

**Language and Literacy Practices of
African Immigrants
in
Pietermaritzburg**

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DECLARATIONS

I, Mutinta Cheelo, declare that:

1. The research represented in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated and is my original work
2. The thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other University.
3. This thesis does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons and quoted.
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Signed:

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As the candidate's supervisor, I agree to the submission of the thesis

Signed:

Sandra Land

Date: 01 - 04- 2014

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ABBREVIATIONS

CD	Compact Disc
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
DSTV	Digital Satellite Television
L A	Language Acquisition
NLS	New Literacy Studies
SLS	Second Language Socialization
SMS	Short Message Service
TV	Television
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

Language and literacy are of central importance to communication for most people in the world today. This case study investigates the language and literacy practices amongst African immigrant families in Pietermaritzburg. There are many immigrant families from different countries with different home languages and different backgrounds. This study examines the languages used in these different immigrant homes, and what factors lead to the choice of the languages. It investigates what literacy practices these families are engaged in. The study further examines the effects that the choice of languages used in these homes and the literacy practices engaged in have on the education of both the parents and their children. The literature reviewed for this study focused on six major themes on literacy, namely; (i) literacy as social practice, (ii) literacy networks, (iii) literacy domains, (iv) literacy events, (v) language, literacy acquisition and social identity and (vi) second language socialization.

To collect the data necessary to for the study, three methods were used: group interviews, home observation and participant observation. Data was examined using Street's ideological model of new literacy studies as theoretical framework.

The findings for this study show that there are different languages used in each home but that the use of English is common in all the homes. The findings show that the literacy practices that these families are engaged in are similar despite coming from different countries.

The study found that texts using cell phones play a major role during communication. This shows that electronic technology plays a vital role in both the children's and adults' language and literacy development.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

This study was carried out in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa among four immigrant families. One was from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), another from Tanzania, another from Zambia and another from Zimbabwe. Pseudonyms were used for these families in this study.

The purpose of the study was to discover and describe language and literacy practices of these African immigrants in Pietermaritzburg with a focus on understanding what languages are used in these families and what leads to the choice of home language. The study investigated the educational consequences for adults and children of the choice of home language and the literacy practices of these four families.

My interest in this study arose from my observations from the point of view of an immigrant in Pietermaritzburg and also as an adult education student interested in literacy and language studies. As an immigrant living and studying in Pietermaritzburg at University of KwaZulu-Natal, I observed that many immigrant families living in Pietermaritzburg use different languages in their homes, knowing that they are living in Pietermaritzburg in which Zulu is the predominantly spoken language. I investigated their languages choices as well as the literacy practices which the four immigrant families engaged in, in their homes. I chose four families from different countries because I knew from my interaction with the families that they would provide me with valuable data for my study.

I investigated the extent to which these families used their home languages and English, and the extent to which they learned and used the local language Zulu. I also sought to discover whether it was through socialization or formal learning and if learning a new language in a foreign country had any effect on their literacy practices in their own language. As an immigrant I realized too that inability to communicate in the local language is a crucial hindrance to most immigrants, especially during social interaction and in places such as shops, mini-buses and even in some of the offices where you find some local people who cannot or do not want to use or speak English. These experiences and observations developed my interest to do this study.

Language use is of critical importance in the life of immigrants. According to Kamuangu, (as cited in Orman, 2012),

Language is, as one would expect, one of the most salient indexicals of otherness by which foreigners can be identified as such. For example, there is a good deal of anecdotal and more concrete evidence of shibboleths being used to identify non-South Africans (Harris 2002: 5–6). The most commonly heard example is that of suspected migrants being asked the Zulu word for body parts such as the toes, little finger or elbow with those failing to come up with the correct answers ('ucikicane', 'inzonzwane' and 'indololwane' respectively) sometimes falling victim to violent assault (Mail and Guardian, 24th May 2008; The Times, 30th July 2008).⁶ Language would seem to have the simultaneous potential to frequently render migrants both visible/audible and silent. For instance, a number of Kamuangu's (2006) interviewees in his study of the 'family language policies' of DRC immigrants in Johannesburg talk of a reluctance to speak their homeland languages in public situations for fear of violent or abusive reactions from South African citizens, preferring instead to either not speak at all or speak only English which, as they acknowledge, still often gives them away due to their accent (Kamuangu 2006:118, as cited in Orman, 2012, pp. 7-8).

It is true from my experience and observation as an immigrant that language is what identifies immigrants here in Pietermaritzburg. This identification is mostly seen in taxis, shops and in institutions. Here in Pietermaritzburg, Zulu is the first language of most of the population and is therefore widely spoken in most institutions and the most commonly used in social, cultural and linguistic domains. The above quote reflects a common occurrence in Pietermaritzburg where some Zulu people expect other African people to speak their language, whether they are local or foreign. This is evident in situations for example in a bank where a black worker will speak to a white, Indian, or Coloured client in English but the same worker will sometimes insist on speaking to a fellow black in Zulu whether she or he understands the language or not. Thus the adoption of "a reluctance to speak their homeland languages in public situations for fear of violent or abusive reactions from South African citizens, preferring instead to either not speak at all or speak only English which, as they acknowledge, still often gives them away due to their accent" (Kamuangu 2006:118, as cited in Orman, 2012, pp. 7-8), is very evident in Pietermaritzburg.

1.2. The history of the immigrant families in Pietermaritzburg

Before 1996, and the end of apartheid, very few Africans from other countries came to South Africa to live. Most of them just came for a short period of time and went back to their countries. From 1995 to about 2000, many people from other African countries came to South Africa to either look for work or to study at the South African Universities. Most of these came with their families and most of them ended up getting jobs here in South Africa after completing their studies. These families live in Pietermaritzburg, and their children go to school here in Pietermaritzburg. Most of the children of this group who have completed their secondary education are at university. I investigated the language and literacy choices and practices of the four immigrant families.

1.3. The Motivation for the Study

The inspiration for my study came as a result of my involvement with immigrant women in Pietermaritzburg who have formed a social group incorporating women from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Congo, Malawi, Tanzania and other countries from East and West Africa. This group started with just few women and it has now grown to almost 60 women. In spite of coming from different countries, languages and backgrounds, these women have found something in common as immigrants in Pietermaritzburg.

These women meet together during times of funerals, marriages, birthdays, birth and even celebrations of graduations. Since these women come from different countries, backgrounds and languages, they follow the custom of the particular person who is celebrating something and has invited them; for example if the lady is from Malawi then they will try to follow the Malawian custom. The language used is always English in all functions. Messages are sent to every woman through SMSs which itself constitutes a social literacy practice. It is from this group of immigrants that I selected the four families who participated in my study.

Papen (2006, p.30) says:

Social practices include language and they include discourse as well. While some common social practices may rely heavily on speech, many contemporary social practices, involve the use of written language. Literacy practices are those elements of social practices that refer directly to the use of written language.

As an insider to this group, I was well-positioned to carry out this study. Having an insider position facilitated my collection of data, and I believe that my understanding of the literacy practices and languages used in this unique group enabled me to carry out a thorough and interesting analysis. From this immigrant group of women, I chose four families from different countries as the sample for my study.

These four immigrant families were important and relevant to my study because all of these families had different experiences concerning Zulu, the language which is most widely spoken in Pietermaritzburg, and these experiences had different consequences for different families. In addition I saw that these four families had rich literacy practices which they engage in at their homes, and which were intertwined with their language use, and I knew that researching these four families' literacy and language practices and lived experience here in Pietermaritzburg would give me vital data for my study.

My study was based in a new immigrant community with values, languages and social contexts different from local people here in Pietermaritzburg, and I believe that studying the language and literacy practices of these four families added new knowledge to what is known about language and literacy practices in South Africa.

1.4. Research Questions:

- 1a. What languages are used at home?
- 1b. What factors lead to the choice of language(s)?
- 2 a. What literacy practices do research participants engage in at home?
- 2 b. How do family literacy practices relate to the learning of children and adults?
- 2c. What are the educational consequences for the children and adults for the choice of home language?

1.5. Methodology

My study was situated within the interpretive paradigm and it was a qualitative study. For this reason, I did not focus on a large number of people when collecting data. I used a case study approach because my focus was on four immigrant families living in Pietermaritzburg. I used observations and group interviews to collect my data.

When analyzing my data I used content analysis, and I looked for common themes and information that revealed answers to my research questions from all the data which I had gathered.

1.6. Definition of a Case study

According to Chilisa and Preece (2005, p. 145) a case study is a detailed study of a situation in its real life context with the aim of making a 'holistic description' of that particular situation or situations. "Data is collected and the conclusion is drawn on the unit of analysis". A case study uses many forms of data collection.

My case study was of language and literacy practices of four African immigrant families in Pietermaritzburg. Aspects of this case that were relevant to this study were dictated by my research questions, and thus related to the languages used in people's homes, factors in their lives that led to the choice of language, the literacy practices they engaged in in their homes, and how these related to learning experiences of family members, as well as the educational consequences of the choices made.

1.7. Outline of the Chapters

Chapter 2 provides a literature review and an account of the theoretical framework within which this study is located. The literature was reviewed by focusing on the related studies by other scholars of language and literacy practices. New Literacy Studies was used as my theoretical framework for my study.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology. The details of the methodology are presented in this chapter. The study is presented as an interpretative, qualitative study.

Chapter 4 gives a rich detailed data collected from the four families who participated in the study using group interviews, participant observations and home observations.

Chapter 5 is a discussion of the themes that emerged from participant observations and the four group interviews. My data analysis was aimed at making sense of the information collected in my study.

Chapter 6 brings out the conclusions of the findings that emerged from participant observations and the four group interviews.

Chapter Two

2.0. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The New Literacy Studies view of literacy (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996; Hamilton and Hillier, 2006; Street 1984, 2001 and 2011) provided an analytical framework for this study of language and literacy practice of four families of African immigrants in Pietermaritzburg. The literature reviewed for this study focused on six major themes namely: (i) literacy as social practices, (ii) second language socialization, (iii) language and literacy acquisition and social identity, (iv) literacy networks, (v) literacy domains, and (vi) literacy events.

Reviewing what other authors have written concerning language and literacy practices reveals how definitions of language and literacy practices have developed over time. The themes that arose from this literature review assisted in framing answers to my research questions. The literature review and a description of the theoretical framework used are given in this section.

Language and literacy are fundamental to our communication and identity. Literacy is based upon a system of symbols which are used for communication. Every person's literacy can add actively to his or her 'social, cultural and economic well-being'. Language and literacy helps in finding new ways of thinking and influences the way people look at the world. Thus, language and literacy are important for people's lifelong social and academic success (Barton, 1994). This chapter therefore, reviews the perspectives of a number of writers on literacy practices. It starts with definitions of relevant terms.

2.2. Definition of 'practice'

"As a noun, practice can refer to an area of work within which people engage in recognizable activities associated with particular bodies of knowledge and expertise" as in the 'practice of medicine', or the 'practice of law'. "Practice involves recurring patterns of behaviour that are culturally recognizable" (Barton and Hamilton, 2005, p. 29). For example, practices of respect which are learnt through family observation, and in Africa especially through African proverbs.

One of the African proverbs in Bemba says “Umukulu tapusa akebo apusa akabwe” meaning “an elderly person can miss a target with a stone but cannot miss words of wisdom.”

Literacy practices are things or activities that people do in their everyday lives; they may be associated for example with watching a soccer game in a stadium, attending a wedding ceremony or party and many other activities. According to Papen (2005), the term practice can be used in various ways. In everyday use, we might speak about practice as something one does on a regular basis to either develop or maintain skills.

Seeing literacy in terms of particular sets of practices that differ with contexts and different groups of people as opposed to something that has to be learned represents a shift in how literacy is understood.

The change from a notion of literacy located in individuals to examining ways in which people in groups use literacy and language is another important development in the theoretical approach to literacy. In this way, language and literacy are seen to be resources, rather than possessions of individuals. “This is true at various levels; at the detailed micro level, it can refer to the fact that in particular literacy events there are often several participants taking on different roles”. Whereas at a “broader macro level, it can mean the ways in which whole communities use ...[language and literacy]... such as a minority community using writing ...[to affirm]... their identity and to understand their history. There are social rules about who can produce and use particular literacies and it is vital to understand how texts are regulated socially” (Barton, 2006, p. 27).

2.3. Second Language Socialization

According to Ochs and Schieffelin (as cited in Roberts, 2006, p. 69) second language socialization “involves both the necessary socialization” in which language is used “and the process of socialization through language”. It is important that learners of the second language know the “behaviours, values and practices of a community [of speakers of a language]” in order for the learner to learn the language. It is in the learning of the practices of the community that the learner comes to know and understand the way things are done in that community. Since second language socialization often takes place where several languages are used in a society, the process is always “concerned with relations of power and ideology” (Ochs and Schieffelin , as cited in Roberts, 2006, p.69).

The immediate context reflected in and created by interaction, feeds into the wider social context of inequality. For example, interaction locates people and also gives the evidence for judging them. In intercultural encounters, differences and misunderstandings feed into widely held linguistic ideologies about English, and what constitutes 'a native language speaker'. In contrast with literacy practices among those whose dominant language is English, second language and literacy practices are much more likely to be developed in formal or institutional settings where relations of power are more palpable (Zuengler and Cole, as cited in Roberts, 2006, p. 69).

This is evident in the sense that interaction is very important in literacy practices because this is where people get to know and understand each other. It is this interaction that people and individuals' differences as well as misunderstandings come to be seen through language where the speakers of the dominant language, Zulu, expect the foreigner to speak their language be it in informal or formal contexts.

Immigrants in South Africa are never identified in relation to their actual country of origin, but rather as being simply 'not South African'. When an immigrant meets someone or goes to a place where he or she has to produce an identity document or use English, a local person's first word tend to be '*so you are not a South African*, thus tend to be named for what they are not. Immigrants are never named in what (Cejas, 2007, p.474) refers to as "neutral terms like 'undocumented' or 'irregular' migrants, they are first of all defined as what they are not: non-South Africans, noncitizens". This very act of not naming them according to who they really are suggests the purpose of not including them in the society.

However, affronts are not exclusively verbal (Cejas, 2007, p.474). The denial of human rights and verbal violence was referred to in Mazimba's interview where he said in most cases foreigners are not treated fairly when placing judgments at the court just because of their status as foreigners.

As an immigrant in South Africa, it is impossible to move across cities without carrying your passport and identification documents especially in Johannesburg. The moment the police suspect that one is a foreigner they ask for a passport. It is more common for the police than the immigration officers to ask for passports. In many cases the police do not seem to know or understand the visas in the passports no matter how one explains the content to them.

Frequently they ask for bribes from immigrants and if they refuse to pay they threaten to take them to police station and lock them up. Thus the apartheid rule '15' according to Cejas (2007, p. 477) is still being practiced in South Africa though it is used now more on foreigners than on black South Africans.

Learning a second language requires gaining knowledge not only of vocabulary and its use, but also in the way speakers of that language think and see the world. This allows a language learner to use the language effectively for different purposes in different social contexts (Lemmer, 2002, p.42).

Learning another language is a humbling experience and second language learners with high levels of self esteem and self confidence are more likely to perform better compared with those who have poor self esteem. Moreover negative attitudes towards members of the group who speak the target language have a significant effect on the motivation of the second language learner (Lemmer, 2002, p. 51).

Learning another language should be a positive and exciting experience, and not something which one does because he or she wants to be accepted in a particular community.

Auerbach (2006, p. 56) explains that people learn language and literacy by being casually "socialized into the practices and values of contexts in which they are immersed". Observation and research of literacy has moved from "school settings to domains such as homes, communities, and workshops". "A great deal of the social practices research on multilingual literacies focuses on families and family roles in literacy events and on the distribution of practices within families: who does what with whom, why and in which languages". All these events involve interactions using texts and spoken languages.

2.4. Language and Literacy Acquisition and Social Identity

The concept of 'social identity' plays a major "role in overcoming social barriers which hinder the language learning process". When people or individuals are building their "social identity", they involve themselves in "group memberships" they do this by connecting themselves with certain communities that is congruent with their social identity (Hansen, as cited in Bylund and Oostendorp, 2013, p. 265-6).

In these social identities, language plays a major role because in many situations, people group themselves according to language. Here in Pietermaritzburg, what identifies the immigrant community is not language but being not South African. In contrast, what identifies local people here is race and language. There are situations where a white person comes into a room where there are different race groups and that white person will only greet the fellow whites. Likewise a black person might do the same thing when he or she enters the same room.

From personal experiences as a participant observer, I have discovered that language learning is very important in Pietermaritzburg because it can provide a link with the local people. Most of the immigrant persons have learnt the local language because of social factors. For some it was because they wanted to be accepted by the local people, and for others it was because the nature of the job they were doing forced them to learn the language. “Language learning is a highly individual process, which is affected not only by linguistic constraints, but also by a large number of social factors. These social factors may even be different for language learners who, on the surface, appear to be in very similar contexts” (Hansen, as cited in Bylund and Oostendorp, 2013, p. 265-6).

Language is strongly connected to identity through human emotions. When people are communicating how they feel about certain issues, such as funerals, prayer, anger, happiness, they use certain words to express their emotions. Language is not only used to communicate, it is also used to connect people in their most personal moments (Ferris, Peck and Banda, 2013, p. 375). In these moments, people’s language expression changes, the way someone expresses himself or herself when he or she is angry will be completely different from the way he or she expresses herself or himself when he or she is happy.

According to Ferris, Peck and Banda (2013)

Group identities focus on the characteristics people share which give them a common identity and separate them from other groups. These characteristics may arise from shared economic, educational, nationality and also the practices which happen take place in the group. Groups may range from big to small: individuals show that they are part of the group by conforming to group norms and practices (p. 377).

Group identities are evident in Pietermaritzburg among immigrant communities who have formed groups which are separate from the local people. In these groups individuals follow the standards and norms of the group practices.

2.5. Definitions of Literacy

For most of the 20th century, the term “literacy” was defined by the terms “reading” and “writing” and was seen primarily as a set of skills gained through schooling. This conceptualization of literacy as a set of skills has been described by Barton as (as cited in Wasik and Van Horn, 2012, p. 4) “one of the most powerful metaphors for literacy in public discussions of reading and writing”. On emphasizing the symbol of skills, Barton pointed that “it underpins the way politicians and the media discuss literacy issues” and it is also “[b]ehind discussions and headlines on falling standards, the need to improve the teaching of reading and the ‘problem’ of adult literacy” (Barton, as cited in Wasik and Van Horn, 2012, p. 4).

Through his assessment of the role of schools (Barton, as cited in Wasik and Van Horn, 2012, p.4) observed that though school literacy is only one of the ways literacy is defined, it is a “common and constant concept of literacy”. Literacy is here defined as a set of skills which is gained through schooling. According to Wasik and Van Horn (2012, p. 4) the schooling concept of literacy has continued to “influence the research on literacy” and has been a “leading force in the study of both child and adult literacy”.

While literacy is still usually defined as the “ability to read and write, the meaning of literacy has expanded to encompass a set of complex, multi-dimensional skills that begin at birth and develop over a person’s lifetime” (Wasik and Van Horn, 2012, p.4). Another “factor influencing definitions of literacy is a focus on the functions of literacy”. This stress on functions of literacy began to appear during World War II, when the United States Army used the term “functional literacy” to indicate “the capability to understand written instructions necessary for conducting basic military functions... at a fifth grade reading level” (Sharon, as cited in Wasik and Van Horn, 2012, p. 4). More examples of “the functions of literacy were seen in 1991 when the National Literacy Act of the United States federal government defined literacy” as:

... an individuals' ability to read, write and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals and develop one's knowledge and potential". This definition was later expanded to include a person's ability to function in his or her family (The Workforce Investment Act of 1998). These legislative definitions call attention to the adult learner not only as worker, citizen and community member, but also as parent and family member and they are consistent with the expanded concept of literacy in the National Institute for Literacy's (Wasik and Van Horn, 2012, p.4).

According to UNESCO (as cited in Wasik and Van Horn, 2012, p.5) "literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials "linked with differing contexts. Literacy as it is now understood involves a range of learning which enables people as well as individuals to accomplish their goals, to develop their knowledge potential and to contribute fully in their community and the society at large.

Family literacy is observed as the basis of three broad groups of literacy experiences for young children: (a) experiences in which children interact with their parents in writing and reading situations; (b) experiences in which children explore print on their own; and (c) experiences in which children observe their parents modelling literate behaviours when they themselves read or write (Teale and Sulzby, as cited in Senechal, 2012, p.38). There are many ways in which parents engage their children in literacy activities, when they are reading to their children and they are teaching their children to write things such as their names. At this stage, parents give their children papers and pencils so that the children can discover how literacy works.

Barton (1994) says people bring their cultural knowledge to an activity. It is useful to refer to these ways of using literacy as literacy practices. Barton defines literacy practices as the common cultural ways of using literacy which people draw upon in a literacy event. According to Reder (as cited in Hillier, 2006, p.181) the concept of social practices offers a 'richer' explanation "that can identify many more possible points for involvement" or influence than simply as attempts to help in literacy development. "This can provide an integrated framework in which the provision of basic skills programmes can itself be understood as a set of literacy practices". A social practice view is one which can see people as well as individuals as being productive in their communities and in the world at large, and not simply as learners who always have something more to learn.

Merrifield (2005, p.154), emphasizes that “cultural literacy’s main focus is the call for “shared new experiences and inherited experiences of the past reflected in the heritage language texts which need to be fully comprehensible to people across generations”.

2.6. Language and Literacy as Social Practices

In order to understand what a theory of literacy as social practice means, it is best to compare it with the skills view. This view regards literacy as “a set of skills, which are independent of their particular context of use” (Barton and Hamilton, 2005, p. 25). The social practices view of literacy believes that things are not as simple as that. Advocates of the social practices view believe that we have to look at literacy not merely as a skill, as something people have learned and therefore know, but as something people do (Barton and Hamilton, 2005, p.25). People need to think of “literacy not so much as an ‘attribute’ but as an activity” (Tusting and Barton, as cited in Papen, 2005, p. 25). Literacy is an activity in which people engage in writing and reading. Literacy practices are constantly rooted in language and “social and cultural contexts”. A social practice involves people making meaning and communicating their meanings through spoken language and other semiotic means. For this reason, it is important to understand that social practices include language and a channel of communication among individuals or a group of people. Even though most of the social practices might depend heavily on the use of verbal communication, a lot of these social practices also involve the use of written language (Papen, 2005).

Literacy practices are common ways in which a group of people or individuals engage in social practices that involve reading and writing. Thus literacy practices are aspects of social practices which people or individuals engage in, such as writing a text message to a friend or writing a shopping list. Hence, ‘literacy practices’ does not only mean what people do with reading and writing, but it also includes the ‘ideas, attitudes, ideologies and values’ that frame people’s activities in literacy events, and determine how they understand the communication and associated occurrences (Baynham and Baker, as cited in Papen, 2005, p. 31).

“A social practice approach by its very nature attempts to validate people’s everyday practices of working with words, numbers and languages” (Hillier, 2006, p.182). According to Barton (2006, p.21) “language, literacy and numeracy are central to people’s knowledge and communication”. The “fundamental social and technological changes” associated with the use of literacy skills affect the lives of many people, especially as their knowledge and the way they used to communicate is changing. For example the coming of internet and cell phones has changed what people know and how they find out things, whom they communicate with and also how they communicate. People nowadays can use different methods to communicate and also to find out things, since in addition to traditional ways of seeking information they can now use a computer to search for information or communicate, or they can use a cell phones.

The literacy practices which people and individuals engage in change from time to time in their lifetimes. These changes are as a result of the demands from people, the availability of resources, interests of people and technological changes. Here we talk of the arrival of the internet and cell phones, which have brought about a major change in literacy practices with the introduction of texting, e-mails and televisions. With advances in technology, literacy practices are changing very fast, and new ones are often acquired through the process of informal as well as formal learning (Barton, 2005).

2.7. Literacy Networks

Networks enable people to connect to each other. Barton (1994) describes how literacy networks are based on interaction between people such as relations, neighbours, work partners and friends. In such networks, skills and resources are shared and exchanged. Barton goes on to say these networks which people or individuals engage in are not different from other social networks which people or individuals may be part of, for example where families communicate and help each other in looking after each other’s children, where they help sick friends or where they help each other with school work. In the context of this study, language networks tended to parallel literacy networks.

According to Boissevain (as cited in Baynham, 1995, p. 39) “a ‘network’ is the social relations in which every individual is embedded. This social network may at one level of abstraction be looked upon as a scattering of points connected by lines”.

Here the point represents people and the lines represent social relations. In a network, every individual is seen to be very important because in these social relations people give out information and provide links to other people. People form social networks in order to maintain communication, and to gain access to resources which they or other individuals need.

Barton (1994, p. 201) further says given that where these networks continue to exist, problems regarding poor reading and writing skills tend to be taken care of because “people have networks of support which help them” overcome problems. In these networks, a person who encounters a problem may seek help from another individual or group and it is therefore unnecessary to develop every skill personally because people have networks of support in which people either offer to read or write for them, or help them develop their skills.

Social networks are relations between individuals or a social group (Barton, 1994), for example a church cell group is a social network. These social networks may be structured in levels and they can be for particular groups, such as both men and women, or women only depending on the purpose of the network, and in these networks, different languages may be used. People form support networks within their communities, for example here in Pietermaritzburg, immigrant women have formed a social network group which meets to support each other when ever needs arise. These social networks are part of everyday life whether or not people have problems. It is in these social network groups that individual skills are developed and discovered, and language and literacy practices are shared.

According to Baynham (1995, p. 65) “it is important to realize that the meaning of network in literacy practices is not simply an aspect of adults with limited access to literacy skills”. This means that most literacy networks involve literacy events where complex written texts and oral interactions play a major role. For example a group of people discussing a business proposal can constitute a network that involves both written and oral interactions in their discussion, and communicate complex information to one another. It is also important to note that every network may involve either written or oral interactions or both. Each network has a purpose which it aims at achieving, and individuals join networks that suit purposes they want to achieve.

For instance I am in a Bible study cell group at church because I want to understand the Bible more with the help of other members in the group and through the interactions with other individuals. It is also important to note that language and literacy networks accommodate or provide a context for different events.

In these networks, language, numeracy and literacy practices include some of the informal and rarely recognized learning that take place within family, community and workplace. “Through these informal network practices people ‘just do it’, they ‘get by’ and get ‘settled’, supporting and exchanging skills and expertise, fashioning their practical lives and sense of identity within the limits they perceive for themselves” (Hamilton and Hillier, 2006, p.55). Here in Pietermaritzburg, many immigrants have formed networks because they want to feel a sense of identity which they do not feel when they are with the local people.

As in this instance, it is evident that most networks are formed because of identity for example, a group of youths’, women’s groups, men’s groups and even couple’s groups, who shared sense of identity is clear from their names.

2.8. Literacy Domains

According to Baynham (1995), domains of literacy are the main settings and contexts where people use literacy, for instance at home, in the workplace, at school, in shops and in the street. “The domain construct is a fairly rough and ready way of sorting the social space in which literacy practices is embedded” (Baynham 1995, p. 68). The domains of literacy give an original arrangement of the “social context of literacy practices” (Baynham 1995, p. 68). Language domains can take shape in the same way and can be analyzed in the social contexts of literacy practices.

Literacy domains are organized “patterned contexts within which literacy is used and learned” (Barton and Hamilton 1998 p. 10). Activities in these domains are not “accidental or randomly” changeable: they confirm to established patterns of language and literacy practices and there are usual ways in which people act in these literacy events in certain contexts (Barton and Hamilton 1998 p. 10).

(Klassen, as cited in Barton, 1994, p.40) says “literacy may be different in different domains and school is one domain of literacy activity”. Barton (1994) explains that a home is the most important domain for children because this is where children naturally come into contact with languages, literacy events and activities initiated by their parents.

Reder (2005) found that literacy practices were organized into domains of activities, such as those of the church, school, work, governance and many others. The roles of literacy experts within domains differ across domains. In church the literacy experts help the people to understand their religion and faith in God (believing in the God they have never seen). While in science people question each other’s writings until there is convincing proof or explanations. The differences exert a deep influence on the choices individuals make about acquiring and then using their literacy skills in certain settings.

Reder (2005, p.21) maintains that once people “consider adults’ literacy development as a possible outcome of informal acquisition as well as formal instruction, additional research issues and development concerns start coming to mind”. To understand the importance of literacy practices in terms of its’ ‘social meanings’, it is important that people draw from current thinking on language, knowledge and power in the fields of social theory and socio-linguistics (Reder, 2005).

Identifying specific educational literacies or workplace literacies means that, within a given culture, there are different literacies associated with different domains of life. Contemporary life can be analyzed in a simple way into domains of activity, such as home, education workplace. It is a useful starting point to examine the distinct practices in these domains and then to compare for example, home and school, or school and workplace. The home is often identified as a primary domain in people’s literacy lives and is central to people’s developing sense of social identity. Education can also be seen as a distinct domain and the ways in which cooking is taught within education will again be a set of distinct practices, although drawing on and overlapping with both home and work (Barton, 2006, p. 25).

It is important to know that people acting within domains have objectives and within these domains there are various organizations that support and structure certain activities. These organizations may include family, religion and government. A domain is where language and literacy activities take place and it defines the literacy in that particular domain.

According to Hamilton and Hillier (2006) language, literacy and numeracy are shaped by the social and cultural context within which each practice is rooted and the meanings it has for its users and the purposes it serves. Hamilton and Hillier (2006, p.52) maintain that it is important to look at the ways in which peoples' everyday lives work around (possibly limited) ways of using language, literacy and numeracy, the issues that take priority when these people make decisions, and the support systems the people draw on from literacy domains.

People use language, literacy and numeracy in their everyday activities, for instance when doing shopping most people usually carry shopping list with prices indicated at the end, and when shopping, the person will start with the major items on the list, and compare the prices they expect with what they see on the shop shelves.

As a result I can say that domains give 'certain patterns to literacy practices. In every domain, different functions and meanings are attached to language and literacy. Workplaces for instance, prioritize literacy practices that make possible the processes and tasks of certain jobs (Barton and Hamilton, as cited in Papen, 2005, p. 44).The position is that different "domains make use of specific forms of texts, which are linked in particular forms of communication and social interaction. In other words, they are part of particular practices" (Papen, 2005, p. 44). Literacy activities also involve "oral or written language, images, equations, symbols, sound, music, gestures, graphs, artefacts, phone, screen, print and face-to-face interactions, which are used in combination and interchangeably", dependent on the task, convenience of access and preferred learning styles (Papen, p. 52).

2.9. Literacy Events

According to Heath (as cited in Baynham, 1995) 'literacy events have social interactional rules which control the type and amount of talk about what is written. It also implies the ways in which "oral language strengthens, denies, extends or sets aside the written material" (p. 39). (Heath, as cited in Baynham, 1995, p. 39) further says that print plays a major role in literacy events, people understand what the print encodes and they tend to behave in a certain way which is expected by others in the domain. For instance, when people want to cross the road, people wait for the robots to turn green then they cross.

This behaviour or activity is a response to symbols, and complements the behaviour of drivers and other pedestrians who are also responding to the visual symbols, thus achieving the purpose of maintaining safe mobility on roads.

The concept of literacy events has its origin “in the sociolinguistic idea” of events that take place in language contexts (Barton 1994, p.36). Barton goes on to explain that a literacy event is an event where people try to understand or create “graphic signs” either as a group or as individuals, and engage in certain activities where literacy has a role. These are usually normal activities which are repeated in our everyday events (Barton 1994, p. 36).

A literacy event is a useful idea as it allows “researchers and practitioners to focus on” certain situations where things happen and can be seen, where people are able to observe an event or activities “that involve reading or writing” and “draw out” the characteristics. For example helping a child with homework is a literacy event because literacy skills are being used in helping the child and the child is learning something from the person helping him or her (Street, 2001, p. 10).

Literacy events are activities where literacy has a role. Many literacy events in life are regular, repeated activities such as paying bills, sending greetings cards, reading bedtime stories and such activities can often be a useful starting point for practical research into literacy. Some events are linked into routine sequences and these may be part of the formal procedures and expectations of social institutions like workplaces, schools and welfare agencies. Some events are structured by the more informal expectations and pressures of the home or peer group. Events are observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them. The notion of events stresses the situated nature of literacy that it always exists in a social context (Barton, 2006, p.23).

“Literacy events’ refer to what people do with reading and writing” (Papen, 2005, p.31). People are the users of literacy which means literacy events can be observed and explained by people. The term “literacy event” signifies a descriptive concept of what can be observed and recorded by watching people engaging with written language (Papen 2005, p.31).

The term ‘literacy practices’ moves us into the realm of analysis trying to understand the meanings of events observed, looking for patterns across events, similarities and differences between them and trying to understand their relationship with other elements of the world” (Papen, 2005, p. 31).

There are many written texts that are important in literacy events, and there may be also talk around the same text. These texts might be the main point of the event or they may exist in the background (Barton, 2006).

Texts include rapidly scribbled notes, calendars, books, web pages, text messages, signs, and instruction leaflets; there is an almost limitless list of possible text types. In whatever form they appear and however they are used, texts are a crucial part of literacy events and often they provide some stability to activities and across different settings. Literacy education entails learning to produce and use texts, including being able to contribute to texts and being able to find them, evaluate them and criticize them. Literacy education is about engaging with texts appropriately across a range of settings (Barton, 2006, p. 23).

The three elements, “practices, events and texts, provide the first proposition of a social theory of literacy, that literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events mediated by written texts” (Barton, 2006, p.23).

Theoretical Framework

2.10. The history of New Literacy Studies, (NLS) and the Definition of Ideologies

The ‘new literacy studies’ is a group of strongly “related theories that have moved away from a traditional psychological or cognitive skills model [of literacy] to one that includes the social practices associated with numbers, reading and writing”. This is known as a “social view rather than a purely psychological one”. This view sees “literacy and numeracy as being historically and socially situated and therefore part of cultural and media theory” (Hamilton, Hillier and Tett, 2006, p.1).

A social practice approach emphasizes the uses, meanings and values of reading, writing and numeracy in everyday activities and the social relationships and institutions within which literacy is embedded. The social practice approach is drawn upon by the New Literacy Studies which has developed over the last 20 years. It offers specific and detailed ethnographic evidence about the way in which people learn through the written word, both in and outside formal educational settings (Hamilton and Hillier, 2006, p.17).

What we see is that in the events of everyday life, language, literacy and numeracy are incorporated and entangled phenomena, (Barton, 2006, p24). This provides a challenge for language and literacy and numeracy education where they are not taught as one entity.

It is important to know that language and literacy differ depending on the contexts they are used in. Literacy “practices in different cultures and languages can be regarded as different literacies, often involving different writing systems” (Barton, 2006, p24).

The approach in the study of literacy does not reject the position of cognition in literacy achievement and its use, rather it highlights the function of context in determining cognitive processes. This is why it is vital to highlight that “literacy is situated social practice” (Baynham, 1995, p.53). Street argues that, in the ideological model of literacy, literacy practices are “inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in given society” (Street, as cited in Baynham, 1995, p. 53).

According to Street (1993, p.7) researchers have come to “view literacy practices as inextricably related “to cultural and power structures in society and to recognize the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing “done in a variety of contexts. “Avoiding the “reification of the autonomous model” researchers have studied “the social practices rather than literacy in itself for their relationship to other aspects of social life”. Many researchers in ‘new literacy studies’ have given more consideration to the function of literacy practices in “reproducing or challenging the structures of power” and authority.

Street says, “I use the term ‘ideological’ to explain this approach, rather than less contentious or loaded terms such as ‘cultural’, sociological’ or pragmatic’ because it signals quite explicitly that literacy practices are aspects not only of ‘culture’ but also of power structures” (Street, 1993, p.7). New Literacy Studies’ viewpoint is different from the traditional psychological or cognitive skills model of literacy to one that focuses squarely on the social practices associated with number, reading and writing, as opposed to the learning of literacy skills.

2.11. Street’s Ideological Model of Literacy (NLS)

My research is informed by Street’s ideological model of New Literacy Studies (2001, p. 7-8) which presents a culturally aware observation of literacy practices as they differ from one context to another and are always rooted in “socially constructed epistemological principles”. This model differs from the autonomous model in which literacy is seen as a technical and neutral skill. Street says:

I prefer to work from what I term the ‘ideological model of language and literacy’, that recognizes a multiplicity of language uses and literacies; that the meaning and uses of language and literacy practices are related to specific cultural contexts; and that these practices are always associated with relations of power and ideology, they are not simply neutral technologies (1984, p. 139).

Central to the ‘autonomous model of literacy is the assumption that literacy is itself autonomously defined independently of cultural context and meaning and will have effects, creating inequality for those who ‘lack’ it and advantages for those who gain it. Street sees this perspective in itself as deeply ideological (Street, 1993a, b).

In contrast, the ideological model “seeks to make explicit such underlying conceptions and assumptions” in literacy practices, and “...recognize(s) the variety and complexity of what counts as literacy, both for the observer and for the participant (Street, 2011, p. 581). On the subject of ethnography as an appropriate research style, Street’s view (2011, p.584) is that “ethnographic accounts of literacy have provided ‘telling cases’ of what literacy means to different populations of users, focusing on the cultural and institutional locations of such meaning”, and,

An ethnographic perspective shifts us out of this mind set and helps us firstly to ‘imagine’ things that do not exist in our own world and then to understand them in their own terms rather than to see them, in our terms, just as ‘deficits’. One contribution of an ethnographic perspective to the understanding of cultural variation in general and of literacy in particular, is that it can help us to ‘untie the (k)not’ that arises from the (natural?) tendency to describe difference as somehow a deficit (Street 2011, p.584).

It is evident from Street’s view that “literacy events” need to “be interpreted in relation to the larger socio-cultural patterns which they may” demonstrate or reflect. For example, “ethnography” should explain “literacy events in their socio-cultural contexts”, so that people can come to know how such patterns and practice, such as care-giving roles and sex differences are interdependent with the types and aspects of literacy events in which a community develops. It is only on the basis of such “thorough-going ethnography that further progress” can be “made possible towards the understanding of cross-cultural patterns of oral and written languages uses” (Street, 1984, p.125).

Street and Grillo (as cited in Prinsloo and Breier, 1996, p.21), perceive communicative practices as social activities during which language or communication is formed that includes the way in which these social activities are rooted in “institutions settings or domains which in turn are implicated in other wider social, economic, political and cultural processes”.

This therefore, requires consideration of ‘the ideologies’, that are likely to be ‘linguistic’ or in addition that may direct the “processes of communicative production”.

Literacy does not only differ with the social context and with ‘cultural norms’ and communications regarding, for example, identity, gender and belief but also with regard to its uses and meanings that are always rooted in ‘relations of power’. This is what makes literacy ‘ideological’ because at all times literacy involves challenges “over meanings, definitions and boundaries and struggles for control of the literacy agenda” (Street as cited in Coben, 2005, p.102). Coben (2005, p.103) explains that it ought to be considered that Street’s difference between ‘autonomous and ideological literacy’ has implications that weaken the argument that literacy is the trademark of culture”.

The new literacy studies (NLS) requires scholars to look further than formal educational settings to informal learning and alternate official settings’ where these literacies play a major role. It needs to be noted that ‘learning does not take place in classrooms only’ and it does not only concern the type of methods used in classroom settings. It is believed that the ‘social practices’ viewpoint helps people to understand what it is that people know and do in their everyday lives and which also helps these people to establish meanings, values and purposes in a wider literacy framework, not merely looking at the written words themselves (Hamilton, Hillier and Tett, 2006, p.3). Hamilton and Hillier (2006, p.52) describe how the support from the New Literacy Studies which has developed over 15 years gives a full “account of how literacy and numeracy fit into the” ecosystem ‘of people’s lives, ‘the informal support and learning activities’ which contain them and how they are rooted in different issues and concerns of their everyday living. The ideological models which are situated in social practices should be explored in their own terms.

Those who subscribe to the ideological model of literacy concentrate on the specific social practices of reading and writing. They recognize the ideological and therefore culturally embedded nature of such practices.

The ideological model stresses the importance of the socialization process in the construction of the meaning of literacy for participants and is therefore concerned with the general social institutions through which the process takes place and not just the explicit 'educational' ones (Street, 1984, p. 2).

“The uses of literacy which we examine in the close focus of the literacy event need to be understood in terms of the social power relations that are operating and the values and ideologies which they express implicitly or explicitly” (Baynham, 1995, p. 71). According to Robinson (as cited in Street, 2001, p.123) language use always carries a “symbolic function representing a group relationship, social unity and also personal or corporate identity”.

The new literacy studies (NLS) argue a similar point for literacy practices, in the sense that literacy practices represent and “mediate social relationships, networks of solidarity and support, relative power/status differentials” (Barton and Hamilton, as cited in Street, 2001, p.123). It is for this reason that in terms of the ideological model, the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which literacy is rooted (Street, 1984).

2.12. Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature and theoretical framework of the study which I used to understand the language and literacy practices of four families of African immigrants in Pietermaritzburg. Understanding their language and literacy practices was the central aspect of my study and the literature assisted me in understanding language and literacy practices in the four immigrant homes.

To conclude this chapter, the exploration of language and literacy practices from this angle necessarily entails an ethnographic approach, which offers direct in depth accounts of the entire cultural context in which the social practices have meaning(Street, 1995). My next chapter focuses on the research design and methodology which I used to analyze the data.

Chapter Three

3.1. Research Design and Methodology

My proposed study falls under the interpretive paradigm which holds that “social life is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning systems” (Neuman 1994, p. 63). In this sense meaningful actions need to be understood from within the participants’ context. Neuman goes on to say that this requires studying how social reality is experienced, interpreted and understood by the participants. It is this meaningful understanding of social reality, experiences and interpretation that I was exploring in my study.

My research is qualitative in nature. According to Chilisa and Preece (2005, p. 143) the aim of “qualitative research is to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon”. The research is conducted with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being studied. I explained to the participants the purposes and nature of my study, and they developed a clear understanding of what I was studying, and agreed to participate.

According to Chilisa and Preece (2005, p. 143) qualitative research refers to the type of investigation in which the researcher carries out research about people’s “experiences, in natural settings”. The researcher uses a variety of data gathering techniques such as interviews, and observations, from which data is collected mainly in words.

According to Kalman (as cited in Papen, 2005, p. 63), the use of ethnography to study literacy essentially has to do with the ‘New Literacy Studies’ interest in understanding the role of reading and writing in everyday life, rather than just observing the way it is taught and learned in the educational settings.

My study is an emic and ethnographic study. Since I (as the researcher) belong to this community of immigrants, it is written from the point of view of an insider, with the understandings of an insider, (thus an emic study). It is ethnographic since detailed data was gathered in natural settings over a period of time, as they took place, and the data pertained particularly to the group I was studying. I was studying a small group of immigrant families from Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. These families are living in Pietermaritzburg, the capital city of KwaZulu-Natal province.

3.2. Sampling

My sampling was purposive and I voice recorded my research process with the permission which my participants granted me. Although the participants were willing to be voice recorded, they were very hesitant to be video recorded. As an insider of the group I think it was because they felt uneasy about being recorded because this would have increased the chances of them being recognized by the local people.

This recognition would have increased the chances of them being the targets of xenophobia. As an inside researcher I know the participants and I was sure they were able to provide me with valuable data. Since I am an insider, I selected the participants knowingly and with the specific purpose of providing me with valuable and rich data for my study.

A sample is “composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population” (Singleton et al, as cited in Strydom and Venter, 2002, p. 207). According to (Cohen, 2007), researchers often handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characters being studied.

In this study, I am a member of the group that I was observing and I have the advantage of an insider’s privileged familiarity of the setting but also an ‘outsider’s’ advantage of not being part of the particular families in my study (Bonner and Tolhurst, 2002). As an insider of the immigrant group, I chose my participants because I believed their practices were representative of other immigrant families living in Pietermaritzburg.

I used purposive sampling to select my participants and I selected the four immigrant families with a specific purpose in mind and because my study was an exploratory study. This purposive sampling which I used allowed me to select unique cases where I could explore educational implications. This method allowed me to select the four families because the immigrant families in Pietermaritzburg are too numerous for all of them to be included in the study.

The purpose of my study was less to generalize to the larger population than it was to gain a deeper understanding of language and literacy practices in the four immigrant homes. I selected the participants because of their knowledge in my study area of interest, and also because they were interested in my proposed study and they were willing to participate.

3.3. Methods of Data Collection

Participant Observation

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.404) participant observation is mostly useful in studying small groups or events and processes that last only a short time and are frequent. It is also an effective research method for activities that lend themselves to being observed, and for those researchers who desire to “reach inside a situation and have a long time available to them to ‘get under the skin’ of behaviour or organizations” (as in an ethnography), the primary concern is in gathering in-depth information about what is happening, (i.e. is descriptive).

According to Morrison (as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.405), participant observation is in most cases conducted jointly with other forms of data collection which, together draw out the “participants’ definitions of the situation and their organizing constructs in accounting for situations and behaviour”. As an insider of the immigrant group, I was able to see how events occurred and changed in these four immigrant families over time. This enabled me to analyze the activities as they occurred through communication with the participants. (Morrison, as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.405) argues that by ‘being immersed in a particular context over time not only will the most important features of the situation come out and present themselves, but a more holistic view will be gathered of the interrelationships of factors’.

The authors go on to say such participant engagement “facilitates the generation of ‘thick descriptions’, particularly of social processes and interaction, which lend themselves to accurate explanation and interpretation of events rather than relying on the researcher’s own inferences” (p. 405).

The data obtained from participant observation is strong and real, since it is gathered directly, by an insider of the immigrant group, as opposed to through interpretation by an outsider.

In this study, participant observation was my primary method of gathering data. Chilisa and Preece (2005, p. 155-6) say researchers conduct observations to enable and elaborate discussion of a specific issue. Since I was studying the specific and unique issue of language and literacy practices of immigrant families in Pietermaritzburg, I chose to use participant observation as my primary method for gathering data.

I was able to move around in the setting or location and people regarded me as an insider to their group since I was a member of the group under study. I was also able to triangulate and compare data from observations with the data which was gathered through group interviews, and interpret my observations in detail and with the depth afforded by the understanding of an insider.

3.4. Focus Groups / Interviews

According to Denscombe (2007, p. 176) focus groups make particular use of group dynamics. They consist of small groups of people who are brought together by the researcher to explore attitudes and perceptions, or feelings and ideas about a specific topic, and participants tend to express these more readily in a group context. This method of data collection was good for my research because the focus of this study was practices of which all four families who participated had similar knowledge.

I intended to use observations and focus groups for my data collection. As noted by Denscombe (2007, p. 176), “semi-structured” group interviews allowed me to have a clear list of issues which I wanted to address in my study and questions which I wanted to be answered. In the event, families preferred to meet me individually, so I did not run focus groups including members from different families, but conducted a focus group interview within each family in order to explore the information collected during observations.

I was open to whatever information the participants shared with me. I allowed the participants to develop ideas and speak widely and freely on the issues which I raised. The communication among family members enabled me to get more information concerning language and literacy practices of these immigrant families.

3.5. Number of Home Observations and Focus Group

The number of home observations in all the four families did not go as planned. The home observations were done on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I tended to arrive at 12 noon and stay until 5pm. I chose to visit in the afternoon because I wanted to be present when children were doing their home-work.

As a researcher I discovered that during these home observations, parents were not at home because most parents work outside Pietermaritzburg and some work late hours and so come home late. I asked the participants if weekends would be better, but they all said that that was the time when they go out, therefore they preferred to meet me on week days. The times of meeting and observing differed because of the different circumstances of each family. I met with the Congolese family and the Zimbabwean family three times each during the months of October and November 2013. I met with the Zambian family eight times, between June and November. I met with the Tanzanian family five times, between August and November.

3.6. Data Analysis

Throughout the phase of my data analysis I was seeking to make sense of the data which I had collected. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 461)

Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.

I analyzed the data using qualitative methodology after I had completed the observations and the focus group interviews. Since I voice recorded my interviews, I listened to the voice recorder before I started writing the transcripts. During my transcript analysis I referred back to my research questions and my field notes.

Since my data required a detailed interpretation, I had to note that there are often many interpretations to be made of qualitative data. In my data analysis I was aiming for the following:

- To describe what I observed and what people told me;
- To summarize data I collected;
- To interpret data in the light of my understanding of the context;
- Where appropriate, to explain the causes and implications of information in collected data;
- To discover differences and similarities on the choice of home language and the literacy practices done in these four families.

Since I was looking at different families from different backgrounds and countries, I aimed at explaining and seeking causality.

Here I was looking at the causes and the effects of certain events and practices which were brought to light during the interviews, which yielded reasons for why families do things the way they do.

As people have different views and ideas when discussing language, in my data analysis I tried to discover the differences and the similarities between the families' language and literacy practices in what is for them a foreign country and town: South Africa, Pietermaritzburg respectively.

3.7. How I organized and analyzed my data

In organizing and presenting my data analysis I made sure that every participant's voice was presented before I moved to the next participant. I did this in order to maintain the logic and honesty of every participant's response and it enabled me to construct a whole picture of the participants' presentation, which was important for my study.

I organized the data analysis according to my research questions. This was important as it drew together all the relevant data I wanted, and to maintain the logic of the material. The results of each instrument used were presented; such as focus group interviews, observations and participant observation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison on, 2007, p. 467-8). I made sure I kept back-up copies for all the original materials. All materials were collected and organized in an orderly way.

I used coding in analyzing the transcripts and I put information into categories, including the languages used in the homes, the literacy practices which the families engage in at home and the educational consequences of the choice of home languages for adults and children.

I went through the data assigning codes to each piece of information. After coding, I categorized the data according to each research question.

3.8. Trustworthiness

Since I used case study as an approach to my study, to ensure the trustworthiness and dependability of my study, I used observations, participant observations and focus group interviews to collect my data and also to check if my observations linked to what I gathered from my interviews.

In all the cases my observations matched my interviews. In each interview, I checked with the participants by asking them questions to verify whether my understanding of what I heard in the interview was actually what they said.

I prepared the interview questions in advance to make sure that they would elicit the information they were intended to discover. I tried to be unbiased during my interviewing process as much as I could by listening to exactly what my participants said. I guarded against seeking particular answers by asking questions which would lead to any preconceived ideas that I had.

I made sure that my study report had a truthful explanation of the research process and a clarification of arguments for the different choices of the methods and a full description of the entire study.

Because I used different methods to collect my data, I could use triangulation as a way of demonstrating concurrent validity in my study, as recommended (Campbell, as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 141).

3.9. Ethical Issues

In research, ethics are “a set of standards that guides researchers on how they should interact with research participants” (Chilisa and Preece, 2005, p. 227). Ethics require that a researcher does the right thing throughout the study process. In this regard, I made sure that all the participants were willing to participate in the study, and they signed consent forms to show their willingness. See Appendix 3 and 4 for participants’ consent form and consent sheet. I respected the rights and dignity of my participants in my study and avoided bringing any harm to the participants’ arising from their involvement in my study. For example, I respected their wish not to be photographed.

I operated with honesty and integrity. I protected the interests of my participants by ensuring that I kept the information confidential. Their names were not mentioned in my study, and instead of their actual names, I used false names chosen by participants.

My data was kept in a safe place and I ensured that the identities of my participants, who had contributed to my study, were not disclosed.

In gaining their informed consent, I made sure that the participants knew in advance what role I expected them to undertake, and what information I was going to collect from them. I made known to the participants that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from participation at any time should they wish to have done so.

I applied for ethical clearance and was granted this by the Faculty of Higher Degrees Committee, (see Appendix 5)

3.10. Limitations

My position as an insider of the group was both a strength and a limitation. It was strength because being an insider I had a profound understanding of the practices and the implications related to the data that was collected in this study. The limitations were that since I was an insider I could not avoid having my own understanding and this possibly influenced my analysis of data. I was limited in that as an insider I might have overlooked certain routine behaviours.

I recognized the danger that I might have made some assumptions about the meaning of certain experiences for the participants, thinking that what I knew was what the participants knew too. I might also have preconceived ideas by assuming that I knew the participants' views and issues. I tried to minimize these issues by consciously approaching the study in a non-judgmental way, being alert to unexpected information and discussing my interpretations with participants.

Finally, I recognized the limitation that my study was a small study and of the qualitative genre which could not be generalized.

3.11. Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the research design and this was followed by developing the steps which I took to ensure the trustworthiness of my study. Since my study was an interpretivist, it used different methods to collect data such as observations, participant observation and focus group interviews. I analyzed the data using content analysis. My next chapter focuses on presenting the data that emerged from my study.

Chapter four:

Interviews from the four Families

4.1. Introduction

The study brought in rich data from the participants and the data was analyzed in terms of the research questions. I used observations and focus group interviews as my data collection tools. The research questions that guided my data collection were:

- 1a. What languages are used at home?
- 1b. What factors lead to the choice of language(s)?
- 1 c. What are the educational consequences for the children and family of the choice of home language?
- 2 a. What literacy practices do research participants engage in at home?
- 2 b. How do family literacy practices relate to the learning of children and adults?

Thus the study investigated what languages and literacy practices are used in the four immigrant homes and the educational consequences of adult and children on the choice of home languages.

4.2. Zambian Family

Chalwe and Chileshe are a couple from Zambia living in Pietermaritzburg. They have three children, seven year old Mulenga, the first born, and seven month old twin girls. The languages which Chalwe and Chileshe use at home are English and Bemba. Bemba is a Zambian language. When Chalwe and Chileshe speak to their children, Mulenga and the twin girls, they use English and sometimes Bemba. When Chalwe and Chileshe speak to each other they use both English and Bemba. When Mulenga is speaking to her twin sisters she uses English. When Chileshe and Chalwe speak to adults from Zambia they use Bemba and when they speak to those from other countries or South Africa, they use English.

Chalwe and Chileshe have helped their child Mulenga develop her languages by helping her answer questions. Mulenga usually goes to either her father Chalwe or Chileshe her mother to ask the meaning of words either in English or in Bemba. Other children have also helped her to develop her English language during play time. The parents discovered that Mulenga has developed new words and ideas as a result of her interaction with other children. Mulenga often visits friends who are also from Zambia who go to the same school as she does, and through this interaction they share ideas and from here her language develops. Mulenga was born in Zambia and they came here when she was still a baby between 1 and 2 years old. They visited Zambia with her when she was about four years old just to make sure that she does not forget her roots and identity. They tell her stories about home, their relatives and friends, and they intend to take their three daughters to Zambia at the end of this year.

Mulenga loves reading story books from her school library and some which are bought by her parents. She also loves reading to her seven month old twin sisters and to her parents as well. Chalwe and Chileshe help their daughter with her school work. Mulenga likes to read the Bible as well during their family Bible study. Chileshe explains that:

As parents we help our daughter with home work and we read bed time stories for her. Sometimes she reads the Bible to us during Bible study.

Mulenga loves drawing pictures and she hangs some of the pictures she draws in her parents' bedroom and some in her father's office where he works.

Mulenga has drawing books and story books which she reads during her free time, when she has finished doing her school work or during holidays and weekends. In the house they have a white board which she uses to write on. She gives herself English spellings to learn, and later writes them on the white board and marks herself afterwards. Sometimes she asks her mother to mark her work. On the same white board Mulenga writes the alphabet. According to Mulenga's mother this exercise has helped her master words and knows the whole alphabet without encountering any major problem. This is so because she does this often and she repeats the words over and over until she knows them.

Another literacy practice which this family engages in is that Mulenga has a junior laptop which she uses to learn mathematics and English words and spellings. The laptop also has educational quiz questions, sentence completion and shapes which help Mulenga learn and understand English spellings and word meanings better. She also loves playing games on the laptop and on her mother's cell phone and she likes reading her mother's messages on the cell phone too.

Chileshe says:

When she gets my cell phone, she wants to read my whatsapp messages and play games as well

Chileshe uses the cell phone to communicate with her husband Chalwe, to communicate with people back home in Zambia, with friends, and to also communicate with her supervisor for the PhD she is pursuing at University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Below are some cell phone messages between the researcher and Chileshe:

Chileshe: Hi, can I see you another day? My supervisor has just emailed to see me today?

Researcher: okay my dear you will let me know the day

Chileshe: I will do that, it's just becous I've been trying to meet her for three months and today she has remembered.

Researcher: wow you better rush before she tells you she is going out of the country, you know we have to chance these people, they are rarely seen

Chileshe: That's true and when they want to see you, they expect you to change your schedule to accommodate them! I really wanted to see you but I'll plan to come with the three girls' pa weekend maybe.

Researcher: that is better if the weather allows it will be fine, at least now my sister is here

According to Chileshe the cell phone is one of the main means of her communication because through the cell phone she sends and receives messages from her daughter's school. She uses it for whatsapp, sms and also emails people including friends from church about changes of schedule, church reminders, women's meetings and any other function happening within the immigrant community. As for Chalwe since he works at the university, the computer is his main means of communication. He communicates with students and other lecturers, set up meetings and conferences via emails. He also uses the computer to buy his air tickets over the internet and to send and write reports to the funders of the program which he works for.

The couple has a television set which they use to watch news, both local and international. They watch movies, and listen to music on DSTV channels. Mulenga loves watching cartoons on DSTV. They have a DVD/CD player as well and they do watch movies and listen to music from home, Zambia. They have educational DVDs for their daughter about songs, colours and shapes too. The parents encourage her to watch and listen to the songs once in a while to avoid her sitting and watching cartoons on DSTV for a long time.

Apart from using a cell phone as a main means of communication, there are times when writing with pen and ink is important to Chalwe and Chileshe. They report back in their daughters home work book through writing if there are any reminders, or if they want to communicate something to the school or teacher concerning their daughter.

Since Chileshe is a PhD student, writing using a pen is very important to her. She writes when doing her research in the library, before meeting with her supervisor. She writes some points when doing the research and when she meets with her supervisor she writes the comments and ideas which the supervisor gives her.

Chileshe explains that:

Since my husband and I are both in the academic, writing is very important to both of us, my husband does a lot of research and before he types on the computer, he has to write some points in a writing pad just to give him some ideas and directions of what he is researching on.

When I have a women's meeting with church friends and also when I go for seminars with my colleagues I do a lot of writing. Even on Sunday services at church when the pastor is preaching I do take some notes in my note book.

Chileshe explains that there are many occasions and difficult experiences which they have faced as a family in relating to language in Pietermaritzburg. She explains that it is difficult to deal with people and friends who do not care that you do not understand their language, Zulu.

Chileshe describes one moment that:

I had to speak to one Zulu woman in Bemba language because she would not understand when I said I cannot speak Zulu. That is when she switched to English.

It has been very difficult to deal with most of the Zulu people because most of them just speak to you in Zulu even though they know that you do not understand their language and they seem not to care at all as long they have said what they wanted to say.

Chileshe explains:

Even when you go into a shop and you are trying to find out the price of a certain item or want to know how a particular thing works, just the bare fact that you have used English someone will just start explaining to you in Zulu, and even when you tell the person that you do not understand or know Zulu, the person will either start teasing you why you do not know Zulu and yet you live in South Africa or the person will just carry on explaining in Zulu.

The other consequence which Chileshe explains they face in relating to language in Pietermaritzburg is that when you go into offices to ask something, the black people in the offices will just speak to you in Zulu. She explains that she found this to be strange because:

Back home in Zambia you can never find a person speaking a local language in an office especially if she or he is speaking with clients, but here it is very common everywhere you go you find them speaking Zulu until you tell them that I do not understand Zulu that is when they switch off to English, but even then you find others still mixing English and Zulu when speaking to you.

Chileshe admitted that many times when one goes in the offices like at the bank, home affairs, hospital or any other place, a foreigner prefers to see either a white, coloured or Indian person knowing that at least she or he will be able to get the information which she needs because the communication will be in English. It is apparent from Chileshe's explanations that these three races are more helpful to them, as far as language is concerned, than the black South Africans here in Pietermaritzburg.

Chileshe describes a moment at the hospital:

We went to this hospital to find out some fees and to check the conditions of the hospital for delivery. The first person we approached was a Zulu lady when we arrived. She greeted us in Zulu and we answered in English hoping that she would switch to English as well but she did not. We were speaking in English but she carried on speaking to us in Zulu such that by the time she finished we did not hear any of her explanation.

As a result we decided to see another person and we went to an Indian man who explained everything to us. If we did not think of seeing this guy we would have come back home without knowing what we wanted to know. It is very sad because in some cases you go to a place and find that there are only Zulu people there and when they are dealing with you they do not even show any seriousness because you are speaking English to them. There are also cases where you just come back without finding out what you wanted to find out. I remember an incident when we were at Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa, ESSA there was a lady from Rwanda. She went to the Home Affairs to renew her study permit, but when she arrived one Zulu lady just told her to go back to her country so she came back crying. The next day the dean of the school, a white man, decided to go with her and the same lady who had chased her the previous day was so helpful this time because this lady went with a white person.

Chileshe maintains that being in a foreign country has negative consequences when it comes to language. She explained how she and her family are expected to know how to speak Zulu and yet there are Indians who are South African, white South African who are not expected to know Zulu. She explained that just because she is a black person, puts her and her family under pressure to know Zulu. On the other hand Chileshe explains that since she and her husband are at university where English is used mostly, they have no problem in communicating and also doing work since everything is in English. The church where they go is a Coloured church where English is the language used, so they do not have problems there. Their daughter also goes to a mostly white school where English is used and she has no problems in communicating with friends and also when it comes to school work.

Chileshe explains that:

I feel for my mother sometimes who is in Zambia, she presses the wrong button on her cell phone and it goes on silent. Because she does not know how to read, she leaves the cell phone thinking that no one is calling her, until she takes it to someone to remove it from silence - that is when she will start receiving calls again.

Chileshe explains that if these cell phones were written in local languages, people especially the old like her mother who is in Zambia could not have been encountering many problems because most of them can read and understand local languages.

Chileshe concludes that it is difficult for those children who cannot speak or write in English to compete with other children who can speak and write in English. She says although it is important for children to learn in their language, she says it is also important that children learn English because we are living in a global world, children should be able to relate and communicate in English.

To the parents also the choice of language has not affected their work because English is the main language at the University. However, socially it has had a negative impact in the sense that the Zulu speakers like using Zulu to every black person regardless of where you come from.

4.3. Participant Observation

Language affirms our identity, and this is so for this couple despite Chileshe and Chalwe using English when they speak their three daughters, since they always use their language Bemba when speaking to each other. This alone shows how our language affirms our identity because even though these parents speak English to their children, the children know that English is not their mother tongue because they listen and hear their parents Bemba when speaking to each other. Below is an sms conversation with a Zambian woman and her brother which shows how language affirms their identity.

My brother : Start cooking nshima...leaving Durban now
Me : Okay
Brother : In the parking lot
Brother : Thanks for the lovely lunch. Mwacizyiba kujika cinamwanga. Travelled well and now at home, have a gud night.
Me : While that was quick, thank God you had a safe journey, gudnite too
Brother : Gnite
Me : Okay than

4.4. Tanzanian Family

Juma and Neema came here as pastors, and Juma is doing his Masters in Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The languages used in Juma and Neema's family are Swahili, English and Zulu. Neema explained that she and Juma use Swahili and English when they are speaking to each other.

Jumas emphasizes that:

We use Swahili to each other because it's a national language back home. It is spoken in the whole country in schools, governments, churches everywhere, English is the second language, only in private schools that is where they use English as the first language.

While Swahili is the national language spoken in Tanzania, Juma and Neema have different home languages; Juma can just speak a little bit of Pala which is Neema's language, and Neema can just speak a little bit of Nyakyusa which is Juma's language. When they met, both Juma and Neema knew Swahili, and for this reason they communicated in Swahili because it was known to both of them. As for their daughter Tamasha, since she was born here in Pietermaritzburg, they decided to teach her Zulu and English.

Thus Neema speaks Zulu and English to Tamasha while Juma speaks English to Tamasha since Juma does not know Zulu. Tamasha is fluent in both Zulu and English because she has been learning them from childhood and she feels confident of knowing these two languages because these are the common languages in Pietermaritzburg. Neema explained how she was forced to learn Zulu when she stopped studying. She explains how this became an opportunity for her to learn Zulu because she started mixing with the Zulu people in church:

where I was working in Spar it was all Zulu and sometimes when I say something and I do not say it correctly they would laugh at me and later on correct me, then I know that okay this means that and so on and the more I spoke to them even when it was not correct the better I became. As you know Zulu people do not like speaking English they like using their language, so for me I was focused to learn Zulu because they always spoke Zulu to me.

Neema now knows about five languages and she is fluent in English, Zulu and Swahili. Juma, her husband, speaks Swahili and English, and her daughter Tamasha speaks mostly Zulu.

The literacy practices which Juma and Neema engage in at their home include watching television together as a family. They watch both local and international movies and soccer and listen to gospel songs sung in different languages.

Neema describes their enjoyment of gospel songs as:

We also love listening to gospel not only from back home but any gospel songs, we have all types of gospel songs, overseas, Zulu, Swahili.

Their daughter Tamasha also likes Zulu and English songs, and songs in Swahili as well. Neema explained how Tamasha goes to her to ask the meaning of the songs when she is listening to Swahili songs because she does not understand Swahili, and Neema explains the meaning of the songs to Tamasha.

They read the Bible as a family after supper during family prayers. They have turns in doing this and whoever is reading a scripture interprets it and they later discuss the scripture as a family. The reading is done in English. Juma and Neema help Tamasha who is in grade four,

with her school work. Neema also teaches Tamasha Zulu, helping her with both speaking and writing skills. Juma and Neema help each other with work as well. Juma is doing his Master's degree and Neema sometimes reads his assignments and suggests improvements, and also checks for errors. Juma also helps Neema with reports for her work since she works in the field doing HIV and AIDS counselling. The family explained how they share stories about their home in Tanzania to Tamasha so that she knows where they come from. Juma and Neema tell Tamasha about her cousins, sisters and brothers from both Juma and Neema's families and they also tell her about her grandparents. They have photos of the family members back in Tanzania, so when telling Tamasha they show her the photos of the family members too.

The family also has cell phones which they use to communicate to each other and other people as well. Some of the sms messages between Neema and I the researcher are:

Neema: Tell do u buy yo Kapenta or u get them straight frm Home

Researcher: sorry just saw your message I came with it from home, I went there in June but down town at Asmall's they sell the one from Malawi

Neema: Ya those ones are not nice compare to the one u gave me

Researcher: Yeah I know those are bitter and sandy

Neema: Too much

Neema and Juma explained how they decided to take Tamasha to Tanzania last year. They explained how they want their daughter Tamasha to know her roots and culture. Since Neema is the one who went with Tamasha to Tanzania, she described how communicating to Tamasha became a problem for family members who do not know how to speak English. Tamasha had some struggles with communicating in Swahili. People tried to communicate to Tamasha but she could not understand, and as a result the family members used body language and sign language to communicate to Tamasha just to make sure Tamasha got the message. Those family members who know English spoke to her in English but those who did not speak English used body and sign language to Tamasha. Tamasha's reaction as people tried to speak to her using body and sign language she was just laughing, but she was more willing to learn Swahili when they were in Tanzania. Going to her parents' home and meeting family members seemed to shape Tamasha's identity.

Since Tamasha was born here in Pietermaritzburg she does not believe that she is from Tanzania. She always tells the parents Neema and Juma how they are Tanzanians and how she is a South African despite taking her to Tanzania.

Neema describes some of these moments:

There is this thing which she has in her mind, because every time I want to talk to her about something from home she tells me that but I was born here, am a South African, and I tell her that yes but you are from Tanzania and she tells me that yes, you and dad are from Tanzania but am a south African.

Even though Juma and Neema do not speak Swahili to Tamasha as they do to each other, they still believe that Tamasha will learn Swahili, and as they continue explaining to her about Tanzania and also taking her to Tanzania, that she will understand her identity. Neema explained how sure she is about Tamasha learning Swahili as she grows:

When we were at Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa when Tamasha was one year old, we took her to Tanzania and my sister was calling my husband 'shemeji' meaning brother in law, and when we came back Tamasha also started calling the father 'shemeji'

Since children are very quick and good at picking and learning a language, Juma and Neema want to make sure that Tamasha first knows Zulu well since she learns Zulu at school as a subject and also because Tamasha was born in a Zulu speaking province. They want Tamasha to be able to socialize well both at school and at home.

Juma and Neema explained how they are not in a hurry to introduce Tamasha to Swahili since she already knows Zulu, the main language spoken in the province they are staying. Tamasha speaks Zulu to her classmates and she finds it easy to get along with them because of this. It is obvious from the above presented findings that teaching a child a language which is being spoken in that particular province is very important because it gives a child confidence both at school and at home. The main language used at Tamasha's school is English. Therefore Tamasha has no problem in school and also at home since she knows both Zulu and English.

Knowing English well helps her to communicate with her teachers and fellow pupils. Zulu also is helping her to socialize with her friends both at home, church and at school. So she does not feel isolated in any way and she is doing better in Zulu than local pupils.

Neema too has no problem in communicating since she knows both Zulu and English and she works mostly with the Zulu people. Thus communicating becomes very easy for her be it in English or Zulu, even though her accent is not pure, and she is not good at producing the click sounds of Zulu.

Juma is at the University studying and doing part time work in the library where English is mostly used, and he has no problem in using both spoken and written English. However, he experiences social awkwardness outside the classroom. As Juma explained:

When I just came to university in 2008, we were a group of foreigners James from Zimbabwe, Ronny from Zambia, I Juma from Tanzania, Linda from Namibia. This happened because we used to feel closer to each other than with the locals. Here we had a common language which we all used and that was English. We did not mix with the local students because they always spoke Zulu which none of us knew. Since that group is gone now am left alone, I do experience isolation especially when we go to these seminars and workshops, though most of the time we use English, but when it comes to socializing at break time or before the sessions, you find that people group themselves according to language and race.

Even if you go and join them you find that they are speaking either Zulu or Afrikaans depending on the race. Sometimes you find white people speaking English but again race becomes a barrier. Even if you want to participate in the story or chat you cannot and it is very frustrating.

As a result of this you find that most of the times I'm alone even trying to read something which I'm not even following just to keep myself busy. I remember one time we were at this workshop and people got a picture of that accident which happened in Pinetown and all the guys had their cell phones with the picture on and I had two guys on my sides so they showed me but I would not say anything because they were using Zulu.

Even when I wanted to say something I would not just use English because these guys were chatting in Zulu so breaking into English might have put them off. The other reason is that I do not want to be known as someone who cannot speak or understand Zulu because of the way they take us, once they know that you are a foreigner you are isolated in most of the activities because of not knowing the language. I just smile just to let them know that am with them and I understand what they are saying even if I cannot speak.

Juma also admitted how it is difficult to be in a place such as a church or school where he feels excluded because he cannot speak Zulu. Juma maintained that:

You can be either at school or church and when the locals are chatting about something, they would not involve me just because am a Kwerekwere. In fact one thing they say or think is every time they hear that you are a foreigner they think you are from Zimbabwe, in other words all foreigners are from Zimbabwe until you explain yourself where you come from.

In the researcher's experience, local people tend to assume that every black foreigner in Pietermaritzburg is a Zimbabwean because of the economic problems in Zimbabwe, and the consequent substantial migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa. Juma's frustration also comes when it comes to the church that they go to. They go to a Zulu speaking church. What Juma came to realize is that language issues also affect practising of their faith. Juma explains how he goes to church and sometimes finds that all the preaching is done in Zulu without any interpretation in English.

Juma tells of how he sometimes forced to think of going to church where they use English or his language Swahili, but because of his family who are comfortable being in that church, he is forced to stay in the same church. Juma also tells of how good it is for his daughter Tamasha and Neema his wife since they understand Zulu. Juma explains how sometimes he comes out of church without getting any message but only the scriptures which were read, and he finds this very frustrating.

Regardless of Juma not knowing how to speak Zulu and not understanding it in church, he is not discouraged from going to church with his family. Juma still has confidence and pride in Neema, his wife, and Tamasha, his daughter, who speaks and understands Zulu well. This gives Juma the strength and belief that one day he will be able to understand and speak Zulu like them.

Juma is beginning to enjoy church somewhat because some preachers who come to preach at their church do mix English and Zulu unlike the one who was there previously, who would just preach in Zulu throughout the whole service. Juma is slowly beginning to learn Zulu because of that. Juma and Neema explained how language has hindered their ministry or calling here in Pietermaritzburg:

The factor which has hindered our lives as a result of language here in Pietermaritzburg is that it becomes very difficult for us to be involved in ministry because I came to realize that Zulu speakers love listening to a Zulu preacher than English so when you go in front and read the scripture in English and you interpret it in English they will listen to you but you will not hear more of amen. When the Zulu person reads the same scripture in Zulu and interprets in Zulu, you will hear their response. So it is difficult for us to be accepted in ministry because of language so our calling is also affected because of language, even when you are told to preach you will preach in English but you will know that there is no connection between you and the people. One of the pastors in the church even said I love preaching in Zulu. I do not like hearing sermons in English.

So already even when we are asked to preach or share something in church, the bare fact of hearing such a statement already puts us off knowing that we will use English.

Juma further explained that getting on a combi is also a problem because when he tells the driver where he is “dropping” (getting off) using English the driver does not respond. Juma explained that the driver would just look at him without saying any word.

I would tell the driver ten meters before that am dropping off at Strawberry Field in English and he would just look at me, he just knows that this one is a Kwerekwere, because the combi is moving so telling them that I do not know Zulu will take time, so I just tell them in English even though they never respond.

Juma explains how he is willing to learn Zulu but because he is a Master's student he is too busy to concentrate on learning Zulu. Juma also explains that where he stays at Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa, most of the families are foreigners, which adds to the disadvantage he faces in learning how to speak Zulu. The other fact is that all the school work is done in English, so this too does not help him to learn Zulu, and Juma finds this to be frustrating.

Neema describes how it is also difficult for Juma her husband to learn Zulu, she explains how they use English in classes at the University and also how other people, knowing that Juma is a foreigner, will not use Zulu when speaking to him, but English. *"In fact a Zulu person will not speak to you in Zulu, he or she will look for a Zulu somebody to speak with"*.

Neema describes moments when she would mix Zulu and English especially when she went to Tanzania. She says that in Tanzania there is Swahili which is the national language, her mother tongue Pala, and her husband's language Nyakyusa, and describes a difficult moment she experienced when she went to her husband's place. When people spoke to her in Nyakyusa, she forgot and responded to them in Zulu. She felt embarrassed about this. As for her mother tongue she explains how she is slowly beginning to forget it because there is no one to speak with here in Pietermaritzburg.

Neema said:

What pushed me more to learn Zulu was the school field work which we went to when I was still studying at Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa. When we went to Bergville we went to the villages for the locals and when you speak English to them because you do not know Zulu, some of them looked at me with funny faces and some of them still do not see you as a foreigner but as someone who is a 'coconut' or someone who is too proud to speak Zulu or someone who is in a high class.

According to Neema, what she realized is that even though her daughter is learning Zulu as a subject in class, the best way to learn it is to communicate and try to speak the language. Neema realized that a particular problem with Zulu is the click sounds which it has. Back home their languages have no click sounds, so Zulu can be very difficult for older people from other countries to learn. Neema also explains how her daughter Tamasha finds it easy to learn Zulu:

Tamasha was born here and she started learning Zulu when she was still young and she is still learning. Tamasha can speak the click but I cannot. My click is very funny which a Zulu person can easily pick that this one is a Kwerekwere. I can understand what they say but I cannot speak the click. When they say qa I will say ca. But Tamasha can click very well.

Neema describes her tough moments in communicating while working at Spar:

Two years ago I was working at spar on the food section, and one day there came a lady, a total Zulu speaking. She wanted cooked rice and I took a container and I asked her in English how much? And she said in Zulu I will say when it is okay and I started putting. After some time she said kulungile. At that time I did not know what it meant, I thought she meant some more so I continued putting the rice until the container was full. When I looked at her she was busy laughing and she kept on telling me sis kulungile, until another lady came and told me that she is saying it's enough.

But by that time the container was already full so I had to start afresh. I learnt the word kulungile through a hard time. From that day I learnt that kulungile means it's enough.

Neema also described some moments when she really felt ashamed where people speak fluent Zulu and she responded in English. She described moments where some people really did not know how to speak English at all, and in such moments she was really forced to learn Zulu in a hard way.

Neema says that at work places, especially in places like shops is where she has encountered many problems when it came to language because this is where she met different people. She explains how when people spoke to her in Zulu and she did not understand what they were saying and she would look at them and she ended up showing them and asking them what they wanted using sign language. The other problem which Neema encountered here in Pietermaritzburg as a result of language was when she went to the shops to buy something. When she asked in English “*How much is this?*”, some would not even respond, they would just look at her or to make the matter worse, they would respond in Zulu. From all these experiences, Neema told herself that she would speak Zulu even if it was broken. Neema explains that since she lives in Pietermaritzburg she knew that she would always find Zulus where ever she goes, be it in the shops, church, schools and even in taxis, so learning Zulu was the only way to overcome the language problem in Pietermaritzburg. “*The people here love their language,*” she said. So Neema decided to learn so that she would be able to communicate with the locals.

Neema says

I hated it when people pointed fingers at me saying I cannot speak Zulu, I also hated to be called a Kwerekwere or a coconut, so I decided I will be speaking Zulu even if it is broken and eventually I learnt it.

Neema says before she learnt Zulu she used to feel the same way as Juma her husband felt in the church where she wanted to hear the message but she could not because the message was preached in Zulu. Sometimes she wanted to communicate to people but she could not. She would find herself in situations where after the service she would stand alone because she did not know how to speak the language even if she wanted to be part of the conversation. Neema explains that when you are with the Zulu speaking people, it was difficult to tell them that she did not understand Zulu, therefore, even when she did not understand the story she would end up laughing when they laughed. Neema says when they expected her to say something, she would just pretend that she agreed with what they were saying, and when they laughed, she too laughed. Neema says she felt very ashamed for it to be noticed that she could not speak Zulu, especially when dealing with elders because they do not speak or know English at all.

Neema explains how language becomes a big problem when one is in a foreign country, and described an incident which happened in her church:

I remember someone from church, a foreigner also but not from Tanzania, the pastor was making announcements concerning the men in church and the pastor said all men should raise their hands, so when she saw people raising their hands she also raised her hand and she was the only woman who raised her hand up. (Neema laughs)

Juma and Neema had different opinions about knowing or learning a language in a foreign country. For Neema it was easy to learn Zulu because of the type of work she does where she is always dealing with people who speak Zulu, and was therefore immersed in the language, while for Juma it is very different. At the University where he is, the main medium of communication is English and he does not come in contact with Zulu speakers often. Juma explained that in every country you cannot easily be accepted by the people if you do not know their language. One should know and learn the language of that particular place in order to be accepted.

Neema explained that back home in Tanzania when a foreigner from America, South Africa or any other country comes, people will try by all means to communicate to that person in English, bearing in mind that this person does not understand any of their national languages. But here in Pietermaritzburg she felt forced to know Zulu in order to be accepted. Being in a foreign country and not being able to speak the local language of that particular place has negative consequences for one's interaction with the locals of that place. In Neema and Juma's experience, this is more evident in Pietermaritzburg than in Tanzania and other countries they have passed through like Zimbabwe and Zambia.

4.5. Democratic Republic of Congo DRC Family

Mazimba and Tamiya is a couple from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) living in Pietermaritzburg and with their five children. Mazimba explains that in his home they use quite a number of languages.

Mazimba explains that:

We come from the Democratic Republic of Congo and in my country we have 450 languages. Among the 450 languages, my mother tongue is Kifuliru which I know and this is the language which I used to speak when I was young with my parents which I do speak with my wife too. This language is mostly spoken in rural areas while Swahili is spoken in urban areas.

Mazimba says once people move from a rural area to an urban one, they have to speak Swahili because people in urban areas are from different tribes and language groups, and they use Swahili as a common language to communicate with one another. People who go to school speak French as well, since it is the language used in schools. When Mazimba came to South Africa with his wife and children, they could speak only Kifuliru, Swahili, English and French. He has now settled in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and their children now speak Swahili, English and Zulu.

The children are fluent in all these three languages, but not Kifuliru which is Mazimba's mother tongue, and which he is trying to teach them. Mazimba says his children will learn his mother tongue because he and his wife always use Kifuliru when speaking to each other even here in Pietermaritzburg because they come from the same tribe. When Mazimba and his wife speak to their children they use Swahili and when the children are speaking to each other they use English.

When speaking to a Zulu person the children use Zulu and when speaking to someone from home, Democratic Republic of Congo, they use Swahili. Mazimba's children can switch between languages depending on the person they are speaking to.

Mazimba and his family came to South Africa in 1998. At that time he had only two young children. His three other children were born in Pietermaritzburg. Mazimba has five children now and since he came in 1998, he has not taken his children home to Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mazimba explains that:

My children know that we are not from South Africa both those who were born here and also the ones who were born in Democratic Republic of Congo.

They discovered that they are not South Africans from friends and school that even though they speak Zulu they are not South Africans. They are sometimes discriminated once they are discovered that they are foreigners. The children discover this when they tell their friends their names and also when they are just playing, and once they are told that they are not from here, South Africa, they come and ask: mummy or daddy someone at school was saying we are foreigners or we are not South Africans are we kwerekweres. What are we? I sit down and explain to them where we come from and who we are and they understand.

The children do not even wish to go home to Democratic Republic of Congo because they are frightened by what they hear about war in Democratic Republic of Congo. This scares them because they know and understand that there is no peace back home where their parents come from. Local children played a part in the language development of Mazimba's children in Pietermaritzburg because his children learnt Zulu through interaction with Zulu friends, neighbours and at school. They learnt Zulu before Mazimba and his wife.

The literacy activities which children engage in at home include: writing, watching television, and reading on their own. They have no family reading time.

Mazimba explains that:

I can be honest, am a very busy man and I blame myself for this because I do not have time to sit and read with my children., I'm working and by the time I come back home I'm very tired and since I'm a pastor also the church too needs me, so I do not have enough time with my children except for weekends only.

When it comes to homework I do not help them either, they do it themselves. What I have discovered is that the older ones help the younger ones with their homework.

The children have a computer and they play computer games on the computer, and they also use it to type their school projects. Since there is DSTV in the house, children watch and listen to DSTV music only, everything they want is on this channel, they do not watch or listen to DVDs or CDs.

The children use cell phones only during holidays, because Mazimba discovered that they were not doing well in school so he decided to take the cell phones from his children. When they get them back they use them to play games, text their friends using sms, whatsapp and emails. They also do some research using the internet. When the children are at home, they practise drawing in their books and they also read the books they get from their school library and other reading materials found in the house like story books and Christian books.

Mazimba says in this age of technology he and his family use cell phones as a means of communication. They use cell phones to communicate with people back home in Democratic Republic of Congo, with church members here in Pietermaritzburg since he is a pastor, to communicate with his workmates and friends, even other people as well. Some of the cell phone communications which I had with Mazimba before the interview using whatsapp were;

Mazimba: Maybe this network may also help if u wanna ask me some questions or u need face to face interview

Researcher: its fine, it can also help yes, or the other way is to email the questions to your email, o that I email the consent form as well

Mazimba: Hey sister I confirm receiving your e-mail however I won't have enough time to type answers to your questions, therefore I suggest we meet face to face for u to do research

Researcher: That's is fine you can just tell me when you are free and where we can meet, good day

Mazimba also describes how he used to take notes using a pen at work as a memory aid, since he works at the court as an interpreter and needs to remember the conversations. He says he found that taking notes helps him to remember what has been discussed; even though he cannot really read the notes, they help him to remember the discussion. Therefore, Mazimba explains in summary that writing is very important. He also says since he is a pastor he writes down points when reading the Bible and when preparing for the church services as well.

The difficulties that Mazimba and his family experienced in relation to language in Pietermaritzburg as newcomers included experiencing problems when it came to taxi/combi.

They usually paid a R10 note and they never used to ask for the R5 change back, often because they did not know how to ask for their change in Zulu, so they would just get out of the taxi without getting their change back. Mazimba says they could not ask in English “*May I have my money back?*” because of fear of what local people would do to Mazimba and his family after they discovered that they were foreigners.

This fear was of being identified as a foreigner or a “*kwerekwere*” and fear of being attacked. As a result Mazimba and his family just decided on keeping quiet. Mazimba explains that this really used to challenge them a lot. When a local person asked him or one of his family members something in Zulu they answered the person in English or sometimes they did not answer them at all, the person would then notice that they were foreigners. Mazimba explains that the fear came as a result of seeing other foreigners being attacked. Now that Mazimba and his family have stayed here in Pietermaritzburg for almost 15 years they, no longer encounter the problems which they encountered when they first came because they can now speak Zulu very well and also the locals’ attitude towards foreigners has changed. It has become less negative than it was when they first came.

The educational consequences for the choice of home language for adults and children in Mazimba’s family are that his children are doing very well in all subjects since they know both Zulu and English which is used in their schools. Mazimba says, “*One of my daughters’ results in Zulu was 89% she even out beat the locals*”.

When the children go to church they have no problem too because they understand and speak Swahili which is used at their church. The choice of home language has an advantage to the children and the parents as well because children can switch between languages depending on the person they are communicating with, thus gaining the advantages of being multilingual.

As for Mazimba since he works at the court interpreting for foreigners, he can easily switch between Swahili, French, Chichewa and English. Knowing many African languages has played a major role in Mazimba’s life because it also helped him to find a job at the court where he interprets for foreigners. Mazimba also explained that he learnt Chichewa which is a Malawian language from Malawi when he was a refugee.

When I went there I started business selling goods and through this business I used to interact with the locals. We could also go to Zambia to order some goods for selling and through this interaction I learnt how to speak Chichewa. When I'm speaking Chichewa, someone cannot even notice that I am not from Malawi because I am very fluent in Chichewa than Zulu. The problem with Zulu is the click sounds it has. As much as I know how to speak Zulu when it comes to click sounds a Zulu person will notice that I'm not a Zulu because of my click.

Mazimba is a pastor of a church attended by foreigners, most of whom who speak Swahili and French. What Mazimba discovered here in Pietermaritzburg was that there were many foreign people, mostly Swahili and French speakers, who were not going to church because of language. These people could not go to either English speaking churches or Zulu speaking churches because they did not understand these two languages. So they chose to stay at home without going to church.

Mazimba explains that:

I saw to it that foreign people needed to be helped to bring back their faith and that is when I started a church where we use French and Swahili. It is just one service but we interpret in either French or Swahili so that everyone gets the message.

I also let them to worship the way they used to worship at home so that is why they like it and once you are a foreigner and you come and join you will never leave because you just feel like you are at home.

The other thing which Mazimba discussed was that when a local person comes into their church, that person encounters problems because it means that they have to use English to interpret for him or her and this local person feels like a foreigner in his or her own country. As a result that person does not feel as if he or she has a place in the church and before long, the person just decides to leave. Most of them do approach Mazimba as a pastor to ask him for his permission to leave the church and find a church where they would be free to worship in the language which they understand better.

Mazimba explains that:

These people explain to me that “Pastor we do not blame the way you worship because this is how you also do back in your home country, but the only reason is that we cannot stay because we do not understand your languages which you use.”

Mazimba maintained that he encourages these local people to go to churches where they use the language which they understand better because he wants these local people to feel free when they are worshipping God. Mazimba says he does not want language to be a barrier to these people. Some of the local people do go to Mazimba’s church to visit once in a while because of the relationship which they have built with him.

Mazimba believes that it is good for a person not to ignore any language no matter how difficult it is, even if it is not intelligible to that person, at least a person should make an effort to learn the basics of the language spoken in the city where one is staying because it is for that person’s own good. Mazimba explains that it is important to learn words such as how to greet, how to ask for your change when you are in a mini-bus/taxi or combi.

He admits that if a person knows a few words at least they can help that person. He explains that learning a language spoken in a country where one is staying especially as a foreigner is very important. Mazimba believes that we are all Africans and all Africans are the same, the way they treat foreigners here in South Africa, Pietermaritzburg is the same way they treat foreigners back home in Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia in all African countries. So once a person is a foreigner, Mazimba believes that it is important that that person admits he or she is a foreigner no matter how well the person may know the language of that country. Mazimba explained that once a person admits that he or she is a foreigner, he or she will know how to conduct himself and because of that, the person will not be disappointed with most of the things because that's what he or she expects as a foreigner. Mazimba further explains that as foreigners we should admit that there will be some consequences that every foreigner will encounter as a result of being in a foreign country. He also believes that the bare fact that one is in a foreign country should not make the locals take advantage of one because we are all human beings, and we all have human dignity and human rights. Therefore local people should respect foreigners too.

Mazimba thinks that it is important that local people respect foreigners. Mazimba says as long as we are in a foreign country, we should know that there are consequences and we have to understand this, even in the Bible there are no foreigners who were free in a foreign country, for example the children of Israel were never free in the foreign land that is why they sang the song which says “*by the Rivers of Babylon*”.

The other thing which Mazimba has discovered is that at the place where he works at court interpreting for foreigners, there are situations where he finds that a foreigner is not treated or judged fairly; the simple fact that the person is a foreigner puts that person at a disadvantage in the case. Mazimba explains that being a foreigner there is nothing much that one can do but to follow and accept what comes.

Mazimba was more dominant during the interview than his wife. Tamiya showed that she was part of the interview in spite of her being silent by nodding her head in agreement with what Mazimba said.

As a researcher I cannot give a definitive explanation for the husband’s dominance in the interview, but since she has not gone beyond secondary school, it is possible that Tamiya said little in deference to the authority of her husband in accordance with traditional African custom.

4.6. Zimbabwean Family

Adasha and his wife Akashinga is a couple from Zimbabwe who came to Pietermaritzburg, South Africa in 2007 with their daughter Andiswa who was four years old at that time. The main language used in their home is Shona, their mother tongue. Both Adasha and Akashinga come from the same tribe and hence they speak the same language. They use Shona when speaking to Andiswa and also when speaking to each other. Adasha and Akashinga both ensure that Andiswa speaks Shona because they want her to understand it well. It is only on very rare occasions that they use English at home. They decided to teach Andiswa Shona because they want Andiswa to be able to communicate with Zimbabwean people when they go back home to Zimbabwe, especially the people at the village because that is the language they know.

Adasha and Akashinga explained that

"It has been easy for Andiswa to speak Shona because she was born in Zimbabwe and she only came here when she was four years old. By this time, she had already started to learn how to speak Shona."

Adasha and Akashinga explained further that they don't intend to stay here in Pietermaritzburg for ever, but want to go back to Zimbabwe at some point. Therefore they do not want Andiswa to fail to communicate in Shona with the people back in Zimbabwe when they go. To ensure that Andiswa learns Shona Adasha explains that:

We read a grade two Shona book to our daughter, which we bought from Zimbabwe and after that we give her the book to read to us. She can write father in Shona and mother

The school Andiswa attends is an English medium school, but they learn Zulu and Afrikaans as subjects and Andiswa is learning both these languages.

Her parents also encourage Andiswa to learn Zulu because she only knows a little bit of it. One of the reasons why it has been difficult for Andiswa to learn Zulu is because at school, the type of friends she has are mixed white, Indians and blacks and at school they all use English both in class and outside the classroom. This has contributed to Andiswa not knowing how to speak Zulu.

At home Andiswa speaks Shona to most of family's friends because they are also from Zimbabwe. This has also contributed to Andiswa's learning of Shona apart from the parents teaching her at home. Andiswa loves drawing, painting, writing and reading story books. Andiswa uses the books which have drawings of pictures and draws these pictures into her scrap books.

Andiswa also uses the computer for playing educational games, drawing and painting. Adasha has installed programs for Andiswa for drawing and painting which she uses.

Adasha explains that:

My daughter loves drawing. She draws pictures like dresses, flowers and houses. We as parents also participate in the drawing by drawing something for her on a piece of paper then ask her to draw it on her paper.

Like the other day she asked me to draw her a camel, so I had to go on the internet and search for the picture of a camel then I drew it on a piece of paper and gave it to her to draw. She got the name from a story book that she was reading. She wanted to draw an animal pulling a cart and then she came across the word camel that is when she came to me to find out what a camel is and asked me to draw it for her. She gets books from the school library for reading because they are encouraged by their teachers to read books. She comes with these books to read at home.

Adasha explains some of the literacy activities which the family engages in at home and he says that they have family Bible study every evening. Here they read and discuss the Bible as a family. They also hold Bible study meetings at their home where church members gather to discuss the Bible. They also watch television as a family. They watch both local and international movies and they listen to Shona songs as well on their CD player. Adasha said his daughter Andiswa is a member of the Girl Guides at church. She attends Sunday school and she also does sports such as hockey, swimming and netball at school.

Other literacy activities which are engaged in in Adasha's home are helping Andiswa with her home work almost on a daily basis. They help Andiswa by calling out the spelling both English and Zulu, which they get every day from school and which Andiswa writes in her homework book. Andiswa also does mathematics homework which her parents check to see if what she has written is correct.

According to Adasha, the school encourages parents to help their children with homework. There are also projects which the teacher gives Andiswa to go and research from home where the parents help her. Adasha explains that one day Andiswa was given a project on conserving the environment, and the water cycle whereby the water evaporates into the atmosphere, condenses then falls back as rain.

Adasha explains that they get some of the information for his daughters' school projects from the internet and also from books. When it comes to sending text messages on the cell phone, Adasha explains how he and his wife Akashinga use this service to communicate, and explains that he uses more of whatsapp, an instant messaging service, sms and emails to communicate to friends and relatives.

Adasha and his wife Akashinga share Bible verses and prayers using whatsapp with their friends at church. Adasha explains that his wife Akashinga uses face-book and whatsapp a lot to communicate to her family and friends.

Adasha works in a cartridge centre in Pietermaritzburg where they sell and refill printer cartridges, and he explains that at his work place he has not encountered many difficulties in relation to language because more than 80% of his customers are whites who speak English. Therefore language has not hindered Adasha in doing his work. As for his wife, Akashinga, she encounters problems in relating to language at her work place. She works for a financial broker dealing in insurance and life policies. Because of the nature of her job, she frequently encounters people who cannot speak English, and speak only Zulu. There are situations where she calls a work mate who knows Zulu and English to interpret for her. Thus not having learned Zulu has a negative effect on her work.

The educational consequences of the choice of home language for Andiswa have not been negative. She goes to an English speaking school and she is doing well in all the subjects because they are taught in English. She is in fact more fluent in English than Shona, Adasha said. This is because she spends more time speaking English with teachers and classmates at school than the time she spends speaking Shona at home with her parents. For Andiswa there is no negative effect as a result of the choice of language at home since she is able to cope at school using English and at home using Shona or a mix of both English and Shona.

The choice of language at home has no negative effect for Adasha because at his work place he mainly mingles with people who speak English. Even at church the majority of the people are Coloured and students from the University who use English as their main language. Most of the friends he has are Shona speaking Zimbabweans, and people from other African countries such as Zambia, Malawi, Congo DRC, and Kenya who speak English.

As for Akashinga at church she has no problem because they go to a Coloured church where English is the only language used and when it comes to social life most of her friends are those who speak Shona and English so she does not encounter any problems at all. She encounters problems at her work place because most of the people she deals with are those who cannot speak or understand English well.

Chapter Five

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I am presenting my analysis of the data from chapter 4 in terms of six language and literacy domains. Under each domain I compared and contrasted the four families' language and literacy practices, the networks each family is involved in, and events each family takes part in.

I made sense of data by relating the data from observations and interviews to themes, and then I categorized the data according to each research question.

As I mentioned in the methodology chapter, (chapter 3) my study takes a case study approach. In chapter 4 I presented the four cases that I studied. In this chapter I will use the data that I collected from home observations and interviews to illustrate the themes that emerged. In all four cases, the families talked about their choices of home language, reasons for the choices of home language, the literacy practices that they are engaged in in their homes, and the educational consequences of their choice of home language.

Educational Consequences:

- Children are expected to communicate adequately in English since it is the medium of learning and teaching at their schools. Similarly, parents are expected to communicate well in English since their work activities are conducted in English, and they are assumed to be as proficient as indigenous speakers of English (Lemmer 2000, p. 52).
- It is rare for the children and their parents to find someone who speaks their first language at school or at the work places since they are in a foreign country.
- Children who can only speak English are disadvantaged when it comes to relationships with other family members who cannot speak English.
- At school, children are taught by teachers who do not know or understand the home language of the learner, thus the teachers cannot make any connections between the learners' first language and other languages.

- Second language learners with no schooling in the first language may have difficulty with English instruction as they have missed out on important background knowledge which the other group has received (Macdonald, 1993 as cited in Lemmer 2000, p. 46).

5.2. Domains of language and literacy

Language, literacy and numeracy are central to people's knowledge and communication (Barton, 2006), and naturally these four families use language in their everyday literacy and numeracy practices as they communicate and gain and share knowledge.

The findings show that there are a number of domains of language and literacy in the four families. Below are the domains in the four families.

5.3. Family communication

The findings show that communication using cell phones to send SMS, emails, chatting using Whatsapp and using Facebook are literacy practices engaged in by all the families. This is in accordance with the 'new literacy studies' which sees "literacy and numeracy as being historically and socially situated and therefore part of cultural and media theory" (Hamilton, Hillier and Tett, 2006, p.1).

The families find it easy to make networks amongst each other and with other family members because of the nature of cellphone technology. The networks are made in line with their social settings. Here there are times when immigrants use electronic means to communicate with each other concerning events such as a funeral, a sickness or other activities which require them to meet as immigrants irrespective of their countries of origin. The other setting is where immigrants meet according to their countries of origin during functions, such as when they are celebrating the independence of their home countries.

Each family's everyday social practice involves words, numbers and languages. Each family uses cell phones as their main means of communication either by written words (texting) or by calling, both of which involve use of language. The differences here are the languages used during texting and cell phone calls.

Depending on the person they are communicating with, the families use different languages. These are mostly African languages, even though English is the dominant language across the families. According to Robinson (as cited in Street, 2001, p.123) language use always carries a “symbolic function representing a group relationship, social unity and also personal or corporate identity”.

Like most modern families with highly developed literacy skills, these four families use the internet for various reasons, to communicate with friends and family, to search for information, to read news, both local and international, and one of the families uses it to do financial transactions such as buying air tickets or paying bills.

The use of cell phones has made it easier for them to communicate with family and friends. With the cell phone they can send SMS and Whatsapp messages to a lot of people in a short time and through this they can share a lot of information including pictures, songs and text with family and friends. The basic social and industrial changes affecting people’s lives mean that the nature of knowledge and the nature of communication are changing. For instance, the internet is changing what people know and how they find things out, as well as whom they communicate with and how.

Findings show that there are many similarities amongst the four families. In all four families, children interact with their parents in reading and writing; they explore print on their own, through reading and personal drawing, and observe their parents engage in literacy practices. According to Teale and Sulzby (as cited in Senechal, 2012, p.38), these are the three broad groups of literacy experiences that young children tend to be involved in literate families.

All the children get help with their homework at home; in the Zambian, Tanzanian and Zimbabwean families, parents help their children with homework and in the Congolese family, older children help the younger ones. When children are able to ‘observe activities that involve reading or writing and are involved in literacy practices, such as when they get help with homework, they gain literacy skills and learn the conventions of literacy in their family and culture from the person helping him or her (Street, 2001, p. 10).

The use of SMS as a way of communication helps to strengthen family bonds because in SMS messages, people as well as individuals share culture from home. In the Zambian family, people use words from their mother tongue in the conversation, and this serves to affirm the family bonds and their identity as Zambians.

This expression is very strong when used in our mother tongue because when we interpret it in English, it does not carry the same meaning as when it is in our language.

It is also evident that in all the four families, literacy practices are very similar, although different languages are used in these families. Though the languages differ, my findings indicate that English is the most commonly used language in all the four families especially during literacy practices and events that relate to education.

5.4. Impersonal Interactions

In this domain the families interact impersonally with people in different social settings outside the home. Most of these encounters are with local people whose main language is Zulu. Because of not knowing how to speak Zulu, immigrants are easily identified as foreigners wherever they go, be it in the shops, in combis, or on the streets. They are often labelled "*Kwerekwere*", a derogatory term for a foreigner. This makes it difficult for the immigrants to communicate with local people, for instance, when Mazimba could not ask for his change back in a combi because he could not speak or understand Zulu and he was afraid to speak English for fear of being noticed as a "*Kwerekwere*". This fear was as a result of being taken advantage of by the local people; once noticed as *kwerekeres*, people fear being harassed as a result of not knowing the language. The fear was a result of their seeing other foreigners being attacked and killed by local people.

Some take it upon themselves to learn Zulu in order to be accepted in the society. For instance, Neema from Tanzania was forced to learn Zulu where she was working at a Spar supermarket because most of the customers insisted on speaking to her in Zulu even though they knew how to speak English. In the course of her work, she also had to communicate with elderly Zulu people who could not speak or understand English at all, and here she found herself compelled to speak Zulu even if it was not correct. In the process she learnt how to speak Zulu and she taught her child too.

As Barton (1994) explains, a home is the most important literacy domain for children because this is where children naturally come into contact with many literacy events and activities through their parents.

5.5. Church and religious activities

The families are faced with a dilemma when it comes to church and religious activities. In the local black churches, Zulu is the language mostly used during preaching and during interactions amongst the church members, and immigrants can feel alienated on the basis of language.

In the white churches, English is used as the language of communication but immigrants do not feel welcomed by white congregations who seem to them to discriminate against people of colour. Therefore, most of them find it more comfortable in coloured churches where English is used, and where they feel welcomed. Some, like the Congolese family, have ended up forming their own church where they use languages from their home country as a language of communication during preaching. Here the immigrants, especially from DRC find it very welcoming and they feel at home.

The Tanzanian family has chosen to go to a local black church where Zulu is the main language but it has not been easy for the husband because he does not understand Zulu.

5.6. Children's school

In all the families children go to schools where everything is taught in English. All the children in these families are competent in English, and when it comes to school work, this has been an advantage for them. During interaction outside the classroom, children, sometimes use Zulu at certain schools, as in the case of the Congolese and Tanzanian children. Their knowing how to speak Zulu has been helpful to them. The other children go to schools where English is spoken both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, they find it easy to interact with other children. When socializing outside the classroom most often they use English. Therefore socializing becomes easy and there is no regard to race.

At home these children have social networks of friends. The Zambian child, Mulenga usually visits friends from Zambia with whom she socializes during weekends and holidays.

As for Andiswa from Zimbabwe, most of her friends at home are those from Zimbabwe, and at church she is in the Sunday School, where most of her friends are coloured and whites who speak English. As for Mazimba's children, speaking Zulu and Swahili has helped them form a network where they can switch between languages depending on which friends they are interacting with. This also applies to Tamasha from Tanzania; since she speaks Zulu and English, she can also switch languages depending on which network of children is interacting with.

5.7. Adult occupation

In this domain, the situation is different in different families, but most serve to illustrate the observation of Ferris, Peck and Banda (2013) that language is associated with group identities and the characteristics that people share which give them a common identity and also separate them from other groups.

In the Zambian family, the husband, Chalwe, lectures, and the wife, Chileshe, studies at an academic institution where English is the language used. Juma from Tanzania is in the same situation, and none of the three can speak Zulu. Since they all have high communicative competence in English, it is easy for them to interact with colleagues. The only time they face problems is when socializing with the Zulu speakers who work and study there because they like using Zulu when they are talking to each other. As for Juma's wife this is not a problem because she can speak both English and Zulu and in the type of work she does as a counsellor it is very helpful to know these two languages. In contrast, for the Zimbabwean wife, not knowing how to speak Zulu has a negative effect on her work as a financial broker because sometimes she deals with people who can only speak Zulu, and she has to look for someone to interpret for her.

Mazimba, from Congo DRC knows many languages including Zulu, and this has worked to his advantage since he works as an interpreter at the court. He interprets for immigrants from Congo DRC and also from Malawi because he can speak one of the Malawian languages. The use of his home language when preaching at his church has attracted a lot of people from Congo DRC, and also from countries where they speak French and Swahili, to his church because they feel welcomed.

As for Adasha from Zimbabwe, most of his customers at his work place are white and use English when communicating with him, and because of this he finds it easy to work.

Since Juma, Chalwe and Chileshe work and study at a higher institution, using computers, writing using a pen or pencil and reading books during research is very important to them. They use computers to do some research on the internet, send emails, and communicate with students and supervisors. When studying, they write notes just to keep in mind what they are studying. As for Neema, Mazimba, Akashinga and Adasha, filing is very important, because they all work in places where paper work is important and they have to put all the records in order and in place for future use.

5.8. Women's group

Women immigrants from African countries have formed a social group or rather a network consisting of different immigrant nationalities. They meet without regard to the country of origin. This network has been formed in order to give each other mutual support, and share services such as helping each other financially and with other services that need physical help, such as funerals, and events like a birthday party or baby shower. Because they have different home languages, they use English to communicate amongst themselves. During these interactions they learn each other's culture because whenever there is an event, whether a wedding, funeral or party, they follow the culture of the owner of the event.

My findings show that using cell phones as a main means of communication, Akashinga has formed a social network group where she and other women from her church send each other prayer messages and Bible scriptures. As for Chileshe and other women from her church, they send each other reminders for any upcoming women's meeting or let each other know of changes of plans for the group. My observations show that a cell phone is the main means of communication in these groups because women send each other reminders of functions or any upcoming event happening in the immigrant community. This represents some of the advances in technology which, as noted by Barton (2005), result in rapid changes in literacy practices, and the acquisition of new ones.

5.9. Summary of the Findings

Languages Used in Each Home

LANGUAGES	TANZANIAN FAMILY	ZIMBABWEAN FAMILY	CONGOLESE FAMILY	ZAMBIAN FAMILY
ENGLISH	YES	YES	YES	YES
BEMBA	NO	NO	NO	YES
SHONA	NO	YES	NO	NO
SWAHILI	YES	NO	YES	NO
ZULU	YES	NO	YES	NO
FRENCH	NO	NO	YES	NO
KIFULIRU	NO	NO	YES	NO

Literacy Practices Found in Each Home

LITERACY PRACTICES	TANZANIA N FAMILY	ZIMBABWEA N FAMILY	CONGOLES E FAMILY	ZAMBIAN FAMILY
PARENTS DO HOMEWORK WITH CHILDREN	YES	YES	NO	YES
WATCHING TV/LISTENING TO MUSIC	YES	YES	YES	YES
CHILDREN DRAWING IN BOOKS	YES	YES	YES	YES
CHILDREN DRAWING ON COMPUTER	NO	YES	YES	NO
CHILDREN TEXTING OR PLAYING WITH CELLPHONE	NO	NO	YES DURING HOLIDAY PERIOD	YES
PARENTS TEXTING USING A CELL PHONE	YES	YES	YES	YES
FAMILY BIBLE STUDY	YES	YES	YES/NOT ALWAYS	YES
WRITING USING PEN/PENCIL	YES	YES	YES	YES
READING BED TIME STORIES TO CHILDREN	YES/NOT ALWAYS	YES	NO	YES
CHILDREN READING STORY BOOKS	YES	YES	YES	YES

Chapter Six

6.1. CONCLUSION

Pietermaritzburg has a lot of immigrants from different countries and these immigrants come from different backgrounds. There are different reasons why these families came to Pietermaritzburg. Some came as refugees, running away from wars in their country, for instance from the Democratic Republic of Congo while others came to study at different institutions. and to look for employment. There are different challenges faced by these immigrants including language barriers, negative social interactions with some of the local people and being labeled as "*Kwerekwere*" a term that means, derogatorily, a foreigner. The term *Kwerekwere* does not just mean foreigner, there is a lot of negativity attached to the term. To most of the locals, the term implies someone who belongs to a lower class and also someone who can be taken advantage of. There are some locals who do not even understand where the foreigners come from. They have heard about the negative things happening in Zimbabwe economically so they think every foreigner comes from Zimbabwe. This is so because of the negativity attached to a foreigner.

Even though English is an official language, the majority of the locals prefer using Zulu (their mother tongue) to English even when they can speak and understand English. Whenever they meet somebody they do not know, a black person especially, the first assumption they make is that every black person they meet must be able to speak Zulu, therefore they will speak in Zulu. This is one of the challenges faced by foreigners especially when they are new to the country. In fact depending on the work that one does, they are forced to learn the local language because some people cannot speak English while others they just do not want to speak English. For this reason, when foreigners come to Pietermaritzburg, they are faced with the sense of not being accepted by locals in so many situations. This is evident in different ways. When using mini buses locally called "Taxis", the conductors do not pay attention if one uses English, so immigrants end up not asking for change, or being dropped at the wrong stop simply because they cannot express themselves in Zulu. On the other hand, race plays a role too because white, Indianan and Coloured South Africans are not expected to speak Zulu while African immigrants are expected to speak Zulu.

The reasons for the choice of language used in the homes of the immigrant families are different. English is used by all the families. They might not use it so much in the home but at school, their children learn all the subjects in English and also when they are playing outside the classrooms they usually use English, so children end up using it even at home when they are chatting among themselves. Others, like the Zimbabwean family, chose to teach their child their mother tongue because they plan that when they go back to their home country, their child will be able to communicate with the people there, and will not feel isolated. Apart from this, the parents also want their daughter to have an identity because from my observations, I have found that children who cannot speak their mother tongue lose their identity when they encounter situations where English is not the main language used.

There are some families like the one from Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania who have decided to learn and use Zulu in their homes. This has helped them a lot because as long as they live in Pietermaritzburg they will always come in contact with the Zulu speaking people and these has reduced the tension caused by language. Other families have not been able to learn how to speak Zulu mainly because they have little social interaction with the locals who speak Zulu, like the Zimbabwean and the Zambian families. These also go to Coloured churches where English is the main language used and usually socialize with the people who can speak English or their mother tongue to them. It can be seen that because of isolation that most immigrants face, they form their own social groups where they meet as foreigners and feel free with one another other because within the group there is no discrimination based on being a foreigner.

There are so many literacy practices engaged in in the homes of these families. Most of the practices are similar in these families. Most of the families have computers, and the children use the computers for different activities. They use them to play games and also for typing and drawing. Parents also use the computers to do research for themselves and for the children on the internet. They also use the computer to communicate with other people through emails. Cell phones are also one of the devices mostly used for communication through several services they offer. There are instant messaging services like Whatsapp and Facebook which are very popular amongst these families. These are popular because they can communicate to the friends and families easily and fast. Most of the parents help their children with homework.

From the interviews, it can be seen that all the parents want their children to know where they come from and tend to emphasize that they are actually not South African. Some try to achieve this through telling stories about where they come from and try to give their children a sense of the social identity that they have.

The choice of the home language at home has very little bearing on how children perform at school. This is evident from the different families interviewed. They use different languages at home but at school they all use English and since the schools they attend are English medium, they tend to know it well. In the South African context, it is actually easier for the children to learn English than their mother tongues.

From my participant observation and also from the reports of the four families given in interviews, it is evident that the use of cell phones is their main means of communication. All the families send text messages using sms to their friends, family, church members and workmates. There are more interactive services for literacy events and practices that these families use on the cell phone like Whatsapp and Facebook. This is a very popular way of communication for these families because of its low cost and ease of use.

With instant messaging, they make networks by making groups of communication. Within these groups they share information and knowledge concerning the group using written texts on their cell phones. As Baynham (1995) notes, this is an example of a literacy network not concerned with gaining access to literacy skills, but that is involved in literacy events where written texts and oral interactions play a major role.

Findings in the study indicate that written texts using cell phones play a major role in these networks because people are able to communicate their ideas and values amongst each other cheaply, using this fast and reliable medium. The findings also show that the media plays a vital role in both the children's' and adults' language development.

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