

**CONCEPTUALISING HISTORICAL LITERACY IN
ZIMBABWE: A TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS**

BY

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Masters in Education (History Education)**

At the

University of KwaZulu-Natal

2009

DECLARATION

I declare that

(i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

(ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely thank God for the will and strength which he has granted me to go through my research in spite of the huge challenges I had to overcome.

I thank my supervisor and mentor, Prof. Johan Wassermann, for the amazing amounts of energy and drive which he dedicated to me and my studies. I am what I am today because of you. Words will never be sufficient.

Many thanks are due to my parents for always prioritising my education. To my mother I say, may God bless you for encouraging my success in all my academic endeavours through your reminders of the challenge that dad left for us. Thanks for your prayers and support.

I am heartily thankful to my wife, Emby Faith, for her unwavering support and commitment to endure days and nights of loneliness. Thank you for all the support you gave when we were together as well. Instead of being a hindrance, your presence helped me conquer. Great thanks to my brother, Tabonga and sisters, Gladys and Faith and their husbands, Tendai and Peter, for moral and financial support. Your support has sustained me throughout. To Mukoma Jairos, I wouldn't be here without you. I will never forget your selfless sacrifice and help. Thank you Guunyi and thanks to all Guunyis.

I thank the Foroma family for all the prayers and accepting and understanding my decisions.

Finally I thank Prof. Denis Francis and the entire staff in the School of Social Science Education at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Edgewood Campus. Your collegial support and academic guidance personally and through the research seminars was invaluable.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Masters in Education dissertation to my late father, Rev. R.C. Maposa (1935-2005).

ABSTRACT

While debates rage over the relevance and worth of school history, history has been one of the five compulsory subjects up to Ordinary Level in Zimbabwe. However, far away from the corridors of power, it is essential that research be conducted on what school history is for and what represents that which the learner of school history acquires through at least eleven years of school history studies in Zimbabwe. Using the concept of historical literacy as its framework, this study is an analysis of three Ordinary Level history textbooks in Zimbabwe to explore how historical literacy manifests itself in Zimbabwean school history textbooks. In a context of increased government concern over what and how school history should be taught, the study explains how the textbooks that were produced more than ten years ago can still be turned into resources for the propagation of patriotic history, which emerged in the last decade.

While conceptualisations of historical literacy continue, I argue for multiple historical literacies, that is, historical literacy which actually takes different forms in different times, spaces and contexts. Thus, what is represented as historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks is not necessarily what historical literacy is elsewhere. This research is a qualitative textual analysis which was conducted in an interpretivist paradigm. I employed historical discourse analysis, question analysis and visual analysis as the analysis methods. The analysis was conducted through an instrument created from the benchmarks of the conceptual framework. The study concluded that despite attempt to push for an activity-based curriculum, historical knowledge, especially the nationalist narrative, is still the dominant benchmark of historical literacy in Zimbabwean textbooks. As a result, the current textbooks can be used, not only for a state sanitised version of historical literacy, but also a version of political literacy.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. Timeline showing the evolving meanings of historical literacy (p. 18)
Figure 2.2: Summary of major aspects of historical literacy – conceptual framework (p. 40)
Figure 4.1: Summary of the research design (p. 65)
Figure 4.2: The research sample (p. 67)
Figure 4.3: Criteria for analysis (p. 74)
Figure 4.4: How the data analysis methods were used (p. 75)
Figure 4.5: The analytical framework (instrument) (p. 79)
Figure 5.1: Cover page - <i>Focus on history</i> (p. 85)
Figure 5.2: Cover page – <i>People making history</i> (p. 87)
Figure 5.3: Cover page – <i>People and power</i> (89)
Figure 5.4: Manifestation of historical literacy in the jacket texts of the sample (p. 94)
Figure 5.5: Manifestation of historical literacy in preface – <i>Focus on history</i> (p. 98)
Figure 5.6: Manifestation of historical literacy in preface – <i>People making history</i> (p. 102)
Figure 5.7: Manifestation of historical literacy in preface – <i>People and power</i> (p. 105)
Figure 6.1: Manifestation of historical literacy in descriptive text – <i>Focus on history</i> (p. 114)
Figure 6.2: Manifestation of historical literacy in descriptive text – <i>People making history</i> (p. 119)
Figure 6.3: Manifestation of historical literacy in descriptive text – <i>People and power</i> (p. 124)
Figure 6.4: Manifestation of historical literacy in activities – <i>Focus on history</i> (p. 130)
Figure 6.9: Manifestation of historical literacy in activities – <i>People making history</i> (p. 134)

Figure 6.10: Manifestation of historical literacy in activities – *People and power*
(p. 138)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHA	American Historical Association
“A” Level	Advanced Level
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
GDR	German Democratic Republic
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
“O” Level	Ordinary Level
RF	Rhodesian Front
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SHP	Schools Council History Project
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Peoples’ Union
CEPD	Centre for Education policy Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
CHAPTER 1	
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background and contextualisation	1
1.2 Rationale for the study	7
1.3 Purpose and focus of the study	8
1.4 Research design and methodology	9
1.5 Outline of the thesis	10
1.6 Limitations	11
1.7 Conclusion	12
CHAPTER 2	
2. Literature review: Conceptualising historical literacy	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Evolving meanings of the concept of literacy	13
2.3 The emergence and development of historical literacy	17
2.4 Towards a conceptual framework of historical literacy	37
2.5 Conclusion	42
CHAPTER 3	
3. Literature review: History textbooks research	44
3.1 Introduction	44
3.2 Historical overview of history textbook research	45

3.3 Major themes and debates	47
3.4 Reviewing history textbook research methodologies	57
3.5 Conclusion	62
CHAPTER 4	
Research design and methodology	63
4.1 Introduction	63
4.2 Methodology	63
4.3 Sampling	66
4.4 Contextual analysis	69
4.5 Data generation	71
4.6 Data analysis	74
4.7 The analytical instrument – categories	78
4.8 Limitations	80
4.9 Conclusion	82
CHAPTER 5	
Research findings: Cover pages, jacket texts and prefaces	83
5.1 Introduction	83
5.2 Cover pages	84
5.2.1 <i>Focus on history</i>	85
5.2.2 <i>People making history</i>	87
5.2.3 <i>People and power</i>	88
5.2.4 Concluding analysis	89
5.3 Jacket texts	90
5.3.1 <i>Focus on history</i>	90
5.3.2 <i>People making history</i>	91
5.3.3 <i>People and power</i>	92
5.3.4 Concluding analysis	93
5.4 Prefaces	97

5.4.1 <i>Focus on history</i>	97
5.4.2 <i>People making history</i>	100
5.4.3 <i>People and power</i>	103
5.5 Concluding analysis	107
5.6 Conclusion	110
CHAPTER 6	
Research findings: Descriptive text and assessment activities	111
6.1 Introduction	111
6.2 Descriptive text	111
6.2.1 <i>Focus on history</i>	112
6.2.2 <i>People making history</i>	118
6.2.3 <i>People and power</i>	122
6.2.4 <i>Concluding analysis</i>	126
6.3 Assessment activities	128
6.3.1 <i>Focus on history</i>	129
6.3.2 <i>People making history</i>	132
6.3.3 <i>People and power</i>	137
6.3.4 Concluding analysis	141
6.4 Conclusion	143
CHAPTER 7	
Discussion and Conclusion	144
7.1 Introduction	144
7.2 Discussion of findings	147
7.2.1 Cover pages	147
7.2.2 Jacket texts textbooks	146
7.2.3 Prefaces	152
7.2.4 Descriptive text	154
7.2.5 Assessment activities	156

7.3 Implications of the research findings	158
7.4 Limitations	163
7.5 Recommendations and directions for future research	164
REFERENCES	166
APPENDIX	
Ethical clearance	176

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and contextualisation

In 2001, Aeneas Chigwedere, the then Minister of Education in Zimbabwe, made an announcement that five subjects were to be made compulsory for all secondary learners from form 1 to form 4.¹ The five subjects are mathematics, English, any science subject (such as biology and physical science), any practical subject (such as woodwork and agriculture), and history. Of these five subjects, history raised most eyebrows because its position had suddenly been elevated from being one of the electives to join the seemingly holy grail of school subjects. Schools that had not been offering the subject had to suddenly recruit teachers and provide the subject almost overnight.

The roots of Minister Chigwedere's announcement can be traced back to the President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, who, earlier in the same year, had spelt out that there was a need for the rewriting of the history of Zimbabwe and "furthermore, Zimbabwean history [would] be made compulsory up to Form Four" (Raftopoulos, 2004, p. 166). This statement was reiterated by the then Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) party Secretary for External Affairs, Dydimus Mutasa, who commented in *The Voice* that, "We erroneously did not fan the fire of our nation and struggle for independence among our children. That fire almost went out as our children knew nothing of that invaluable history" (Raftopoulos, 2004, p. 166). From such statements, one can infer that from a government point of view, the revision of Zimbabwean history, in fact, implied reviewing school history as a whole.

¹ In the Zimbabwean education system, secondary education starts in form 1. If a learner finishes form 4 they will gain the Ordinary Level ("O" Level) certificate which is the basic qualification with which to secure employment or access tertiary education. One can however continue and enrol for form 5 to 6 and obtain an Advanced Level ('A' Level) certificate which is fundamentally a preparation for university education.

It should be borne in mind that the measure to make school history compulsory was taken in the context of escalating political temperature, barely a year after a hotly contested 2000 general election, and in preparation for an even hotter square-up in the presidential election scheduled for 2002. For the first time since independence in 1980, the ruling ZANU PF party led by Mugabe was facing stiff political opposition in the form of the newly-formed (1999) Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party led by Morgan Tsvangirai. According to Raftopoulos (2004, p. 166) “the emergence of the MDC and the civic movement is viewed as an interruption and a detour in the ‘legitimate’ history of national liberation.” Indeed the statements by the government officials quoted above implied that history teaching had to cease being just an academic action and become rather a political one. Notwithstanding the longstanding affair between history education and politics, in which history has to play a legitimating role, this would seemingly become an example of extreme cases of government involvement in history education (Chernis, 1990; Apple 1991; 1992; Wertsch & Rozin, 2000; Manzo, 2004; Rodden; 2009). Within this context, Minister Chigwedere’s announcement was received with mixed feelings by the history teachers, because while on one hand they were guaranteed of jobs, on the other hand some teachers would rather teach history to only those learners who made conscious decisions to take up the subject for study, let alone contemplating excessive political intrusion in their classrooms.

The sudden move by the government to make school history compulsory was all the more unexpected, particularly in the wake of the Nziramasanga Commission Report of 1999. Although the commission made recommendations on education and training as a whole, it made specific reference to history by proposing that the subject be an elective which would be done by learners who would have chosen to follow the academic (rather than vocational) stream (Nziramasanga, 1999). The Nziramasanga Commission Report was never fully ratified as a new syllabus was launched in 2002 with a rather different focus (Barnes, 2004). Since

then, curriculum modifications have not been vast enough to be branded as a new paradigm. In fact, any new amendment has only served to strengthen the 2002 Syllabus 2167 and thus a certain form of historiography has been fortified.

In tracing the evolution of historiographies in Zimbabwe, Ranger (2004, p. 215) argued that, since 2000 the Zimbabwe government has been engaged in an intentional project to propagate “patriotic history” as opposed to forms of academic history. He argues that since independence in 1980 the purposes of history have been embodied by three historiographies – nationalist historiography, history of the nation and patriotic history. Nationalist historiography “proclaimed the nationalist movement as inclusive and even non-racial. It depicted nationalism as emancipatory and espoused projects of modernisation and reform, extending in its radical versions to Socialist and egalitarian visions” (Ranger, 2004, p. 8). These socialist ideals were grounded in ZANU PF’s Maoist philosophy which had significantly inspired the party during the struggle for independence. On the other hand, the historiography of the nation “seeks to raise questions about the nature of nationalism and about the course of its development; to offer alternative versions of challenges and struggles within the nationalist movement” (Ranger, 2004, p. 8).

Patriotic history which of late has taken root “repudiates academic historiography on the grounds that it attempts to complicate and question” resulting in youth, parents and teachers forgetting or betraying revolutionary ideals (Ranger, 2004, p. 215). The implication here is that anyone who tries to understand multi-perspectives and multi-narratives of history, particularly of the struggle for independence, risks being labelled unpatriotic. Patriotic history was already being propagated outside the school contexts through the establishment of a kind of parallel history curriculum for the newly established youth training camps and in the compulsory National Strategic Studies course at most colleges. The implementation of this form of history outside of formal mainstream education can be viewed as a factor in attempts for something similar to be moved into

formal education as the official history. According to *The Independent* newspaper (as cited in Raftopoulos, 2004, p. 167) this form of history was unashamedly biased towards the ruling party as illustrated by these two questions from an examination paper in the youth training camps and in the compulsory National Strategic Studies course:

Which political party represents the interests of imperialists and how must it be viewed by Zimbabweans? [And] African leaders who try to serve the interests of imperialists are called what and how do you view imperialism?

The explanations of the three historiographies help elucidate the role of school history in Zimbabwe. One thus can argue that governments have the power to promote and develop a particular kind of literacy for those who study school history. This argument can thus be applied to history textbooks which have been identified to be at the coalface of the promotion of official history, and thus a particular form of historical literacy (Wertsch & Rozin, 2000).

The above dynamics confirm that, from 2001, history education in Zimbabwe began to experience a virtually new system which had been imposed. This illustrates another case of the politicisation of history education. A few examples of politicisation of history textbooks would suffice. In apartheid South Africa, history textbooks were used to reinforce racial separation and Afrikaner superiority through grand-narratives and master symbols (da Cruz, 2005; Engelbrecht, 2006). In Nazi Germany and, subsequently, Communist German Democratic Republic (GDR), textbooks were under strict state control such that authors had to endure gruelling sessions with state authorities to justify inclusion of certain content (Rodden, 2002; 2009).

In spite of the above developments and all the dynamics involved in the imposition of a virtually new system, what has remained unchanged for almost two decades is the set of history textbooks that are being used in schools. There are a number of factors that can account for this. Firstly, the country's economic

meltdown from being one of the most promising developing countries to being one of the poorest in the world can not be underestimated. In fact, Zimbabwe had a “vibrant publishing industry” in which school textbooks accounted for over 80% publisher sales in the mid-1990s (Barnes, 2004, p. 145). Today, in contrast, many private companies have been forced to shut down and publishers have not been spared either. Resultantly, it would not be uncommon for newly-qualified history teachers to come back and use the exact same edition of the textbook they used while they were still learners in school. For example, as a teacher in Zimbabwean secondary schools until 2007, I had to use the same textbooks that I had used as a learner in the early 1990s.

It would be too simplistic, though, to credit the stall in history textbook production in Zimbabwe to the economic crisis only. Factors affecting history textbook production can not be crudely generalised to other school subjects. This is more so if one considers the idea that history textbooks have been argued to be, amongst others, the leading face of official history. Official history is a representation of the past that is sanctioned by the state and in some cases it is “centrally produced and distributed” and has to be “mastered if one [is] to pass mandatory examinations” (Wertsch & Rozin, 2000, p. 40). In most cases, official history gets to the ordinary citizen as sanitised by the government as a means to “compel students to master an official account of the past” (Penuel & Wertsch, 2000, pp. 24-25). Other faces of official history include national heritage sites, symbols and national holidays. In Zimbabwe, according to Ranger (2004, p. 215), “‘patriotic history’ is propagated at many levels – on television and in the state-controlled press; in youth militia camps; in new school history courses and textbooks.” While textbook production has been a private sector activity, the Zimbabwe government has always reserved the right to recommend textbooks for use in the schools. The publishing companies therefore have had to follow “guidelines set by the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) of the Ministry of Education” (Barnes, 2004, p. 145).

One typical example of the Zimbabwean government's hand in textbook production and use was in 2000, when a project undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) culminated in the production of a new series of history textbooks. Yet, the project has so far been rendered redundant as the books have failed to gain government endorsement on the pretext that they represent "bogus universalism" (Ranger, 2004, p. 225). As a result, these new textbooks remain largely unknown and unused. Even if these condemned textbooks were known to the history teachers, few would want to risk using them, especially with closer monitoring of history teachers by the state and, especially, ZANU (PF) youth militia.² The militia have been the public face of the enforcement of patriotic history and their mission has been made easier by the fact that militia camps and training bases have often been located in schools, particularly in the rural areas. As such, the militia often accuse some teachers who are "progressive and teaching alternative points of view" of "preaching opposition politics" in their classrooms (The Solidarity Peace Trust, 2003, p. 156). The most vulnerable teachers in this case were history teachers who were expected to teach patriotic history. As a result, this has created tension in history education over a number of years.

Given the foregoing background and context, one can argue that school history is taken seriously by the Zimbabwean government. This would not be something new as history is littered with examples of the uses and abuses of school history by governments of varying orientations. As already exemplified, in the former GDR, the communist government used school history as a key conduit of official propaganda to levels almost similar to those used by their predecessors, the Nazis (Rodden, 2009). This background sets the scene for an enquiry on the kind of historical literacy that history textbooks that are currently in use in Zimbabwe promote.

² In 2004, a fellow history teacher was held by Central Intelligence Officers for three days ostensibly for making use of an independent newspaper (*The Weekend Gazette*) at school.

1.2 Rationale for the study

This study focuses on the intersection of history textbooks and the notion of historical literacy. There is a focus on history textbooks because they are at the forefront in terms of propagating official history through government control (Apple, 1991; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Rodden, 2009). At the same time, textbooks still dominate the teaching of history in the schools (Apple, 1991; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Mirkovic & Crawford, 1998; Crawford, 2000; Nicholls, 2006). This is especially so in Zimbabwe considering a serious lack of resources in the majority of schools (Kanyongo, 2005). Even in the mid-1990s, when the Zimbabwean economy was still relatively stable, the government was struggling to provide adequate subsidy for the purchase of textbooks because of massive surges in learner enrolment figures (Barnes, 2004). The focus on “O” Level history textbooks is based on the rationale that it is at “O” Level that history is compulsory in secondary school. At “A” Level, there is no strict textbook prescription for history and the subject is voluntary.

It is valuable to analyse history textbooks in an attempt to conceptualise historical literacy in Zimbabwe because only then can we have an idea of what the history learner takes out of studying school history, which the government has branded important through compulsion. If one puts together government control of history textbook production and use and compulsion of school history, one finds that there is a certain kind of historical literacy that the Zimbabwe government wishes to promote amongst its citizens. It should be clarified that the assumption here is not necessarily that what is in the textbooks is exactly the government’s official story, but government interests and manipulation can not be underplayed.

Production of new history textbooks in Zimbabwe is overdue. According to Nicholls (2003), on average, textbooks need to be renewed at most every ten years. The history textbooks that are in use in most schools in Zimbabwe today are more than a decade old. Therefore, not only does this study attempt to check if there is an alignment between the history textbooks and government’s patriotic

history project. The results of this study are useful in terms of setting benchmarks to be considered for the future production of history textbooks in Zimbabwe. If history is to remain relevant in a changing curriculum terrain, the textbooks need to suit the present-day context, and this analysis demonstrates what is useful about the Zimbabwean history textbooks and what needs to be reconsidered.

1.3 Purpose and focus of the study

Given the issues explained in the background and contextualisation, what is neither clear nor agreed upon – at least practically – is what kind of history the learners should know, how much history they should know and whether just knowing in itself is enough. This creates a fuzzy explanation of the purpose of school history in Zimbabwe. In fact, in a global context where history is facing stiff competition from new educational disciplines that have mushroomed in the last twenty years and are attempting to elbow established disciplines such as history out of relevance, I was left with more questions: Why was history made compulsory in Zimbabwe? What is school history for in Zimbabwe? In other words, what is expected of a school history graduate? The answers to these questions are not simple and straightforward. It can also be open to question whether the efforts of government to move patriotic history into the formal school curriculum were successful, considering the implications in terms of resource provision, especially textbooks. Understanding the concept of historical literacy gives one some tools which are useful in trying to come up with a number of answers to some of my questions. As a concept, historical literacy is constantly evolving and has been theorised with rather different views.

In the light of the above, the purpose of this study is to analyse “O” Level history textbooks so as to conceptualise historical literacy in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the focus is on two phenomena under focus: history textbooks and the concept of historical literacy. The study firstly traced the origins and evolution of the notion of historical literacy. I then evaluated the various theories of historical literacy to come up with one useable conceptual framework of historical literacy. I finally

used the framework as a basis to make meaning of this concept in analysing Zimbabwean history textbooks. It is intended that the conceptualisation will contribute to explaining what school history is for in Zimbabwe.

There is ample evidence of conceptualisation of historical literacy especially in Europe and America. For example Ravitch (1989) considers historical literacy to be a grasp of important historical facts. Wineburg, (1991) argued that historical literacy is more than just recall of facts, but application of historical method. More recently, Taylor (2003) and Lee (2004, p. 9) contend that historical literacy implies a combination of several competences in history with the latter referring to it as an “intellectual toolkit.” However, efforts to find examples of the theorisation of this concept in Africa, and in Zimbabwe to be particular, have not been fruitful. This motivated my study with this overarching question: How does the notion of historical literacy manifest itself in Ordinary Level history textbooks in Zimbabwe? An understanding of the kind of historical literacy as illustrated in the history textbooks that are currently in use aimed at helping explain what school history is for in Zimbabwe. Inspired by Seixas (2006) and considering the preceding background, one can ask: What does the Zimbabwe government, through the history textbooks, want to cultivate in the way of historical literacy in the next generation? This crucial question summarises the main motivation behind this study.

1.4 Research design and methodology

Textual analysis or documentary analysis is the methodology adopted for this study. It is conducted in the interpretivist paradigm because the main aim is to make sense of what the textbooks imply in terms of historical literacy. The methodology is qualitative in nature. The epistemological assumption is that knowledge and reality are socially constructed. Thus historical literacy is conceptualised differently in various time frames, spaces and contexts.

The above epistemological assumptions are also anchored by the point that textbooks are secondary data – they are written not necessarily for analysis purposes. Therefore analysis can be done in an unobtrusive manner. I purposively selected a sample of three Ordinary Level textbooks which are *People making history* (Prew, Pape, Mutwira & Barnes, 1993), *People and power* (Proctor & Phimister, 1997) and *Focus on history* (Mlambo, 1993). Data were generated from specific parts of the selected textbooks, that is, from the theme on the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. Criteria for analysis were based on Pingel's (1999) list and these are: the cover pages, jacket texts, prefaces, descriptive texts, images, and assessment activities. The data analysis methods which I used are historical discourse analysis (Peräkylä, 2008), visual analysis (Nicholls, 2003) and question analysis (Nicholls, 2003). Because of its limited conceptualisation, question analysis was integrated with Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). In the analytical instrument, the benchmarks of historical literacy that I set in the conceptual framework are what I used as categories of analysis.

I made a conscious effort to use theories grounded in history education. This decision was informed by Wineburg's (2000) significant argument: one reason why there is weak understanding of history education is that theories from other fields have been used to theorise school history while theories from history education have not necessarily been, in turn, generalized to other disciplines. While acknowledging the value of generic theories, it is essential that history educationists engage in theorization in their field if the field is to grow and if a greater understanding of history education is to be attained.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This dissertation consists of seven chapters, this one being the first. The second chapter is a review of literature on historical literacy. It interrogates the arguments by various scholars who theorise historical literacy. The chapter ends with a construction of the conceptual framework which I then used for the study.

Chapter three is also a literature review, but in this case, of issues regarding textbooks and, in particular, history textbooks. I have two literature review chapters because the literature on historical literacy and literature on history textbooks are both extensive separately. Furthermore, while the literature on historical literacy ends up informing the conceptual framework, the literature on textbooks mainly informs the methodology to be adopted. The fourth chapter explains the research design and methodology in detail. This explanation is based on the conceptual framework and mainly on the literature on history textbooks. I also have two chapters on the research findings. In chapter five, I present and discuss the findings of the analysis, in the process revealing the manifestation of historical literacy in the cover pages, jacket texts and prefaces of the selected history textbooks, while in Chapter 6 I present the findings from the descriptive texts and the assessment activities from the same textbook sample. Chapter seven is the concluding chapter and it discusses and draws from the significant points in the whole dissertation, but especially from chapter five. I also give recommendations for further research while also explaining the implication of the study.

1.6 Limitations

Admittedly, this study has a number of limitations and identifying them is a key to producing a better piece of research. Firstly, the study was conducted in South Africa and therefore from outside the country under focus. While this is a limitation, it also enabled me to make maximum use of both Zimbabwean and South African views on history education. Secondly, as a former teacher in Zimbabwe, I conducted the study as both a participant and subject of patriotic history. This is a limitation in that my experience has an influence on some of the judgements I make on the purpose of school history in Zimbabwe. However, at the same time, I took advantage of this experience as it enabled me to make informed evaluations. The last limitation is the lack of generalisability of the study. While this is a limitation, it in fact makes the study worthwhile because my contention is that historical literacy is conceptualised differently depending on the

time, space and context. Therefore, what Zimbabwean textbooks of today might view as historical literacy may not necessarily be the same as the view of other countries' textbooks.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter served to introduce and summarise the research that is encapsulated in this dissertation. The main thrust here was to explain the background and contextualisation of this study. The explanation has demonstrated that while textbooks are an essential resource to teaching and learning history in Zimbabwe, they are subject to manipulation by government and thus end up producing a sanitised version of history, in the process promoting a particular form of historical literacy in the learners. In a context where the same history textbooks have been in use for almost two decades, this research analyses if the kind of historical literacy that is manifested therein and if it suits the government efforts to sell patriotic history.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review: Conceptualising historical literacy

2.1 Introduction

For a minimum of eleven and maximum of thirteen years, Zimbabwean learners have to study history in school. But the point of studying the subject for all those years is not always obvious to everyone. The contention in this chapter is that the notion of historical literacy is the embodiment of what a history learner should acquire out of studying the subject. I therefore adopt a functional view of history education. With this outlook in mind, this chapter is a review of literature focusing primarily on explaining the concept of historical literacy. Hence, this literature review is a response to the research question posed in Chapter 1 and will survey the relevant body of knowledge before I present an argument. I firstly trace the origins and evolution of the concept of literacy in general. After that, I explain the emergence and development of historical literacy. On the back of these explanations, I then use various theorisations of the concept of historical literacy to construct a conceptual framework within which this study is structured.

2.2 Evolving meanings of the concept of literacy

Literacy studies do not have a long history outside the languages. Whereas the concept of literacy has quickly, albeit belatedly, gained ground in some subjects, such as science and mathematics, it can be argued to be still negotiating its place in history. Hence, in order to understand the concept that is historical literacy, one has to grasp its origin in the context of other literacies and its development over time.

To gain a useful bigger picture, I commence by trying to understand literacy as a general concept. Studies on literacy have demonstrated how complex defining the concept can be. Clifford (1984, p. 472) illustrated how literacy had thus far evolved from being a preserve of "old men and monks," to a concept whose meaning ranges from elitist to inclusivist. As elitist, literacy is supposed to be

attained by a very restricted portion of the population as its definition is tightened to connote the highest attainable standards. In such cases, the elite will also have political power, along with it many other forms of influence such as economic and religious power. Thus, literacy becomes a cultural tool, without which the ordinary populace are excluded from either enjoying the benefits of or confronting the challenges of the society within which they live. On the other hand, as inclusivist, literacy is not perceived as a tool to alienate people. This means that in an inclusivist form, the definition of literacy is made simpler and broadened; such that an individual who can insert an X on a document as signature, without necessarily being able to fully comprehend the contents of the document, is deemed to be literate. The opposite is true for elitist notions of literacy whereby only a select elite are deemed literate thereby enabling them to rise to the upper echelons of society. Variations of both elitist and inclusivist conceptions of literacy are demonstrated across various countries. For example, while for many years the UNESCO measurement of literacy was based on the level of education one has reached, politicians in different countries may interpret it differently, some in a campaign to be lauded for eradicating illiteracy (Roberts, 1995).

For the reasons discussed above, the meaning of literacy may be argued to be very ambiguous (Hillerich, 1976). The major question that tends to arise recurrently is how literacy should be measured, if it can reliably be measured at all. In other words, where does one draw the line between a literate individual and an illiterate one? One response to this dilemma came from Hillerich (1976) who refuted the existence of a literacy/illiteracy dichotomy. In an attempt not to be exclusivist, he proposed a continuum of literacy which meant that one would not need to draw an iron curtain to separate the literate from the illiterate. Instead, the continuum implies that people can be positioned at different levels of literacy in ascending or descending order. While the continuum apparently solves the literacy/illiteracy dilemma, it is not free from criticism either. What complicates the issue most is what level of aptitude can be considered to be the lowest standard

for a literate individual. In other words, although the achievement standards are simplified and lowered, one will still need to draw a line where an individual may be deemed totally illiterate. In addition, the developmental stages of a literacy continuum are fraught with complications. It suggests that one's literacy develops in a sequence of predetermined and predictable stages. This model may entail still having to come up with a measuring instrument in order to determine a person's level of literacy (Clifford, 1984). All these considerations illustrate the complications related to attempting at coming up with a single and generic understanding of the concept literacy.

The research by Clifford (1984) is also very insightful in acknowledging the existence of varying connotations of literacy. Explaining the development of the diverse meanings of literacy, he demonstrated how this development can be categorized into three stages in terms of:

(a) a heightening of qualitative standards of literacy to encompass higher order cognitive processes; (b) a broadening of the social and individual purposes that literacy is intended to serve; and (c) an extending of the literate from religious and scholarly elites to the whole population (p. 482).

The above quotation suggests that, with time, the notion of literacy has broadened to encompass other competencies which might not necessarily have been considered earlier. The apparent result of this development is that literacy has now been extended to other disciplines resulting in new conceptions such as "television literacy", "computer literacy", "scientific literacy" and "historical literacy" (Clifford, 1984, p. 481). To this list of diverse literacies can be added mathematical literacy (Hobden, 2007; Madongo, 2007).

The wide-ranging nature of literacy had been cemented by the late 1990s as the concept was no longer limited to the languages only. According to Roberts (1995, p. 413) "a more productive line of inquiry would be to consider how literacy has been constructed, shaped and discussed, by whom, when, where, and why."

This argument is valuable in that it rightly concludes that the conceptualisation of literacy – be it scientific, mathematical or historical – crucially depends on the time, space and context under study. Furthermore, Roberts (1995) argued that there are three major conceptions in literacy studies; that is, the quantitative, qualitative, and pluralist. The quantitative measure of literacy is based on figures and an example of this would be when scholars measure learners' reading ages. Social scientists, however, came up with an alternative range of qualitative definitions of literacy. Of these, the description by Gudschinsky (1976, as cited in Roberts, 1995, p. 429) revealed that the most important aspects of literacy are speaking, reading, writing and understanding. It should be noted that speaking, reading and writing are skills. Therefore early ideas of literacy were primarily grounded in skills acquisition. However, Roberts (1995, p. 418) preferred the pluralist approach to literacy which “concentrates on describing in a more general way the 'features' or 'dimensions' of literacy and the literate person.”

The quantitative notion of measuring literacy is, in a way, related to the literacy/illiteracy dichotomy. For example, if one is of a certain age, but has not attained the corresponding reading age, the individual is considered illiterate. The qualitative notion can be correlated to the continuum conception of literacy. Evidently, it assumes that a person develops from speaking to reading, through writing until they develop to reach the pinnacle of literacy which, in this case, is understanding. Considering the weaknesses these two notions have been identified to have, the pluralist notion offers a different and more convincing view. The strength of the pluralist approach is that it does not consider literacy to be continuum, but rather a construction made-up of several building blocks.

In relation to Hillerich's (1976) continuum of literacy in general, Kaiser & Willander (2005, as cited in Madongo, 2007, pp. 33-34) identify and develop five levels of literacy which are: “illiteracy”, “nominal literacy”, “functional literacy”, “conceptual and procedural literacy”, and “multidimensional literacy” - in respective order. What this continuum suggests is a rejection of the

literacy/illiteracy dichotomy and hence it is inclusivist. However, it has already been pointed out that one of the weaknesses associated with this continuum type of outline is the assumption that the stages of development are fixed and predictable. Although the characteristics of an individual within each stage of literacy are enumerated, they remain subjective.

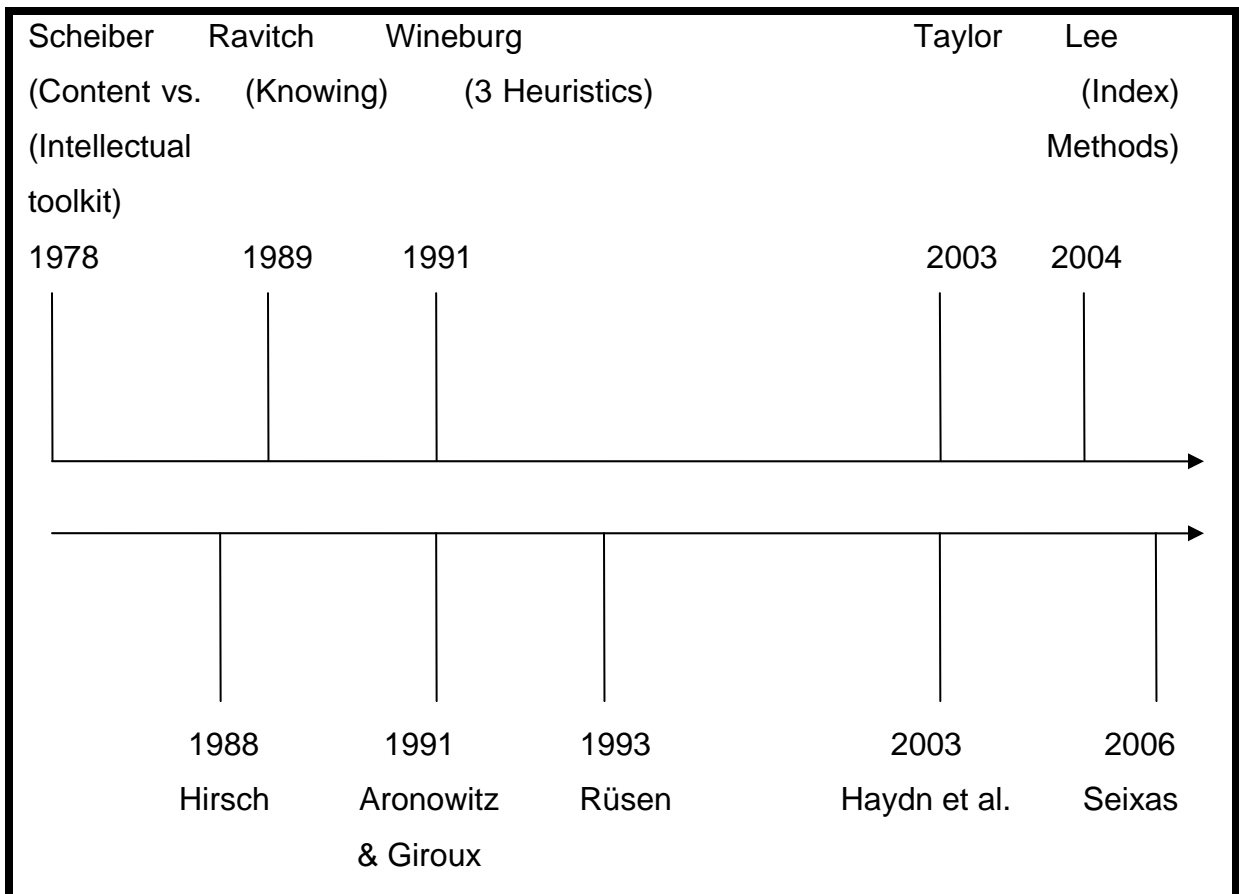
2.3 The emergence and development of historical literacy

The literature summarily reviewed above does not directly deal with historical literacy; however it is critical in bringing up arguments which can be applied to other forms of literacy. This section of the literature review will contend that there is a difference between literacy in history and historical literacy. While the former refers to the ability to read and write while studying school history, the latter implies what someone gains from studying school history. In presenting this argument, I will commence with a brief analysis of the evolving meanings of the concept of historical literacy from the point of view of the major theorists. The template that I will use for this literature review is that I will firstly identify a major theorist and the time they put forward their theorisation. I will then analyse how the theorists conceptualised historical literacy. After that I will review the context within which each theory was propounded. Finally, I will highlight the major strengths and weaknesses of the conceptualisation, the connection between the different conceptualisations and how they built up on each other. This analysis is very useful as I ultimately used it to construct a useful conceptual framework for my study. The major theorists and the evolving meanings of historical literacy are revealed in the timeline in Figure 2.1.

It is noteworthy that although the theorists on the timeline constitute the significant researchers in relation to historical literacy specifically, they are not the only ones to have contributed to the discussions. Indeed, some scholars might not have explicitly used the term historical literacy, but their role in the theorisation of history education is nonetheless important. As Figure 2.1 illustrates, the scholars on the top row of the timeline referred directly to the

concept historical literacy, while the scholars in the bottom row have theorised history education such that their arguments feed into historical literacy as a construct. Therefore, it would be folly to argue that before the term historical literacy was coined, or outside its perimeters, scholars were not and are not trying to understand what the ultimate achievement in the study of school history is from a functional perspective. With this in mind, their input will be discussed as it feeds into the arguments of the main scholars identified above.

Figure 2.1. Timeline showing the evolving meanings of historical literacy. The upper line represents theorists who refer to historical literacy and the lower line represents those who do not use the term.



The first significant mention of the concept of historical literacy can be traced back to 1978 when Scheiber (1978) used it to refer to the competence that an individual displays in making sense of not only text, but also various other

sources of history such as images, symbols or music (Clifford, 1984). Scheiber's (1978) contention was in the context of the emerging debate about content versus methods in school history. However, Clifford (1984, p. 493) reminds us of how this debate had its roots in the early 20th century as the American Historical Association (AHA) advocated for the promotion of "higher order literacy in 20th-century American public schools" through stressing the use of inquiry methods and problem solving. Indeed, Scheiber (1978, as cited in Clifford, 1984, p. 493) acknowledged that the AHA was:

in the vanguard of efforts to restructure history and social studies teaching; it sought de-emphasis of the old moralistic and patriotic objectives, and it argued for the need to view historical study as a means of cultivating critical intelligence or, in modern parlance, 'cognitive skills.'

The argument as championed by Scheiber (1978) did not take root back then. In fact, just over a decade later, a strong standpoint as argued for by Ravitch (1989) was that historical literacy refers to levels of historical content knowledge, that is, an accumulation of facts about past events. This argument can be connected to historical knowledge as a form of historical literacy. Only in the recent years has the mere knowledge of past events begun to be questioned globally as an authentic grasp of school history. Although the term historical literacy is still developing, the knowledge of a certain body of facts of the past was, for centuries, the hallmark of the knowledge of history. In spite of the argument against the mere absorption of facts in the study of history, one can not deny that without some facts, history ceases to exist. This was the core of Ravitch's (1989) argument when she decried the low levels of historical factual knowledge among contemporary American students. She claimed that "some information is so basic, so essential that all students must know it in order to make sense of new learning" (Ravitch, 1989, p. 53). Therefore, according to the Ravitch (1989) school of thought, historical knowledge is equivalent to historical literacy.

Ravitch's (1989) point of view is not entirely new. It has been common for some historians to tend to grieve over what Ravitch & Finn (1998, as cited in Wineburg, 2000, p. 33) term the contemporary generation's "shameful ignorance" while celebrating the nostalgia of a "presumed golden age of fact retention." This argument was strengthened in the 1980s with the results of the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs) in the USA which concluded that American students displayed disappointingly deteriorating knowledge of historical information that is presumed basic and should be known by everyone. So alarmingly bad were these results in some circles that scholars – significantly Hirsch (1988, p. 22) – declared American education, along with it, the economy and "civilisation" in crisis and consequently lamented the contemporary students as "a generation of cultural illiterates." The opposite of cultural illiteracy, as Hirsch (1988, p. 22) called it, was cultural ignorance which rendered students unable to "thrive in the modern world." This conception resonates with the literacy/illiteracy dichotomy explained earlier. The argument was that illiteracy had emerged in the last half of the 20th century and that students should know basic facts on "geographical names, historical events, famous people, patriotic lore, and scientific terms" (Hirsch, as cited in Sleeter & Grant, 1991, p. 228). While the critical usefulness of literacy is to determine the learner's fate in relation to overcoming contemporary challenges, Hirsch's (1988) doomsday prediction is rather too alarmist. Indeed, Aronowitz & Giroux (1991) dismiss Hirsch (1988) together with other scholars such as Bennett, Ravitch, Finn and Glazer as conservatives who are responding to their perceived threat of post-modernism which has served to undermine the meta-narratives of what should be known.

There are at least two contentions in relation to the issue of so-called shameful ignorance. Firstly, Wineburg (2000) reveals that actual research does not demonstrate any substantial change in learners' historical factual knowledge over time. In fact, evidence demonstrates that since the times of Socrates³, the youth

³ A popular quotation by Socrates, in 399 B.C. cites him admonishing the youth for being wayward, loving luxury and being forgetful.

have always been blamed for lacking something that the older generation possesses. This trend continues up to today. In response to the lamentation of older generations about the younger generations' apparent lack of historical knowledge Wertsch (2006, p. 55) put forward the "schematic narrative templates" which, he argued, are "a means for understanding differences as well as commonalities between the two generations" in terms of historical knowledge. His contention is that although older generations may claim to (and apparently) have more memory of historical facts; in reality their knowledge might not be very different if it falls within one schematic narrative template. Wertsch (2006, p. 57) gives the example of Soviet Union school history students and post-Soviet Union students whereby the latter group apparently seemed to be deficient in content knowledge, when in actual fact the two groups could retell their history within the same "triumph-over-alien-forces' narrative."

The second concern is that in trying to inculcate certain historical facts into the younger generations, the older generation might end up emphasising memory and celebration of heritage. Critically, according to Phillips (2006) history, heritage and memory are not necessarily the same. This argument was echoed by Lowenthal (1998, as cited in Virta, 2008, p. 124) who contended that heritage is "amateur scholarship" and it is "accessible for anyone and meaningful for many." All these contentions are interrelated to Ravitch's (1989) perception of historical literacy, whereby content knowledge determines one's historical literacy. This view, in spite of its shortcomings, can not be discarded entirely and it is central to the development of an understanding of the notion of historical literacy.

In response to the likes of Ravitch (1989) and Hirsch (1988) a new dimension was added to the conceptualisation of literacy in general and historical literacy in particular. Aronowitz & Giroux (1991, p. 227) start by acknowledging and agreeing with Hirsch (1988) that any definition of literacy should embrace "a particular relationship between knowledge and power." This will then imply that

any crisis of literacy – that is if it ever exists – should be defined primarily as an “epistemological and political problem.” However, that is where the agreement ends. Aronowitz & Giroux (1991, p. 229) then took issue with Hirsch (1988) for simplistically calculating that “cultural literacy is the precondition for industrial growth, and that with industrial growth comes the standardisation of language, culture, and learning.” Not only is this considered a baffling case of historical determinism, it is also based on an assumption of Western culture as “egalitarian and homogeneous.” The crux of Aronowitz & Giroux’s (1991, p. 233) argument is that if historical literacy is conceptualised as was done by Hirsch (1988) and Ravitch (1989), then history turns out to be “a museum of information that merely legitimates a particular view of history as a sacred goods designed to be received rather than interrogated by students.” In other words, history should be a territory for academic struggle and any historically literate individual should be able to partake in this struggle.

If one accepts the argument by Aronowitz & Giroux (1991), they will have to view historical literacy as a discourse which is not universal and which is embedded in “social and political relations, ideological practices, and symbolic meaning structures” (p. 236). Implicit in this argument is the notion of multiple literacies in an attempt to avoiding labelling certain sections of society illiterate simply because they do not know information which is not significant in their contexts. Aronowitz & Giroux (1991, p. 236) sum up their argument thus:

To acknowledge different forms of literacy is not to suggest that they should all be given equal weight. ... This presents a form of literacy that is not merely epistemological, but also deeply political and eminently pedagogical. It is political because literacy represents a set of practices that can provide the conditions through which people can be empowered or disempowered. It is pedagogical because literacy always involves social relations in which learning takes place; power legitimates a particular view of the world, and privilege legitimates a specific rendering of knowledge.

It is apparent that the conceptualisation of the notion of historical literacy by Aronowitz & Giroux (1991) is different to that by Ravitch (1989). Historical literacy was now being considered as not universal and was manifested by individuals' ability to make use of their history to empower themselves.

The meaning of the notion of historical literacy was developed further by Wineburg (1991) who argued that the concept goes well beyond mere recall of facts as was the argument by Ravitch (1989). His contention was that the key to historical literacy is what he referred to as the three heuristics – sourcing, corroboration and contextualisation. Evidently, this implies a sort of historical literacy continuum whereby sourcing would represent the lowest level of literacy, and contextualisation the highest. The allusion, therefore, is that on top of historical knowledge an individual needs to be able to work with historical sources, as is expected of professional historians in order to achieve historical literacy.

Sourcing refers to “noticing and evaluating the source of the document” (Wineburg, 1991, as cited in Perfetti et al., 1994, p. 262). In other words, these are enquiry methods and processes that one needs to be able to practice in order to be a historian. This notion of historical literacy assumes the historically literate person as being able to gather sources, be they primary or secondary, which are relevant to their line of historical enquiry. The basis of this argument is that it is only after gathering the historical sources that one can analyse and evaluate their origins. It would be difficult to label a learner who does not know how to gather sources or information as a historically literate person.

Wineburg (1991) identified corroboration as the second stage of the continuum of heuristics that contribute to a learner's historical literacy. It denotes an historical investigation whereby a historically literate person “check[s] the facts mentioned in the document against those in other documents” (Perfetti et al., 1994, p. 262). To further develop this notion, corroboration involves checking the information gathered against information from other sources, both official and unofficial.

Because of this, the historically literate individual should in the end be able to come up with multi-perspectives of one story. Boix-Mansilla (2000, p. 406) calls this an ability to apply “historical modes of thinking.” This entails working with different historical sources to identify the multiple causes of events and being able to compare and contrast events and perceptions. In doing this, one should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the particular sources, official or unofficial. In fact it can be contended that the ability to discriminate official history from unofficial history is evidence of historical literacy (Penuel & Wertsch, 2000).

The third step as identified by Wineburg (1991) is contextualisation which means setting “events in a larger context” (Perfetti et al., 1994, p. 262). The implied larger context is either time or space. Without the ability to apply this method, an individual may tend to view the past as made up of unconnected events. It should be noted that this heuristic became more important by the 1990s with the accelerated rate of globalisation. As such, it became essential for history learners to connect events around the world while also making meaning of local events in the context of the global picture. According to Lee (2004), contextualisation is a major indicator of historical literacy which many students struggle to achieve. A solution to this is for learners to have a usable framework of the past which enables learners to set events in a “big picture” which, in turn, enables them to “go beyond fragmentary extrapolation from the very recent past” Lee (2004, p. 8). A historically literate individual should picture the past not only as a story, but also as a map so that history is contextualized within space and time (Shemilt, 2000, p. 94).

Wineburg’s (1991) conceptualisation was a big step in the evolution of historical literacy from viewing it as mere content knowledge to knowledge coupled with the application of historical investigative and processes. Thus, this development was cumulative rather than subtractive. In other words, Wineburg (1991) did not argue that knowledge was not important. Instead, he contended that historical knowledge without the understanding and application of actual historical

technique is not as useful as was assumed by Ravitch (1989). The reason for this argument is that knowledge is obtained from historical sources. It is noteworthy that Wineburg's (1991) emphasis on the use of sources came in a context of the development of skills-based curricula in many countries in the wake of Shemilt's (1980; 1983; 1987) far-reaching work in the School Councils History Project (SHP) in Britain in the 1980s. Evidence of this frame of thinking is the move away from memorisation and regurgitation of historical facts towards increased amount of source work with which history learners had to engage with similar to historians.

After some relative silence on the concept of historical literacy for several years, the next major step in the conceptualisation of historical literacy was by Taylor (2003) who drew up an index in which historical literacy was presented as a combination of several concepts. In this way, Taylor (2003) fore-grounded, after about 10 years, the notion of historical literacy through his theorisation. Taylor's interest in historical literacy can also be linked to developments within his context. Based in Australia, Taylor (2003) wrote comprehensively on historical literacy. It should be noted that prior to his theorisation, he was head of a project at Monash University to investigate the quality and status of teaching and learning of history in Australia whose report was produced in May 2000. This inquiry team was set up as a result of concerns, starting in the mid-1990s in Australia, that school history was failing to thrive (Taylor, 2000). It elicited the views of teachers and curriculum officials on school history. Taking a cue from this project, Taylor (2003) proceeded and conceptualised historical literacy in an attempt to theorise and, in the process, come up with an instrument to measure individuals' historical literacy. His arguments also built on the theorisations that had already been done by earlier history education scholars such as Ravitch (1989) and Wineburg (1991).

At the apex of his index of historical literacy, Taylor (2003) placed knowledge of the events of the past. He admitted the useful role played by what may be termed

prior knowledge, which learners come to school with from mainly unofficial sources (Phillips, 2006). This implies an acknowledgement of what Lowenthal (1998, as cited in Virta, 2008, p. 124) dismissed as “amateur scholarship.” The placement of knowledge of past events at the top of the index shows how fundamental Taylor considers knowledge to be in historical literacy.

The cumulative evolution of the concept of historical literacy is also demonstrated when Taylor (2003) modified Wineburg’s (1991) heuristics. While he steered clear of using the term heuristics, Taylor (2003) still refers to them, although his focus is mainly on the understanding and use of historical skills. He acknowledges research skills to be crucial, in the process defining them as “gathering, analysing and using the evidence (artefacts, documents and graphics) and issues of provenance” (p. 6) Clearly, there is a similarity between Taylor’s (2003) “research skills” and Wineburg’s (1991) “sourcing.” Taylor (2003) furthermore argued the importance of historical method and skills by pointing out that a history learner should be able to use historical reasoning, synthesis and interpretation to explain historical events. This means that historical literacy also implies the ability to make sense of the sources and to show why each event happened in its own context.

Taylor (2003) went further than Wineburg (1991) through being more specific about the sources to which one applies historical method. One such aspect from his index is the use of applied science to determine the way historical events occurred. Therefore, according to Taylor (2003, p. 1) “understanding the use and the value of scientific and technological expertise and methods in investigating the past” is a sign of historical literacy. Although history and science are disciplines which are quite distinct, being able to use science to explain historical events is according to Taylor (2003) proving to be a kind of historical literacy. It must be noted, though that there are problems related to this view. For example, the use of science which is positivist in the social sciences may lead to learners not grasping the historical process (the unpredictability of events) well. Science

also does not tell us about behaviour and attitudes of past people. In any case, many third world countries will need some time before they can afford to conduct hard scientific studies in history. Hence, although being able to use science to explain the past enhances historical literacy, one's failure to use it – for various reasons – does not necessarily render that individual historically illiterate. This proves the argument that historical literacy comprises a number of unique and sometimes independent building blocks, depending on the context.

There is one conspicuously dominant idea throughout Taylor's (2003) index of historical literacy, that is, historical understanding. For example, he identified as a characteristic of historical literacy "understanding the shape of change and continuity over time, understanding multiple narratives and dealing with open-endedness" (p. 6). This implies that an individual who myopically reproduces a single narrative of events lacks critical literacy in history. This view has gained ground as a result of the application of post-modernist and deconstructionist theories in history championed by Foucault and other scholars such as Derrida, White, Mink, Ankersmith and Ricoeur (Munslow, 1997). The post-modernist philosophy challenged the existence and use of grand narratives (or meta-narratives) in history. At varying degrees historians have come to compromise and accept the use of multiple narratives instead of grand narratives in history.

A further notion of historical literacy identified by Taylor (2003, p. 6) is "understanding historical concepts such as causation and motivation." This is in a way related to the previous point wherein he fore-grounded change, continuity and time. These three – amongst others – are some of the key historical concepts without which history learners' historical understanding and therefore historical literacy are limited. Haydn, Arthur & Hunt (2003), in resonance with Taylor (2003) stated and added that the major concepts that enhance historical understanding are identified to be time, evidence, causation/consequence, change/continuity, significance and understanding events and issues from the perspective of people in the past/ making moral judgements on people of the

past. This proposal was a major development in identifying the purpose of school history and in partly explaining why there have been no major theories in this regard since then. Hence, Haydn et al. (2003) should therefore be considered as key theorists in the theorisation of historical literacy, despite them not mentioning the concept directly.

The concepts identified in the foregoing paragraph are known as second order concepts, and they differ from first order concepts such as for example revolution, nationalism and slavery. Lévesque (2005, p. 1) states that second order concepts “implicitly arise in the act of doing historical inquiries” and “are necessary to engage in investigations and to anchor historical narratives (or interpretations) of the past”. The theorisation of second order concepts within the context of the purpose of school history by Haydn et al. (2003) was therefore done at the same time that Taylor (2003) produced his index of historical literacy. Admittedly, Haydn, et al. (2003) did not write about historical literacy, yet still their work feeds directly into the concept. Their work, mainly done in Britain, was in a context of a reworking of the nature of school history which resulted in a concept-based history curriculum. Concept-based school history was a departure, though not major, from the skills and method based school history of the 1980s and nineties. Because of their significance, the second order concepts will henceforth be reviewed individually.

The first concept that Haydn et al. (2003) put forward is significance arguing that for history learners to study the subject with understanding, they should comprehend the significance of that particular subject and the content in it. Therefore history learners should “appreciate how the topic they are studying contributes to their education, informs and explains issues that are both serious and significant to their own lives” Haydn et al. (2003, p. 120). Their argument was that even if the learners may tend to not recall all factual detail which Ravitch (1989) held so dear, realising the significance of historical events is “the enduring educational outcome” (Haydn et al., p. 96). Levstik (2000, p. 284) noted the link

between historical literacy and power – in the fashion of Hirsch (1988) and Aronowitz & Giroux (1991) – by stating that “decisions about what is historically significant have as much to do with what is repressed as with what is recollected.” This can be demonstrated by the language (such as the use of the first person plural “we” or choice of images which could be meant for nation building or emphasis of certain issues or individuals. Ultimately the history textbook should give its user an answer to the question “why are we studying this”? (Hunt, 2003, p. 33) or “what is school history for”? (Husbands, Kitson & Pendry, 2003). This implies that understanding the concept of the significance of history and historical events contributes a great deal to a learner’s historical literacy. However, during the same time frame, Hunt (2003) lamented the lack of focus on the concept of significance in textbooks. He admitted, though, that this has been mainly a result of a lack of official guidance on the concept in curriculum documents. Bradshaw (2007) argued that for learners to learn real historical significance they should not have it dictated, not even by the media or textbooks. Rather they should be given the chance to make their own decisions about the significance of historical events. Yet, it can not be denied that as mediums of official history, textbooks have a huge role to play in deciding historical significance and, ultimately historical literacy.

The centrality of the concept of time in the study of History was also underscored by both Taylor (2003) and Haydn et al. (2003, p. 97), the latter contending that “if pupils are to make sense of history, they need to have some idea about how we ‘measure’ and reference events in history in terms of when they occurred, and to build up a mental framework of the past.” This would mean that historically literate individuals understand time right from “deep time,” that is, “the distant past stretching back to prehistory, the Stone Age and the formation of the Earth” Haydn et al. (2003, p. 97). Admittedly, how far back in time in for example the textbooks may go hugely depends on the history curriculum content. According to Taylor (2003, p.11), if an individual is exposed to sound historical learning, they develop the capacity to confidently and correctly apply period labels. This

implies an understanding of chronology, sequencing and time markers. Examples of time markers include GMT, AD, BC, generation, century, era and epoch. Evidently, understanding the concept of time will have to imply some linguistic and mathematical literacy as well (Wood, 1995; Dawson, 2006). It is also the hallmark of an individual who is historically literate to be able to identify and avoid anachronism and presentism. Presentism implies looking into the past using eyes contextualised in the present world (Partington, 1980). Hence, using the pluralist approach, understanding the concept of time in history is a sub-building block of historical literacy.

In addition to time, the concept of change is crucial to historical literacy. According to Taylor (2003, p. 9) the epitome of understanding change and continuity is the appreciation of “change as the gradual transformation of a situation.” In corroboration, Haydn et al. (2003, p. 116) identified a link comprehension between the concept of change and continuity and the structure and content of the “syllabus” when they stated that “if a syllabus is not chronological (i.e. is episodic), it makes it difficult for learners to understand change and continuity.” In support of this position, Barton (2001, p. 881) adds that one needs a certain set of “cultural tools” in order for them to understand the complexity of the process of change. It is the possession of such cultural tools that enables individuals to be historically literate. The idea of cultural tools can be linked to later theorisation by Lee (2004) who proposed an intellectual toolkit for historical literacy.

The concept of causation was also singled out by both Taylor (2003) as a key component of achieving historical literacy and by Haydn et al. (2003) as a key component of school history. Haydn et al. (2003, p. 112) alleged that most highly intelligent adolescents treat the word “cause” as though it refers not to the connection between events but to the properties of one of the events. Taylor (2003, p. 9) likewise concluded that the epitome of a historically literate learner, in terms of understanding causation, is the understanding that causes are “an

intricate network of actions and factors.” They will have developed from assuming that history is linear and events are inevitable. In addition, Evans & Pate (2007) argued that although learners need scaffolding in order for them to develop good causation arguments, over-scaffolding ends up being retrogressive. The main reason for this argument is that learners need to end up developing independent application of historical method and if they can not be independent then they will cease to be historically literate.

A perplexing paradox that has dogged school history is that on one the hand school history has been forced to carry the burden of developing responsible citizens. On the other hand, learners are not encouraged to make moral judgments of people who lived in the past. Making moral judgments is one of the characteristics of a responsible citizen and this was identified by Taylor (2003) as part of his index of historical literacy. On the contrary, von Borries (1994, p. 346) remarked that “moralising obstructs historical explanations” because moral evaluations and historical judgments are not necessarily the same. Moralising leads to anachronisms as learners try to impose today’s values on societies whose experiences led to the morals the learners are trying to use, he argued. Thus, one can identify two contrary arguments regarding moral judgments. While Taylor (2003) considered understanding moral issues in history as a sign of historical literacy, von Borries (1994) considered avoiding the making of moral judgments to be a sign of historical literacy. Therefore the historically literate learner will have to learn not to let moralising hamper their understanding of historical events.

It is thus evident that second order concepts were a major component of the theorisation of historical literacy. Although Haydn, et al. (2003) did not specifically write about historical literacy, their arguments tally with those of Taylor (2003). But the agreement ends there. Taylor (2003) went further than second order concepts. He also brought to the fore the relevance of historical skills and the

importance of the language of history as key components of both historical literacy and school history.

It has already been alluded to that there is a difference between literacy in history and historical literacy. While the former refers to the ability to read and write while studying school history, the latter implies what someone gains from studying school history (Otto, 1992). According to Taylor (2003, p. 6) “understanding and dealing with the language of the past” is a distinguishing attribute of a historically literate learner. This is because history, as with other specialisations, has its own unique language and genres. Indeed, the meaning ascribed to the word “revolution” in history may differ to that in mathematics. It is these distinctive communication features which “render the accumulation of valid historical understandings problematic for many students” (Husbands, 1996, p. 30). The historically literate learner should be aware of the fact that language in history can have multiple meanings. Husbands (1996) also contended that history learners should understand how language shapes history and how history in turn shapes language. Therefore, while it is important that history learners comprehend historical language, language itself can depict our understanding of History. Thus, it becomes necessary for the historically literate person to understand and make use of the appropriate historical language. The use of this historical language is either textual or oral. To support this, Taylor (2003) added that historical literacy entails “understanding the 'rules' and the place of public and professional historical debate.” This implies that schools should produce learners who have the capacity to practice as professional historians for them to be labelled historically literate.

The use of historical language is related to presentation of the historical narrative. The narrative has seemingly since time-immemorial been the main assessment genre of historical communication and being able to construct one was a sign of historical literacy. Jacott, Lopez-Manjon & Carretero (2000) maintained that the narrative is still important today as long as it is well

presented. Good presentation of a historical narrative is not necessarily about perfect grammar only, but it must also show multi-narratives and should follow the structural model (Jacott et al., 2000). The structural model entails explaining history “based on the relationship between a set of conditions” as opposed to attributing historical developments to human action. Nevertheless, whatever a history learner learns will in the end have to be presented and the narrative is one of expressing what has been learned. Taylor’s (2003) index explained on representational expression whereby historical creativity is expressed through film, drama, visual arts, music, fiction, poetry and information and communications technology (ICT). His argument is that “history is not merely a written or spoken narrative” (Taylor’s 2003, p. 33). It is debatable whether creativity can be taken to be historical literacy; however this is defended with the deconstructionist argument that all narratives are not real representations of the past. Therefore, in spite of the digital divide which means that many parts of Africa have little or no access to ICT, Taylor (2003) considers ICT to be important in history. Such arguments expose the plurality of historical literacy where certain benchmarks are important in some contexts but can not be generalised to all contexts.

In some circles, some historians and history educators (Seixas, 2006; Simon, 2006; Phillips, 2006; Laville, 2006) have focused on theorising historical consciousness. It is important to discuss historical consciousness, firstly, because in some instances it is mentioned almost interchangeably with historical literacy. Secondly, later theorists try to use historical consciousness as a component part of historical literacy (Lee, 2004).

The chief protagonist – though not the first – of historical consciousness is Rüsen (1993, as cited in von Borries, p. 345) describes History as a “complex network of interpreted past, perceived present and expected future.” In its own right, the idea of historical consciousness has had such wide-ranging conceptualisation that it is difficult to pin down one agreed upon definition. This is compounded by

a lot of history education scholars' relative lack of exposure to Rüsen's (1993) work since most of it is written in German (Lee, 2004). Evidently, historical consciousness gained huge ground in the 1990s, a watershed period in the history of Europe in particular and the world in general. With the demise of the Soviet Union, and subsequently the end of the Cold War globally and the unification of Germany, there was a marked change in the role of history in many societies and with this, the way history as a discipline was viewed. As a result, the notion of historical consciousness has been largely theorised in countries that needed to rethink the role of history in their past, present and future (Laville, 2006). Indeed, Rüsen (1993) is identified to have been one of the first to call for a single European monetary currency which would strengthen a European cultural currency which, he argued, developed from a common historical consciousness. The limits of such philosophy was that questions were raised as to whether historical consciousness was European or global.

As the theorisation of historical consciousness continues, questions arise whether historical consciousness and historical literacy are just but two different sides of the same coin. Of late, Seixas (2006, p. 11) understands historical consciousness to be "individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors that shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understandings to those of the present and the future." This conceptualisation can be equated to the clearer and workable understanding provided by the *Youth and History* Project (as cited by Wassermann, 2008, p. 143) which labelled historical consciousness simply as "the connection between the past, the present and the future." These two explanations clearly demonstrate the way historical consciousness can not be a direct equivalent of historical literacy. Instead, this notion has been developing either at least as parallel or at most as part of historical literacy if one adopts the pluralist view of literacy. In this case, historical consciousness becomes a building block of historical literacy which can be related to Wineburg's (1991) contextualisation because a

historically conscious individual will be assumed to be able to contextualise themselves in the unfolding history.

Although Taylor (2003, p. 6) did not specifically name historical consciousness, in his index, he indirectly refers to it under the aspect on “connecting the past with the self and the world today.” This might be viewed not to be exactly how Rüsen (1993) or Seixas (2006) conceptualised historical literacy since there is no mention of the future. Hence, the crux of Taylor’s (2003) index of historical literacy hinges on the intersection between historical knowledge, historical understanding, historical consciousness and historical method. This theorisation also demonstrates the cumulative development of the concept of historical literacy over time.

The key argument in Taylor’s (2003) comprehensive index of historical literacy is that historical knowledge without understanding does not construct a complete historically literate learner. He also considered historical methods to be closely correlated to historical literacy as a product of SHP. The index is very detailed and can be appreciated as a wide-ranging theorisation of historical literacy. Yet still, it should be noted that the index is relevant in a certain context and it does not come up with answers to some critical questions one might want to ask. For example, how much knowledge of the past should one have? Which level of historical skills is optimal? Can one be considered illiterate if they can not use ICT to study history? Such issues demonstrate the predicament one faces if one tries to come up with an instrument to measure literacy. Therefore in terms of the literacy theories already discussed, Taylor’s (2003) theorisation of historical literacy demonstrates the weaknesses inherent in viewing literacy and illiteracy as a dichotomy. The fact that he proposes an index implies that the index can be used as a checklist or an instrument to measure one’s historical literacy.

There is no evidence of Taylor’s (2003) theorisation directly making use of the concept historical consciousness to develop that of historical literacy. In one

statement, though, he argued that, “historical literacy can be seen as a systematic process with particular sets of skills, attitudes and conceptual understandings that mediate and develop historical consciousness (Taylor, 2003, p. 2). The implication of this statement is that historical consciousness develops from historical literacy. Lee (2004) took this up and argued on the contrary that historical consciousness is critical in the conceptualisation and development of historical literacy. After critiquing the work of Rüsen (1993), Lee (2004, p. 9) concluded that, “knowing who we are without a usable historical framework will not lead to literacy.” His argument is that for anyone to be historically literate, they should have an “intellectual toolkit” which will help them in understanding. This intellectual toolkit is made up of many components such that one can make use of the necessary component if the situation demands. For example, conceptual understanding could be taken to be part of the toolkit. However unlike what happened to maths literacy for example in South Africa, Lee (2004) did not view historical literacy, as a separate area of study. Rather, he views it as a competency which develops as a result of optimal study of the subject of history. Manifestly, he builds upon previous conceptualisations of historical literacy rather than come up with a new take on the concept. For example, one might view an intellectual toolkit to be a checklist, just like Taylor’s (2003) index. This would imply that most of the conceptualisation of historical literacy can be viewed from either a quantitative or qualitative, instead of a pluralist perspective.

Lee’s (2004) conceptualisation of historical literacy can be argued to be the most recent theorisation of the concept. Curiously, there is no evidence of a current groundswell of research from different theorists in this field. This should not be interpreted as a sign of the loss of impetus of the concept of historical literacy. On the contrary, it should be interpreted as a gap in a fertile field which is calling for further research and conceptualisation. Reasons for the modest research on historical literacy may include the nature of school history and learning history at school-level, which is, it is conceptualised, not only by history educationists, but also by powerful voices in society such as politicians and governments who are

not easily challenged. This is evidenced by a lot of critical thinking in school history in times of crises, especially political. The contexts that have resulted in major theorisations in the USA, Germany, and even South Africa, by the likes of Ravitch (1989), Wineburg (1991), Rösen (1993) and Taylor (2003) attest to this. Indeed, one could argue that the emergence of the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe in the late 1990s into the 2000s have seen government efforts to re-conceptualise historical literacy in the country as explained in chapter one (Ranger, 2004). The notion of historical literacy is therefore very useful as a conceptual framework in studies that evaluate the quality of history that learners learn in schools, and outside for that matter.

This subsection of chapter two has interrogated the research that is in relation to theorising the concept of historical literacy and explained what various theorists perceive to be the essence of the study of school history. This review paves the way for the next subsection by providing the basis of the construction of a conceptual framework that will be adopted for this study. With the framework, I will be able to answer the key research question which was explained in the introductory chapter.

2.4 Towards a conceptual framework of historical literacy

In this subsection, I will now make use of all the above theorists' relevant conceptualisations to come up with a model of historical literacy that can be used as the conceptual framework for this research. In doing so, I will assemble the ideas of historical literacy as identified by the literature review. This will enable me to identify the overlays of the ideas and the silences in the research. I will then put forward what can be regarded to be the benchmarks of historical literacy and ultimately these will play an essential role in informing the methodology and methods adopted for this study.

Summarily, the literature review elicited the conception that literacy, and hence historical literacy, can be viewed, firstly, as a literacy/illiteracy dichotomy,

secondly, as a continuum or thirdly, as composed of building blocks. These three views fittingly tally with ideas of historical literacy as defined from quantitative, qualitative or pluralist standpoints respectively. For this study, I will adopt the pluralist notion of historical literacy which implies that historical literacy is made up of component building blocks as expounded by Roberts (1995). Therefore, historical literacy will not be viewed as easily dichotomous in that one is only ever classified as either literate or illiterate as explained by Clifford (1984) since such an idea is exclusivist. Neither will I assume that historical literacy develops through predestined and predictable stages and in a linear fashion until one attains the highest possible level of literacy as propounded by Hillerich (1976). Both the exclusivist and continuum notions of historical literacy imply quantification of the concept. However, the literature review above demonstrates that there is no agreed way of quantifying historical literacy. Therefore, one can argue that it is possible to get a qualitative description of historical literacy without attempting to quantify it.

Another major question for consideration emerging from the review of literature is whether historical literacy should be regarded as a competency or as a subject of study like mathematical literacy as adopted by some scholars (Hobden, 2007; Madongo, 2007). It can be concluded that at no point have the history education theorists that were reviewed suggested that historical literacy should turn out to be a separate field of study. This is despite all the debates about the relevance of school history and the challenges it receives from more vocationally-oriented subjects such as commercial subjects (Rabb, 2004). Reviewing the literature revealed how all the theorists agreed that historical literacy is the embodiment of what a learner acquires through the learning of school history. What they differ on, in some cases, is what it is that the learners should acquire and this can be established as a gap in research. This research therefore sets the benchmarks of historical literacy based on what the research reveals.

For this research, I adopt the argument by Aronowitz & Giroux (1991) that it would be folly to attempt to come up with one generic definition of historical literacy. As already mentioned, contexts and circumstances have a major say in how historical literacy is viewed in a particular society. This is the reason why the meaning of the concept has been evolving, and there is no reason to assume that the evolution has ended. Quantitative conceptions of historical literacy suggest attempts at a one-size-fits-all definition of the concept. On the contrary, the adoption of a qualitative conception of historical literacy implies an admission that historical literacy is flux and it means dissimilar things to diverse people in different times, spaces and contexts. Therefore, my conceptual framework will adopt multiple literacies, that is, there are manifold manifestations of historical literacy.

I argue that historical content knowledge alone is an insufficient yardstick for the achievement of historical literacy. I therefore contend that if other factors such as historical understanding are built upon content knowledge they become crucial to historical literacy. This does not imply, nevertheless, that historical understanding is equal to historical literacy. In fact, the former can be taken to be a component of the latter. To avoid the risk, created by conceiving historical literacy as a dichotomy or a continuum, of erroneously labelling the majority of people in the study of history – never mind the world – historically illiterate, a position is taken whereby people can be said to possess various notions of historical literacy. In other words, historical literacy can be metaphorically equated to a house and whether the house is double-storey or not, it remains a house. The additional storeys are there, in some cases, to add value without necessarily changing the generic nature of the structure.

It was also pointed out that Hirsch (1988) and Aronowitz & Giroux (1991) agreed that any definition of literacy should not be separated from power. Indeed, the powerful sectors of society construct historical literacy for the rest. The powerful groups could be politicians who ensure that historical literacy may be seen as the

ability to justify and defend existing political dispensations. However, while not downplaying the role of politicians, especially in Zimbabwe, it should be noted that scholars also hog a considerable amount of power which they can use to push their own conceptions of historical literacy down the throats of those who imbibe the contents of their textbooks. Therefore, I will recognise the role of power, be it political or epistemological, in the determination of historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks.

Figure 3.2: Summary of major aspects of historical literacy – conceptual framework

Dimension/benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-dimension
Knowledge	Events
	Narratives
Conceptual understanding	Time
	Causation and consequence
	Motivation
	Significance
	Moral judgments
	Change and continuity
	Empathy
Source work (Historical method)	Sourcing
	Corroboration
	Contextualisation
	Analysis
	Evaluation
	Explanation
Historical consciousness	
Historical language	

The theorisation of the concept of historical literacy according to the literature that has been reviewed can be summarised in Figure 2.2. The diagram shows how historical literacy can be viewed to consist of dimensions or benchmarks, with each having its own sub-dimensions. The table therefore represents historical literacy as the conceptual framework for this research. The first benchmark of historical literacy is historical content knowledge, which in turn comprises historical events and narratives as sub-dimensions. Knowledge of events implies the learners' ability to remember occurrences of the past. Knowledge of narratives reveals whether the learner follows grand-narratives or multiple-narratives. This dimension tallies with the views of Ravitch (1989).

The second benchmark of historical literacy according to this study's conceptual framework is historical conceptual understanding. This is largely based on the work of Haydn et al. (2003) and Taylor (2003). The important historical second-order concepts are the sub-dimensions and these are time, causation and consequence, motivation, significance, change and continuity, empathy and moral judgments.

Application of historical method is the third benchmark of historical literacy. It implies working with historical sources. The sub-dimensions of this benchmark include Wineburg's (1991) heuristics which are sourcing, corroboration and contextualisation. The other three sub-dimensions which are analysis, evaluation and explanation are founded on Taylor's (2003) index of historical literacy.

Historical consciousness was adopted as the fourth benchmark of historical literacy. For this study, historical consciousness is viewed as a mental construct which is a manifestation rather than the equivalent of historical literacy. This conceptualisation will be based on the simple understanding of historical consciousness as connecting the past, the present and future. This is thus linked to Taylor's (2003) making of connections.

The final benchmark of historical literacy is the understanding and use of historical language. Thus, I argue that history can have a unique language. In other instances, though, the language is sometimes grounded in technicalities and can be related to other disciplines such as mathematics.

2.5 Conclusion

The above has been an attempt to conceptualise historical literacy, particularly explaining how historical literacy can be developed in learners without necessarily following a linear process. The dimensions of historical literacy are both dependent and independent on each other. For example historical understanding is grounded in content knowledge. Meanwhile methods are applied on content knowledge and understanding, but knowledge and understanding can be increased through the use of historical methods such as sourcing, corroboration or contextualisation. However, if one does not possess the capacity to contextualise it does not mean that they abruptly cease to be historically literate. On the contrary, while their historical literacy will be less complex, at least it will still be there in another form. This is what is meant by multiple-literacies. In addition, all these dimensions are contextualised and carry different meanings in different spaces and times.

The literature that has been reviewed on historical literacy shows that the concept of historical literacy has already undergone substantial amounts of theorisation internationally. However, one should not just adopt these theorisations wholesale and apply them in new situations. For example, the digital divide is a reality that makes it fallacious to assume that the use of film and ICT and gas and chromatography tests are presently being practiced in Zimbabwean school history in particular and many African countries in general. In fact, this research aims at using the conceptual framework only as what it is: a framework with which I will try to understand historical literacy in Zimbabwe school textbooks.

This chapter intended to construct a conceptual framework for this research. This was done by firstly interrogating literature on literacy in general and historical literacy in particular. Therefore historical literacy is the conceptual framework for this study. From the literature I concluded that there are multiple manifestations of historical literacy and these can be qualitatively described according to context, space and time. On this basis, this study set out to find out how the concept of historical literacy manifests itself in 'O' Level Zimbabwean school history textbooks. But before that, I will review literature related to history textbooks and methodologies related to their analysis.

CHAPTER 3

Literature review: History textbooks research

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second of two literature review chapters, this structure being adopted in order to fully review the huge amount of literature on both historical literacy and history textbooks. The preceding chapter reviewed research on the origins and evolution of the concept of historical literacy and ended with a generic conceptualisation of historical literacy so as to answer the key question posed. With this concept in mind, this chapter examines the main studies relating to history textbooks research. International textbooks research is a well-trodden path and thus literature on textbook scholarship abounds. According to Dean, Hartman & Katzen (1983, p. 37) “The field of textbook analysis has been particularly concerned with historical teaching materials.” The intention in this chapter is therefore to interrogate research specifically in history textbooks through identifying the dominant themes in the field and linking them to the concept of historical literacy.

This review will be structured according to themes that emerge from research on history textbooks. I have intentionally avoided organising the review according to geographical trends for two main reasons. Firstly, there is a general similarity of themes across international, regional and local (Zimbabwean) landscapes since textbook production is largely an internationalised phenomenon (Altbach, 1991). Secondly, history textbooks have not necessarily promoted the same form of historical literacy, even within the same continent – Europe for example. For instance, my review efforts showed limited evidence of history textbook research in southern Africa and thus history textbook research in this region can not be generalised. I will therefore start this review by presenting a brief historical overview of history textbook research. After that I will explain the major themes and debates that were raised in the literature. The chapter will end with a

discussion of the implication of the literature review on methodological issues in studies in textbook analysis. Permeating throughout the literature review in this chapter is the notion of historical literacy which has been adopted as the conceptual focus of the review and the conceptual framework for this study.

3.2 Historical overview of history textbook research

Research on history textbooks is not a recent development and as early as the 1920s, there was evidence of concern over history textbook scholarship. Through the Casares Resolution in 1925, the League of Nations commended early textbook analysis and recommended that countries exchange textbooks especially for history (Dean et al. 1983). Through the resolution, signatories undertook to eliminate from schoolbooks passages which were seen to be causes of conflict. Evidently, these were attempts to align the historical literacies that were being promoted in textbooks of different countries. However, the results of these attempts were largely insignificant, mainly due to the League's own inherent weaknesses. The failures did not dampen interest in history textbooks as in 1933, at the International American Conference in Montevideo; delegates adopted a Convention on the Teaching of History, again with an aim to revise school history textbooks so that they would not influence conflict. Again, the aim would have been to promote a single form of historical literacy, with the implication that coordination of history textbook production would promote one form of historical literacy across nations, thereby limiting difference.

The volume of history textbook studies increased considerably after the World War II with the support of the UNESCO. As an organ of the United Nations Organisation, UNESCO revived the projects on revision of history textbooks used in member states. A further aim of UNESCO was to produce useful criteria for textbook analysis and this was done through the publishing of an evaluation guideline and sponsorship of international conferences (Dean et al., 1983). According to Nicholls (2003, p. 2) most of the research in the immediate post-World War II period was "bilateral" and mainly "between former 'enemies' or

between countries where there were border disputes.” One can thus infer that the analysis of history textbooks under the mandate of UNESCO was part of the bigger political agenda of the United Nations to rebuild diplomatic relations in the post-war period. In addition, there was an increasing consciousness in the use and abuse of school history especially during the ideological battle of the Cold War. The two cases of the League of Nations and the United Nations are examples of international attempts to construct a common school history thus informing the development of a common form of historical literacy for the textbook users.

Another chapter unfolded in the progression of history textbook research in the 1970s when UNESCO began collaboration with the Georg Eckert Institute for international textbook research located in Braunschweig, Germany. This initiative, coupled with increasing globalisation, led to the metamorphosis from bilateral history textbook projects to more multilateral ventures (Nicholls, 2003). Up to today, the Georg Eckert Institute stands out as an international reference point in terms of research on history textbooks. While the institute does not necessarily dictate what history learners should be literate in, it – usually indirectly – plays a role in international determination of historical literacy propagated. Significant research in history textbooks has been conducted in conjunction with the Georg Eckert Institute throughout Europe, notably in Poland, Germany and many Eastern European countries from the former Soviet bloc. The role of the UNESCO and the Georg Eckert Institute should, however, not be exaggerated; particularly if one considers the Zimbabwean government’s snub of UNESCO funded history textbooks as explained in Chapter 1. Therefore, history textbooks in different contexts continue to propagate diverse forms of historical literacy.

The above brief overview illustrates the growth of history textbook research internationally and sets the foundation to an understanding of present-day history

textbook research. As such, it sets the scene for a detailed review of the literature related the analysis of textbooks.

3.3 Major themes and debates

The brief global picture set out in the previous section of this chapter shows that one can tap into research that has been done in history textbooks to design new research. Indeed, a review of the studies in history textbooks reveals a number of sub-themes which strengthen attempts to understand historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks.

A major theme is on the role of history textbooks in teaching and learning which is a major debate internationally from Greece, China, Japan, America to South Africa and even Zimbabwe. Numerous scholars reiterate the dominant position that history textbooks (or any other school textbooks for that matter) hold in the teaching and learning for over five hundred years in western education (Apple, 1991; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Mirkovic & Crawford, 1998; Crawford, 2000; Nicholls, 2006). So acceptably critical has the role of the textbook in history teaching and learning become, that Crawford (2000, p. 1) aptly summed it up when he stated that in general discourse “the word ‘textbook’ is used to define and convey a sequence of actions which do not deviate from agreed and regulated procedures.” As such, history learners, and indeed history teachers, tend to take it for granted that relying on the textbook is not only the easier way out, but is the accepted way of teaching and learning history. With such a deep-rooted traditional responsibility, the history textbooks can not be wished away easily in spite of persistent criticism. The pedagogical role of textbooks in general can be inferred from this general observation by Down (as cited in Apple, 1998, p. 6):

Textbooks, for better or worse, dominate what students learn. They set the curriculum, and often the facts learned, in most subjects. For many students, textbooks are their first and sometimes only early exposure to books and to reading. The public regards textbooks as

authoritative, accurate, and necessary. And teachers rely on them to organize lessons and structure subject matter.

Although the above statement refers to textbooks in general, the same argument can be held for history textbooks. Thus, literature reveals the dominance of the history textbooks in spite of all the recent massive advances in teaching and learning resources. If history textbooks hold a principal position, the implication is that they in turn can have a huge influence in the nature of historical literacy their users will ultimately, or at least, are expected to develop.

History textbooks are at the coalface of curriculum as practice. In some cases they may take as much as 90% of instructional time in schools (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1987, as cited in Lavere, 2008, p. 3). As a result, they play a significant role in terms of curriculum recontextualisation. Recontextualisation means that what the curriculum planners intend for learners to learn is altered as the curriculum policy is put into practice. Hence, what the curriculum planners may view to be the intended historical literacy may be altered, amongst other things, by the textbooks the learners use. A related argument is that the history textbooks also have an important role in the empowerment, or disempowerment, of the learners who use them (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). As the leading conveyor of the history curriculum in many countries, history textbooks are a crucial component of what Cherryholmes (1988, as cited in Sleeter & Grant, 1991, p. 80) describes as “the narrowing process.” To explain this process, she argues:

Scholars ... often have a variety of definitions from which to choose in writing textbooks; teachers have fewer from which to choose, but often have more than one; and students usually, more so at lower levels, are given the opportunity to learn only one.

By implication, the argument above is that history textbooks do not help learners develop multiple perspectives. In such a situation, the learners who use them might end up, intentionally or otherwise, developing an almost uniform kind of historical literacy. This argument is in tandem with the view that the learners’

context is crucial in determining their historical literacy. Because of the lack of exposure to multiple narratives, the consumers of history textbooks are likely to end up developing a historical literacy which is based on the knowledge of grand narratives which are sanctioned by those who hold political, social and economic power.

The above-mentioned dominance of the history textbook in the teaching and learning process is, however, not unanimously agreed upon. While admitting the apparent prevalence of the history textbooks in the classroom, some scholars refute the assumption that learners always learn what is in the history textbooks (Apple, 1998; Porat, 2005; Chisholm, 2008). Their argument is that it is not a given that what is in the textbook exactly represents what is eventually learned. For example, while discussing issues of migration in relation to nation building, xenophobia and history textbooks, Chisholm (2007) considered the paradox of history textbooks playing an important role in nation building while at the same time promoting acceptance of increased diversity. Her analysis showed how textbooks tried to promote the values of inclusivity and diversity, but the events on the ground in South Africa were characterized by exclusivity manifested in xenophobic incidents. The implication could therefore be that South African history textbooks end up promoting a different historical literacy to the one that they intend to. This school of thought warns that one should be wary of perceiving learners as *tabula rasa* who come into the school system empty headed only to imbibe what is in the textbook. In addition, Porat (2005, p. 965) contended that the impact of textbooks is mostly felt in terms of reinforcing what the learners already know from unofficial history. This, he argued, is because “not only do people tend to read text in a manner that supports their personal beliefs, but they read in a way that supports their cultural schemata.” In a contrary contention, Sleeter & Grant (1991, p. 97) maintained that “even if students forget, ignore, or reject what they encounter in textbooks, textbook content is still important because it withholds, obscures, and renders unimportant many ideas and areas of knowledge.” By implication, unofficial history influences

official history while simultaneously, official history influences unofficial history (Wertsch & Rozin, 2000). Therefore history textbooks are liable to be used by the powerful to promote a certain form of historical literacy which pushes the agenda of a sanitised and government-sanctioned narrative. In addition, just like any other recommended resource for teaching and learning of school history, textbooks should be analysed and evaluated.

As proponents of official history, history textbooks at times tend to reflect what may be described as politically correct history. This is a form of sanitised history in which selected heroes and heroines are valorised to the extent of almost being viewed as saints. For example, Aldridge (2006) analysed the depiction of Martin Luther King Jr. and argued that history textbooks represent only the politically correct or expedient history of people who are considered to be heroes. Such tendencies, he warned, risk education systems producing school graduates who can not tell the relationship between history and the present-day world. In addition, students are denied “access to relevant, dynamic, and often controversial history or critical lenses that would provide them insight into the dilemmas, challenges, and realities of living in a democratic society such as the United States” (Aldridge, 2006, p. 663). One may hasten to add that not only are critical skills relevant for survival in a democratic dispensation; they are crucial if a people aim to create such a democratic dispensation in the first place. Therefore, textbook analysis is crucial for all those with vested interests in history education in Zimbabwe in order to determine the worth of the textbooks in promoting a useful historical literacy for present and future generations.

In relation to the above argument, Manzo (2004) argues that history textbooks have been used as tools to build up a certain public memory which glosses over past events that might not support current ideals. For example, there is a trend for new Russian history textbooks to give a glossier presentation of Stalin (Manzo, 2004). This is in direct contradistinction to the exposition of the brutality of Stalin that was prevalent in Russian history textbooks soon after the break up

of the Soviet Union. Manzo (2004) furthermore noted that in India, the new history textbooks underplay the role of Mahatma Gandhi and his assassination by a Hindu extremist while the Hindus are portrayed as the pure Indians. In South Africa, da Cruz (2005) conducted history textbook analysis which was a case study of white supremacy in pre and post-apartheid history textbooks. The main aspect under scrutiny was the depiction of Shaka, the Zulu King, in pre-1994 history textbooks and the main conclusion is that the textbooks had played a part in perpetuating myths which entrenched negative perceptions on the black people of South Africa. These myths can be argued to have been the form of historical literacy that was promoted. Omission and distortion of past facts in the history textbooks ends up permeating in public memory and subsequently creating a historical literacy that is not critical. This demonstrates the weakness of the argument by Ravitch (1989) that knowledge of facts is equal to historical literacy and by implication gives credence to the pluralist kind of historical literacy promoted by Lee (2004). Conversely, if history textbooks and educators promote other dimensions of historical literacy, such as conceptual understanding and historical method, history learners will develop a more complex form of historical literacy which entails questioning omissions and bias.

History textbook research amply demonstrates the link between history textbooks, power and politics as illustrated above. Indeed, Aronowitz & Giroux (1991, p. 215) described the authority of the textbook as “both pedagogical and political.” This means that one should not look at the history textbook and merely view it as a resource for teaching and learning. The pedagogical nature of the history textbook has already been discussed above. The political character of the history textbook is likewise evidenced in virtually all societies, be they capitalist, communist, democratic or authoritarian and each of those governments tends to use the history textbook to defend and promote their agendas. According to Rodden (2009, p. 268) there are many cases where history textbooks are “consciously and completely turned to propagandist purposes” and one example of this was in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Taking over from Adolf

Hitler's Nazi regime, the GDR communist government ended up using the history textbooks in almost exactly the manner they had criticized their predecessors of doing. The use of history textbooks for nation building and justification of contemporary political dispensations is not always as overt as in the case of the GDR, but in most cases one can infer the values promoted by incumbent governments through analysing the content in the history textbooks. An example is the South African history textbooks which according to Chisholm (2007) promote the incumbent government's democratic ideals. The link between history textbooks and power illuminates the respective link between the concept of historical literacy and power as argued by Hirsch (1988) and Aronowitz & Giroux (1991). Hence, in conceptualising the kind of historical literacy promoted, one should always bear in mind the space, time and context within which the textbooks were produced since, as argued in Chapter 2, these three variables are crucial in determining the nature of historical literacy.

Stemming from its link with politics and power already alluded to, school history is usually burdened with the double responsibility of carrying out civic education and nation building and this tends to be reflected in the history textbooks. However, research demonstrates a negation of these very ideals through the exclusion of minorities in the history textbooks even in countries that are deemed democratic. Avery & Simmons (2000, p. 127), in a study of how civics and history textbooks in United States of America (USA) conveyed civic life, concluded that while the textbooks played a great a role in nation building, their content proves that they "devote relatively little attention to women, minorities, or their advocacy groups." This implies that learners in such a context develop a limited historical literacy in terms of content knowledge and understanding. Many other cases of history textbook research have also been done on the depiction of minorities and unmasking the perpetuation of the holders of power. Sleeter & Grant, (1991, p. 98) revealed how their analysis of contemporary textbooks clearly showed "the extent to which the curriculum focuses on the White male and downplays or simply ignores the accomplishments and concerns of Americans who are of

colour, female, poor and/or disabled.” The trend to analyse the representation of those who hold power and those who do not is in tandem with the development of critical theory which challenges the power realities which might be taken for granted. These arguments are illustrations of how historical literacy is linked to power and official history.

Because of their critical role as identified above, history textbooks tend to be at the centre of conflict. An example of such conflicts is the “Texas textbook wars” which were a huge motivation behind Apple’s (1991) research on textbooks. Evidently, these wars were over textbook selection and that is an issue that still continues to be topical up to today. Rodden (2009, p. 267) notes that a significant number of school novels have been banned, but left intact, however, the school history textbook, by nature, has content that is “malleable” and therefore can always be adjusted to suit the form of historical literacy as conceptualised by the decision makers. The decision makers vary from country to country. In some cases, such as in Zimbabwe, decisions on the authorisation of history textbooks are the preserve of the Ministries of Education; and in extreme cases they rest with the ruling party organs. In democratic systems, the textbook conflicts are usually between parents and school district administrators. For instance, in Texas the loud voices are from family planning, gay-advocacy, fundamentalist Christian and other lobbying groups (Rodden, 2009). Considering that the conflicts have been labelled wars, one can conclude that, just like in most wars, the most powerful will prevail and the least powerful will compromise, or in the worst case scenario, even lose all their authority. As such, the recommended school history textbooks will end up propagating a historical literacy whose nature identifies with the victors in the particular textbook wars.

At a political level, South Africa had its own moment of history textbook conflict when demonstrators sympathetic to the Inkatha Freedom Party burned Oxford grade 12 history textbooks in KwaZulu Natal, on the grounds that a cartoon therein depicted their leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, as sanctioning pre-1994

inter-party violence. In reaction, the publishers had to remove the contentious page and replace it with another, an action which added more fascination and curiosity over the cartoon among those who had not noticed it in the first place (Wassermann, 2009). Such an incident underscores the seriousness with which textbooks are viewed by sectors of society as important tools in the inculcation of historical literacy in this case like the Ravitch-style (1989) literacy to the learners. At the same time, the publishers were forced by political issues to revise what they might have deemed to be historical literacy regarding pre-1994 election violence in South Africa.

History textbook wars have not been limited to intra-state clashes only, but also have spread to inter-state natures. Content in history textbooks has resulted in severe repercussions including international diplomatic rows such as the one between South Korea and Japan over the depiction of early 20th century militarism in Japanese textbooks (Conachy, 2001). After Japanese authorities approved certain history textbooks in 2001, government officials in South Korea and China remonstrated and corresponded furiously on the pretext that “the move was a threat to diplomatic measures” (Manzo, 2004, p. 1). Such textbook conflict incidents can be interpreted as showing how public memory is still an important factor when the ordinary people observe history textbooks. At the same time, it is evidence that historical literacy may differ from country to country. Manifestly, what the Japanese authors and government might have defined as historical literacy concerning World War II is not what their South Korean counterparts viewed as historical literacy. From a pluralist view of historical literacy, it would not be proper to label Japanese learners who imbibed the content sanctioned by the government as historically illiterate. Rather, they would end up developing a form of historical literacy whose form was determined, among other factors, by the government. Therefore, Ravitch’s (1989) conception of historical literacy would come under scrutiny in terms of establishing what kind of historical knowledge one should have in order to be branded historically literate. It should be noted that the above mentioned clashes over history

textbooks are resultant from concerns over content knowledge rather than other benchmarks of historical literacy.

A further theme that emerges from a review of history textbook research literature is that crises and changes in political dispensations have contributed significantly to history textbook research. This has already been revealed through post-war efforts to work on history textbooks (Dean et al., 1983; Nicholls, 2003). In the same vein, a lot of research has been conducted in Eastern Europe and Asia since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Crawford, 2000; Nicholls, 2003). Although one can notice some evidence of such a trend in South Africa with the demise of apartheid and the eventual advent of democracy in 1994, the volume of history textbook research does not match that in Eastern Europe. In fact, since the 1960s, less than a dozen dissertations have been written on history textbooks in South Africa (Da Cruz, 2005; Engelbrecht, 2009). This could partly be explained by the then new curriculum's apparent snub of school history (Siebörger, 2006). Most of the research on history textbooks during transition periods challenged the depiction of certain issues and topics and the focus was primarily on critiquing the content in an effort to have it cleansed of overt racial, ethnic, sexual and other forms of bias. An example is the research done during the last few years of apartheid by Mazel & Stewart (1987) where they analysed the way the San were depicted in history textbooks. Similarly, Polakow-Suransky (2002) and Engelbrecht (2006) analysed South African textbooks and the manner in which they underwent change from the days of the heavy influence of apartheid ideology to post-apartheid discourses. The significant implication of such research is that history textbooks were manifesting the changing forms of historical literacy as determined, partly, by the new political realities and the new curricula that they purveyed.

School history textbooks are a glaring illustration of the differences that exist between school history and professional history. This is in spite of certain views of history teaching and learning which expect learners to “do” history, that is, to

practice as young historians. Paxton (1999), though, demonstrated more concern about the history textbooks lack of metadiscourse and specifically on the gap between the history that is practiced by professional historians and the history that school learners are encouraged to study through history textbooks. The argument therefore is that textbooks may be found guilty of promoting a limited historical literacy for the learners with the result that learners find the subject either boring or irrelevant to their quests in life. This is in line with Wineburg's (2000) criticism of history textbooks that they do not promote the heuristics of sourcing, corroboration and contextualisation, which he argues to be crucial for the attainment of historical literacy

Although the review of literature has so far illustrated the role of authors and politicians in the production of textbooks, it has to be borne in mind that complex factors are involved in the production of textbooks. According to Altbach (1991), textbook production is an internationalised process:

For many countries of the Third World ... textbooks are often imported from abroad or, although published by foreign multinationals to meet local or regional needs, are nonetheless printed abroad. In these instances, the counties involved have only a limited amount of control over the books used in their schools. Local ministries of education have specific goals and requirements, but in the end must select from products already in the marketplace (p. 248).

The quoted trend implies that consumers of internationalised textbooks might in turn develop a sort of internationalised historical literacy. The trend of internationalised school textbook production was beginning to change in Zimbabwe as local publishing companies were developing dominance in textbook publication. For example, missionaries had established opportunities for local authors during the days of colonisation through their printing presses such as Morgenster, Chishawasha and the Mambo Press (Manzo, 2004). The Zimbabwe Publishing House was also established in 1981, just after independence and has also been active in producing history textbooks amongst

others. International influence can be detected, though, as the following statement appears in one of the textbooks under study: “The publishers also wish to record the generous donation by the Canadian Organisation for Development through Education (CODE) given to assist in the production of this book” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997). Other sources of influence, according to Altbach (1991) include UNESCO and the World Bank who are involved in various other educational processes especially in the Third World. Sleeter & Grant (1991, p. 81) lamented the limited number of black authors in Africa and pointed out that “the 1980s have witnessed a resurgence of traditional White male voices in the struggle over what knowledge should be taught.” There is therefore a disparity in terms of the demographics of people writing their history and this has an impact on the historical literacy that the learners who use the textbooks might end up developing.

In the foregoing review, I have identified the major themes that emerge from history textbook research. The themes mainly centre on the pedagogical and political role of history textbooks. The overarching contention that can be inferred from the review is that history textbooks propagate a historical literacy that revolves around the ideologies of the stakeholders in textbook production, in most cases the major stakeholder being the incumbent government. Only if we accept the plurality of the manifestation of historical literacy in history textbooks, can we begin to attempt finding answers to questions as to what school history in Zimbabwe is for or why the government reckons that it is important for history to be compulsory up to ‘O’ Level. An appreciation of this pertinent issue is significant in understanding how school history retains its relevance in a context of mushrooming new subjects and a constantly changing globe.

3.4 Reviewing history textbook research methodologies

The previous subsection of this chapter has illustrated the growth of history textbook research since the early 20th century. The paradox, though, is that in spite of the huge amounts of textbook research that have been conducted,

methods for history textbook research are argued to be fundamentally underdeveloped and in need of further research (Nicholls, 2003). The major deficit, according to Nicholls (2003), is on the development and utilisation of explicit instruments with which to analyse history textbooks. According to Weinbrenner (1992), the chief reason for this weakness is that there is no “theory of the schoolbook” upon which to construct solid methodologies. As such, researchers tend to employ generic methodologies to analyse history textbooks. In response to this state of affairs, Wineburg (2000) lambasted history education’s reliance on theories which were not based specifically on history education. He argues that while the general theories might be useful, history education must be recognised as a unique discipline with distinctive theories and thus reliance on general theories might lead to skewed understanding of the teaching and learning of history.

Indeed, there is a lack of consistency between what generic research texts and specific history textbooks analysis texts propose as methodologies. In fact, in generic research texts, textbook analysis, let alone analysis of history textbooks is rarely mentioned. If it does, it is done in passing and/or lumped together with analysis methods for many other documents such as letters and diaries (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The implication of this predicament for the history textbook researcher is that he/she has to come up and develop useful methods which suit their specific study (Pingel, 1999; Mikk, 2000; Nicholls, 2003). Therefore history textbook researchers still have a responsibility to develop useful and relevant methodologies for their discipline and make them coherent with the requirements of their studies.

One prominent theme that can be gleaned from research into history textbooks is that most of it is in the form of content analysis (Mazel & Stewart, 1987; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Avery & Simmons, 2000; Polakow-Suransky, 2002; Engelbrecht, 2006; Aldridge, 2006; Engelbrecht, 2009; Rodden, 2009). According to Nicholls (2003, p. 9), “qualitative forms of content analysis have tended to dominate the

field of history textbook research although there are examples of purely quantitative studies using space and frequency analysis.” The epistemological incongruence is that general research texts categorise content analysis as a methodology framed in the positivist paradigm (Cohen et al., 2007). This implies that in using content analysis, one has to use only deductive methods of data analysis and employ a lot of quantitative techniques. Therefore, general research methodologies contend that if one decides to conduct a qualitative analysis of history textbooks, the use of content analysis will render the study unbalanced epistemologically. Therefore, history textbook research is largely in the same form and there is a need to diversify it.

There are also cases of the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in history textbook research. The employment of both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods is also referred to as mixed methods (Creswell, 2003; Denscombe, 2008). In using mixed methods, the history textbooks researcher analyses all aspects of the history textbook and comes up with a huge data-base with which to make conclusions which are meant to be deemed reliable. For example, Sleeter & Grant (1991, p. 82) used “picture analysis, anthology analysis, ‘people to study’ analysis, language analysis, story-line analysis and miscellaneous.” This was meant to come up with comprehensive data with which to develop arguments on issues of race, class, gender, and disability in history textbooks. Mikk (2000) recommends the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies; however, these should be informed by the nature and requirements of the research. In other words, the research question is a key determinant of the methods which the research ultimately adopts.

The virtually unilateral form of history textbook research (emphasis on content analysis) resulted in scholars such as Apple (1992) and Crawford (2001) advocating for new focuses of textbook studies. However, the main concern is that a lot is still to be done in terms of developing instruments for analysis.

Nicholls (2003, p. 1) declared that “sophisticated textbook studies can only be guaranteed with the systematic development of generic frameworks and instruments.” This argument is based on his evaluation that while researchers might mention that they used questions to analyse history textbooks, they are rarely explicit about the actual question which they used, leaving the readers to make them out as they read the research papers. Therefore there is a need to explicitly state the major aspects of one’s research such as the sampling, methodologies, methods, categories of analysis and the actual questions based on the categories of analysis.

Amongst those who attempt to be more specific is Pingel (1999) who, in a generalisation, alleges that all textbook analysis can either be didactic analysis or content analysis. The former “deals with the methodological approach to the topic, exploring the pedagogy behind the text” (Pingel, 1999, p. 18) and the latter refers to an examination of the actual text. Nicholls (2003) views Pingel’s statement to be narrow and gives a whole host of other methods of textbook analysis. One such method is discourse analysis and Henning et al. (2005, p. 117) warn us that “the analysis of data for discourse purposes is both similar to and different from content analysis.” Therefore, if one is not careful, there is a danger of confusing the use of discourse analysis and content analysis.

A further theme which emerges from the research on history textbooks is the use of descriptive comparative methodologies. In some cases, political eras are used as the frameworks for comparison. For example in South Africa, apartheid and post-apartheid history textbooks were compared (Polakow-Suransky, 2002; Engelbrecht, 2005) and found to have differences particularly in their content and tone. The same is done for history textbooks in Nazi Germany and the communist GDR (Rodden, 2009). Another form of comparative history textbook studies is the comparison of history textbooks from different countries. Foster & Nicholls (2005) conducted a comparative study of history textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the United States and identified differences in the

depiction of the same topic from country to country. This corroborates the argument on the social construction of historical literacy and history textbooks with the same history topic being covered in varying ways. Nicholls (2003, p. 9) referred to such studies as “latitudinal” analyses whereby the researcher compares contemporary representations of similar issues in history textbooks from different countries.

Most of the research reviewed showed that the history textbook researchers tend not to analyse entire textbooks; rather, they selected particular topics to analyse. For instance, Ogawa (2003) analysed the treatment of Japanese American internment during World War II in United States history textbooks, Aldridge (2006) analysed the depiction of Martin Luther King Jr and Laverne (2008) focused on the depiction of Native Americans. Other examples are Mazel & Stewart (1987), Foster & Nicholls (2005) and Romanowski (2009). This does not mean that no researchers analysed entire textbooks. The trend to select parts of textbooks for analysis can be viewed as apparent efforts by the scholars to keep their studies focused. The evident assumption is that a study of one topic is representative of the entire textbook. Admittedly, this sampling of topics is determined by the scholar’s research interests. Although there are cases of individuals amongst multiple authors of one textbook writing separate sections, it can not be denied that one chapter represents the views of other authors since the chapters in history textbooks are not credited to particular authors and the history textbooks have to go through an editing and authorisation process by stakeholders explained earlier in the chapter. Therefore, when it comes to data generation, it is not always necessary to generate data from the entire textbook, depending on the research focus.

In addition, time-frames are important considerations when a researcher is sampling history textbooks for analysis from the same era. The trend in many accepted circumstances is that new textbook editions or entirely new textbooks are written every ten years. In their international comparative study, Foster &

Nicholls (2005) selected history textbooks with publication dates of within eight years of each other. The assumption here is that textbooks of the same time frame share a “dominant linguistic protocol (or trope) of the epistemic archive” (Munslow, 2006, p. 136). Hence, the expectation will be that these textbooks will share a common manifestation of historical literacy.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter was a review of the literature on the history textbooks research. I discussed the main issues and debates in the area of history textbooks and how the issues are relevant to research framed in the concept of historical literacy. The literature review shows that history textbooks are almost inextricably linked to both pedagogy and politics and thus the textbooks within a particular space; time and context promote a certain form of historical literacy. Therefore history textbooks demonstrate the multiple manifestations of historical literacy. The literature on history textbook research exhibited the main limitations in history textbook research methodologies. That is, researchers thus far focus mainly on content analysis and have not explicitly explained their methodologies and methods. Thus the methodologies in history textbook research remains largely underdeveloped and sometimes in contradiction with generic research methodologies. In the next chapter I will use the conclusions from the two literature review chapters to explain the research design, methodologies, and methods that I adopted in analysing the manifestation of historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks.

CHAPTER 4

Research design and methodology

4.1 Introduction

The literature that has been reviewed in the last two chapters interrogated research that has been done on historical literacy and on history textbooks. The literature review on historical literacy ultimately produced the conceptual framework on the benchmarks of historical literacy that I adopted for my thesis, while the review on research into history textbooks clarified the main themes that emerge and how these inform further research on history textbooks. Building on the previous chapters, I move on to describing the research design and methodology that I used in this study. I will explain the important aspects related to the methodology and methods that I have decided to employ, bearing in mind the focus of the study, which is to analyse the manifestation of historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks. The aspects which I will focus on include sampling, data generation methods, data analysis methods, and their respective strengths and limitations. I will also consider aspects to do with reliability and validity as I interrogate the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology that I applied.

4.2 Methodology

The review of literature in the preceding chapter on research into history textbooks has exposed the lack of universal methodologies for history textbook research, in spite of the large volume of textbook research conducted thus far. The problem is that most of the research methodologies are never well described and they always lean towards content analysis (Nicholls, 2003). As alluded to in Chapter 1, one major reason for the lack of development of methodologies in history textbook research is the researchers' over-reliance on generic methodologies which might have been conceptualised in disciplines other than history education. Wineburg (2000), who traced theorisation in history education, bemoaned the dominance of theories from other fields on history education. This

argument has been substantiated by Weinbrenner (1992) and (Nicholls, 2003). I therefore intentionally attempted to make use of theorisations from history education. This does not mean that I discarded generic theorisations totally. Rather, I used them for corroboration purposes.

A further finding from the literature review on history textbooks research was that there is an increase in the amount of textbook analyses being conducted globally, both in terms of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In an attempt to conduct history textbook research from a different angle, and also being informed by the requirements of my topic, I adopted a qualitative methodology for my study. The qualitative methodology was suitable because it “focuses on context” and acknowledges multiple methods (Marshall & Rossman (2006). As stated in Chapter 2, historical literacy and history textbooks are firmly grounded in contexts, and the context for my research is present-day Zimbabwe. Denzin & Lincoln (2008, p. 4) define qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world.” In the case of this study, I situate myself as an active participatory observer of historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks because of my experience in the Zimbabwean education system. I adopted a qualitative perspective mainly because the primary concern of my study was on depth rather than breadth of understanding (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). In other words, I aimed not at quantifying my results, rather at increasing the understanding of the phenomenon under focus which is historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks.

The contention here is not to imply that quantitative studies are not relevant in textbook analysis. However, it can be argued that mixing qualitative and quantitative studies can result in an incongruity in matters of epistemology and ontology. Quantitative methodologies would have implied a positivist slant to this research and they are usually suitable for large-scale surveys (Cohen et al., 2007). This research is not a large-scale survey, but rather from limited data as the sample will demonstrate. The limitation in scale is based on this study being

for a Masters in Education dissertation. In addition, from an interpretivist and social constructionist point of view, the qualitative methodology alone is sufficient in developing an understanding of phenomena in a particular context; in this case, historical literacy in history textbooks in Zimbabwe. The aim of this study fits a qualitative approach which Henning, van Rensburg & Smit (2004, p. 129) argue results in a “higher-order synthesis in the form of a descriptive picture, patterns or themes, or emerging or substantive theory.”

Bearing in mind the limitations in history textbook analysis (Weinbrenner, 1990; Nicholls, 2003), I had to formulate a usable methodological framework. In doing this, I had to make sure my design was evidently coherent starting right from epistemological issues to the data analysis methods. According to Pingel (1999, p. 21) it is important for the history textbook researcher to have well defined stages of research, methods and techniques and clear “categories upon which an analytical instrument may be constructed.” Resultantly, the design of my research was well defined as part of the research process. Using Gray’s (2004, p. 30) template as an example of a summary of a research design, my research can be summarised in Figure 4.1 and it will be explained throughout this chapter.

Figure 4.4: Summary of the research design

Epistemology	Social constructionism
Theoretical perspective	Intepretivism
Research approach	Deductive and inductive
Research methodology	Qualitative textual (documentary) analysis
Time-frame	Cross sectional
Data collection methods	Historical discourse analysis, visual analysis, question analysis

The overarching methodology for this study is qualitative textual analysis. This is alternatively referred to as qualitative documentary analysis. The texts or documents which I analysed are Zimbabwean school history textbooks. In this thesis, methodology refers to “the coherent group of methods that complement one another” (Henning et al., 2004, p. 36). Therefore the sampling, data generation and data analysis methods coherently collaborate in consistency with qualitative documentary analysis as the overarching methodology. Using the qualitative documentary analysis methodology, I aimed at making meaning of the manifestation of historical literacy in the history textbooks in an inductive way. This means that although I had a conceptual framework extracted from the literature review on historical literacy, I did not try to rely solely on a preconceived hypothesis. The conceptual framework of historical literacy was used as a guide and therefore I looked for patterns, categories, and themes and explain their relatedness.

4.3 Sampling

In this section I will first explain the sample for this study, after which I will explain how and why it was chosen. Sampling is usually a selection of a section from a wider potential area of study which is referred to as a population (Kumar, 2005). In the case of this research project, history textbooks are the population from which I had to choose my sample. However, as explained in Chapter 1, for a number of reasons, there are relatively few textbooks available for school history in Zimbabwe meaning that the population was limited. I thus chose three “O” Level current history textbooks. In this case, current textbooks imply those that are being used presently and due to publication problems, those that were “published from 1990 to date” (Dudu, Gonye, Mareva & Sibanda, 2008, p. 78). The three textbooks selected are represented in Figure 4.2.

Nicholls (2003, p. 3) reminds us that when defining a history textbook sample, “the type and quantity of textbooks to be analysed are essential considerations

for analysts wishing to generalise on the basis of research findings.” However, it should be borne in mind that this statement is based on large-scale comparative international textbook analyses. On the contrary, this study is not an international, but a small-scale research endeavour. Still, while the quantity of textbooks is important, my sampling was guided by the limited number of history textbooks which are presently in use in Zimbabwean schools. As a result, the sampling for this thesis can be identified as purposive. Gray (2004, p. 324) explains this choice by noting that most qualitative samples “tend to be more purposive than random” mainly because “it works with small samples of people, cases or phenomena nested in particular contexts.”

Figure 4.5: The research sample

Title	Author(s)	Date of publication	Publisher
<i>People making history : Book 4</i>	Prew, Pape, Mutwira & Barnes	1993	Zimbabwe Publishing House
<i>People and power: Book 1</i>	Proctor & Phimister	1997	Academic Books
<i>Focus on history: Book 4</i>	Mlambo	1993	College Press

I had reasons for selecting the three textbooks in my sample. To start with, I decided to analyse “O” Level textbooks because, as explained in Chapter 1, in Zimbabwe history is a compulsory subject up to the end of “O” Level studies. In addition, “O” Level is still regarded as the minimum qualification that should – conditions allowing – enable one to go for basic tertiary education or get a job. Therefore, focusing on “O” Level textbooks aimed to ultimately determine the kind of historical literacy the textbooks will have helped learners develop at the end of what government considers an important stage in the education system.

In selecting the textbook sample for this research, I also considered the fact that the series of textbooks were all approved by the Zimbabwean Ministry of Education for use in the secondary schools. This government approval tallies with the argument of the dual “pedagogical and political” role of school history textbooks explained in Chapter 3 (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 215). Despite the shift of the government’s view of history from a history of nationalism towards a more radical patriotic history, and the change of the syllabus in 2002, the history textbooks have been constant. Therefore using purposive sampling, I aimed at analysing history textbooks which have continued serving changing historiographies for changing political and educational objectives.

The selected sample of history textbooks were also produced by different publishers, with government approval; *People making history* being published by the Zimbabwe Publishing House, *People and power* by Academic Books Zimbabwe and *Focus on history* by the College Press. Although this is not necessarily a comparative study, this variety is useful in terms of attempts to generalise the kind of historical literacy promoted by the “O” Level history textbooks in Zimbabwe. Thus, I selected the sample aiming at gaining a representation of the response of the publishers in terms of historical literacy for the learners in view of the influence of the other players in textbook production, that is, the authors, the government and market forces, although the latter variable has diminished in the ten year economic crisis. The three selected textbooks were published within a ten year time frame. It was shown in Chapter 3 how, for example, Foster & Nicholls’ (2005) sample was made up of history textbooks which were published within an eight year time-frame. Therefore, one can argue that the selected textbooks were produced within a generally similar time-frame, with expectations for a, generally, similar manifestation of historical literacy, regardless of the subsequent drive by government for compulsion of school history and emphasis on patriotic history.

In addition, the choice of these textbooks series was based on their relative current use in most Zimbabwean schools especially in the poorly to averagely resourced schools, which happen to be in the majority. My experience as a secondary school history teacher in Zimbabwe for nearly nine years showed that the three history textbooks were the most commonly used in schools. As already noted in Chapter 1, there has not been any creditable production of “O” Level history textbooks since the textbooks under focus were published. Therefore there was no real wide pool of textbooks to select from. All the factors discussed above contributed to the selection of the sample for the study.

4.4 Contextual analysis

One contention in my literature review on history textbooks is that the agency of the history textbook authors can be seriously undermined in contexts where the government’s hand and that of publishing houses is visible in controlling history education. Nevertheless it is crucial in the research process to conduct a contextual analysis. In this case, I provide a brief analysis of the authors of the three textbooks that I have selected.

The author of *Focus on history*, Alois Mlambo is currently a Professor of history and heritage at the University of Pretoria. He has of late published *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the pre-colonial period to 2008* (Raftopoulos & Mlambo, 2009), following on the publication of *White immigration into Rhodesia: From occupation to Federation* (Mlambo, 2002). Although he has thus been involved in research of the general history of Zimbabwe, he established himself as an economic historian in Zimbabwe. One example of his works in economic history is *Zimbabwe: A history of manufacturing 1890-1995* (Mlambo & Pangeti, 2000). Although Mlambo can not be simplistically classified into a consistent tradition, his slant towards economic history during the 1990s when the current textbooks were produced fits conveniently into the Marxist tradition which the government tended to promote then.

The authors of *People making history* are a mix of diverse historical tradition. Theresa Barnes is currently a Professor at the University of Illinois on gender and women in history with publications such as *We women worked so hard: Gender, urbanization and social reproduction in colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-56* (Barnes, 1999). She has also done some research in higher education (Barnes, 2009). However, her research roots are in the field of economic history. Thus, Mlambo and Barnes can be argued to fit into the same historical tradition. Meanwhile, Martin Prew is currently a director of Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) in South Africa. He however, also has researched widely in economic history and issues of nationalism. Examples of his publications are *Mining, engineers and risk management: British overseas investment, 1894-1914* (Prew & Mouat 2003) and *Zimbabwe now: the political economy of crisis and coercion* (Prew & Raftopoulos, 2004). Roben Mutwira is established in the field of environmental history especially in relation to the control of land, game reserves and hunting. John Pape, now known by his real name – James Kilgore – is in the USA after living and working in Zimbabwe, Australia and South Africa. Using his old identity he has of late written on fictional history in the novel *We are all Zimbabweans now* (Kilgore, 2009) He earned his academic reputation through researching on the history of the working class. Besides championing the cause of the workers and the poor through history, he was involved in comparative research in education particularly between Zimbabwe and South Africa (Pape, 1998) and in textbook writing in South Africa.

People and power was authored by Ian Phimister and Andre Proctor. Phimister is currently attached to the University of Sheffield, but is prominent as an economic historian who has researched and published on class, exploitation and nationalism in Zimbabwe. For example he wrote *An economic and social history of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: capital accumulation and class struggle* which one reviewer criticised for being more economic than social (Hodder-Williams, 1989). Proctor is also established in the same field of class in history as is exemplified

by his article: *Class struggle, segregation and the city: a history of Sophiatown, 1905-1940* (Proctor, 1979) and has authored history textbooks in South Africa.

The brief overview above shows that the authors of the textbooks under focus might be in different fields today due to various circumstances, but they had roughly similar research interests during the 1990s when the textbooks were published. Evidently, there was a strong influence of economic history compared to other forms of history. Because of this interest in economic history, it can be argued that the tradition in which they fit is in tandem with the then government ideology, that is nationalist Marxism, even if they were not necessarily self-confessed Marxists. All the authors, except for Mutwira on which very little evidence was forthcoming, now resides and works outside of Zimbabwe.

4.5 Data generation

In all research processes, data generation is an important step. The data that I generated for this study is secondary existing data because the textbooks have already been written. This being an empirical study of qualitative documentary analysis, I had to generate data from text that had already been produced. I therefore had limited control of how the data is represented since I had to make use of data that was already in existence (Mouton, 2001). The main advantage of secondary data is that the data can be generated in an unobtrusive manner, meaning that I did not influence the way the textbook authors presented their version of historical literacy (Cohen et al., 2007).

Although I selected a particular sample of history textbooks, I did not analyse the publications in their entirety. Instead, I adopted an approach whereby I largely selected parts of the textbooks which I deemed relevant to the research on historical literacy. The selection of parts of the textbooks from which data was generated was based on Pingel's (1999, p. 48) "list of 'criteria for analysis' which are the author's intentions (if specified), descriptive author's text (narrative), illustrations/photos/maps, tables/statistics, sources [and] exercises."

Consequently, for all the three history textbooks, I generated data from the cover pages, jacket texts (blurbs at the back page of the book covers) and the preface (introduction and notes to the teachers). These sections gave me the textbook producers' intentions or, in fact, their rough views of what kind of historical literacy their books intended to promote. I refer to the intentions of the textbook producers, rather than just authors, because my literature review on history textbooks in Chapter 3 has explained how history textbook authors have limited agency in terms of what finally appears in the textbooks since there are other stakeholders such as publishers and governments. The preface in *People making history* is made up of the introduction and notes to the teacher (no page numbers); in *Focus on history*, the preface comprises the introduction only (pp. 6-8), while in *People and power* there is an introduction (pp. 4-6).

There was an intentional purpose for selecting the cover pages, jacket texts and prefaces. The cover pages are an embodiment of what the textbook producers want to tell the market about their book. Therefore it is determined by both economic and academic factors. Jacket texts are powerful condensations of what is in the entire textbook although they also serve as a selling tool for the textbooks (Byerly, 2009). Therefore, publishers play a role in the type and amount of text at the back page for marketing reasons and this can be shortcoming in that marketing might have exaggerations meant to impress consumers. Still, as argued in Chapter 3, historical literacy is linked to power and the way it manifests itself in textbooks might reflect the views of those who hold power, publishers included. Thus, analysing the jacket text helped me to determine the intentions of the textbook producers and their conceptualisation of what historical literacy is and how they would promote it in their respective textbooks. According to Haue (2009, p. 7) "the preface can be seen as a key to the book where the intentions of the author are unfolded." Therefore the preface, or introduction and related text such as the notes to the teacher, are often overlooked parts of the history textbook yet they can generate a lot of data for the

researcher. Although these sections may seem to represent a small portion of the textbooks, they are rich in data and therefore worthy to be analysed.

For the descriptive text and related illustrations, tables and sources I again purposively selected chapters from which I would generate data. From *Focus on history*, I analysed the section on “Umvukela/Chimurenga II” from the chapter on “Zimbabwe: colonisation to independence” (Mlambo, 1993, pp. 137-143). From *People making history*, I analysed the introductory section of the chapter on “The struggle for independence” (Prew et al., 1993, pp. 170-171). Finally, I analysed the section on “The beginning of the war” from the chapter on “Armed struggle and the coming of independence” from *People and power* (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, pp. 247-249).

I also purposively selected the assessment activities that I would analyse in each textbook. The activities had to be from the chapter I had selected for the descriptive text. From *Focus on history*, I analysed the summative activities, that is, the activities which are at the end of the chapter I had selected and these are entitled “Revision exercises” (Mlambo, 1993, pp. 151-152). I also analysed summative activities from *People making history* which are source-based questions and “essay topics” (Prew et al., 1993, p. 191). Finally, since there are no summative activities in *People and power*, I analysed the activities throughout the chapter on the “Armed struggle and the coming of independence” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, pp. 247-254).

The selection of the above sections of descriptive text was purposive and on the basis of international trends in history textbook analysis described in Chapter 3, whereby a particular topic rather than entire textbooks are analysed (Mazel & Stewart, 1987; Foster & Nicholls, 2005; Aldridge, 2006; Lavere, 2008; Romanowski, 2009). I therefore selected the topic on the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe, because I consider it to be deemed significant in the study of history in Zimbabwe. Significantly, this area of study was the primary

area of concern when President Robert Mugabe declared that there was a need for the rewriting of the history of Zimbabwe and “furthermore, Zimbabwean history [would] be made compulsory up to Form Four” (Raftopoulos, 2004, p. 166). As already explained in Chapter 1, although history has been compulsory in schools for nearly ten years, there has been no significant rewriting of school history textbooks during the same period. The sections from which data were to be generated are summarised in Figure 4.3. Although textbook producers present and structure their textbooks differently, I tried to ensure some uniformity in the sections that I selected.

Figure 4.3: Criteria for analysis

Title	Selected sections	Location
<i>People making history : Book 4</i>	Cover page	Front cover page
	Jacket text	Back page
	Preface (introduction, notes to the teacher)	No page numbers
	Descriptive text	pp. 170-171
	Assessment activities	p. 191
<i>People and power: Book 1</i>	Cover page	Front cover page
	Jacket text	Back page
	Preface (introduction)	pp. 4-6
	Descriptive text	pp. 247-249
	Assessment activities	pp. 151-152
<i>Focus on history: Book 4</i>	Cover page	Front cover page
	Jacket text	Back page
	Preface (introduction)	pp. 6-8
	Descriptive text	pp. pp. 137-143
	Assessment activities	pp. 247-254

4.6 Data analysis

The data that had been generated, as explained above, were analysed in two ways. At the end of the analysis, I would then be able to answer the research question posed namely: How does that notion of historical literacy manifest itself in Ordinary Level history textbooks in Zimbabwe? I started by using three methods namely: Historical discourse analysis (HDA), visual analysis and question analysis. The data analysis methods that I applied were based on Pingel's (1999, p. 48) "list of criteria for analysis" described above. The application of these analysis methods is represented by Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4. 4: How the data analysis methods were used

Selected sections	Analysis Methods
Cover page	HDA and visual analysis
Jacket text	HDA
Preface	HDA
Descriptive text	HDA and visual analysis
Activities	Question analysis

The textbook producers' intentions on the cover pages and in the jacket texts and prefaces and the descriptive text in the chapter narratives were analysed using HDA, which is a form of discourse analysis. Nieuwenhuis, (2007, p. 102) quotes Wittgenstein (1971) to have claimed that "linguistic utterances do much more than simply picture facts – which is what content analysis focuses on – as discourses are ever-present ways of knowing, valuing and experiencing the world." Therefore I made use of a form of discourse analysis rather than content analysis which has dominated history textbook analysis thus far. According to Mouton (2001, p. 168), discourse analysis is a "more recent version of textual analysis" which "aims to study the meaning of words but within larger 'chunks' of texts such as conversations and discourses." Discourse analysis therefore offers more than the traditional content analyses and textual studies which are grounded in hermeneutics (Mouton, 2001).

According to Peräkylä (2008) HDA scholars are inspired by the work of Michael Foucault, the French scholar who revolutionised analysis of text through his notion of the “history of the present” which tries to make sense of the present through studying the past (Gutting, 2005). The HDA researchers focus on “how a set of ‘statements’ comes to constitute objects and subjects” Potter (2004, as cited in Peräkylä, 2008, p. 354). In the case of my study this means that the statements in the history textbooks were expected to give meaning to objects and subjects and in this case historical literacy and its many dimensions. An example of a Foucauldian scholar, who made use of HDA is Armstrong who investigated medical textbooks and his research demonstrated how certain “objects and subjects – in the sense that we know them now – did not exist before they were constructed through textual and other processes” (Peräkylä, 2008, p. 354). Of those that had been constructed his study, like Foucault’s, traces the evolution of meanings of those subjects and objects over space and time. This was of direct relevance to my study because it aimed to find out how historical literacy is constructed in Zimbabwean history textbooks.

It should be noted that although Foucault can be regarded to be anti-history, his HDA is a useful method of identifying what certain concepts mean within particular time-frames. His main argument was that history “depends on the dominant linguistic protocol (or trope) of the epistemic archive” (Munslow, 2006, p. 136). In other words, the concept of historical literacy (the trope) as espoused in the textbooks depends on the context, specifically the time-frame (the episteme). This implies an admission that in a different dispensation, especially political, what the recommended textbooks deem to be historical literacy may turn out to be different.

Inspired by Foucauldian HDA, my study adopted an analysis of data that can be referred to as the “informal approach” (Peräkylä, 2008, p. 352). This implies “reading and rereading” the empirical existing data and “try to pin down key themes and, thereby draw a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that

constitute the cultural world of which the textual material is a specimen” (Peräkylä, 2008, p. 352). This means that, while I had premeditated categories of analysis from my conceptual framework of historical literacy, as later illustrated in my analytical framework, I also remained open-minded enough to create new categories. In fact, the framework was just that: a framework which is meant to be proved correct or to be disproved. In HDA, the researcher is encouraged to take, fundamentally, the sentence as the unit of analysis. However, I had to take cognisance of the fact that this is not a hard and fast rule. For example, when analysing the usage of the concept of time, I had to consider individual words such as “decade” and “century” as units of analysis as well. These concepts would then be made sense of in their broader context. Therefore, depending on the category of analysis, the unit of analysis was either the sentence or the single word.

I used question analysis to analyse the relevant data generated from the assessment activities from the selected chapters in the textbooks on the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. Question analysis is neither a very well-developed nor a widely utilized data analysis method. An example of the use of this method is the study by Laverre (2008) which analysed pedagogical exercises in selected American school history textbooks. Nicholls (2003, p. 4) however insists on the usefulness of question analysis in history textbook analysis particularly in efforts to “assess whether in-text questions facilitate the development of students’ memorization or critical thinking skills.” In other words, in the case of my study, the implication is that analysing questions from the selected textbook sections is a key way of identifying what textbook producers assume to be important for learners of history to have grasped or developed at the end of the teaching and learning process, that is, historical literacy.

In order to apply question analysis, I also had come up with units of analysis. I looked at the task words that were used in the actual questions. To make sense of the task words, I referred to Bloom’s Taxonomy which explains levels of

assessment. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, there are levels of thinking and these are categorised from lower order to upper order as such: (Krathwohl, 2002) I was, however, conscious of the fact that not all activities could be interpreted just by focusing on the task words. Therefore the sentence was eventually taken to be the unit of analysis for the textual questions.

The main purpose of visual analysis was to corroborate the findings from historical discourse analysis. I used visual analysis to evaluate the utilization of all the visuals in the sections selected from the text, cover and questions such as illustrations, photos, maps, tables and sources in the textbooks under study (Nicholls, 2003, p. 4). In this study, each individual image was the unit of analysis. According to Noble & Bestley (2005, p. 138), when analyzing images there are two techniques: "denotation and connotation." The two are also referred to as first level of signification and second level of signification respectively (Wilson 2005). Denotation implies the basic identification of features, in this case the features of the images. Connotation builds on denotation and implies linking the features with meanings. I therefore relied heavily on connotation to make meaning of the kind of historical literacy that the images promoted. The meanings were coded according to the categories of analysis based on the benchmarks of historical literacy.

The use of more than one method of analysis should not be interpreted as a sign of confusion or as intended to water down the efficacy of one of the methods in use. In fact Gray (2004, p. 33) argues that "multiple methods are used to answer the different questions and for 'methodological triangulation'." For instance, I explained in Chapter 3 how Sleeter & Grant (1991) made use of six methods of analysis to come up with rich data from history textbooks. Considering the complexity of the concept of historical literacy, one method would not have been a sufficient tool to analyse the textbooks with.

4.7 The analytical instrument – categories

The data analysis methods above were used in order to get an overview of the data in the criteria of analysis through identifying the major emerging themes. After selecting the relevant areas of analysis, and getting an overview of the data, I made copies of the pages I wished to make use of. This aided me in that I would be able to analyse the text without being held back by issues of lack of space or fear to scribble over the books. I used highlighters of different colours to code the various benchmarks of historical literacy that were emerging from the data.

I then analysed the data to determine the kind of historical literacy it espoused. To do this I had come up with an instrument that I could use to analyse my data.

Figure 4.5: The analytical framework (instrument)

Category/Dimension	Sub-category	Comments
Historical Literacy		
Historical Knowledge	Events Narratives	
Historical Understanding	Conceptual Significance Time Causation and Consequence Motivation Change Empathy	
Historical Method	Sourcing Corroboration Contextualisation Analysis Evaluation	

	Explanation	
Historical Language		
Historical Consciousness		

According to Nicholls (2003, p. 8) history textbook researchers should construct an analytical framework that is “based on an idea of what is to be analysed or on our experience of what is to be analysed.” In formulating the instrument for data analysis, I used the conceptual framework on historical literacy, as explained in Chapter 2, to create criteria or categories I which use. This method is supported by Cohen et al.’s (2007, p. 476) assertion that when analysing textbooks, the categories of analysis can be “derived from theoretical constructs rather than developed from the material itself.” However, they admit that “emerging themes” in the process of analysis can be used “to generate or test a theory”. I did this to avoid making the data analysis totally deductive, since it would then not tally with research grounded in the interpretivist paradigm.

According to Nicholls (2003), history textbook researchers should construct an analytical framework based on literature on the topic under focus. Accordingly, my literature review chapter ended with the construction of a conceptual framework of historical literacy. Following Nicholls’s (2003) suggestion, I then made use of the conceptual framework to create an analytical instrument. The five categories of analysis are: historical knowledge; historical conceptual understanding; historical method; historical language and historical consciousness and they are all explained in Chapter 2. There was space for other emerging categories in my analytical framework. The analysis framework can be summarised by the instrument illustrated by Figure 4.5. I applied the instrument to each of the selected sections of the history textbooks in the sample for the study.

4.8 Limitations

As is the case with any research, there are strengths and limitations to this research design which I needed to consider. It has already been noted that, unlike in many research methods, in textual analysis the researcher has got very low control of the data. Indeed, Cohen et al. (2007, p. 475) confirm this by noting that “as the data are in permanent form (texts), verification through reanalysis and replication is possible.” I therefore had the chance to work on the data as has originally been put down by the author without the problems of loss of meaning through translation. The only loss of meaning was through my own interpretation of the data, therefore there was no double loss of meaning.

Coming to the limitations, first of all, as a former teacher in the Zimbabwean school context wherein the government was increasing its control over history teaching, I bring myself into the analysis both as a participant and as a subject in trying to instil a certain form of historical literacy in the learners. However, this experience can be turned into an advantage in terms of understanding what the goals of teaching history were according to the Zimbabwean government from an insider’s viewpoint.

Another major limitation to this study is, as Mouton (2001, p. 168) argues: “Given that most discursive practices are context-dependent or context-bound, such studies are limited in their generalisability.” This has however been explained in the theoretical framework where I stated that the concept of historical literacy is context-dependent and hence the reason for this study. In fact, if it were not context-dependent, there might have been little or no need for this study at all. Still, because of government regulation of Zimbabwean textbooks, I could make some generalisations, and the analytical framework can be adopted for other textbook analyses on historical literacy. The triangulation of methods also helps to increase the validity of the research findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Finally, it would be folly to assume that textbooks are the ultimate representation of what can be deemed to be historical literacy in any context. In spite of the explanations already given on the central role that history textbooks play in the teaching and learning process, one should always remember that there are many factors at play in textbook production and usage. Indeed, Apple (1992, p. 9) warned us that:

We cannot assume that what is "in" the text is actually taught. Nor can we assume that what is taught is actually learned. Teachers have a long history of mediating and transforming text material when they employ it in class-rooms. Students bring their own classed, raced, and gendered biographies with them as well.

Being wary of such limitations, I was careful to ensure that my research focused primarily on textbooks and what they try to promote as historical literacy. Therefore there is no attempt to generalize the research to a wider history education context but since it is a "case" of Zimbabwe and all the textbooks are controlled one can generalise on historical literacy in Zimbabwean textbooks!

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained the methodologies and methods that were applied to my study. I followed a golden thread which ensured coherence between the chapters so far by making reference to the conceptual framework throughout and basing the research design on the framework. Summarily, this study is qualitative and in the interpretivist paradigm. I have selected a sample of three "O" Level history textbooks and data was generated from the cover pages, jacket texts, introduction, notes to the teacher, the descriptive text in a selected chapter, the visuals and activities. I decided to use three data analysis methods which are historical discourse analysis, visual analysis and question analysis. The analytical instrument was based on the conceptual framework of historical literacy and its benchmarks. I acknowledged the limitations of my research design and tried to turn them into strengths. In the chapters that follow I will move

on to the findings of my analysis, aiming to show how historical literacy manifests itself in Zimbabwean history textbooks.

CHAPTER 5

Research findings: The manifestation of historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks – cover pages, jacket texts and prefaces

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explained the research design and methodologies that I adopted for this research. I explained that I designed the research according to the needs of the purpose of my study, which is to investigate how historical literacy manifests itself in Zimbabwean history textbooks. Using historical literacy as a conceptual framework, as explained in the Chapter 2 literature review, I designed my research as a qualitative analysis in the interpretivist paradigm. I purposively sampled three “O” Level history textbooks and from the selected textbooks I generated data from three specific criteria of analysis which are: the textbook producers' intentions (cover pages, jacket texts and prefaces), the selected descriptive text and the assessment activities. As explained in the Chapter 3 textbooks literature review, textbook producers include stakeholders such as the authors, the publishers, the government and the editors. I will therefore not assume that the historical literacy promoted by the textbooks that I analysed represents historical literacy as conceptualised by the authors only, since their agency has some limitations.

This is the first of two chapters in which I present the findings of my textbook analysis. The reason for having two research findings chapters is structural; presenting all the findings in one chapter would be cumbersome and lead to loss of focus. In this chapter, I present the findings from the analysis of the selected textbooks' criteria of analysis: the cover pages, jacket texts and prefaces. These three criteria are related in that they represent the textbooks producers' intentions and it is not a given that what they aim to do is what is represented in the descriptive text and the prefaces.

The findings are presented according to the analysis methods explained in the research design and methodology Chapter 4. I firstly analysed the criteria of analysis using the analysis methods of historical discourse analysis and visual analysis to get an overview of the emerging themes. I then analysed the data using the instrument based on the conceptual framework, that is, the benchmarks of historical literacy. Therefore, collectively the tools of analysis will give a picture of historical literacy in the selected textbooks, thus answering the research question: How does the notion of historical literacy manifest itself in Ordinary Level history textbooks in Zimbabwe?

As I explained in Chapter 4, the three books under analysis are *Focus on history* (Mlambo, 1993), *People making history* (Prew *et al*, 1993) and *People and power* (Proctor & Phimister, 1997). All three textbooks were approved by the government, through the Ministry of Education in 1993, 1992 and 1991 respectively. Government approval is crucial in terms of the textbooks presenting a relatively similar kind of historical literacy. Evidently, the government approval dates precede the publishing dates, this illustrating the importance of securing government approval before the book is even published. The findings of this research are presented according to the criteria of analysis listed above. At the end of the presentation of findings from each criterion of analysis, I present a concluding analysis which is grounded in the historical literacy conceptual framework, and, in consequence, answer the research question.

5.2 Cover pages

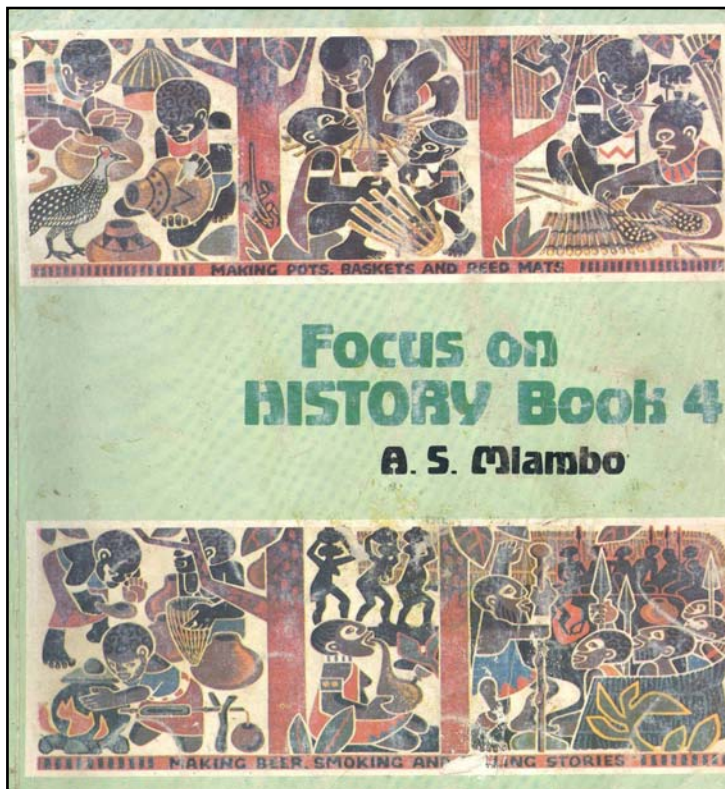
The covers of the textbooks generate data that consist of text and images and both are useful in revealing the intentions of the textbook producers. The front cover page is the face of the history textbook and its purpose is largely determined by economic factors because it is usually the cover that attracts the customer to the book. However, it is more than for marketing purposes as it also provides an insight of what the textbook entails. In the case of the history

textbooks under review, the cover page can thus give a picture of the kind of historical literacy that it seeks to promote.

5.2.1 *Focus on history*

The cover page of *Focus on history* has illustrations of visual art, and text in the form of the title of the book and the name of the author, A.S Mlambo – figure 5.1. The discourse in the cover text gives very little data on historical literacy. What can be inferred from the title of the textbook is that it is part of a series of publications by the same publisher focusing on different subject disciplines. Focusing on history, in particular, implies entering a unique domain and thus the promotion of a unique form of literacy, that is, historical literacy.

Figure 5.1: Cover page – *Focus on history*



Using denotation as a technique of visual analysis, I identified the illustrations to be showing the way of life of people, presumably Zimbabweans in the pre-colonial era. The images have two captions: “Making pots, baskets and reed

mats” and “Making beer, smoking and telling stories” (Mlambo, 1993, cover page). The people in the images do their work collectively, young, old, male and female, each playing their specific role. Most of the work is being done by the women and children while the men sit, with weapons in their hands, and discuss matters.

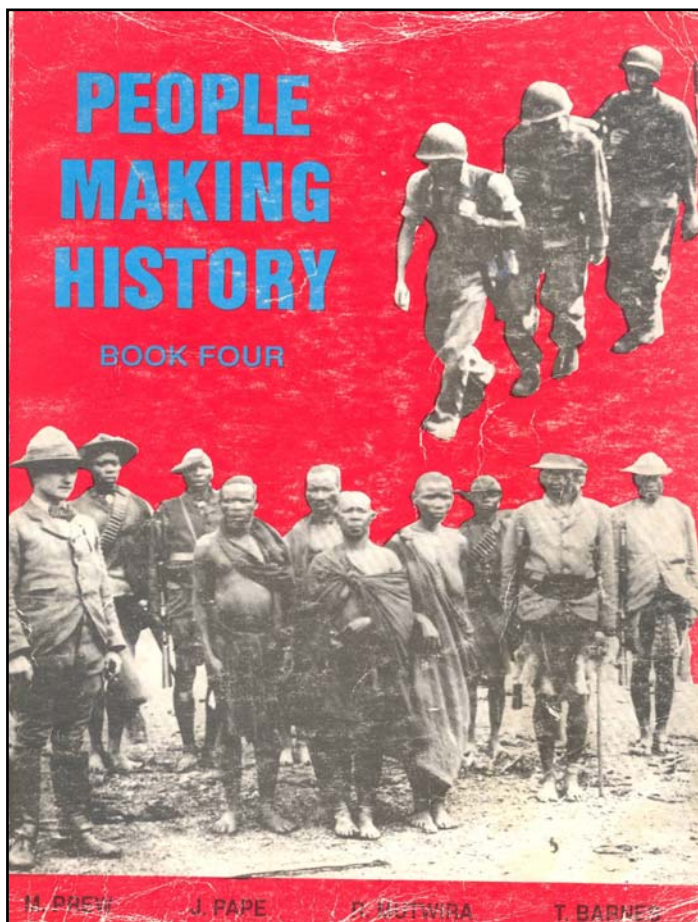
Denotations alone do not give sufficient meanings of images and through connotations researchers can generate more useful meanings. The connotation of the *Focus on history* cover page images is that the intentions of the textbook producers in choosing the images on the covers can only be inferred since they are not explained. However, whatever their intentions, the images have an implication on historical literacy for the users. First, since they depict pre-colonial Zimbabwean society, the textbook user is mentally prepared beforehand that the textbook focuses on Zimbabwean, specifically, black Zimbabwean history. Second, the images present a nostalgic reminiscence of pre-colonial Zimbabwe where there is evidence of production, merrymaking and sharing traditions, but no evidence of conflict, oppression or exploitation. From these images the user of the textbook is presented a romanticised narrative of Zimbabwe whereby society was not wrecked by the advent and effects of colonisation – this narrative being in line with the present government’s view of Zimbabwean history.

Therefore, with reference to the conceptual framework of the benchmarks of historical literacy, the cover page of *Focus on history* demonstrates a certain historical narrative, a sub-benchmark of historical knowledge. The illustrations and their captions, promote a particular version of Zimbabwean history whereby society before colonisation was productive, harmonious and peaceful. The images also imply a certain nature of historical consciousness, whereby the past is viewed to have been more glorious than the present thus hoping for a return of the past glories in the future. This consciousness can be said to be what was being referred to as the fire of the nation and history in Chapter 1.

5.2.2 *People making history*

The second textbook to be analysed is *People making history* whose cover page – see below - consists of the book title, the four authors' names and pictures. A historical discourse analysis of the textbook title reveals an attempt on the part of the textbook producers to put people at the centre of the historical process. This has the connotation of creating a collective memory and a collective destiny of a group of people, in this case the relatively young nation of Zimbabwe. According to Phillips (2006) collective memory ends up creating a collective historical consciousness which, however, may be a hindrance to historical literacy since it emphasises heritage more than history.

Figure 5.2: Cover page – *People making history*



From the images on the cover page one can denote a picture of the capture of Mbuya Nehanda, an event which is argued to have marked the end of the First Chimurenga. The other picture shows three foot soldiers on a trail, presumably during World War II. Both images have military denotations. The connotation of these images is that the textbook focuses on military history at the expense of other aspects of the discipline. In terms of historical literacy, the image of the capture of Nehanda and the military implications are central to the narrative of resistance to colonisation. The narrative of resistance is consistent with patriotic history which, as noted in Chapter 1, the government has tried to transfer from the national youth training centres into the mainstream school system. What this means for the learner is that historical literacy implies historical knowledge as a benchmark of historical literacy, specifically on military events. It also implies a certain historical consciousness whereby the actions of the contemporary government are ostensibly to redress the wrongs of the past, signified by the capture and execution of Nehanda.

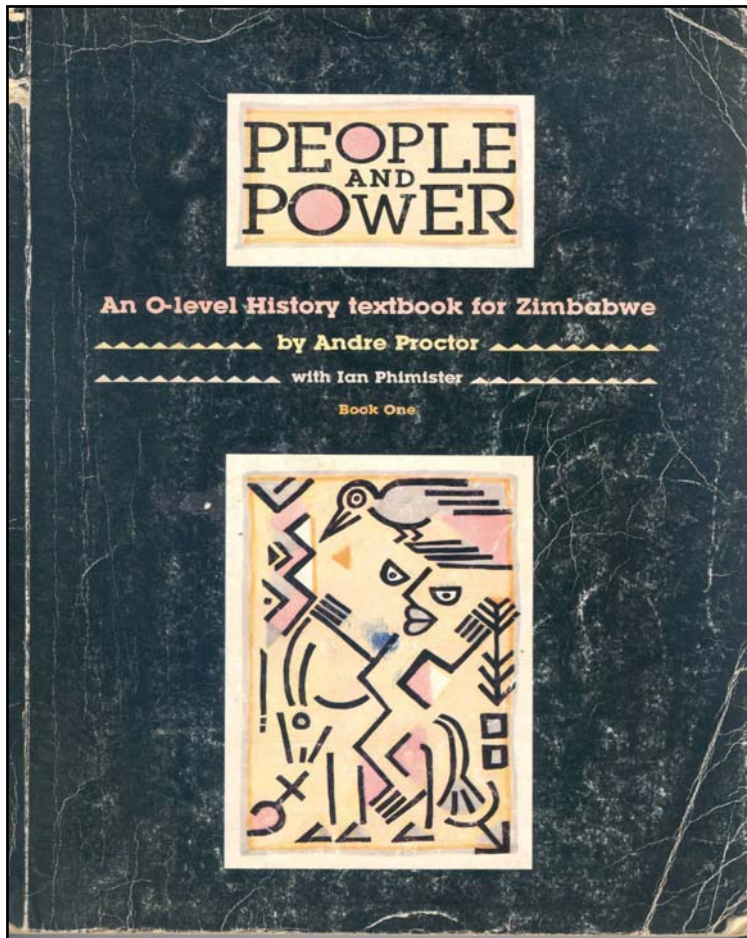
5.2.3 *People and power*

The third publication is *People and power* whose cover page consists of the textbook title, the two authors' names and a visual illustration. The title also reflects a discourse consistent with people's democracies and is clear that the textbook is "for Zimbabwe" Proctor & Phimister (1997, cover page). The visual illustration on the front cover as can be seen below is made-up of abstract art. In the illustration are representations of a human being, a bird and symbols such as for men and women and archaeological artefacts such as arrows and the chevron pattern consistent with the Zimbabwe tradition.

The choice of one visual illustration can be connoted to be an attempt not to foreground historical individuals. The symbols are sign of the representation of both sexes, therefore showing the promotion of equality symbolising the equality ideals of the struggle for independence which dominated much of the African nationalist historical discourse. The bird and the artefacts also show an

appreciation of history from deep time, usually investigated through archaeology. This can be viewed to imply that the textbook aims at encouraging a historical literacy whereby various methods of historical enquiry are used to reconstruct the past. At the same time, I would argue that the artefacts represent pre-colonial Zimbabwean history which, as noted earlier, the government has been keen to re-emphasise. An example of this is the celebration of the return of the upper half of a Zimbabwe bird sculpture from a German museum which was celebrated by the government and the state media (Ranger, 2004).

Figure 5.3: Cover page – *People and power*



5.2.4 Concluding analysis

Conclusively, the cover pages of the three textbooks that I analysed show historical knowledge, specifically the sub-category of historical narrative, as the

manifestation of historical literacy. The narrative that is illustrated is that of mainly the “glory days” of pre-colonial Zimbabwe and how they were disrupted by colonisation, thus motivating the armed struggle for independence. This narrative also promotes a historical consciousness whereby learners connect with deep time through the major events until independence. According to Wertsch’s (2006, p. 55) theorisation, as explained in Chapter 2, the three textbook cover pages reveal a similar “schematic narrative template.” The narrative thus gives the incumbent government the moral authority to run the country on the pretext of reigniting the fire of the history of Zimbabwe as explained in Chapter 1.

5.3 Jacket text

As described in the methodology chapter, besides being a marketing tool, the textbook’s jacket text – at the back cover – offers a condensation of the entire textbook from the view of the textbook producers. The jacket text, therefore, offers more explicit, though still brief, data on the textbook producers’ intentions.

5.3.1 Focus on history

A historical discourse analysis of the jacket text for *Focus on history* identifies the textbook’s main object which is to cover the ““O” Level History syllabus 2166” (Mlambo, 1993, back cover). The data on the jacket text also reveal that the textbook has a focus on “informative” written and visual sources and activities and the textbook is constructed in an “activity based approach.” The implication of the jacket text under scrutiny is that the focus of the textbook is not to only provide historical facts. In fact, it claims that the “informative quotations, maps and statistics [are] to help the teacher in presenting the material” (Mlambo, 1993, back cover). The implication of this statement is crucial: the textbook is more of a teacher’s tool than a history learners’ tool, and the teacher should present the material therein to the learners who do not necessarily have to challenge the textbook.

The reason for source based activities according to the jacket text is “to encourage the development of historical skills of analysis, evaluation and empathy” and “to stimulate discussion and enhance deeper understanding of historical issues” (Mlambo, 1993, back cover). From these statements, one can conclude that in terms of historical literacy, the main aim of the textbook producers is to develop learners’ historical method, which is, working with sources of history. Furthermore, it can be inferred that discussion of historical issues is being regarded as a dimension of historical literacy. However, the word “issues” is ambiguous and therefore the textbook is not clear what understanding the textbook user is exposed to.

In conclusion, historical literacy from the jacket text of *Focus on history* would be interpreted to be more about historical method than historical knowledge, although there is an apparent attempt to do both. The source-based approach to history teaching and learning to which this book subscribes can be argued to be informed by the then dominant SHP ideas of doing source work explained in Chapter 2 (Shemilt, 1980; 1983; 1987). There is a contradiction though, as historical method would imply the learners using the textbooks to come up with their own interpretations of history. In contradiction, the textbook producers seem to suggest that teachers are the ones who present material from the sources for the learners, therefore defeating the whole purpose of a historical method based on learners’ activity.

5.3.2 People making history

The jacket text of the second book – *People making history* – also depicts the textbook producers’ intentions. Through historical discourse analysis, the jacket text affirms the main aim of their textbook to cover the “O” Level syllabus through the statement that the textbook is meant to “ensure in-depth coverage of the varied periods, events and concepts stipulated in the broad new syllabus” (Prew *et al*, 1993, back cover). The textbook producers attempt to show how different this textbook is from previous history textbooks regarding the use of sources in

school history. The emphasis on sources in *People making history* can also be traced to the SHP spearheaded by Shemilt (1980; 1983; 1987). For example, part of the jacket text reads: “Informative quotations, maps and statistics assist the teacher in presenting the material” Prew *et al* (1993, back cover). This implies that there is a focus on historical information, sources of history and activities. In addition, the textbook producers claim to use “simple language” and “lively presentation” so that learning history is not rendered a boring ordeal. Finally, the jacket text for *People making history* ends with the seal of government approval. Therefore the government’s hand in determining historical literacy in the history textbooks is evident in *People making history*.

The historical literacy being peddled by the jacket text of *People making history* can be said to be mainly historical knowledge and historical method. Historical knowledge is also manifested in the textbook producers’ assertion that they cover periods, events and concepts stipulated by the syllabus. Second order conceptual understanding, if implied, is not explicit. The assumption is that the concepts being referred to here are first order concepts which are consistent with coverage of events. For example, covering various periods in history may imply developing an understanding of the concept of time, but it does not necessarily mean that. One further dimension of historical literacy that the textbook refers to is language. By professing to use “simple language” there is a connotation by the textbook that specialist historical language is not necessary and might only serve to complicate historical understanding. This is contrary to the argument as proposed in Chapter 2, whereby specialist historical language is regarded as a key to historical literacy (Husbands, 1996; Taylor, 2003).

5.3.3 *People and power*

A historical discourse analysis of the jacket text of the third publication – *People and power* – also confirms syllabus coverage as the main aim of the textbook. The textbook producers also point out that the textbook is meant “to assist teachers and pupils by approaching the complexities of the subject in a simple,

direct and imaginative way” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, back cover). In terms of what they really deem the important aspects of studying history, the textbook producers pronounce “discovery and interpretation.” They also make readers aware that the textbook contains a lot of illustrative historical sources “many never before published in Zimbabwe” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, back cover).

With reference to the conceptual framework of historical literacy, what can be inferred from the jacket text of *People and power* is that the government and the curriculum policy determine the topics that the textbook had to cover in their textbook. As such, a benchmark of historical literacy that is manifested in the jacket text is historical knowledge, although not very explicit. The jacket text lacks an overt focus on historical facts in an apparent effort to sell the use of sources in teaching and learning history. The textbook producers argue for source-based history learning through which learners will discover and interpret historical information in the sources, in other words, historical method as a benchmark for historical literacy. However, it is rather hazy what kind of source work is being promoted.

5.3.4 Concluding analysis

In conclusion, a historical discourse analysis of the jacket texts of all three textbooks show that the Zimbabwean government, through the curriculum documents has a huge influence in what should be in the history syllabus and for that reason the history textbooks cover all the recommended topics in a certain way. Those textbooks that cover all the recommended topics in that particular way then manage to get government approval, without which the textbooks would not be used in the Zimbabwean schools. Hence, the textbooks would be grounded in a certain kind of history education, thus promoting a certain kind of historical literacy. This kind of historical literacy is illustrated in Figure 5.4 which is a reflection of how my main analytical tool captured and coded data.

Figure 5.4: Manifestation of historical literacy in the jacket texts of the sample

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Comments		
		<i>Focus on history</i>	<i>People making history</i>	<i>People and power</i>
Knowledge	Events	Topics to be covered as per syllabus	In-depth coverage of events	Content of topics
	Narratives	Information to come from sources	Information to come from the sources	
Conceptual understanding	Time		Concept implied – periods	All concepts implied
	Causation and consequence			
	Motivation			
	Significance			
	Moral judgments			
	Change and continuity			
	Empathy	As a skill		
Source work (Historical method)	Sourcing		Reference to skills	Discovery
	Corroboration			
	Contextualisation			
	Analysis	To be developed through exercises		
	Evaluation	To be developed through exercises		
	Explanation			
	Interpretation		To be based on sources	A process
Historical consciousness				
Language		Use of simple language		
Other?		Sources to help the teacher	Sources to assist teacher	Sources to assist teachers and

		present to the learners		learners
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A glance at the figure gives a full picture of the emphases and silences in terms of the benchmarks of historical literacy that are promoted in the three textbooks' jacket texts. To begin with, the intention of the textbooks to cover a range of topics means that historical knowledge is the key benchmark of historical literacy that is promoted. The nature of historical knowledge is further revealed by the images on the cover which depict a version of historical narratives which tally with the expected official version of school history. In covering the recommended topics, the aim is to deal with the major historical events as per the argument by Ravitch (1989) in the Chapter 2 literature review. Thus, the textbook producers still promote a content-heavy historical literacy.

There is also evidence that some aspects of historical method or source work are encouraged in the jacket text with the activity-based approach specifically being promoted. In fact, the claim is that the information mentioned above should come from the sources in the textbooks. All three textbooks aim at promotion of, specifically, historical skills and this is consistent with developments in history education, then, linked to the effects of the SHP (Shemilt, 1980; 1983; 1987). Two of the textbooks directly refer to historical skills while the other refers to discovery which can also be regarded as an enquiry skill. The reference to historical skills exposes a limitation in my conceptual framework, which in Chapter 2, assumed skills to be too functional, leading me to use historical method instead.

The claim in the jacket texts of all three textbooks to follow an activity-based approach to history teaching and learning implies that the textbooks promote a learner-centred pedagogy. Historical method is a learner-centred approach to history pedagogy after-all, while teacher presentation on sources would imply a teacher-centred approach. However, a contradiction that emerges in the jacket text of two of the textbooks is that the sources are for the teacher to use in

presenting lessons. What is crucial about this contradiction is that the history teacher can then make use of the same textbook to promote a variety of historical literacies. This implies that the same books can still be used to promote patriotic history if the teacher tries to present history that way.

There are also some cases of ambiguity and silences in the jacket texts. For example, although there is mention of concepts, it is not clear whether the concepts being referred to are first order concepts or second order concepts. The only concept to be recognised is empathy, though, in this case, it is regarded as a skill. Thus, the textbook producers have a view of historical literacy which does not necessarily fit perfectly into my analytic instrument. While it would be unrealistic to expect exact details of, for example, all concepts to be covered, the jacket texts' emphasis is evidently not on a concept-based historical literacy, but a theme and activity based one.

In addition to the silences, the jacket text offer no evidence of historical consciousness as a benchmark of historical literacy as the jacket texts does not mention the connection between the past, present and future in history. This silence implies that the history textbooks do not equip learners with an awareness of the use of history in terms of learning from the past, perceiving the present and planning for the future.

It can also be concluded that the textbook producers contend that history can be learned without necessarily making use of specialist historical language. One textbook jacket text categorically states the intention to use simple language while the other two are silent about it. This is contrary to the argument by Husbands (1996), as discussed in Chapter 2, that history can not be separated from its disciplinary language since the latter shapes history while history also shapes language.

As already explained earlier, it is not a given that the jacket text represents exactly the historical literacy that is manifested inside the history textbooks, nor do they present historical literacy as conceptualised by the textbook authors alone. Admittedly, the covers of any textbook would be too limited in terms of covering all aspects of historical literacy as per the conceptual framework. Further analysis of other aspects of the textbooks will either corroborate or contend against the picture in the jacket text of an activity-based historical literacy. As a result, in the next section, the prefaces of the three textbooks will be analysed in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the kind of historical literacy promoted in the “O” level textbooks and in so doing answer the research question posed.

5.4 Prefaces

The role of the preface in the history textbooks has been evolving over time. For example, until recently it was rare for the preface to address the learners (Haue, 2009). Who the preface addresses thus depends on who the textbook is aimed at. What can be agreed on is that the preface is meant to persuade the textbook user to take interest in the book. It therefore introduces the textbook user to the features and outline of the textbook. As described in the methodology chapter, the preface has less marketing intentions compared to the jacket text, thus it produces more data. In the three textbooks that I analysed the preface comprises the introduction or notes to the teacher, or both. Since the prefaces are only textual, I used historical discourse analysis to identify the major themes and issues in order to make meaning of what they reveal and imply.

5.4.1 Focus on history

The preface in *Focus on history* is referred to as the introduction and for the most part it attempts to explain the relatedness of the textbooks to the history syllabus policy documents in Zimbabwe. As a result, the textbook producers undertake to cover all the topics in the syllabus, in the process, providing history learners with “important historical data or ‘facts’” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 6). This is despite the

claim on jacket text or in the same introduction that the textbook’s thrust is different from “the old exam-oriented approach in which emphasis was placed on rote learning and the memorising of great battles, dates, and the exploits of great men” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 6). Although there is reference to skills as explained in the jacket text, the textbook producers acknowledge the criticality of historical facts. The introduction of this publication reiterates the intention of both the history syllabus and the textbook to promote the development of empathy, research and analytical skills, which skills should be useful as the learners will apply them in their lives, not necessarily in history studies. In addition, the introduction acknowledges the inadequacies of the history textbook and encourages the history teachers to “exercise their own initiative and use pertinent current sources of immediate relevance to the student’s day-to-day lives (newspapers, magazine articles etc) to supplement the materials given in the books” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 6). The foregoing are the major themes emerging out of the preface of *Focus on History*. However, for a deeper understanding of how historical literacy manifests itself I used the analytical tool which depicted the representation in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.5: Manifestation of historical literacy in preface – *Focus on history*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Examples and comments - <i>Focus on history</i>
Knowledge	Events	Focus on exams, important historical data/facts – Ravitch(1989)
	Narratives	
Conceptual understanding	Time	
	Causation and consequence	
	Motivation	
	Significance	
	Moral judgments	
	Change and continuity	
	Empathy	As a skill, equated to imagination
Source work (Historical)	Sourcing	Research skills, find supplementary source material – Wineburg (1991)

method)	Corroboration	
	Contextualisation	
	Analysis	“Power of reasoning”
	Evaluation	Evaluating forces that shaped historical moments; be critical of accepted wisdom, question sources.
	Explanation	
	Interpretation	
Historical consciousness		
Language		Use of simple language
Application	Skill	Useful in everyday life outside history classroom
Other?		Textbook for the teacher Statement against old system – rote learning

Figure 5.2 illustrates how, if the themes arising from the preface in *Focus on history* are run against the conceptual framework, it can be deduced that the textbook regards historical knowledge as a key benchmark of historical literacy. Indeed, the reverence of important historical facts resonates with Ravitch’s (1989) conceptualisation of historical literacy which is that historical literacy is manifested through knowledge of basic historical facts. This is further corroborated by the publications stated intention to “help the students revise and also become familiar with the exam format” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 6). Therefore, although it claims the intention to move away from the exam-oriented approach, the textbook is still motivated by the exam and the promised coverage of the syllabus is testimony to this. This implies a certain kind of historical learning which is controlled by the authorities and teachers as agents while the textbook only acts as the manual for this process.

Aspects of historical method or working with sources are also evident in *Focus on history* as manifestations of benchmarks of historical literacy with the focus on historical skills. The preface especially recognises the importance of research skills which are part of Wineburg’s (1991) heuristic of sourcing. In the process, the textbook producers regard the concept of empathy as a skill, and not as a

concept as argued by Haydn *et al* (2003). As such, a historically literate learner should be able to apply such skills to solve problems outside history.

However, just like in the jacket text, there is a silence regarding historical conceptual understanding, historical consciousness and historical language as benchmarks of historical literacy. The preface offers no allusion to second order concepts as fundamental to history teaching and learning. There is also no mention of the importance of connecting the past to the present and the future. As for historical language, the introduction states that there is no use of specialist language, but rather simple language. Therefore conceptual understanding, historical consciousness and historical language do not feature as benchmarks of historical literacy in the preface of *Focus on history*.

5.4.2 People making history

In *People making history*, the preface consists of the introduction and notes to the teacher. This proves that there are no separate teachers' guide books and the same textbook has to cater for the needs of both the learner and the teacher. A major theme emerging out of the introduction is in relation to shifting from the rote-learning approach to history. The introduction asserts that the textbook will not teach learners "how to memorise, but to think critically about various events and periods" with the ultimate aim of building "the student's skills as a historian" (Prew *et al*, 1993). Such statements demonstrate an attempt to bridge the gap between the history learner and the professional historian as argued by Wineburg (1991) and explained in Chapter 2. Still, the introduction admits the textbook producers' efforts to prepare the users of their textbook for exams.

Another claim in the introduction is that the textbook adds "the people's voice to history" Prew *et al* (1993). Therefore the focus is not on important men, but even ordinary men and women who have made a contribution to the historical process. This resonates with the argument about the textbook title putting people at the

centre of the historical process, also tying with the ideals of the struggle for independence.

The introduction also gives reasons for the study of school history. Other than studying for enjoyment, the introduction explains that “only through a clear understanding of the past, can we plan for the present and future” (Prew *et al*, 1993). These reasons for studying history may serve to answer the question on what school history is for. In this case, history is regarded to have the same role for the present and the future; that is, planning,

The notes to the teacher mostly offer details of the content that the textbook covers. It is therefore almost a run down of the syllabus requirements in terms of topics that should be covered. The teachers are promised, amongst other things, “an in-depth analysis of the history of Zimbabwe from 1980 to the present” (Prew *et al*, 1993). There is no real guidance of the teacher in terms of the dimensions of historical literacy that needs to be developed in their learners. Although the notes aim to “increase the students’ understanding” it is not clear what understanding refers to in this instance.

To gain a deeper and clearer understanding of how historical literacy is manifested in the preface of *People making history*, I coded the themes from the preface using my analytical framework. Figure 5.3 exhibits how the historical literacy is reflected in the analytical framework. To start with, although the introduction of this publication categorically downplays memorisation of historical facts, the notes to the teacher reflect the appreciation of historical knowledge as a benchmark for historical literacy in the textbook. The focus on preparing learners for exams also substantiates the textbook producers’ view of a certain kind of historical knowledge as important. They claim that the knowledge follows a narrative that includes the ordinary shapers of history and not those who are in power. This is in spite of the cover page showing the picture of Mbuya Nehanda, one of the most significant individuals in the official grand narrative of

Zimbabwean history. This therefore turns out to be one of the contradictions between the cover and the preface in terms of the historical literacy being promoted.

By encouraging historical skills, the preface argues for historical method as another benchmark for historical literacy. This manifestation is along the lines of Wineburg’s (1991) argument whereby working with sources is the major determinant of historical literacy. However, only sourcing and evaluation of historical sources are emphasised and there are silences on other sub-categories of historical method such as corroboration, contextualisation and analysis (Wineburg, 1991).

Figure 5.6: Manifestation of historical literacy in preface – *People making history*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Examples and comments - <i>People making history</i>
Knowledge	Events	Various events; preparation for exam Cover developments
	Narratives	Adding the people’s voice, on top of great men – thus title of textbook To change the inclination towards socialism and the Eastern bloc to a more balanced look at world history In-depth analysis of the history of Zimbabwe from occupation to present
Conceptual understanding	Time	Various periods From occupation ... in 1890 to the present From ... 1917 to ... in 1985 All implied
	Causation and consequence	Developments resulting from colonisation - implied
	Motivation	
	Significance	World War 2 and how it influenced world events – implied
	Moral judgments	
	Change and continuity	Revolutions outside Africa – implied

	Empathy	
Source work (Historical method)	Sourcing	Build skills as a historian – Wineburg (1991)
	Corroboration	
	Contextualisation	
	Analysis	
	Evaluation	Think critically about events and periods; discover the real meaning and importance of the sources
	Explanation	
	Interpretation	Read source material
Historical consciousness		Only through understanding of past, can we plan for the present and future
Language		
Other?		Statement against old system – rote learning

It can also be argued that the preface of this publication professes the intention to develop historical consciousness by helping learners connect the past to the present and future. Although the explanation of their statement in this regard is not explicit, the textbook producers promote an understanding of the role of history in past present and future society. What is not clear though, is what kind of historical consciousness they want to promote.

Even though the jacket text explained coverage of concepts, nowhere in the preface is there use of the term “concept.” This implies the downplaying of conceptual understanding as a benchmark of historical literacy. Although there is some allusion to the notions of change, time, causation and consequence, it is only as part of the general narrative and the concepts are thus only implied. Therefore, the preface of *People making history* manifests historical literacy as grasp of knowledge, historical method, consciousness, and some conceptual understanding.

5.4.3 *People and power*

In the case of the third publication, the preface from *People and power*, for the most part, emphasises different kinds of historiographies and “how history has been used in African societies.” It thus explains the developments in the use of

history from “traditional historians”, “colonial history”, “Africanist or nationalist history”, “the under-development school”, “popular history or ‘history from below’” right up to “historical perspectives in the 1990s” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 4-6). This explanation elucidates the link between history and power. A section on the outline of the textbook gives a rundown of the topics to be covered and constantly points out that “we will see how...,” implying that the textbook follows a certain narration of past events. The textbox entitled “What’s in a term?” argues that “the new approach employed in the book requires new terms for the societies studied” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 5). For example the introduction claims that the textbook prefers to use the term “early farming societies” instead of “early iron age” and discards Marxist terms like “mode of production” ostensibly “because they seem unnecessarily difficult” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 5). The adopted terms, though, are meant to represent the same thing as the discarded ones. The final theme from the introduction of *People and power* is on the purpose of studying history, and it concludes that “It is up to each of us to make up our minds and draw our own conclusions from history” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 6). These conclusions should then make a difference in our everyday life. For this to happen, the textbook producers propose what they call “democratic History” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 6). Democratic history gives the history learner access to all classes and sections of past society and hence the chance to understand present and prospective future society.

The above details are the main themes that emerge from the historical discourse analysis of the preface of *People and power*. For a deeper understanding of the kind of historical literacy that is manifested in the preface, I used the analytical framework which produced the picture represented in Figure 5.4.

From Figure 5.4, it is evident that historical content knowledge is viewed as a critical benchmark of historical literacy in the preface of *People and power*. It has been shown how the outline of the textbook they constantly point out the content they will focus on implying that the textbooks follows a certain narration of past

events. In addition, most of the preface discusses how historiographies have developed over time. From the discussion of historiographies, one can infer that the history learner is being encouraged to be both open-minded and critical in understanding that historical events are seen differently by different people and consist of different narratives. For this reason, the benchmark that they are promoting in the preface is that of multiple narratives of historical knowledge (Taylor, 2003).

Historical conceptual understanding as a benchmark of historical literacy can only be inferred from the preface. Considering the argument in the preface that multiple perspectives are promoted, it would then be important for understanding second order concepts which Lévesque (2005) argues are vital in anchoring historical narratives. The argument is that factual knowledge without understanding can easily turn into narrow narratives which in turn can be used for propaganda purposes.

Figure 5.7: Manifestation of historical literacy in preface – *People and power*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Comments - <i>People and power</i>
Knowledge	Events	p. 6 We will see these themes of colonialism and resistance – outline of topics/themes
	Narratives	p. 4 There can never be a single history p. 5 Need to go beyond history of ruling classes on
Conceptual understanding	Time	p. 4 Pre-colonial – implied 1940s, 1950s p. 5 The beginnings of the 1990s
	Causation and consequence	p. 5 Colonisation led to underdevelopment – implied p. 6 Merchant capitalism brought increasing war and destruction
	Motivation	p. 5 Economic motives behind colonisation – implied
	Significance	

	Moral judgments	
	Change and continuity	p. 4 Uses of history from earliest times to present p. 6 A liberating period of change – implied colonialism destroyed the old societies of Africa, but preserved colonialism had both progressive and regressive aspects
	Empathy	
Source work (Historical method)	Sourcing	p. 4 Oral history, linguistics, archaeology etc – legitimate evidence
	Corroboration	
	Contextualisation	
	Analysis	p. 6 positive and negative aspects
	Evaluation	
	Explanation	
	Interpretation	p. 5 Challenge interpretations of earlier historical traditions
Historical consciousness		
Language		p. 5 Bourgeoisie, working class What's in a term? New terms for societies studied Avoid using technical terms – they seem unnecessarily difficult. It is possible to convey the same meaning using simple descriptive terms
Application	Skill	Using what's learned in class to solve political issues

Missing from the preface in *People and power* is historical consciousness as a benchmark of historical literacy. Although the textbook user is encouraged to make conclusions from the past, the preface does not explain why this is important for the present and future. With such silences, the role of school history, other than for development of skills and enjoyment, is not clear especially in a context, explained in Chapter 1, where history is being challenged for relevance by emerging disciplines.

Finally, the argument that the same historical meaning can be conveyed using simple language implies that specialist historical language is not an important benchmark of historical literacy.

5.5 Concluding analysis

The textbooks under analysis have generally similar interpretations of historical literacy, but differences exist as well. The similarities are largely informed by government approval of the textbooks for use in the schools for history teaching. By juxtaposing the prefaces against the conceptual framework of the benchmarks of historical literacy, there is evidence that the textbook producers emphasise some benchmarks and pay virtually no attention to others. The data shows that although all three history textbooks are influenced by the curriculum documents, this is more overt with *People making history* and *Focus on history*. In these two textbooks the prefaces give statements that mirror the “O” Level history syllabus 2166, with its inherent contradictions. Thus, although the textbook producers state their intention to take a learner-centred and activity based approach, the syllabus guidance means that the history textbooks can not run away from focusing on examinations. This means that, to a greater extent, historical literacy in the history textbooks manifests itself the way it does in the history syllabus. The alignment between history textbook content and the history syllabus therefore becomes a factor why the textbook manages to get the seal of government approval through the Ministry of Education.

Given the above factors, historical content knowledge ends up manifesting itself as a key benchmark of historical literacy in the prefaces. The sub-categories of historical events and narratives are both taken seriously and they are what is referred to as key “historical data” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 6). In spite of the claim to move away from memorisation, the prefaces in the end outline certain areas of content that they wish to expose to learners. The coverage of content is consistent with the claims in the jacket texts which promote the coverage of the history syllabus 2166. The narratives can be argued to be in line with the official

line, especially on themes directly relating to Zimbabwe, despite declarations that the textbooks focus on the ordinary history makers and not heroes and heroines. The view of knowledge of historical facts as a sign of historical literacy is in tune with Ravitch's (1989) argument as explained in Chapter 2 namely that a recollection of historical facts implies historical literacy. The exception is *People and power* which explains the need for history learners to know multiple narratives as argued by Taylor (2003). It should be noted that the view of multiple narratives is a shift from what is manifested on the cover pages which illustrate a romanticised single narrative of Zimbabwean history.

The data also reveal that the textbook producers recognise historical method or source work as a benchmark for historical literacy. This is consistent with the argument in the jacket texts that the textbooks mainly follow the activity based approach to history teaching and learning. This is illustrated by the three textbooks' inferred argument that learners should practice history like real historians as per the argument by Wineburg (1991). They therefore refer to the development of historical skills, which can be viewed under historical method as a benchmark for historical literacy. The emphasis on historical method is particular in terms of the sub-categories of analysis, evaluation, interpretation and empathy. Empathy, in this case is regarded as a sub-benchmark of historical method, rather than a second order concept as espoused in the conceptual framework. These skills, it is argued are essential in life even well after examinations as the history learner will apply them to solve problems outside history. The application of skills outside school history, as a result goes further than Wineburg's (1991) contention meaning that historical skills can be generalised to other disciplines.

Another benchmark which the prefaces in *People making history* and *People and power* consciously consider is historical language. They argue that specialist historical language only serves to complicate school history and make it boring for learners. It should be noted that the terms *People and power* seem to be

antagonistic towards those grounded in Marxist discourse. Since the history textbooks under analysis were published in the period just after the fall of the Soviet Union, these assertions may be interpreted as a subtle way of attempting to move away from Marxist discourse. In the same vein, *People making history* also clearly states the endeavour to shift from the “inclination of the syllabus towards socialism and the Eastern bloc” (Prew *et al*, 1993, notes to the teacher page). This may also imply discarding Marxist language, but only symbolically so. As an alternative, the textbooks prefer the use of what they term simple language. It may be argued that this conscious discussion of historical language in the preface illustrates the textbook producers’ regard for historical language as a benchmark for historical literacy. On the contrary, the assumption that such statements create is that history does not necessarily need a specialist language. Therefore, the data from the prefaces implies that historical language is not an indispensable benchmark of historical literacy. One can therefore conclude that the prefaces present the textbook with relative autonomy from the ideological dogmas of the government.

In Chapter 2 I argued that both historical understanding and source work are grounded in second order historical concepts. However, while there is frequent reference to understanding, its meaning in the prefaces is very ambiguous. For example “increasing students’ understanding” (Prew *et al*, 1993) could very well be interpreted in a range of ways by history learners and teachers. There is very little reference to concepts, if any, on the covers and the prefaces. Where concepts are mentioned, it is not clear whether they are first order concepts or second order concepts. Therefore the textbook users are not explicitly exposed to second order concepts like causation and consequence, significance and change (Haydn *et al*, 2003). Where these concepts are mentioned, they are not as a separate benchmark for historical literacy, but rather as a consequential aspect of the historical narrative. In other words they are only implied, but not explained. For example, dates imply the concept of time, but they do not

necessarily mean an understanding of time as a concept, as opposed to a mere historical “fact.”

Historical consciousness as a benchmark of historical literacy is also not deliberately discussed in detail. Only in *People making history* is there an attempt to demonstrate the connection between past, present and future. Here, the textbook producers seem to be giving a rationale for the study of history rather than explaining the notion of historical consciousness as a component of historical literacy. Therefore it can also be concluded that the prefaces pay little attention to encouraging historical consciousness as conceptualised by Rösen (1993) as a benchmark for historical literacy.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the findings from the analysis of the cover pages, jacket texts and prefaces of the three textbooks which are *Focus on history*, *People making history* and *People and power*. The analysis showed that for all three textbooks, it can be generalised that there is an attempt not to focus on historical knowledge only. There is a lot of emphasis on skills development. Therefore, historical method is a key benchmark of historical literacy according to the three criteria of analysis. There is virtually no recognition of historical conceptual understanding as a benchmark of historical literacy. Finally, historical language is not considered a key benchmark and the same applies to historical consciousness.

In the next chapter, I present the findings from the descriptive text and the assessment activities and also demonstrate the consistencies and the inconsistencies between the intentions of the textbook producers and what they actually present in the textbooks.

CHAPTER 6

Research findings: The manifestation of historical literacy in Zimbabwean history textbooks – descriptive text and assessment activities

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 was the first of two chapters in which I present the findings of the analysis of the three selected history textbooks. The focus in that chapter was a presentation of the findings from cover pages, jacket texts and prefaces. This chapter is part of the audit trail moving from the outside to the inside of the textbooks to answer the research question. I will therefore present the findings from the analysis of the selected parts of the descriptive text and assessment activities. As I explained in the methodology chapter, I used Historical discourse analysis and visual analysis to analyse the descriptive text and present an overview of the emerging themes. In addition, I used question analysis to analyse the assessment activities. Because of the underdevelopment and inadequacies of question analysis, I corroborated it with Bloom's Taxonomy to gain an overview of the themes. For both the descriptive text and the assessment activities, I employed the analytical framework based on the conceptual framework on the benchmarks of historical literacy.

6.2 Descriptive text

As described in Chapter 4, data from the descriptive text of the selected textbooks were generated from within a selected chapter on the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. First, I analysed the section on "Umvukela/Chimurenga II" from the chapter on "Zimbabwe: colonisation to independence" from *Focus on history* (Mlambo, 1993, pp. 137-143). Second, from the chapter on "The struggle for independence" in *People making history*, I analysed the introductory section (Prew, *et al*, 1993, pp. 170-171). Finally, I analysed the section on "The beginning of the war" from the chapter on "Armed struggle and the coming of independence" from *People and power* (Proctor &

Phimister, 1997, pp. 247-249). I selected these themes because they resonate with the area of focus specifically identified as crucial by the government in making school history compulsory in Zimbabwe.

The rationale for choosing these small sections has been explained in the methodology in Chapter 4 - the major reason being that this research is not a content analysis, but an analysis of how the benchmarks of historical literacy are presented. As such there is no need to analyse the entire textbook. The amount of data is also within the parameters of a Masters in Education degree by dissertation. I used Historical discourse analysis and visual analysis to come up with the themes in an overview of the sections under analysis. I then coded the data onto my analytical framework, which is based on the conceptual framework of historical literacy expounded in Chapter 2.

6.2.1 *Focus on history*

The descriptive text in *Focus on history* gives a detailed account of events in the second Chimurenga, including other details such as dates and names of people and places. The text thus presents a particular narrative of how events unfolded during the Chimurenga. One excerpt from the descriptive text would suffice:

In June 1967, a combined force of about eighty ZIPRA and SAANC guerrillas crossed from Zambia and opened up a wide front stretching from Binga to Hwange Game Reserve. The cadres clashed with the Rhodesian forces in Karoi, Chinhoyi, Tsholotsho and Nkayi (Mlambo, 1993, p.141).

The text quoted above is rich in detail as it contains dates, events and a variety of names. The guerrilla fighters are the subjects while the Rhodesian forces are the objects, meaning that the narrative is told from the point of view of the African nationalists. This point of view is confirmed by the identification of Rhodesian government as “the real enemy” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 139). The narrative follows the events that unfolded as the reform movement in Rhodesia transformed into a mass nationalist movement characterised by an armed guerrilla struggle. The

descriptive text in the selected part of the textbook contains citations, albeit of some of the nationalist leaders, James Chikerema and Herbert Chitepo. Throughout the narrative, significant individuals, if not cited like the above two, are mentioned with their roles and motivation in the Chimurenga being explained.

As per the explained methods, I used visual analysis at two levels, that is, denotation and connotation. At the denotation level, the images in the selected section are in the form of pictures. The pictures show protest scenes with civilians fleeing fully equipped Rhodesian anti-riot police, a line-up of the ZANU leaders, and the main protagonists of the armed struggle such as Jason Moyo and Alfred Mangena for ZIPRA and Josiah Tongogara and Josiah Tungamirai of ZANLA.

The connotation of the pictures in the section under analysis is mainly to corroborate the narrative that is unfolding. As a result the pictures are mainly meant to identify the significant players in the armed struggle. The captions, as explained in the book's preface, are lengthy and, for the most part, rather than analyse the details of the pictures, they basically tell another narration. For example, part of the caption of the picture on Tongogara and Tungamirai reads:

Tongogara was unfortunately killed in a car accident in Mozambique in 1979, a few weeks after the Lancaster House Agreement which had ended the armed conflict and just before he was due to return to Zimbabwe to take part in the general elections that put ZANU into power in 1980 (Mlambo, 1993, p.141).

This caption is typical of the other captions, not only in terms of its length, but the details that enhance the narrative in the descriptive text. This is because it is also loaded with details of facts such as names, dates and events. The long captions can be regarded as interpretation of the pictures for the learners. The above has been an outline of the selected descriptive text in *Focus on history*. To understand its implication in terms of historical literacy, Figure 6.1 illustrates how the data appear in the analytical framework.

Figure 6.1: Manifestation of historical literacy in descriptive text – *Focus on history*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Examples and comments - <i>Focus on history</i>
Knowledge	Events	p. 137 Umvukela/Chimurenga II – heading – a series of events e.g. “Rallies throughout the country were attended by thousands” dates e.g. ZANU August 1963 p. 138 – Image showing events – riots; therefore used to explain events p. 140 – The first major action in 1964 April 1966 marked a major turning point
	Narratives	p. 137 African nationalists’ narrative p. 139 The real enemy p. 140 UANC mentioned – what was it? Led by?
	Names	p. 139 Heading the new party was Ndabaningi Sithole with Robert Mugabe as the Secretary General image – can you identify the people p. 140, 1 identification of leaders
Conceptual understanding	Time	p. 137 Until the 1960s September 1962 p. 138, 9 images from the 1960s
	Causation and consequence	pp. 141-142 Reasons behind failure of early battles
	Motivation	p. 137 The coming to power of...convinced African leaders p. 141 The need to overthrow ... became more urgent as... p. 142 “Realising this, ...”
	Significance	Images – significant leaders – implied p. 142 – What is the significance...?
	Moral judgments	p. 139 Senseless wave of violence
	Change and continuity	p. 137 Change of tactics
	Empathy	
Source work (Historical method)	Sourcing	p. 138, 9 – Images, no sources p. 141 Citation – Chikerema p. 142 Citation - Chitepo
	Corroboration	

	Contextualisation	
	Analysis	p. 142 – Analysis of image – it’s contents
	Evaluation	
	Explanation	Of text, not sources – pp. 141-142 reasons behind failure of early battles
	Interpretation	
Historical consciousness		p. 139 Image – what positions do they hold in government? Justifies current leadership
Language		p. 137 Umvukela/Chimurenga II p. 139 The real enemy p. 141 Cadres, collaborator

At a glance, Figure 6.1 seems to imply that the descriptive text of this textbook develops all the benchmarks of historical literacy in the conceptual framework. However, a deeper analysis reveals that historical knowledge as conceptualised by Ravitch (1989) is the key benchmark of historical literacy that is being promoted by this publication. This argument is based on how the descriptive text gives emphasis to events, dates and names, especially of significant people, places, countries and political parties, following a particular narrative. Despite, the insertion of quotations from first hand witnesses, the text is largely a single narrative with virtually no citations of counter-arguments. The pictures also help in the presentation of the single narrative. Most of the pictures are of people who the government has accorded national hero status and their identification in the chapter confirms the official view of their role in history.

Contrary to the claims in the jacket text and the prefaces, there is very little to suggest that the descriptive text in *Focus on history* is meant to develop historical method. The attempts at historical method are manifested by the citation of James Chikerema and Herbert Chitepo (Mlambo, 1993, p. 142). But, I have argued that these quotations, while exposing the textbook users to sourcing as per Wineburg’s (1991) view, are mainly meant to strengthen the nationalists’ narrative of events during the period. The lack of counter-arguments proves above point. The major sources in the descriptive text are the pictures described above. However, the pictures do not serve to develop historical method since, for

example, their producers are not acknowledged. Additionally, the captions only add more historical knowledge than method. With the exception of the source on ZAPU and ZANU journals (Mlambo, 1993, p. 142), the captions, notwithstanding their relative length, do not really analyse the contents of the pictures. However, there are cases of questions based on the sources, yet these are basically lower order questions. For example, the questions that are part of the caption on Jason Moyo and Alfred Mangena read:

Which nationalist party did the two leaders belong to? [And] Can you name any other prominent nationalist leaders who died either in exile or at home and did not live to see the country's independence (Mlambo, 1993, p. 140)?

It is therefore evident that the descriptive text of *Focus on history* does not do much to expose history learners to source work, since the sources therein are not mainly for analysis purposes, in spite of claims that the textbook does that in the jacket text and the preface.

Historical conceptual understanding as a benchmark of historical literacy is manifested merely through implication. Just like the case in the prefaces, the concepts of time, significance, motivation, causation and consequence, and change are not explicitly explained in the descriptive text, but they are hinted at. Rather, they are part of the narrative and it is not easy for a learner to extrapolate them. An example is this statement: "The coming to power of the Rhodesia Front Government with its commitment to prevent African rule convinced the African leaders that a change of tactics was necessary" (Mlambo, 1993, p. 137). Since this statement is part of the narrative, the textbook user can not necessarily tell whether the statement implies any second order concept, and if it does, if it is motivation or causation. As explained in Chapter 2, Taylor (2003) notes with concern the way learners confuse motivation and causation. This is especially so if the concepts are hidden within a meta-narrative. Other concepts such as time and significance are also implied as they can be found in relation to events,

names and dates; but, as already been argued, implication does not imply existence of the concept.

While there seems to be attempts to link past events to the present, but not sufficiently to argue that the descriptive text promotes historical consciousness. In terms of historical consciousness, the link between the past and the present is only revealed when showing the results of the Umvukela/Chimurenga II, for example, the significant people who are in government today as a result of the war. Part of the caption on the picture of nationalist leaders contains the question, “What positions do they hold in present-day Zimbabwe” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 139)? This creates a consciousness which justifies the people who hold power today to do so because of their role in the war, but nothing more. This is not the purposeful development of connecting the past, present and future as part of historical consciousness.

The language in the descriptive text of this publication is evidently still influenced by nationalist political discourse. This is evidenced by the use of words such as “real enemy” and “cadres,” which also helps to illuminate the single narrative explained above (Mlambo, 1993, p. 141). The use of this kind of language is contrary to the assertion in the preface that the textbook intends to use simple language.

In conclusion, the descriptive text in Focus on history can be subject to the abuse of school history as argued by Ranger (2004) and Rodden (2009). This is because the text presents a single narrative which exposes the learners to what Husbands (1996, p. 127) refers to as “political literacy” through the language and the significant events and individual players who still have a role in present day Zimbabwean politics.

6.2.2 People making history

In *People making history*, the descriptive text is also text dense, just like in *Focus on history*. A case of the detail is illustrated in this excerpt from the first sentence of the chapter:

As was the case in many other African countries, World War 2 (1939-1945) was to prove a turning point in the nationalist struggle which led to Zimbabwe's independence 35 years later. Prior to the settler invasion in 1890 ... (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 171).

As the above quotation proves, there is a focus on events and their details such as dates and places of occurrence. Thus all the events have their dates of occurrence provided and there are many other related facts. For instance, the events in Zimbabwe are contextualised within the contemporary dynamics in Africa and the world. The text is also largely a narrative of events according to the textbook producers. Although there is a quotation of Kwame Nkrumah, its purpose is to support the views being promoted in the narrative text. The narrative is mainly from the point of view of the African nationalists and is grounded in struggle and victory over the colonists.

The narrative being referred to above is strengthened by the pictures. An application of denotation on the pictures in the selected section of the descriptive text reveals a focus on guerrilla fighters. In one picture the guerrillas are in a bus shaking their fists in victory and shaking hands with an enthusiastic civilian crowd along the road. The other picture denotes the fighters holding guns and mingling with civilians. At a connotation level, the pictures support the narrative of victory described above. They have no captions and therefore it can only be inferred what they imply. They also create a consciousness of a strong bond between the civilian population and the fighters even in cases where they were holding guns. The pictures therefore connote public support of the nationalists, and in present-

day society this can be transformed into supporting the nationalist parties which brought independence.

For a deeper understanding of the descriptive text in *People making history* in relation to the benchmarks of historical literacy, I made use of my analytical framework. The data thus generated is represented in Figure 5.6. As was the case with *Focus on history*, a simple glance at the analytical tool may lead one to conclude that almost all benchmarks are met in the textbook, when, in fact, a closer and deeper analysis proves otherwise.

Figure 6.2: Manifestation of historical literacy in descriptive text – *People making history*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Examples and comments – <i>People making history</i>
Knowledge	Events	p. 171 World War 2 (1939-1945) Zimbabwe's independence 35 years later Settler invasion in 1890 – all events have dates Images- guerrillas mixing with people
	Narratives	African narrative Question. – What was the situation African soldiers...? What ideas ...? A narrative of victory
	Names	Names – Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, France, the United States Kwame Nkrumah, Mahatma Gandhi
Conceptual understanding	Time	World War 2 (1939-1945) 1917 In the same period Aftermath
	Causation and consequence	Forces which had a profound influence on liberation struggle A trigger in raising African consciousness
	Motivation	
	Significance	Profound influence on liberation struggle Most significant Question – what was importance ...?
	Moral judgments	

	Change and continuity	'Wind of change' The seeds of change had been sown Question – what did the phrase 'wind of change' mean?
	Empathy	
Source work (Historical method)	Sourcing	Citation of Nkrumah No reference to images
	Corroboration	
	Contextualisation	Implied – contextualised in the picture of world events
	Analysis	Of causes – implied
	Evaluation	
	Explanation	Not of sources, but text – It was not their war but ... The myth of white supremacy had been eroded
	Interpretation	Question – what did the phrase 'wind of change' mean?
Historical consciousness		
Language		The Russian Revolution of 1917 and its aftermath Imperial dictatorship

Historical knowledge is evidently a key benchmark of historical literacy in *People making history*. The knowledge also comprises facts such as dates, events and names of individuals and places. The events that are mentioned include World War 2, Zimbabwe's independence, and the Russian Revolution and all these events have their dates of occurrence provided. Names of individuals include Kwame Nkrumah and Mahatma Ghandi and places include countries such as Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, France and the United States. Such facts are what Ravitch (1989) claims are essential for anyone to claim to be studying history. Manifestly, knowledge centred on space and time is what the descriptive text mainly aims to promote.

In spite of an in-text citation of a source of information, there is little historical method that is promoted through the descriptive text. The sub-categories of analysis and explanation in the text are implied rather than overt. For example,

the quotation by Nkrumah is not analysed, explained or interpreted, but it is taken as part of the narration. In addition, a statement which reads: “The myth of white supremacy had been eroded and both whites and blacks had been equally vulnerable” (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 171) is not easy to identify to be an explanation. Besides, any explanation that is done is not on sources, but as part of the narrative. The pictures fall short of being useful in source work because their producers are not acknowledged. However, intentionally or unintentionally, the absence of captions for the pictures, gives the textbook users freedom to give their own interpretations of the images.

The above ambiguity also applies to the historical literacy benchmark of historical conceptual understanding. Second order historical concepts are only implied as they also feature mainly as part of the narrative. For instance, statements such as “Zimbabwe’s independence 35 years later” or “settler invasion in 1980” refer to time, but they do not explicitly teach about the concept of time. While knowing dates is crucial in understanding the concept of time, it takes more knowing dates to understand the concept (Wood, 1995; Haydn *et al* 2003; Taylor, 2003; Dawson, 2006). Similarly, causation and consequence are also manifest as part of the narrative. However, there is an attempt at explaining significance when the effects of the World War 2 on events on the African continent. Had the pictures had acknowledgments of their producers and when they were produced, they would be helpful developing the concept of time so that learners can avoid anachronistic presentisms (Partington, 1980).

The language that is used in this textbook can not be divorced from historical language. This is exemplified by the use of terms like “revolution” and “imperial dictatorship” (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 171). According to Husbands (1996, p. 31) such terms are referred to as “language of historical description and analysis.” However, the most prominent language is language of historical time. As explained in Chapter 2, terms like these have their unique meanings in history and their use implies recognising the importance of historical language.

The most significant silence in terms of the benchmarks of historical literacy in the descriptive text of *People making history* is in terms of historical consciousness. There is no strong evidence of the text linking the past to the present and the future in the section of text that was analysed. This is especially of concern since the text that was analysed here was introductory and one would expect the section to make connections between the past, present and future.

In conclusion, *People making history* is a text-dense textbook which encourages the acquisition of historical knowledge as a benchmark for historical literacy. This knowledge is communicated through a form of historical language with a focus on description, analysis and time. The text does little to justify the claim in the jacket text that historical method is promoted. Other benchmarks of historical literacy such as historical concepts, and historical consciousness are ambiguously implied.

6.2.3 *People and power*

The final "O" level textbook as per the purposive sample, *People and power*, has a descriptive text which, just like the other two books, is largely narrative with an emphasis on details. An excerpt proves the point...

In 1969, the Land Apportionment Act was replaced by the Land Tenure Act. This Act divided the country's land roughly into half. Blacks and whites each got 44, 9 million acres. But there were approximately 5 000 000 blacks and only 250 000 whites (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 247).

The above excerpt demonstrates the textbook's effort to give in-depth details of historical facts. The facts, though, are presented in the form of a single narrative. Although there are some textboxes with extra information, they serve as para-text (text within text) which strengthens the single narrative rather than give an alternative version of events. For instance, the para-text on the "role of the spirit mediums" gives a version of events from an unnamed "ZANLA political

commissar” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 249). Another textbox on “support from outside” has one statement: ZAPU received support from the USSR, and ZANU was helped by China” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 247). This statement is regarded as a fact and could have been in the main text anyway because it has no source. This single narrative is contrary to the textbook producers’ intended approach explained in their lengthy description of historiographies and multiple narratives in the textbook’s preface. As part of the narrative, causes and effects of events are explained to show how change took place in the unfolding narrative.

The images from the selected section of the descriptive text denote events that took place during the armed struggle. One image is a picture of a seemingly perplexed retailer facing armed men over the counter. The next picture shows a group of people demonstrating against the Pearce Commission and the final image is a copy of a newspaper front page reporting on the vote against the Pearce Commission.⁴ The first picture is useful in the narrative in that it shows how the war arrived to people. The connotation of the first picture is that the guerrillas were not violent, but rather interacted with the civilians and were engaged in normal activities like entering a shop and buying what they needed. This, like the pictures in *People making history*, paints a picture of the fighters as people who were not aggressive and could interact with civilians. The second pictures show only men in suits and this has a connotation that men were the leading fighters against the Pearce Commission. The copy of the newspaper serves to corroborate what the picture on protests connotes, that is opposition to the mentioned commission.

With the above overview of the major themes in the descriptive text of *People and power*, I then conducted a deeper analysis using the analytical tool for historical literacy. Details of the analysis are represented in Figure 5.7. The data

⁴ In 1972, Lord Pearce led a commission sent to Rhodesia by the British government to investigate the people’s opinion on the proposals by the British and Rhodesians to offer piecemeal constitutional reform.

show that there is a general similarity between the manifestation of historical literacy in *People and power* and the other two books analysed above. Again, seemingly, the descriptive text develops the various benchmarks of historical literacy in the instrument.

Manifestly, events, dates, names and statistics are prominent in the retelling of the single narrative in the textbook. The narrative can be identified as an African nationalist (ZANU/ZAPU) narrative as there are attempts to give a balanced version of the two nationalist parties and their activities. However, since ZAPU was now defunct after the Unity Accord of 1987, it is not surprising that the ZANU narrative is dominant. The narrative is supported by para-text in textboxes and the images. The implication is that historical knowledge that is overtly pro-government is therefore a key benchmark of historical literacy in *People and power*.

Figure 6.3: Manifestation of historical literacy in descriptive text – *People and power*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Examples and comments – <i>People and power</i>
Knowledge	Events	Sabotage attacks in 1964 The government stopped ... it also granted ... In 1969, the LAA was replaced by the ... In 1970 Rhodesia declared itself a republic p. 249 Question: What role did spirit mediums play...? What happened to those ...?
	Narratives	ZANU and ZAPU narrative Images – narrative of resistance Question: How can you be sure that the experience of this ...?
	Other details	Names Numbers – seven ZANLA ... Blacks and whites each got 44,9 million acres. But there were approximately 5 000 000 blacks and only 250 000 whites

Conceptual understanding	Time	By 1963; in 1964; in April 1966 Between 1965 and 1972
	Causation and consequence	As a result ...
	Motivation	This was done to ... implied Question: Why did these countries help the liberation struggle?
	Significance	This fight is taken to mark the start of the armed struggle
	Moral judgments	
	Change and continuity	Poor peasants became poorer
	Empathy	Question: How can you be sure that the experience of this ...?
Source work (Historical method)	Sourcing	Textbox – commissar – no details
	Corroboration	Images – demonstration and newspaper article
	Contextualisation	
	Analysis	
	Evaluation	
	Explanation	This was done to ... in text – implied
	Interpretation	
Historical consciousness		
Language		Counter-attacked; Mass nationalism; Commissar; republic

There is some evidence of the manifestation of historical method as a benchmark of historical literacy in the descriptive text of the publication under analysis. An example is when the copy of the newspaper page is used to corroborate the same narrative. However, besides corroboration there is no other sub-benchmark of historical method that is working with historical sources. Any evidence of explanation in the text is merely implied since the textboxes give information that serve to extend the narrative rather than interrogation of sources.

Second order historical concepts are not unequivocally explained and they are merely part of the narrative. For instance, a statement like “Poor peasants became poorer” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 248) can be taken to imply the concept of change and continuity. However, the contextualisation of such a

statement makes it seem to be just a narration of events rather than evidence of change and continuity as theorised by Haydn, *et al* (2003). Therefore, again, historical conceptual understanding is not manifested overtly as a benchmark of historical literacy in the case of *People making history*. Another example of vague manifestation of second order concepts is this statement in reference to the Chinhoyi battle of 1966: “This fight is taken to mark the start of the armed struggle” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 247). Such a statement can be used to understand the concept of significance, although this implication is not clear and not explored as a form of conceptual development in any other way.

Although the preface of *People and power* clearly showed an intention not to use Marxist language, there is evidence of such language in the text – the use of words such as “comrade” and “Commissar,” for example (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 254). Therefore the text shows how history is tied to language and the textbook does not use the simple language that it purported to use. Historical language is in the form of language and description, an example being “mass nationalism” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 247). Nevertheless, the language also reflects evidence of being political with most of the discourse being based on in the political realm.

6.2.4 Concluding analysis

To conclude the findings from the descriptive text, it should be that there are both similarities and differences in the kinds of historical literacy that manifests itself in these selected sections of Zimbabwean history textbooks. The dominant picture of historical literacy that is painted in all three textbooks is that of historical knowledge as conceptualised by Ravitch (1989). There is an emphasis on the narration of the nationalist storyline giving a lot of facts on events such as dates, places and the major individuals involved. This is, generally, contrary to what is claimed in the jacket texts and prefaces whereby historical method is claimed to be the major benchmark of historical literacy.

For all three textbooks there is no overt attempt to promote conceptual understanding as second order history concepts through the descriptive text. This does not mean that there is absolutely no evidence of second order concepts. Still, if they exist, they are implicit and not explicit. For example, as a result of the emphasis on events and their dates in all three books, the learners can gain certain literacy in the concept of time. At the same time, significance can be extrapolated from the textbooks' reference to significant dates, places, events and individuals.

Since the descriptive text is mainly a narrative of historical facts it does not promote historical method. This is in contrast to what was claimed in the prefaces of all three books. While there is evidence of sourcing through citation of some sources, and corroboration, through giving more than one source on an issue, it is not clear how and why it was done. The descriptive text, therefore, does not follow the activity based approach that was proposed in the prefaces.

Furthermore, in spite of the assertions in the prefaces and jacket text that the textbooks will not use any specialist language, but employ simple language, the descriptive text reveals otherwise. Indeed, the data shows the use of nationalist, and sometimes Marxist, language. Therefore there is evidence of a specialist language based on the nationalist historiography which, in Zimbabwe, can not totally divorce itself from political discourse. This nationalist and political discourse can therefore be used to promote patriotic history which the Zimbabwean government has been attempting to do over the past ten years.

In terms of historical consciousness, all three textbooks' descriptive text did not produce data that reveals an explicit encouragement of what the conceptual framework explained as making connections between the past, the present and the future. There are few cases where there is reference to historical events that have effects on later society. It is clear, though, that such statements, while linking the past to the present, have no concrete bearing on the learners'

understating of the concept of historical consciousness. If any consciousness is created, it is the relationship between the present day rulers of Zimbabwe and their role in the history of the armed struggle.

The data from the three textbooks' descriptive texts revealed that the main form of historical literacy that manifests itself in the descriptive texts is in the form of historical knowledge as conceptualised by Ravitch (1989). A major issue to be considered is that the descriptive text, by its nature is bound to be descriptive and thus tends to be content-heavy. As a result, the other benchmarks of historical literacy, as per the conceptual framework, tend to be ambiguous and implicit.

6.3 Assessment activities

The final criteria for analysis of the textbooks for historical literacy were the assessment activities in the textbooks. As explained in the methodology chapter, assessment activities in history textbooks serve to measure the level of understanding of what has been developed through teaching and prior learning. The assumption is that the history textbook, would have developed a certain historical literacy in learners' and the assessment activities are therefore crucial in determining the kind of historical literacy that will have been developed through the descriptive text. Thus, the assessment activities are a culmination of the historical literacy that is manifested from the cover pages, jacket texts and descriptive text. So far, the findings from the analysis have shown that, in general, the jacket text and the prefaces advocated for the development of the benchmark of historical method as the foremost form of historical literacy. However, the descriptive text seems to be consistent with the front cover page in promoting historical knowledge, telling a narrative of history, in this case, which depicts a romanticised pre-colonial Zimbabwe being disrupted by colonialism until people fight to "reclaim their birthright" leading to independence in 1980 (Prew, et al, 1993, p. 171). The final section continues this audit trajectory and

examines if the selected assessment activities develop a historical literacy that is consistent or in contrast with the already reviewed sections of the textbooks.

From *Focus on history* I analysed the summative activities, that is, the activities which are at the end of the chapter I had selected and these are entitled “Revision exercises” (Mlambo, 1993, pp. 151-152). I also analysed summative activities from *People making history* which are source-based questions and “essay topics” (Prew, et al, 1993, p. 191). Finally, since there are no summative activities in *People and power*, I analysed the activities throughout the chapter on the “Armed struggle and the coming of independence” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, pp. 247-254). I first analysed the activities using question analysis as recommended by Nicholls (2003). The units of analysis were the task words which explain what the learner is expected to do. To make sense of the task words so as to code the data I also made use of Bloom’s Taxonomy. I then ran the data against the analytical framework which is based on the conceptual framework for this research as used throughout the data analysis chapters.

6.3.1 *Focus on history*

The summative assessment activities in *Focus on history* are source-based, essay-formatted and project based. The three sources have their producers acknowledged. The source-based questions had few lower order questions as per the application of Bloom’s Taxonomy. An example of a lower order question reads: “What was the British South Africa Company” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 151)? This question requires recall to answer it even without the provision of the source. According to Blooms’ Taxonomy, the highest level questions are evaluation and explanation questions. This is evident in the source-based questions, for example, when the learner is asked to judge the kind of audience the source would be aimed at, and on top of that explain why. There are also comparison question whereby learners has to give answers based on more than one source and draw conclusion from them. These, according to Bloom’s

Taxonomy, are synthesis questions. Therefore the source-based questions show a spread of activities across the spectrum of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

The essay questions are dominated by the “describe” or “outline” task words (Mlambo, 1993, p. 152). These task words, according to Bloom’s Taxonomy, are knowledge questions whereby one is expected to remember and present knowledge of dates, events, places and key ideas. However, all of the essay questions consist of two parts, the first part being the knowledge part while the second part is largely explanation. For example: “Why was the uprising unsuccessful?” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 152) is an evaluation question and thus a higher order question according to Bloom’s Taxonomy. Finally, the project activity asked the learners to “compile a list of the major areas of African grievances before independence” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 152). Listing is a basic knowledge and recall question, but the second part of the project is an evaluation of how the post-colonial government has dealt with the grievances, and thus pushing it into the realm of a higher order question as per Bloom.

For a clearer picture of the manifestation of historical literacy in the activities in *Focus on history*, I used the analytical framework illustrated in Figure 5.8. The questions reflect achievement of historical knowledge as a key benchmark for the achievement of historical literacy. This is more so for extended writing questions which mainly ask the respondent to “describe” or “outline” (Mlambo, 1993, p. 152). In order to answer such questions, one is expected to recall details of historical events, names and certain narratives. Therefore, the activities are in this way consistent with what is dominant in the descriptive text, that is, historical knowledge in resonance with Ravitch (1989).

Figure 6.4 Manifestation of historical literacy in activities – *Focus on history*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Examples and Comments - <i>Focus on history</i>
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Knowledge	Events	4c Outline the development 4d Outline
	Narratives	4a Describe the narratives ... 4c Outline the development 4d Outline
	Other	What was the BSAC? 5 Project – Compile a list
Conceptual understanding	Time	
	Causation and consequence	Describe the conditions which led ...? – description of causes
	Motivation	
	Significance	
	Moral judgments	
	Change and continuity	
	Empathy	Explain why the writer believed ...? Do you think the person who drew ... was a supporter or an opponent of the Rhodesian government? What ... were the reactions ...?
Source work	Sourcing	
	Corroboration	Would you agree that the two documents are contradictory and why? Which ... more accurately described by ...? Questions 3 a,b,c,d 4e Compare and contrast
	Contextualisation	
	Analysis	
	Evaluation	4d Assess the role - not source based 5c Project – not source based
	Explanation	What kind of audience? Explain your answers carefully 4a Explain the terms ... - not source based What factors explain the ability – not source based
	Interpretation	What message did the cartoonist wish to convey?
Historical consciousness		5 Project
Language		

More than was the case in the descriptive text, the assessment activities, especially the source-based questions, reveal the manifestation of historical method as a benchmark of historical literacy in the textbook. As sub-benchmarks, there is evidence of corroboration and interpretation of sources. Since the sources' producers are acknowledged, the activities also promote the kind of sourcing recommended by Wineburg (1991) which implies working with sources with sufficient knowledge of the sources' producers. The marked emphasis on source work in the assessment activities reflects the historical method that was emphasised in the jacket text and the preface of *Focus on history* as an activity-based approach.

In terms of historical conceptual understanding, the activities in the analysed text section of *Focus on history* encourage understanding of causation and consequence and empathy. For example, the empathy question reads: "What do you think were the reactions of the people who saw the cartoon in the newspaper at that time" (Mlambo, 1993, p. 151)? Considering the single narrative that is in the descriptive text, such a question would be difficult to answer since empathising with the different people in the demographic spectrum would mean having been exposed to their narrative the first place. Otherwise, as argued in Chapter 2, empathy might end up being imagination or mere fantasy.

Finally, there is an attempt to promote historical consciousness through asking the textbook users to conduct a project linking the grievances of the armed struggle to the conditions in Zimbabwe after independence. This, though, is a weak form of historical consciousness as there is no explicit expectation to link the past to the present and, especially, the future.

6.3.2 People making history

The summative assessment activities from the selected chapter in *People making history* comprise source-based questions and "essay topics" (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191). The producers of the three sources used in the activities are not

acknowledged. The source-based questions also cover the spectrum of Bloom's Taxonomy. Indeed, there are several basic knowledge lower order questions such as "What is a 'ceremonial axe'" and "What is a 'veteran' of war" (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191)? However, there are higher order evaluation questions such as:

Explain why the conclusions this author reaches are so different from those of Source B's author? [And] Which do you think is the most biased of the three sources? Explain your answer (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191).

Therefore there are questions which promote critical thinking at the higher level of Bloom's Taxonomy. The essay questions are not mere recall questions; rather they imply comprehension and application. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, inference of historical concepts such as change implies thinking at the comprehension level, which is a stage higher than basic knowledge. Application questions in section under analysis are the ones in which the respondent is required to imagine themselves as someone else. For example, one question reads: "Imagine you are nationalist leader in the early 1960s. Prepare a short speech that you will use at a mass rally" (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191). This question is consistent with the claim in the preface of *Focus on history* that history learning should empower learners to apply skills that are helpful outside the history classroom.

From *People making history* the manifestation of historical literacy in the summative activities from the selected chapter is not vastly different from that in *Focus on history*. The data from *People making history* has been briefly described above, but for a deeper analysis, the manifestation of historical literacy is illustrated in Figure 5.9. After a glance at the figure one would assume that the assessment activities promote virtually all benchmarks of historical literacy, but from the deeper analysis, there are actually some significant silences or ambiguities.

Figure 6.9: Manifestation of historical literacy in activities – *People making history*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Examples and Comments - <i>People making history</i>
Knowledge	Events	
	Narratives	3 What are the problems ...?
	Other	1a What is a 'ceremonial axe'? 1b What is a 'veteran' of war? 1d Who is the nationalist leader receiving the axe? Who is the man next to him? 1e What position did the man ... hold at the time?
Conceptual understanding	Time	2b What is the connection between the fighters in 1896-97 and those of the 1960s and 1970s?
	Causation and consequence	2 What prompted some nationalist leaders ...?
	Motivation	
	Significance	1c What is the significance of veteran of ...? 2a What does the author ... see as the main importance of the 1896/97 Risings?
	Moral judgments	
	Change and continuity	3 What are the problems ...?
	Empathy	1 You are an African soldier returning ...? 2 You are a nationalist leader in the early 1960s.
Source work	Sourcing	Sources not provided
	Corroboration	3b Explain why the conclusions this author reaches are so different from those of Source Bs' author.
	Contextualisation	
	Analysis	
	Evaluation	4a Are any of these source [sic] objective or non-biased? 4b Which do you think is the most biased of the three sources?
	Explanation	3b Explain why the conclusions this author reaches are so different from those of Source Bs author. 4b Explain your answer. 4c Why do historians study biased sources as well as non-biased sources?

	Interpretation	
Historical consciousness		2b What is the connection between the fighters in 1896-97 and those of the 1960s and 1970s?
Language		Veteran, inevitability
Application of skill		2 Prepare a short speech

The analytical tool reveals that, from the sources, there are several “what” questions that are basically recall in nature. Such questions include definition and identification questions. These questions show that historical knowledge as viewed by Ravitch (1989) is a key benchmark of historical literacy in this textbook and have permeated the activities as well. This is in spite of the claim in the preface that this textbook does not promote memorisation questions.

Conceptual understanding also emerges as a benchmark of historical literacy in the assessment activities. While other second order concepts are merely implied, significance and empathy are overtly asked about. For example, in terms of significance it is clearly asked: “What is the significance of the veteran of the Chimurenga/Umvukela giving the nationalist leader an axe” (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191)? The empathy questions, though useful, have a tendency to lean towards imagination as this question proves: “You are an African soldier returning from World War [sic] What do you expect, and what do you find, on your return to Southern Africa” (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191)? Some questions can be used to teach more than one concept, although this is not explicitly stated for the textbook user. An case in point reads: “What are the problems that the changes since 1980 have created? Do you think these were inevitable” (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191)? Such a question can be used to assess learner understanding of either the concept of change or causation and consequence.

In terms of historical method, some sub-benchmarks are manifested more clearly than others. For instance, the sources’ producers are not acknowledged and thus they do not promote the development of sourcing (Wineburg, 1991). However,

corroboration, analysis and evaluation of sources and explanation of answers from sources are evident. The questions in this regard are methodological in nature and focus particularly on bias and objectivity in analysing and evaluating sources of history. This manifestation of historical method confirms the assertions in the jacket text and the preface that the textbook offers development through use of source materials. However, the questions do not have sufficient grounding since historical method issues are not interrogated in the descriptive text.

Historical consciousness as espoused by Rüsen (1993) is silent in the assessment activities of *People making history* since there is no evidence of connecting the past to the present and future. Nevertheless, there is a form of historical consciousness as espoused by Taylor's (2003) in terms of making connections which is encouraged through this question: "What is the connection between the fighters in 1896-97 and those of 1960s and 70s" (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191)? Therefore, one can argue that historical consciousness is not totally silent, but manifests itself in a very narrow sense since only past events are being compared to each other.

The language in the assessment activities in *People making history* is historical to a larger extent. Although the jacket text asserted the use of simple language, the assessment activities demonstrate the textbook producers' failure to totally discard historical language. For instance, according to Husbands (1996) words such as "independence" or "nationalist" (Prew *et al*, 1993, p. 191) are historical because they may not mean the same thing outside the discipline of history. words such as "inevitable" have specific historical connotations. Inevitability is crucial in history education because it connotes a specific view of the historical process. Therefore, while the word "inevitable" may be used loosely in other disciplines, in terms of the historical process, inevitability may imply historical determinism which contradicts the tenets of the discipline.

Finally there is evidence of historical literacy as the ability to apply skills into life outside school history. An example of this application is the expectation to write a short speech for a mass rally. This question may be taken to be consistent with Lee's (2004) view of historical literacy as an intellectual toolkit. This implies that such application of skills become an item in the toolkit which the history learner can make use of when the need arises. Application of skills resonates with the arguments for skills in other sections.

6.3.3 *People and power*

The last book whose activities I analysed was *People and power*. For this textbook I analysed all the activities spread throughout the whole chapter under analysis because there were no summative activities at the end of the chapter. The activities were mostly source-based, but there are a few in textboxes which do not refer to any source in particular.

In spite of the activities being mostly source-based, they are predominantly made up of questions which ask for retelling of events and narratives and the recall of names and statistics. Typical examples of such questions are: "What militant actions were peasants taking?", "What happened to Chief Tangwena and his people?" [and] "How many cattle were stolen from settler farms" (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. pp. 250, 251)? Most of the questions are "what," "how" and "why" questions. However, such questions can be ambiguous for those who are not careful in reading questions. For example, there is an assumption that all "what" questions are knowledge recall questions. In that sense, a question such as "What do you think Tangwena's warning to the whites meant?" (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 250) is not a recall, but an interpretation question. With reference to Bloom's Taxonomy, this would be an evaluation, and therefore, higher order question which could be misconstrued to be a lower order question. Therefore it is evident that the decision not to use task words in the assessment activities may be detrimental to the understanding of questions.

Figure 6.10 gives a summative picture of the manifestation of historical literacy in the activities in *People and power*. Historical knowledge can be argued to be the major benchmark of historical literacy in *People and power*. Indeed most of the questions, even those based on sources, are recall and basic knowledge questions. Just as the descriptive text has proven to be text heavy with emphasis on a single narrative's dates and events, so do the assessment activities of this book.

Figure 6.10: Manifestation of historical literacy in activities – *People and power*

Benchmark of historical literacy	Sub-category	Examples and Comments - <i>People making history</i>
Knowledge	Events	p. 249 What happened to those spirit mediums who did not support the struggle? p. 250 What militant actions were peasants taking? What happened to Chief Tangwena and his people? p. 251 What happened to the young boy? What 'tricks' did the Rhodesians play? p. 252 What did the women do to get food from the guerrillas? p. 254 What questions was the DC asked?
	Narratives	p. 249 What role did the spirit mediums play in the struggle? How can you be sure that the experience of this commissar was the same as that experienced by most people? What advances were made by women during the Second Chimurenga? p. 253 How were ZIPRA guerrillas recruited?
	Other	p. 251 How many cattle were stolen from settler farms? What were they valued at? p. 253 Who was responsible for political organisation? p. 254 What did the 'ZANU comrade' call the DC?
Conceptual understanding	Time	
	Causation and consequence	p. 247 How did their assistance influence the struggle against colonialism?
	Motivation	p. 254 How do you think this helped politicize the people? – implied p. 247 Why did these countries help the liberation

		struggle? – not source based p. 251 Why did the security forces take the people's cattle from them?
	Significance	p. 250 Why was this important for the guerrillas
	Moral judgments	
	Change and continuity	
	Empathy	
Source work	Sourcing	Partial acknowledgments
	Corroboration	
	Contextualisation	
	Analysis	p. 253 How did ZIPRA differ from ZANLA? Compare and contrast ZANLA and ZIPRA methods. What were the differences between ZANU and ZAPU? p. 254 Discuss the nature of Zimbabwe's Second Chimurenga. – not source based
	Evaluation	p. 254 Could this kind of propaganda have any negative effects? Do you think it was a nationalist struggle? – not source based How nationalist was the struggle?
	Explanation	Why?
	Interpretation	p. 250 What do you think Tangwena's warning to the whites meant? p. 251 What does this source tell you about the relationship between the peasants and the guerrillas?
Historical consciousness		p. 252 Have these gains been maintained after 1980?
Language		Commissar, comrade
Application of skill		p. 254 Debate

As is illustrated in Figure 6.10, most of the questions expect responses which are simply extracted from the sources, giving details of dates, events, names and statistics. Therefore such kinds of source-based questions are as good as summative recall questions because they do not help in developing strong historical method.

Conceptual understanding manifests itself in the sub-category of cause and consequence, significance and motivation, especially the latter. These concepts

are not explicitly asked for and even if they were, it would be a case of asking something that has not been taught in the descriptive text. One example is the question: “Why did these countries help the liberation struggle (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 247)? The question is asked in a textbox made up of one sentence. It is evident that the concept of motivation is meant to explain the intentions behind events, but it is not explicitly clear that motivation is being referred to and, once again, it can be confused with causation and consequence. According to Taylor (2003), many learner struggles to distinguish between motivation and causes and some of the questions in the activities confirm that.

The sources for the activities are not fully acknowledged and therefore do not sufficiently promote sourcing. However, historical method is promoted as a benchmark for historical literacy through the promotion of analysis, evaluation and interpretation. The inclusion of interpretation as a sub-category is consistent with what the textbook producers claimed in the jacket text and introduction of the textbook. It is noteworthy that several of the activities in the selected part of *People and power* are not source-based and therefore are not relevant to historical method. Rather, they only serve to promote more historical knowledge. Therefore historical method as conceptualised by Wineburg (1991) is largely not manifested in the activities.

As is the case in *People making history*, historical consciousness is developed only through linking the grievances during the struggle to present day Zimbabwe. It thus does not fully develop making connections between the past, present and future as conceptualised by Rösen (1993). This narrow view of historical consciousness can only be helpful in creating a backward looking consciousness because learners always look to the past and never to the future. This may be linked to what is claimed in the preface that they profess to present “democratic history” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997, p. 6). The evidence of democratic history in this textbook should not be overemphasised since earlier findings have already

illustrated how this textbook propagates a single narrative consistent with the official version of history.

In terms of language, the language that is promoted in the sources in *People and power* is evidently nationalist discourse which exhibits some Marxist influence, hence the use of words like comrade and commissar. For example, one question asks: “What did the ‘ZANU comrade’ call the DC” (Proctor & Phimister, 1997 p. 254)? Therefore, despite the apparent discarding of Marxist discourse in the preface, the descriptive text and the assessment activities have presented cases of the influence of Marxist language. At the same time the language promotes what Husbands et al. (2003, p. 127) call political literacy.

Lastly, the addition of an activity in which the class is expected to hold a debate, can be argued to be an encouragement of skills which are useful outside the school history domain. Debating is useful for historical arguments, but it is even more useful for those learners who engage in debate outside the history classroom, or who take careers that need good oral argument skills. This application of historical skills in other disciplines presupposes a view of historical literacy as an intellectual toolkit which equips the learner to deal with challenges they face (Lee, 2004).

6.3.2 Concluding analysis

To conclude the findings from the assessment activities in the three history textbooks, the three textbooks fundamentally follow similar trends in terms of the kind of historical literacy that they manifest. Historical knowledge is the main benchmark of historical literacy since the questions in the activities to a greater extent expect recall answer. Whether the questions are source based or essay questions, they still expect the textbook user to extract and remember basic facts such as dates, events and names. While all three textbooks have professed to offer a view of school history that has shifted from fact-retention, the fact-heavy descriptive text and assessment activities prove otherwise. The major benchmark

for historical literacy remains historical knowledge as espoused by Ravitch (1989)

The findings also show that as per the aims in the jacket text and preface, there is an attempt to develop historical method. Historical method manifests in the activities more than in the descriptive text and the sub-categories of sourcing, corroboration, analysis, evaluation, explanation and interpretation are evident. This source-based approach to the activities is, however, weakened by the fact that the assessment activities do not always come from acknowledged sources, and thus it is difficult to evaluate them. The sources also tend to be supporting the narrative in the text, and not really counter arguments which force learners to think critically. Another contradiction is that while there is no real attempt to develop historical method, the activities end up asking technical questions such as questions on bias and usefulness, which the textbook user will not have been exposed to.

This is not to imply that other benchmarks of historical literacy as per my conceptual framework do not emerge in the findings. As has been the case, right from the covers, jacket texts, prefaces and descriptive text, conceptual understanding continues to be implicit rather than explicit. It is not surprising that, though, since the textbooks were published before the major advocates of concept-based history education, identified in Chapter 2, such as Haydn *et al* (2003), Hunt (2003) and Taylor (2003) had not propounded their theories yet. Therefore the textbooks, being outdated as they are, are caught in a time-warp.

In the activities, a weak version of historical consciousness is encouraged, the main weakness being that there is no overt effort to look into the future. There are a few cases whereby learners are asked to link the past to the present, but it ends there. In the preface of *People and power*, and *People making history*, there was emphasis on history playing a great role in our understanding and shaping our future. However, nowhere in the activities is there an attempt to look

into the future. Instead of looking from the past through the present into the future, the learners are exposed to looking from the present to the past.

The aim to use language that is not specialist has not necessarily been successful. By virtue of the nature of the chapters under analysis, the language was heavily influenced by nationalist and thus Marxist discourse. In addition, the textbook producers still used terms which are unique to history as first order concepts (Hunt, 1996). The nature of some of the concepts has also not been discussed in the descriptive text, thus complicating them for the learners. One example is when learners are asked, “How nationalist was the struggle” (Proctor & Phimister, p. 254). The problem is that this kind of question is not referring to any source and yet nowhere in the descriptive text was there comprehensive interrogation of nationalism as a first order concept.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the findings from the analysis of the three history textbook samples with the aim to conceptualise the kind of historical literacy that the textbooks reveal. I analysed the descriptive text and the assessment activities. I analysed the text with historical discourse analysis coupled with visual analysis, and the questions with question analysis with corroboration from Bloom’s Taxonomy. The data I thus generated was run against the conceptual framework of the benchmarks of historical literacy using the analytical instrument I created to interrogate historical literacy.

In the next chapter, I conclude this study by discussing the implications of the study in terms of conceptualising historical literacy in Zimbabwe. I give a bigger and clearer picture of historical literacy in Zimbabwean “O” Level history textbooks by linking it with the conceptual framework explained in Chapter 2. In doing this I will show how the history textbooks in Zimbabwe are malleable enough to be used for the changing purposes of school history in Zimbabwe, given the shift towards compulsion and patriotic history.

CHAPTER 7

Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

For at least eleven years, learners in Zimbabwe study some form of history as a compulsory school discipline. But, it is crucial for history educationists to have a clear understanding of what history learners gain from the study of history for all those years. In this study, I argued that historical literacy is the embodiment of what a learner achieves out of studying history. After reviewing the body of literature on the concept of historical literacy, I concluded that the concept assumes different manifestations in different times, spaces and contexts. With this in mind, the key research question that I undertook for my study was: How does the notion of historical literacy manifest itself in Ordinary Level history textbooks in Zimbabwe?

The backdrop to my adoption of this research is the compulsion of school history up to “O” Level, implemented by the government of Zimbabwe in 2001. While the decision to make history compulsory is not unprecedented in the history of school history, the dynamics and the reasons behind the decision warranted attention. First, history is one of only five compulsory subjects in an educational system which recognises five subject passes as an “O” Level pass. At the same time, with rising political temperature, the government, then fully controlled by ZANU PF, had established an almost parallel history curriculum which was to be made compulsory for all school leavers, without which one would not be eligible for tertiary education. This, according to Ranger (2004) marked the advent of patriotic history which was a shift from nationalist historiographies and was opposed to any forms of academic history. Crucially, history would have to play a role of legitimation under the guise of promoting patriotism.

Although this parallel history curriculum was never transferred into the mainstream curriculum, the context on the ground was characterised by attempts to do so (Raftopoulos, 2004). The teaching of history, thus, became more than just a pedagogical endeavour as one had to be alert not to cross the line of patriotic history. There was therefore a hidden history curriculum which the history teachers had to be aware of in order not to court the wrath of the national service youth, the police or the intelligence services.

In spite of all the shenanigans in the background, the history teachers had to make use of basically the same textbooks that they had been using to teach before the advent of patriotic history. This is a paradox, in that arguments abound in literature about the role of the history textbooks in promoting sanitised official forms of history (Chernis, 1990; Apple 1991; 1992; Wertsch & Rozin, 2000; Manzo, 2004; Rodden; 2009). Admittedly, the publishing industry, amongst many others, was bearing the brunt of a collapsing economy and government was not interested in non-governmental organisations and other “outsiders” taking the responsibility to produce history textbooks for Zimbabwean schools Ranger (2004). However, it is also possible that the history textbooks that were in the system were already suited for patriotic history and there was no need to publish new ones, rather to focus on making sure that the teachers are reoriented. Or worse still, probably the history teachers in Zimbabwe had already been teaching patriotic history, involuntarily or otherwise. Whatever the explanation, the continued use of the history textbooks under a different system warranted academic attention.

Given the above background outline, my interest was to find out what the history textbooks in Zimbabwe are meant to develop for the learners who use them. The focus of this study is not on factors in history education other than the history textbooks and historical literacy. I therefore undertook to explore the form of historical literacy that is manifested in the textbooks. An understanding of this historical literacy will help set a fertile ground for further research in history

textbooks, particularly in Zimbabwe. My assumption was not that the textbooks in use were totally flawed and thus needed to be discarded. In fact, the textbooks do promote a particular kind of historical literacy and this is what I set out to determine.

The literature espoused that historical literacy can either be a dichotomy, a continuum (Hillerich, 1976) or as multiple literacies (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Roberts, 1995). I concluded that historical literacy can not be viewed as a dichotomy whereby a learner is either entirely literate or not. Neither do I view it as a continuum whereby people are placed on a scale to measure the level of literacy. I thus adopted a conceptualisation of historical literacy whereby the concept manifests itself in varied ways in different times, spaces and contexts which Roberts (1995) refers to as the pluralist approach. The implication of this conceptualisation is that history textbooks in different countries and different times do not promote the same type of historical literacy. This argument confirms the paradox in the background to my study: do the current history textbooks in Zimbabwe serve to promote the same type of historical literacy they were promoting before government's insistence on patriotic history?

Once I had the conceptual framework for historical literacy, it guided the rest of my research. As a methodology for this study, I adopted qualitative textual analysis or documentary analysis. I situated the research in the interpretivist paradigm because the main aim is to understand the nature of historical literacy in the history textbooks, rather than to analyse content. The methodology is qualitative in nature and this is in resonance with my adoption of a pluralist notion of historical literacy. Through the pluralist approach, historical literacy is conceptualised differently in various time frames, spaces and contexts. Similarly, "what counts as being a good textbook in one place by a certain group of people is likely to be perceived differently in another place by other people" (Nicholls, 2003). Therefore, my epistemological assumption is that knowledge and reality are socially constructed.

The above epistemological assumptions are also anchored by the point that textbooks are secondary data – they are written not necessarily for analysis purposes. Therefore analysis can be conducted in an unobtrusive manner (Mouton, 2007). I used purposive sampling to select three “O” Level textbooks which are *People making history* (Prew, et al, 1993), *People and power* (Proctor & Phimister, 1997) and *Focus on history* (Mlambo, 1993). Since this was not content analysis, I did not need to analyse entire or huge sections of the textbooks. I thus generated data was from specific parts of the selected textbooks, that is, from the theme on the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. Criteria for analysis were based on Pingel’s (1999) list and these are: the cover pages, jacket texts, prefaces, descriptive texts, images, and assessment activities.

These would offer a deeper analysis of the manifestation of historical literacy in the selected textbooks. My choice of methods and theories was informed by Wineburg’s (2000) argument that history education will not fully develop as long as it borrows theories wholesale from other fields. Thus, if I used some general methods, I consciously attempted to blend them with some from history education.

7.2 Discussion of findings

The main aim of this study was to research how the concept of historical literacy manifested itself in Zimbabwean history textbooks. In concluding this dissertation, I will discuss the findings from the three textbooks following the audit trail that characterised my two chapters on research findings.

7.2.1 Cover pages

The cover pages of the three textbooks under analysis reveal an emphasis on historical knowledge and this is done mainly through images. For example, *Focus on history* demonstrates a certain historical narrative of Zimbabwean

history whereby society before colonisation was productive, harmonious and peaceful. The cover page of *People and power* similarly has visual art which has symbols of the nation from deep time. The representation of pre-colonial Zimbabwean history thus resonates with the government policy to re-emphasise pre-colonial history of Zimbabwe. As if to corroborate the same narrative, the cover page of *People making history* has connotations of a narrative of resistance is consistent with nationalist history, but also with patriotic history. Therefore, without giving names of individuals and events, the cover pages show a manifestation of historical knowledge, particularly the benchmark of historical narratives. As was argued in Chapter 5, the historical knowledge that is manifested in the cover pages follows a similar “schematic narrative template” (Wertsh, 2006, p. 55).

The images on the cover pages of the three books also imply a certain nature of historical consciousness, whereby the past is viewed to have been more glorious than the present, thus hoping for a return of the past glories in the future. This consciousness can be said to be what was being referred to as the fire of the nation and history in Zimbabwe (Raftopoulos, 2004, p. 166). *People and power's* cover page with pre-colonial symbols of equality and other forms of production also promote a similar form of historical consciousness. The cover pages furthermore imply a certain historical consciousness whereby the actions of the contemporary government are ostensibly to redress the wrongs of the past, for example, the capture and execution of Mbuya Nehanda on the cover page of *People making history*. However, this form of historical consciousness is not representative of what was espoused by Rüsen (1993). In fact, this is the kind of historical consciousness that Chernis (1990) argues develops when the past is mythologised due to nationalist ideology.

Therefore, the cover pages of the three textbooks reveal a historical literacy that consists of a certain historical knowledge and historical consciousness. The historical knowledge is basically in the form of an Africanist narrative. The

historical consciousness is mainly in the form of the invocation of a romantic past which is should be remembered and whose values should be cherished by the people of present-day Zimbabwe.

7.2.2 Jacket texts textbooks

The next layer of the audit trail of analysis was the jacket texts. A key feature of the jacket texts of the analysed textbooks is their declaration of them doing justice to the history Syllabus 2166. As noted in the introductory chapter, the syllabus was, in 2002, replaced by Syllabus 2167. This means that many learners in Zimbabwe today are using a set of textbooks that was meant for a defunct syllabus. This misnomer proves the point the likes of Apple (1998) and Chisholm (2007) that the history textbook content does not guarantee what learners learn in the end. This, however, is not the main focus of this study. What is more crucial about the textbooks serving the syllabus is that they tend to reflect the same kind of historical literacy, at least in the jacket text. Only *People and power* is not explicit about the syllabus, but still the allusion is there. I argued in Chapter 3 that marketing considerations have a role to play in textbook production and few schools would dare buy textbooks that do not directly prepare their learners for the examinations. Again, this demonstrates the pedagogical and political role of history textbooks (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). Evidently, by trying to cover the topics in the syllabus, the jacket texts imply the promotion of historical knowledge as a benchmark of historical literacy with a focus on events, unlike the cover pages which seemed to focus more on narratives. It is the knowledge of events which Ravitch (1989) considers being historical literacy.

In claiming to promote an activity-based approach, the three textbooks declare that they promote a similar kind of historical literacy, in this case the benchmark of historical method, meaning working with historical sources. In fact, they are more explicit about source work than about historical knowledge, particularly the jacket text of *Focus on history*. The source-based approach to history teaching and learning to which these books subscribe can be argued to be informed by

the then dominant SHP ideas of doing source work (Shemilt, 1980; 1983; 1987). Still, there are differences in the historical method they promote. While *Focus on history* and *People making history* promote historical skills, *People and power* tend to steer clear of using the term “skills” and focuses on discovery and interpretation. Looking at their publication dates, it is evident that *People and power* was published later than the other two and thus could have begun to steer clear of the spell of SHP and the notion of historical skills.

There is a contradiction, though, as historical method would imply the learners using the textbooks to come up with their own interpretations of history. In contradiction, the jacket texts, except for *People and power*, seem to suggest that teachers are the ones who present material from the sources for the learners, therefore defeating the whole purpose of a historical method based on learners’ activity. What is crucial about this point is that if the textbooks are meant to help the teachers’ presentation rather than the learners’ learning, a new system, like patriotic history can supersede the existing one while the textbooks remain the same. Therefore, rather than worrying about the production of new textbooks, the government would focus on reorienting the history teachers to use the same textbooks for a different purpose. This could be achieved since, by 2003, teachers were being recruited for national service which originally had been meant for youth graduating from school (Mukumbira, 2003).

While historical method is explicitly promoted, historical conceptual understanding, as a benchmark of historical literacy, if implied, is not explicit. The inference is that the concepts being referred to here are first order concepts which are consistent with coverage of events. For example, covering various periods in history may imply developing an understanding of the concept of time, but it does not necessarily mean that. Understanding of second order concepts such as time, significance, causation and consequence, change and continuity and motivation is, according to Haydn *et al*, (2003) central to learning school history and therefore is a key benchmark of historical literacy. However, the

jacket text of all three textbooks does not reflect this view. A possible explanation is that concept-based history education as conceptualised by the likes of Haydn *et al*, (2003) and Taylor (2003) only made ground well after these textbooks were published. This is therefore evidence that while the textbooks have been made to continue under a new system, there is a need for at least new editions of these textbooks in order to catch up with global developments related to historical literacy in history education.

The major silences in terms of the benchmarks for historical literacy in jacket texts of the history textbooks are in terms of historical language and historical consciousness, the former being intentional, at least in *People making history*. The silence on historical language is intentional, because by professing to use “simple language” there is a connotation by the textbook that specialist historical language is not necessary and might only serve to complicate historical understanding. This is contrary to the notion whereby specialist historical language is regarded as a key to historical literacy (Husbands, 1996; Taylor, 2003). It should be clarified that there is a difference between literacy in history and historical literacy. While literacy in history would imply grasping reading, writing and compression in the discipline, historical literacy is an embodiment of what is learned. Therefore, the decision to discard specialist language implies that historical language does not feature as a benchmark of historical literacy. As for historical consciousness, there is no evidence in all three jacket texts that connections should be made between the past, present and future.

What can be concluded so far is that the historical literacy that is promoted in the jacket text is not necessarily what is promoted on the cover pages. Whereas data on the cover pages connoted particular narratives of historical knowledge and forms of historical consciousness, the jacket text tends to foreground a SHP kind of historical method, without necessarily discarding historical knowledge. Again, this kind of historical literacy falls short of the benchmarks set in the conceptual framework for this study.

7.2.3 Prefaces

As is the case with the jacket texts, the prefaces of the three textbooks present similar forms of historical literacy mainly because of the need for government approval. The similarities are more evident in *People making history* and *Focus on history*, with *People and power* reflecting a slightly different form of historical literacy. Although the textbook producers state their intention to adopt a learner-centred and activity based approach, the syllabus guidance means that the history textbooks can not ignore focusing on examinations. Therefore, historical content knowledge manifests itself as a key benchmark of historical literacy in the prefaces. In spite of the claim to move away from memorisation of historical facts, the prefaces in the end outline certain content areas that they wish to expose learners to. The coverage of content is consistent with the claims in the jacket texts which promote the coverage of the history syllabus 2166. The narratives can be argued to be in line with the official line, especially on themes directly relating to Zimbabwe, although, like on the cover pages, the preface professes to focus on the ordinary history makers and not heroes and heroines. The view of knowledge of historical facts as a view of historical literacy is in tune with Ravitch's (1989) argument, namely that a recollection of historical facts implies historical literacy. The exception is *People and power* which declares the need for history learners to know multiple narratives as argued by Taylor (2003). The view of multiple narratives is a shift from what is manifested on the cover pages which illustrate a romanticised single narrative of Zimbabwean history.

The claim in the prefaces to develop historical method is consistent with the argument in the jacket texts that the textbooks mainly follow the activity based approach to history teaching and learning. This argument is in tune with Wineburg (1991) who insists that learners should practice history like real historians. The emphasis on the development of historical skills, particularly analysis, evaluation, interpretation and empathy, is again evidence of the spell of the SHP (Shemilt, 1980; 1983; 1987). Empathy is again regarded as a sub-

category of historical method, rather than a second order concept as espoused in the adopted conceptual framework. The argument on the application of the acquired skills outside school history evidently goes further than Wineburg's (1991) contention meaning that historical skills can be generalised to other disciplines.

Another consistency between the prefaces and the jacket text, especially relating to *People making history* and *People and power* is on the benchmark of historical language. The prefaces argue that specialist historical language only serves to complicate school history and make it boring for learners. It should be noted that the terms *People and power* seems to be symbolically antagonistic towards those grounded in Marxist discourse since the history textbooks under analysis were published in the period just after the fall of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the data from the prefaces implies that historical language is not an indispensable benchmark of historical literacy.

A silence in the preface is in reference to historical conceptual understanding. While there is frequent reference to understanding in general, its meaning in the prefaces is very ambiguous. There is very little reference to concepts, if any, in the jacket text and the prefaces. Where concepts are mentioned, it is not clear whether they are first order concepts or second order concepts. Therefore the textbook users are not explicitly exposed to second order concepts like causation and consequence, significance and change (Haydn *et al*, 2003). Where these concepts are mentioned, they are not as a separate benchmark for historical literacy, but rather as a consequential aspect of the historical narrative. In other words they are only implied, but not explained. For example, dates imply time, but they do not necessarily mean an understanding of time as a concept, as opposed to a mere historical "fact."

Historical consciousness as a benchmark of historical literacy is also not deliberately discussed in detail, just as it was silent in the jacket text. Only in

People making history is there an attempt to demonstrate the connection between past, present and future. Therefore it can also be concluded that the prefaces pay little attention to encouraging historical consciousness as conceptualised by Rösen (1993) as a benchmark for historical literacy.

In short, the prefaces of the three textbooks show many similarities than differences in terms of historical literacy. The major difference is the emphasis by *People and power* on understanding multiple narratives. However, all three textbooks reveal promotion of historical knowledge and an SHP inspired historical method. There is little promotion of historical conceptual understanding and limited form of historical consciousness, while the textbook producers intentionally declare the omission of historical language. The audit trail shows how the historical literacy in the jacket texts and the prefaces is similar to each other, but different from that on the cover pages.

7.2.4 Descriptive text

Using the descriptive text to determine historical literacy in the textbook was a challenge. As already mentioned, I did not aim at conducting a content analysis so I did not need to analyse each of the publications in full. Still, by their nature, some topics would tend to give a certain type of data. For example, nationalist language would be more evident in a chapter on the armed struggle for Zimbabwean independence than, say, World War II.

The dominant picture of historical literacy that is painted from the sections analysed from all three textbooks is that of historical knowledge as conceptualised by Ravitch (1989). There is an emphasis on the narration of the nationalist storyline giving a lot of facts on events such as dates, places and the major individuals involved. This is, generally, contrary to what is claimed in the jacket texts and prefaces whereby historical method is claimed to be the major benchmark of historical literacy. As a result, the descriptive text can be subject to the abuse of school history as argued by Ranger (2004) and Rodden (2009).

This is because for instance, individual players who still have a role in present day Zimbabwean politics are fore-grounded, converse to the claims in jacket texts and the prefaces.

For all three textbooks there is no overt attempt to promote historical conceptual understanding through the descriptive text. This does not mean that there is absolutely no evidence of second order concepts. Still, if they exist, they are implicit and not explicit. For example, as a result of the emphasis on events and their dates in all three books, the learners can gain certain literacy in the concept of time. At the same time, significance can be extrapolated from the textbooks' reference to significant dates, places, events and individuals.

Although the jacket text and prefaces of all three textbooks emphasised promoting historical method, the descriptive text is mainly narrative of historical facts and thus does not promote historical method in an in depth manner. While there is evidence of sourcing through citation of some sources, and corroboration, through giving more than one source on an issue, it is not clear how and why it was done and what method the user can practice in the descriptive text as Wineburg (1991) would suggest.

A similar case of inconsistency applies to historical language. In spite of the assertions in the prefaces and jacket texts that the textbooks will employ simple language, the descriptive text reveals otherwise. Indeed, the data shows communication through a form of historical language with a focus on description, analysis and time. Nevertheless, the use of nationalist, and sometimes Marxist, language is evident. Therefore there is evidence of a specialist language based on the nationalist historiography which, in Zimbabwe, can not totally divorce itself from political discourse, thus exposing the learners to what Husbands (1996) refers to as political literacy. This nationalist and political discourse can therefore be used to promote patriotic history which the Zimbabwean government has been attempting to do over the past ten years.

In terms of historical consciousness, all three textbooks' descriptive text did not produce data that reveals an explicit encouragement what Rüsen (1993) explained as making connections between the past, the present and the future. There are few cases where there is reference to historical events that have effects on later society. It is clear, though, that such statements, while linking the past to the present, have no concrete bearing on the learners' understating of the concept of historical consciousness. If any consciousness is created, it is the relationship between the present day rulers and ruling party of Zimbabwe and their role in the history of the armed struggle. This thus creates a consciousness which is devoid of confidence to claim political power without sharing the history of the struggle for independence.

Therefore, the descriptive texts in the three textbooks reveal a manifestation of historical knowledge as the key benchmark of historical literacy. This historical knowledge is made possible by the text-dense nature of the descriptive text with details of major events, dates, statistics and individuals. Although there is evidence of the other benchmarks of historical literacy as per the conceptual framework, they are only implied. This proves to be a major disjuncture from what was declared to be historical literacy in the jacket texts and the prefaces.

7.2.5 Assessment activities

By their nature, and in comparison to the other criteria of analysis above, assessment activities give a clearer picture of what is expected of the learner, in this case the kind of historical literacy the learner should have acquired by using the "O" Level textbooks in question. The assumption is that one would not bother assessing what they do not expect to have been acquired through the learning process. It is therefore critical for assessment activities to be on what has been in the text to retain educational consistency.

Although the assessment format differs across the three textbooks, most of the questions still expect the textbook user to extract and remember basic facts such as dates, events and names. While all three textbooks have professed to offer a view of school history that has shifted from fact-retention, the fact-heavy descriptive text and assessment activities prove otherwise. The major benchmark for historical literacy remains historical knowledge as espoused by Ravitch (1989).

The findings show that as per the aims in the jacket text and preface, there is an attempt to develop historical method. Historical method manifests in the activities more than in the descriptive text. Apparently, the activity-based approach that is offered is mainly in the form of skills development. Indeed some activities develop skills that are needed to survive outside school, such as speech writing. This is evidence that the books were written at a time when historical skills were still revered as a result of the SHP (Shemilt, 1980; 1983; 1987).

This is not to imply that other benchmarks of historical literacy as per the conceptual framework do not emerge in the findings. As has been the case, right across the covers, jacket texts, prefaces and descriptive text, conceptual understanding continues to be implicit rather than explicit. As explained above, the books are caught in a time warp, since they were published before the major advocates of concept-based history education, such as Haydn *et al* (2003), Hunt (2003) and Taylor (2003) had not propounded their theories yet but also a time warp because of political and economic meltdown. .

The activities also reveal a version of historical consciousness whose main limitation is that there is no overt effort to look into the future. There are a few cases whereby learners are asked to, for example, compare the colonial period to the post-colonial period, but it ends there. In the prefaces of *People and power*, and *People making history*, there was emphasis on history playing a great role in our understanding and shaping our future. However, nowhere in the

activities is there an attempt to look into the future. This creates a backwards looking historical literacy which does not bother about the future.

In brief, the historical literacy being promoted by the assessment activities is more consistent with the jacket text and preface than with the descriptive text. There is emphasis on historical knowledge and also historical method. The assessment activities also only hint at historical conceptual understanding, historical consciousness and historical language as there is no overt attempt to promote these three benchmarks.

7.3 Implications of the research findings

The analysis of the three “O” Level Zimbabwean history textbooks has revealed the kind of literacy the textbooks expose the history learners to. Crucially, the textbooks themselves are contradictory in terms of the producers’ intentions and what is exactly in the textbooks in terms of historical literacy. The disjuncture is largely between the jacket texts and prefaces on one hand and the descriptive texts on the other. The assessment activities lean more towards the jacket texts and descriptive text, but still reflect the content-laden nature of the descriptive text. As has already been mentioned, the hand of politics is evident as a factor in determining the manifestation of historical literacy in the Zimbabwean history textbooks. This is reflected through the dominant African nationalist narrative, the details of significant individuals some of whom are still in government today, the language that tends to be more political than historical and a consciousness which is mainly backward looking than forward looking.

I have consistently maintained that in no way do the history textbooks fail to promote historical literacy. Nevertheless, they encourage a certain kind of historical literacy, hence my research question: How does the notion of historical literacy manifest itself in Ordinary Level history textbooks in Zimbabwe? I will now explain the implications of such a kind of historical literacy based on the conceptual framework which greatly determined my analytical framework. In

other words, with the kind of historical literacy revealed in the findings, what are the implications for the history learner, both educationally and politically? This explanation will in a way provide a contextualised answer to Husbands *et al's* (2003) question on what school history is for.

In terms of historical knowledge, the analysis has revealed that from the textbook cover to the assessment activities the textbook user is exposed to huge amounts of detail on historical knowledge which Ravitch (1989) advocated for as the ultimate form of historical literacy. The possible educational consequence is that the Zimbabwean education system produces a prototype history learner who dwells on accumulation of facts on past events, dates, names and statistics. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with this because, as argued in Chapter 2, historical knowledge is the basis on which all other benchmarks of historical literacy can be founded. However, it becomes a problem if knowing alone becomes the end rather than a means to an end.

A limiting implication of the kind of historical knowledge being manifested in the Zimbabwean textbooks is that it is basically restricted to a single narrative, which is the African nationalist narrative which resonates with the values of the ZANU PF, which has entirely dominated and still largely dominates government today. Thus, the history learners are not exposed to the multiple narratives espoused by Taylor (2003). This is how school history begins to play a legitimating role (Chernis, 1990; Apple 1991; 1992; Wertsch & Rozin, 2000; Manzo, 2004; Rodden; 2009). This way, the school history textbooks can still play a role in the propagation of patriotic history which has been a cornerstone of the legitimization of ZANU PF rule in the past decade (Ranger (2004). As stated above, political reorientation of teachers as per the government plan to send teachers for reorientation studies by 2003 would be enough for them to build on this single narrative to propagate a sanitized version of past events in class. This is even more possible if one considers the statements in the textbook jacket texts that the textbooks are meant to help the teacher present lessons to learners, rather

than them being for learners to use independently without the teacher interpreting history for them.

In addition to historical knowledge historical method is a benchmark of historical literacy that is manifested in the history textbooks. I have argued that the kind of historical method that is manifested was evidently influenced by the SHP. The research findings showed that the major emphasis in terms of historical skills in the textbooks was on analysis, evaluation and empathy. However, application of historical method has since moved on from the theorisation of SHP and the emphasis on skills. Therefore, while the textbooks attempt to offer more than just historical knowledge in terms of historical literacy, the sub-categories of historical method have flaws if contextualised in the current global conceptualisation of historical literacy. This does not mean that the entire manifestation of historical method in the textbooks is a relic. Analysis and evaluation of sources is still important for the history learner today and there were cases of engagement with the technicalities of source work, especially in the assessment activities. However, the textbooks demonstrated cases of not practicing these methods as argued by Wineburg (1991) and Taylor (2003). The sources in the textbooks mostly served as para-text rather than historical evidence. The point here is that the sources only served to strengthen the grand narrative being propagated as part of historical knowledge. Thus, while the textbooks expose learners to a kind of historical method, they do not encourage higher order critical thinking whereby sources which deconstruct the grand narrative are offered in order for learners to make their own evaluations. Rather, they read the uses only in order to confirm the narrative that they already know. This was the crux of Porat's (2004, p. 965) argument that "not only do people tend to read text in a manner that supports their personal beliefs, but they read in a way that supports their cultural schemata."

Crucially, while empathy is indeed a skill, in history education it is more recognised as a second order concept (Haydn, *et al*, 2003). As a skill, empathy is

aimed to be applied in other contexts outside history, but as a concept it becomes a basis for historical understanding. I argue that historical knowledge without historical understanding can lead to emotional moral judgements and other unbalanced historical judgements. For example, the polarisation that characterises Zimbabwe today can be partly explained by failure to empathise with the country's past people. As a result, some rash decisions have been taken ostensibly to correct the wrongs of the past. But without engaging the past empathically, those wrongs might be known, but never understood.

Related to the above issue on empathy, a major finding in terms of historical conceptual understanding is that most of the time it was only implied. For example, learners would be exposed to the concept of significance through studying and knowing significant events, dates and personalities. Similarly they would be somehow exposed to the concept of time through knowing dates, when in fact the concept of time is not merely about dates, but it implies language and mathematical understandings as well. Therefore, the way second order historical concepts are manifested in the textbooks has serious educational and political consequences as well. For example, significance can be ambiguous and thus be misunderstood. What is significant to one group of people is not necessarily significant to another. Similarly, individuals like Ndabaningi Sithole or Mbuya Nehanda might be significant to sections of the Zimbabwean population while less significant to another.⁵ The analysed parts of the textbooks have been shown to link significance to imply a certain role to do with African nationalism. However, the concept of significance as conceptualised by Hayden, *et al* (2003), means factors that were crucial in affecting the historical process in spite of which side of the historical narrative they are. Hence, significance that the learners are exposed to is that which supports the narrative which has already to be seen to be pro those in power.

⁵ Ndabaningi Sithole was the founding president of ZANU and Mbuya Nehanda was a spirit medium who today is regarded as a national spirit medium because of her role in the Chimurenga I.

In addition to the above, historical consciousness as a benchmark of historical literacy is at most implied in the analysed textbooks. This benchmark was also found to be embedded in the narrative espoused throughout the textbooks. I argue that the historical consciousness is more backward looking than forward looking because most of the connections that learners are taught are meant to justify the political status quo. For example, learners are expected to connect the problems of today to colonisation and to justify the present ruler on the basis of their role in the struggle for independence. This kind of consciousness is related to the significance of individuals and the nationalisation of heroes and symbols (Chernis, 1990). This then paints a collective consciousness based on collective memory (Phillips, 2006) whereby the past is painted as glorious until it was disturbed by colonisation. Therefore this historical consciousness is not what was espoused by Rüsen (1993), Lee (2004) and Seixas (2006) because it attempts to connect the past to the present, but not to the future.

Finally, the declaration that the textbooks would use simple language (and thus not specialist historical language) proved to be at best symbolical. I argued that it was only meant to acknowledge the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, but in reality the language proved to be heavily influenced by African nationalist language, which is in turn influenced by Marxist discourse. Therefore, Marxist references are evident, but what is most evident is political language. Therefore this language equips learners with what Husbands, *et al* (2003, p. 127) refer to as “political literacy.” This political literacy is in resonance with the narrative already explained. As such, the learners become literate in terms of speaking the African nationalist discourse sprinkled with Marxist connotations. This is not to say that all language is political. As explained in Chapter 6, there is also use of historical language especially what Husbands (1996, p. 31) refers to as “language of historical description and analysis.” However most of this language is still political as explained by the research findings. With this discourse, the textbooks become a medium of patriotic history in the schools, thus entrenching the ideology of the ruling party.

In light of the above implications, I argue that Zimbabwean school history as in the textbooks is for both historical and political literacy. Both these two are grounded in an African nationalist grand-narrative of which the learner has to learn as much details as possible. All other efforts in the learning process are meant to reinforce the grasp of this narrative. Therefore, in reference to my main argument on historical literacy based on Robert's (1995) pluralist conception of historical literacy, the historical literacy in the "O" Level history textbooks in Zimbabwe is made up of one big block of historical knowledge. The other building blocks, such as historical method, historical language, historical conceptual understanding and historical consciousness are small blocks in the construction of the historical literacy in Zimbabwe. All these building blocks serve directly and indirectly to shore up power. The power of government in textbook production and historical literacy in Zimbabwe is manifested whereby the government approves all the textbooks to be used in schools. As a result, the set of textbooks produced through the UNESCO and other non-government organisations were denied government endorsement and therefore remain redundant to present.

7.4 Limitations

As with any other research project, this study has its limitations. It can not be denied that conducting the study in South Africa contributes to a loss of focus in terms of space and context. In spite of this limitation, I used it to my advantage to gain maximum use of both Zimbabwean and South African views on history education. It is also important that studies in troubled countries such as Zimbabwe be conducted from outside the country as a contribution by the greater Diaspora towards the Zimbabwean education system. Secondly, having taught in Zimbabwe for about nine years, I conducted the study as both a participant and subject of patriotic history. This becomes a limiting factor if one considers to extent to which my experience influenced some of the judgements I made on the purpose of school history in Zimbabwe. I turned this experience into a research advantage in terms of making informed evaluations. Finally, this kind of study can

not be easily generalisable. While this is a limitation, it in fact makes the study worthwhile because the contention that I take is that historical literacy is conceptualised differently depending on the time, space and context. Still, this study can be used as a template for analyses of textbooks for historical literacy.

I also faced methodological limitations. I have already explained the underdevelopment of research methods in history textbook analysis. For example, while question analysis is put forward by Nicholls (2003), a leading scholar in history textbooks research, as a method, it is so vague that I had to reinforce it by integrating it with Bloom's Taxonomy. At the same time the analytical framework also had some problems. As I coded the data in the analytical framework, I had to create new categories in an inductive way. The problem emerged when some of the benchmarks did not match. For instance, the textbooks referred to empathy as a skill, yet on my instrument it is a second order concept. In the end I had to code it according to my conceptualisation based on the argument that my analytical framework is based on more recent research in history education compared to the textbooks under analysis.

7.5 Recommendations and directions for future research

Many aspects of the Zimbabwean fabric have been left tattered as a result of the problems that have bedevilled the country for a decade now. At the moment the country is at the crossroads and the citizenry is holding its breath. The formation of a Government of National Unity has resulted in the appointment of an MDC member, David Coltart, as Minister of Education. This therefore implies that priorities and views may change. Indeed, it will be interesting to see if school history remains compulsory and whether or not the ZANU PF historiography of patriotic history will be perpetuated in the short to medium term. Admittedly, history textbooks are at the coalface of the propagation of official history. Within such a context, recommendations are hopefully due on what school history is for and in that sense this study can hopefully make a contribution in terms of Zimbabwe history textbooks in relation to historical literacy.

The foremost recommendation is that there is a need for a reconceptualisation of what school history is for in Zimbabwe as the country reaches 30 years of independence. This reconceptualisation should be grounded in embracing contemporary developments in history education. Only then can new history textbooks be produced for Zimbabwean schools. As has already been demonstrated, the current textbooks are caught in a time-warp and thus struggle to maintain relevance in history education. Nicholls (2003) argues that after about eight years from the date of publication, the history textbook ceases to be current and this applies in terms of both content and methodology. The textbooks in my study are more than ten years old and so need to be revamped, not only to catch up with current events, but also current theorisations.

The second recommendation is informed by Wineburg (2000) and Nicholls (2003). There is need for more textbook research, but also research on research in textbooks. If not so, methodologies and methods that suit history education will remain underdeveloped, in the process limiting our understanding of history education as a whole. This study has exposed the underdevelopment of some of the methods that are being used to analyse history textbooks. More research can adopt and try my conceptual framework, and in the process refine it to be more useful in analysing textbooks for historical literacy.

In general, more analyses of Zimbabwean textbooks are due as the area of textbooks is of concern in the entire education spectrum of Zimbabwe. New textbook production will have to consider the views of not only history textbook analyses. The research by Dudu, Gonye, Mareva & Sibanda (2008) on English textbooks is a welcome development and with more research the need for new textbooks across the board is exposed. School history can only benefit from that development.

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APPENDIX



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30 SEPTEMBER 2009

MR. MT MAPOSA (207510363)
SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

Dear Mr. Maposa

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0659/09M

I wish to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been granted full approval for the following project:

"Conceptualising historical literacy in Zimbabwe: A textbook analysis"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
PROFESSOR STEVEN COLLINGS (CHAIR)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor (Dr. JM Wasserman)
cc. Ms. R Govender

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville