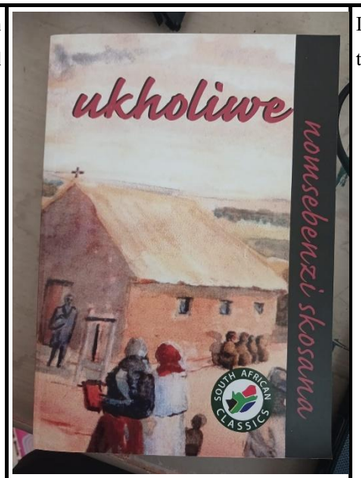
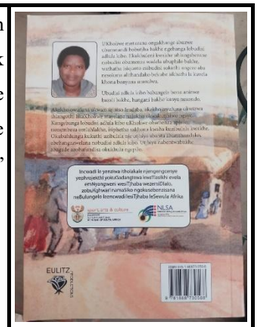
45.	Ngwana Mgana go Botswa	MJ Motloutsi	Nev Production	2004	Not mentioned in the book	The picture shows police holding handcuffed man and police car		I could not find the cover of the previous edition	No text on the spine	The blurb gives background of the author and summary of the story	
	SETSWANA										
46.	Matlhoko Matlhoko	Prof RM Malope	Molaphole Publishers	1980	2008	Silhouette images being hanged on circle/wheel. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			No Text on the spine	Give background of the author and that this was his first novel. No mention of the story	
47.	Motimedi (A wanderer)	DP Moloto	Educum Publishers	1970	2008	Played around with colours. The use the two colours is cheap to print. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			Stappled, n spine	No blurb	

48.	Omphile Umphi Modise	DPS Monyaise	Kagiso Publishers	1960	2016	The sad woman seems to be thinking about a child who eating from dustbin			Spine has the title, author name and logo of the publisher	The blurb talks about the book and mentioned the author wrote other 5 titles and that this book is available as a Study guide	
49.	Bogosi Kupe (Kingship is Sacred)	DPS Monyaise	Van Schaik	1967	2016	Leopard skins depicts royal, the book tackle royal issues			Spine have title and author name	The blurb talk about the book	
50.	Mokomaditlhare (The Mischievous One)	LD Raditladi	Maskew Longman	1972	2013	The cover shows handcuffs with fingerprint paper as background. The old cover shows two people chasing a person			Spine has the title, author name and logo of the publisher	Blurb give synopsis of the book.	

51.	Mokwena	DP Moloto	Via Afrika	1981	2021	Title is large bold white letters at the top of the cover and author below the cover in dark colour at the bottom of the cover.			Spine have title and author name	There is a photo of the author but the blurb is just a summary of the book. It does not talk about the photo	
52.	Go ša Baori (No pan succeeds against the wishes of the ancestral spirits)	DPS Monyaise	JL Van Schaik	1970	2023	The cover shows woman and man dancing. The title shows African believe but the dance on the image is western. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			Spine have title and author name	No blurb	
53.	Ngaka, mosadi mooka (‘Doctor, a woman is a karroo acacia tree)	DPS Monyaise	JL Van Schaik	1965	2023	Ths name of the author is at the top of the cover and the title is at the bottom in larger white letters. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			Stappled, no spine	No blurb	

	ISINDEBELE										
54.	Amabatha (Unfaithful)	BD Masango	Heinemann	1995	2012	A drawing of a lady smelling red flower on the cover. The SA Literary Classics logo was placed on the original edition covers of the titles and reproduced as part of the design for the classic edition covers.			Spine has the title, author name and logo of the publisher	Blurb gives summary of the book	
55.	Mbala Ngubaba (It is really my father)	PB Skhosana	Actua Press	1994	2008	A drawing of a man in handcuffs loos surprised. The Ndebele traditional colours form the background		I could not find the cover of the previous edition	Spine has the title, author name and logo of the publisher	Blurb talks about the author, it look his life from birth, school and various jobs that held to contribute to the development of IsiNdebele	

56.	Ngifanele KuZenzela (I am supposed to do things for myself)	BD Masango	Mbombela Press	1992	2016	Features to note is the use of Ndebele traditional images and colours		I could not find the cover of the previous edition	Spine has the title and author name	No blurb	
57.	Ubonakele	M Sikosana	Macmillan Education	1993	2016	The image sun rise and boxing gloves.			Spine has the title, author name and logo of the publisher	The blurb identify as one of the first books written in Ndebele and encourage the speakers of the language to fight for their language. It also described others works that the author completed. Most authors see themselves as champions of these languages and want to promote their languages and they are teachers	

58.	**Ukholiwe**	**N Skosana**	**Eulitz Production**	**2008**	**2023**	**The cover shows a hall with a cross at the top and people approaching**		I could not find the cover of the previous edition	Spine has the title, author name and logo of the publisher	Blurb gives information about the story. The back shows drawing of people queuing to get into the church. There is no author' bio.	

Annexure 1

SCHOOL OF Literature, Language and Media ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER: WSLLM-PUB-1**

PROJECT TITLE Examining the Strategic Deployment of Paratext to Improve the Adaptation and Accessibility of Indigenous Language Literary Classics for a Contemporary Readership

INVESTIGATOR Sidon Rhulani Bila

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT SLLM/Publishing Studies

DATE CONSIDERED 20 September 2024

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE Approved

RISK LEVEL No risk

EXPIRY DATE 20 September 2025

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 27 September 2024 **CHAIRPERSON** Prof. Anette Horn

A. Horn

cc: Supervisor : Laetitia Cassells

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Annexure 2

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SOUTH AFRICA

INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION LETTER

INSTITUTION NAME & ADDRESS: National Library of South Africa

INSTITUTION CONTACT PERSON: Nokuthula Musa

INSTITUTION CONTACT NUMBER: +27 12 401 9700

INSTITUTION EMAIL ADDRESS: Nokuthula.Musa@nlsa.ac.za

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Examining the Strategic Deployment of Paratext to Improve the Adaptation and Accessibility of Indigenous Language Literary Classics for a Contemporary Readership

DEGREE: Masters

ETHICS APPLICATION REFERENCE NUMBER: WSLLM-PUB-1

RESEARCHER: Sidon Rhulani Bila

DEPARTMENT/UNIVERSITY: WITS

CONTACT NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS: rhulani.bila@gmail.com

Dear Mr Bila

We have reviewed your request to conduct a research project involving the participation of the National Library staff. You have permission to send the information requests for your research project.

The following stipulations should be observed:

- All research ethics considerations
- The summary of research findings must be shared with the NLSA once the study is completed
- An e-copy of the thesis must be submitted to the NLSA and it will be made available on the NLSA website

We wish you the best of luck on your research project

Sincerely,

Name: Nokuthula Musa **Signature**

Position: Executive Director: Core Programmes Date 29/1/2024

Who warrants that he/she is duly authorised to sign on behalf of the National Library of South Africa