

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE AVAILABILITY AND SUITABILITY OF ZULU  
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FOR LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS OF  
MEHLWESIZWE CIRCUIT AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE CULTIVATION OF A  
READING HABIT.

by

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ABSTRACT

Primary school children of the Mehlwesizwe Circuit, who are learning to read for the first time do not have sufficient reading material in Zulu. These books are essential to the formulation of proper reading habits and the stimulation of the desire to read.

An investigation was conducted with all lower primary schools of Mehlwesizwe Circuit, South African publishers, all local bookshops and libraries to ascertain whether any appropriate books in Zulu were available for purchase or loan.

Results indicated that few such books were available and of those found, 88 % were translations from other languages and were often unsuitable.

Possible solutions and recommendations have been presented.

INGQIKITHI

Izingane zesikole ezisemabangeni aphantsi esiyingini saseMehlwesizwe, azinazo izincwadi ezanele zokufunda zesiZulu. Lezizincwadi ziyisisekelo esisemqoka ekufakeni ugqozi lokuthanda ukufunda.

Uphenyo lwenziwa kuzozonke izikole ezincane zasesiyingini saseMehlwesizwe. Kwaphenywa kubashicileli bezincwadi baseNingizimu Afrika, izitolo ezithengisa ngezincwadi kanye nemitapo yezincwadi endaweni yaseMpangeni ukuthola ukuthi ngabe izincwadi ezifanele zesiZulu zingathengwa noma zingatshelekwa na?

Imiphumela yophenyo yatshengisa ukuthi ziyingcosana kakhulu izincwadi ezatholakala, ezingamashumi ayisishagalombili nesishiyagalombili ekhulwini zazihunyushwe kwezinye izilimi, ngakho-ke zakhombisa ukuba ntekentekana.

Okungahle kuxazulule lesisimo sokungabikhona kwezincwadi ezifanele zesiZulu ezingafundwa izingane ezincane kuhlaziyiwe kwabekwa kulomsebenzi.

OPSOMMING

Primêre skoolkinders van die Mehlwesizwe Kring wat vir die eerste keer leer om te lees het nie genoeg leesstof in Zoeloe tot hulle beskikking nie.

Die beskikbaarheid van hierdie leesstof is belangrik vir die ontwikkeling van leeslus.

'n Studie om vas te stel of geskikte boeke in die Zoeloetaal beskikbaar is, of te koop of te leen, was by die volgende plekke onderneem; al die laer primêre skole van die Mehlwesizwe Kring, Suid-Afrikaanse uitgewers, al die plaaslike boekhandelaars en biblioteke.

Gevolgtrekkings het aangedui dat net 'n paar sulke boeke beskikbaar was. Noemenswaardig is dat 88 % van hierdie boeke vertalings was en sommige hiervan nie geskik vir gebruik.

Die skrywer het in hierdie werk ook 'n paar moontlike oplossings en aanbevelings voorgestel.

DECLARATION

I, MANANA NHLANHLA do hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work both in conception and in execution.

Signed by me ..... on the ..... day of ..... 1987

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family.  
My husband Albert Nhlanhla and our  
children, Nonhlanhla, Mlungisi and  
Xolile. I cannot sufficiently  
thank them for their love and  
support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABSTRACTS	iii
DECLARATION	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
FIGURES AND TABLES	xi
PREFACE	xii
<u>CHAPTER 1</u>	Pages
1. <u>GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY</u>	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Definition of terms	3
1.2.1 Zulu	3
1.2.2 Children's literature	4
1.2.3 Reading interest	5
1.2.4 Reading habit	6
1.2.5 Lower primary	6
1.2.6 Mehlwesizwe circuit	7
1.3 Motivation	10
1.4 Aim of the study	11
1.5 Hypothesis	12
1.6 Method of investigation	13
1.7 Limitations	15

2.	<u>PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN THE CULTIVATION AND PROMOTION OF READING INTERESTS AS A LIFE-LONG HABIT</u>	
2.1	Introduction to readership	16
2.1.1	Reading defined	17
2.1.2	Reading and communication	18
2.1.3	Who is a reader	20
	2.1.3.1 Literacy	22
	2.1.3.2 Accessibility	24
	2.1.3.3 Environmental conditions	26
	2.1.3.4 Time to read	27
2.1.4	Reasons for reading	28
	2.1.4.1 Knowledge acquisition	28
	2.1.4.2 Entertainment	30
2.2	Factors which affect the development of the reading habit in South African Black children	
2.2.1	Introduction	32
2.2.2	Cultural factors and traditionalism	32
2.2.3	Authoritarian syndrome	35
2.2.4	Social, political and economic factors	37

	Pages
2.4.1.1 Library services	47
2.4.2.2 Environmental factors	51
2.4.3.3 Publication industry	52
2.3 Promotion of reading interest in children	54
2.3.1 Introduction	54
2.3.2 Provision of adequate and suitable books	55
2.3.2.1 Availability	56
2.3.2.2 Suitability	58
2.3.3 Reading guidance	71
2.3.4 Activities to promote reading	72
2.4 Conclusion	76

### CHAPTER 3

#### 3. AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE AVAILABILITY OF ZULU CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FOR LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS OF MEHLWESIZWE CIRCUIT

3.1 Introduction	77
3.2 Research methodology	78
3.3 Presentation of results	80

	Pages
3.1.1 Response to the questionnaire from teachers	80
3.1.2 Response from publishers	86
3.3.3 Response from local libraries and bookshops	88
<u>CHAPTER 4</u>	
4. <u>A BRIEF INVESTIGATION INTO THE SUITABILITY OF THE AVAILABLE ZULU</u> <u>CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS</u>	
4.1 Introduction	92
4.2 Method of investigation	93
4.3 Findings	93
4.3.1 An analysis of the number of translations and original work	93
4.3.2 An analysis of the type of illustrations found in the children's books investigated.	96
4.3.3 An analysis of the suitability of the children's books investigated	96
4.4 Discussion of the findings	117
4.4.1 Translations	118
4.4.2 Vocabulary control	121
4.4.3 Language usage	123
4.4.4 Cultural compatibility	124
4.4.5 Illustrations in which White characters predominate	125

<u>CHAPTER 5</u>	Pages
5. <u>SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	128
5.1. Introduction	128
5.2. Summary of findings	128
5.3. Recommendations	131
5.4. General conclusion	135
<u>REFERENCES</u>	136
ANNEXURE A: List of Schools with lower primary classes in Mehlwesizwe circuit.	149
ANNEXURE B: Questionnaire	151
ANNEXURE C: List of publishers selected from SANB for this research.	158
ANNEXURE D: A letter to South African Publishers selected for this research.	159
ANNEXURE E: List of publishers that responded and their publications of Zulu children's books for lower primary level.	160

FIGURES AND TABLES

Pages

Figure 1 :	Location for study area.	8
Figure 2 :	Mehlwesizwe Circuit primary schools map.	9
Figure 3 :	UJafta - Umama wami.	107
Table 1 :	Per capita expenditure by the State on different race groups in South Africa between 1950-1985.	43
Table 2 :	The actual expenditure on education for 1985/86.	43
Table 3 :	Average distribution of pupils per school and per class in Mehlwesizwe Circuit.	80
Table 4 :	Library facilities in the schools.	81
Table 5 :	Size and nature of the collections found in the schools.	82
Table 6 :	Library periods in the schools.	83
Table 7 :	Response from the teachers to the questionnaire.	84
Table 8 :	List of publishers and their publication of Zulu children's books.	87
Table 9 :	Bookshops in Mehlwesizwe Circuit and their holdings of Zulu children's books.	90
Table 10 :	Origin of Zulu children's books.	93
Table 11 :	Authorship of books written in Zulu.	94
Table 12 :	Translation of books.	94
Table 13 :	Subject content of illustration.	95
Table 14 :	An analysis to show Zulu children's books that are unsuitable.	117

PREFACE

It is my personal observation, collaborated by other authors that children understand and learn better in their mother language. The English expose their children to English literature and the Afrikaners expose theirs to Afrikaans literature. It follows therefore that Black children of South Africa should be exposed to literature in vernacular for optimum benefit at the formative reading age.

While children's literature in Afrikaans and English abounds, there is a glaring paucity of African children's literature in South Africa. This is in keeping with the overall state of deprivation of the Black people in South Africa.

While enough has been written and published on the theory of readership and the factors which influence the cultivation of reading in children at large, the availability and suitability of literature as they affects a Black child in a South African context have never been addressed.

It is interesting to note that while there is no scarcity in English and Afrikaans children's literature, a racial element has been identified in some of the Afrikaans children's books, which element did not seem to exist in Zulu children's books translated from Afrikaans.

This study will not address the theory of readership except as a brief introduction as well as the racial element because very little documentary proof existed that could have warranted such an exposition.

This study presents a scientific evidence of the status of children's literature for Blacks in South Africa. It is a challenge and an appeal to South African Black authors and South African publishers to give priority to this information need.

CHAPTER 1

1. GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Reading today serves a different function from that of ancient times, when it was mainly a leisure activity enjoyed by a small privileged percentage of a society. Today continuous learning through reading is a necessary task for one to adjust and survive in the ever changing world of technological advancement. It is also for this reason that the function of reading no longer accommodates the definition of reading as a process of recognizing words and knowing their meaning, which process was sufficient to read an important message. The act of reading is now a multi-level mental process which contributes greatly to the development of the intellect. This mental process develops with the intellectual growth of an individual.

Simply literate is not sufficient for one to cope with the ordinary day to day demands of life in our present society. One needs to be a reader, who will continuously update himself on general and professional matters. In

order to do this one needs to have acquired the necessary skills that help one to develop an interest in reading and adopt reading as a habit.

There are many factors that may interfere and deprive one of the opportunity and privilege to acquire such skills especially during early education. This study investigates two key factors, viz; availability and suitability of reading material. These two factors form the basis of any attempt toward the development and cultivation of reading as a habit.

A number of other factors exist which also have a negative influence on the promotion of a reading interest. These are factors like environmental conditions, poverty, etc. All such factors are, however, secondary, because even if they were to be totally eradicated the task of developing a child into a reader in the absence of literature that is also suitable would still prove unsurmountable.

Instilling the reading habit and providing an adequate supply of books are linked activities which should be part of any cultural environment. The teachers, parents and the government should participate in these activities for the benefit of a child.

## 1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 1.2.1 Zulu

Zulu is the language spoken by the Zulu people or nation who developed from many clans that were united by King Shaka. Zulu, as used in this work, stands for both the Zulu speaking people and the Zulu language.

There are estimated to be some 5,6 million Zulu people in South Africa. This is 24 % of the total of 22 million Black South Africans (Population census : 1985). Most Zulu people reside in Natal and in the Transvaal.

Zulu as a Nguni language is the cornerstone of the Zulu people. Luthuli (1977:79) states that the Zulu language was first recorded in 1848 by Bryant when an article entitled The Zulu Language was published in the Journal of the Oriental Society. The Zulu people used their language to transmit valuable traditional Zulu culture orally from generation to generation, and it has stood out as a symbol of culture amongst the Zulu people.

A Zulu family speaks Zulu as a home language. Even in westernized Zulu families Zulu is the major medium of communication, because as Luthuli (1977:45) says, "language reflects culture."

All schools for Blacks in Natal offer Zulu as a subject from Sub-standard A to Matric, while the Transvaal schools try to be representative of all the Black language groups. Since 1983 schools for Whites in Natal are free to offer Zulu as an additional subject to higher primary and secondary school pupils.

#### 1.2.2 Children's literature

"Children's literature" can be interpreted in various ways, viz:

- a) literature about children
- b) literature produced by children
- c) literature for children
- d) all of the above

The context in which it is used in this study is; literature (books) written by adults for children. The definition of a child varies, ranging from the colloquial to the legal context. Since this study is restricted to primary school children whose average ages range from six to ten, a child in this study refers to children of school going age up to the age of ten. Zulu children's literature, therefore, refers to books for children of this age group written in the Zulu language.

### 1.2.3 Reading interest

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1985:523) gives the meaning of interest as "a concern which one has for something." Interest is used in this work as a noun which denotes a positive feeling towards something. This positive feeling or reaction could be curiosity, attention or drive.

Robinson (1956:7) warns that interest should not be confused with preference or positive attitude. He maintains that you can express preference of one thing over the other without necessarily having an interest in both. At the same time you can have a negative attitude towards something but have a keen interest in it. One's interest is a unique feature which is determined by both environmental and developmental influences. Interest as it relates to reading is no different from interest in other things, e.g. health interest or art interest. In this study it refers specifically to a general keenness for reading as an activity which is different from preferential reading which changes with age, status, educational level etc.

Reading interest is acquired and therefore needs to be cultivated and developed. Like all other interests if it is not promoted and supported, especially in childhood, it can be lost. Research has shown that if reading interest

has been successfully developed in a child before the fifth grade, it remains ingrained in the child so that he is likely to adopt it as a life-long habit (Bamberger 1975 : 18).

#### 1.2.4 Reading habit

A habit is a settled tendency which an individual prefers to practice out of interest. Because of the positive gain which one gets through reading, reading is classified as a good habit. Reading as a habit cannot be adopted before one has developed an interest in it. A reading habit manifests itself by the regular reading of printed matter, and brings about the efficient use of reading as a tool for learning and relaxation.

#### 1.2.5 Lower primary school

Black schools in South Africa up to standard seven are classified as follows:

- a) Lower primary:- schools which teach classes from substandard A to standard 2.
- b) Higher primary:- schools which teach classes from standard 3 to standard 5 or 6.

- c) Combined primary:- schools which teach classes from substandard A to standard 5 or 6.

This study will only deal with the lower primary and the classes from substandard A to standard 2 of combined primary schools.

#### 1.2.6 Mehlwesizwe circuit

For purposes of administration the Kwa-Zulu Department of Education and Culture has divided its area into zones known as circuits. Each circuit administers different types of schools; i.e. primary, secondary and high schools, colleges of education and technikons. Each circuit is headed by a circuit inspector stationed at a circuit office with a number of sub-inspectors. The Department of Education and Culture communicates with all of its schools through the circuit offices.

Mehlwesizwe circuit is one of the twenty-five circuits under the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture. It stretches from north of the Tugela River up to Mhlatuze River towards Empangeni (FlGS. 1 and 2). It encompasses seventy two schools, forty eight of which are or have lower primary classes.

# LOCATION MAP OF STUDY AREA

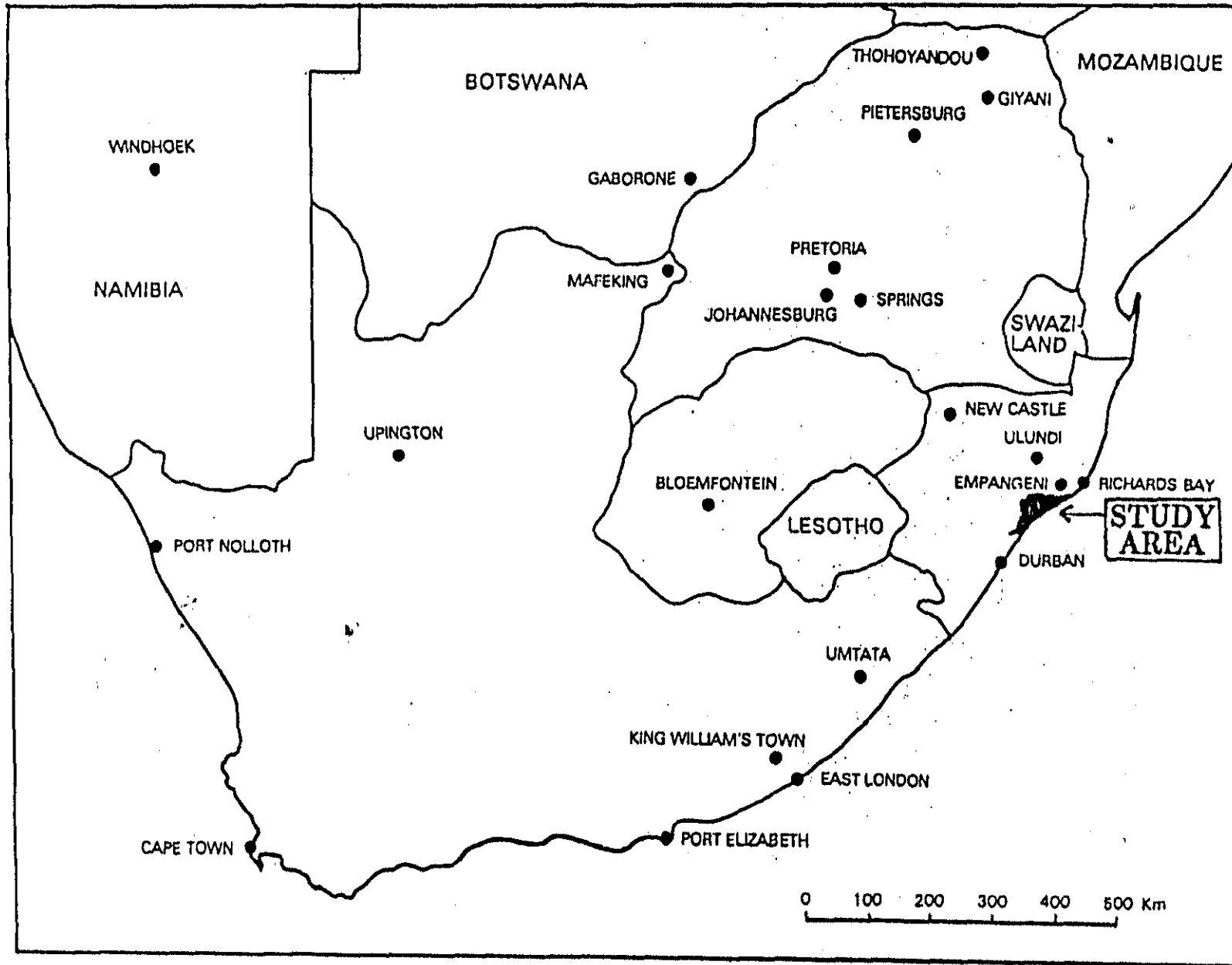


FIG. 1

# MEHLWESIZWE CIRCUIT

## PRIMARY SCHOOLS

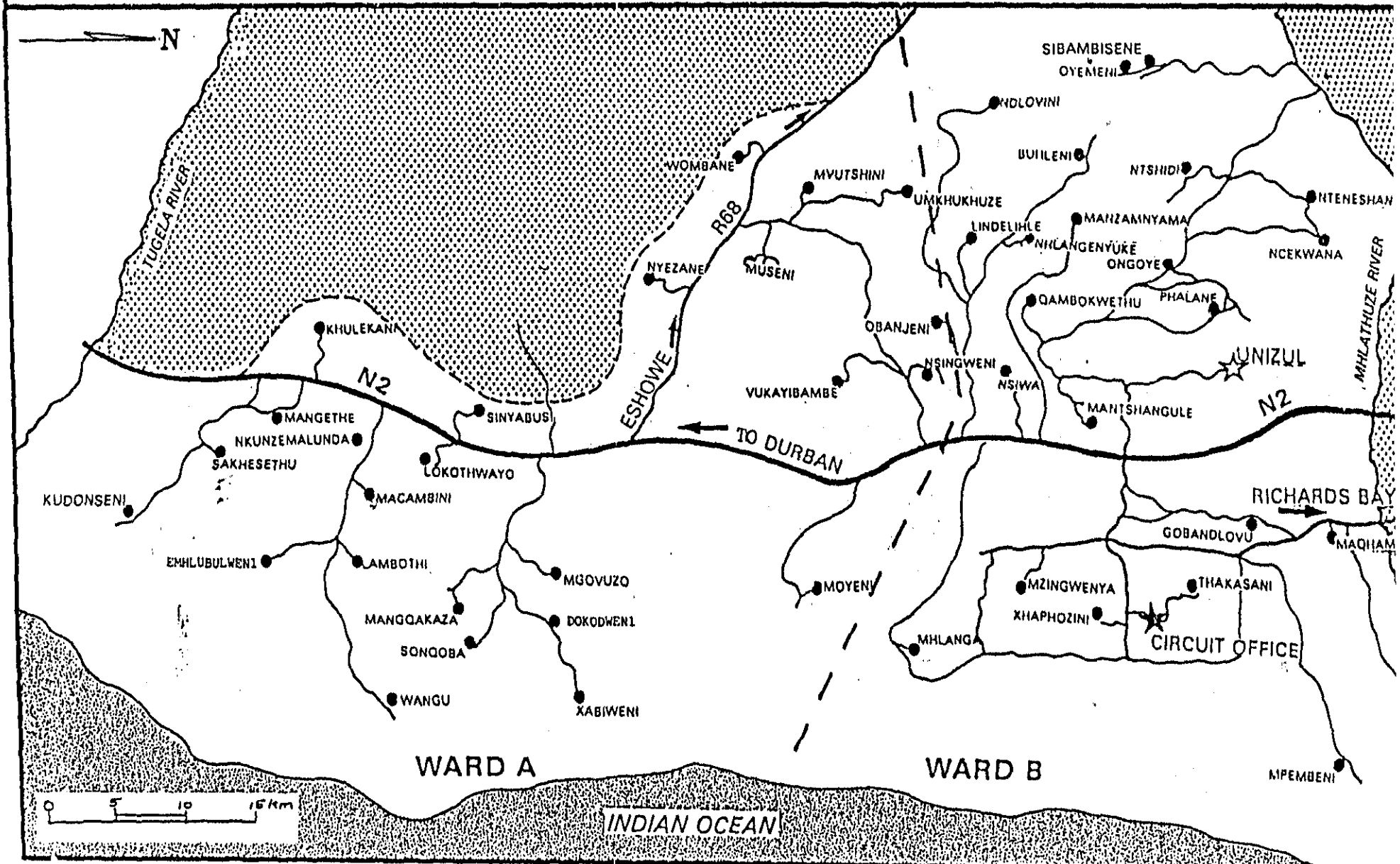


FIG. 2

### 1.3 Motivation

The author was motivated to undertake this study by the realization that Zulu lower primary school pupils who were being taught to read, write and speak English for the first time were not coping with the reading of English children's books.

An attempt to acquire suitable books in Zulu so as to preserve their enthusiasm and promote their love to read proved unsuccessful. Zulu children's books were not available, not only in the libraries and bookshops but from the publishers as well.

It was for this reason that the author undertook this study to ascertain how much Zulu literature for children is available and the nature of such literature. It is the author's belief that if reading equips a child to be better educated and grow intellectually and socially, one would expect that the education authorities would expose him to resources that will meet his reading needs so that he can develop an interest in reading.

#### 1.4 Aim of the study

It has been shown in other cultures that an essential component in the formation of a "reader" is the availability of a wide range of books of interest suitable to children of a specific age group (Hatt 1976). It has further been shown that the availability of suitable books from the time that the child first learns to read is extremely important.

The first aim of this study is to establish whether sufficient Zulu children's literature (excluding textbooks) for lower primary school pupils is available from publishers, and if so, whether such literature is found in:

- a) local bookshops.
- b) local school libraries.
- c) local public libraries.

The second aim is to assess whether the literature available is suitable for the cultivation and promotion of the reading interest in children. Various criteria are given by many authors against which suitability of a children's books is evaluated. Because of the type of the potential reader that I have chosen, viz: a Black child, age between 5-10 years, who speaks Zulu as a home language, resides in Zululand and attends school, this study

is restricted to those factors that will have a significant influence on the promotion of reading on this particular group of pupils.

Suitability of books can be affected by the following factors:

- a) Age and educational level of a child.
- b) Language of the book and of the child.
- c) Correctness of language usage.
- d) Illustrations.
- e) Typography, paper, binding and size.

## 1.5 Hypothesis

1.5.1 There are very few public and school libraries available for Black children of Mehlwesizwe circuit and this seem to be a pattern in the whole of South Africa with possible exceptions in the Transvaal.

1.5.2 There is very little literature in Zulu for children available from any source. This scarcity is due to a low output rate from publishers.

1.5.3 A few Black schools that have libraries, have textbooks as their main collection and a few books of a general nature.

1.5.4 Teachers of lower primary schools spend little or no time in the teaching of library skills and very little time or none at all is allocated to library reading.

1.5.5 Principals of schools have a positive attitude towards the libraries and realise the importance, and the role of a library in a school, but seem to lack professional guidance. They also experience problems in time-tabling a teacher librarian due to lack of teaching staff.

1.5.6 Some Zulu children's books that are available are not suitable.

## 1.6 Method of investigation

The research used in this study is mainly the survey method. The instruments applied are questionnaires, letters and interviews. Although content analysis of the available books is done it is not exhaustive.

1.6.1 A questionnaire was sent to principals and teachers responsible for library activities of all the target schools in the Mehlwesizwe circuit to establish whether:

- a) there is a central school library.
- b) there is a class-room library.
- c) there is a library or reading period, and if there is, how often it is held.
- d) the reading material available in the schools meets the needs of the pupils.
- e) the attitude of the principals towards a school library is positive or not.

1.6.2 Letters were written to South African publishers of Zulu literature requesting them to send an author/title list of Zulu children's books already in print or planned for publication by them.

1.6.3 The number of school and public libraries and bookshops that are available to Black children of this circuit was also established. The number of Zulu children's books held by these sources was assessed.

1.6.4 A random sample of Zulu children's books was taken from libraries, and bookshops. These were analysed to evaluate their suitability for Zulu children in terms of criteria outlined under 1.4.

## 1.6 Limitations

While there are other factors, such as environmental and social factors which also affect the development of reading habits, this study will be limited to the two factors indicated in the topic.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN THE CULTIVATION AND PROMOTION OF READING INTEREST AS A LIFE-LONG HABIT

#### 2.1 Introduction to readership

Historically oral communication was developed before written communication. It was so developed that it became an art and a speciality. Certain people were trained and became skilled in communicating certain information orally. They had to use some form of memory aids in order to retain information for a long period and over long distances.

Facts and stories of one generation depended on being memorized and transmitted orally through generations. This was accompanied by distortions and omissions to a certain extent.

With the invention of writing the keeping of permanent records was possible and people no longer relied on their fallible memories. The following were achieved; \*

- a) knowledge and wisdom from the past could be stored permanently for use by generations to follow.

- b) this information could be transmitted and made available to a wider audience,
- c) inaccuracies and misinterpretation were minimized.

Historically, therefore, writing preceded reading. Writing, as defined by Moyle (1982:25), is the process of presenting speech in a more permanent visual form, and reading is the reverse of this process.

#### 2.1.1 Reading defined

What is of fundamental importance in the definition of reading is to realise that reading ranges from a narrow to a broad concept. Hall and Ramig (1978:3-4) point out that reading can be defined from three premises, viz;

- a) as a decoding process of words into their oral counterparts.
- b) as an interrelationship between language and thought i.e. psycholinguistics.
- c) as a cognitive process.

Improvement in the ability to read leads to improvement in learning i.e. the more one reads the more one learns.

### 2.1.2 Reading and communication

The term communication is very broad and difficult to define in its broadest sense. For the purpose of this study communication as defined by van Schalkwyk (1982:1) is sufficient. He states that it is a two-way process by which certain information is conveyed or transmitted from a communication source to a receiver who in turn will react to the stimulus.

It has been stated earlier that initially man communicated orally, and later developed a written language through which he communicates. If it is accepted that a language can be presented in printed marks or signs which form words associated with definite vocal sounds, and that these words can be combined into a message that can be grasped in the same way that a sentence in a spoken language is understood, it follows, therefore, that when one reads one no longer perceives letters or even words, but realises that these

communicate a specific message to the reader to which he must react (Coetzee 1983)

Although reading can be classified as a form of interpersonal communication, it is characterized by the following unique features:

- a) the reader, who is a receiver of information does not observe the person communicating the message as in oral communication, but is presented with a product of the communicator's thoughts and feelings;
- b) the expression or message, reaches the reader, after a period ranging from a few minutes to thousands of years;
- c) the receiver or reader of the message can react but may not always be in a position to communicate or transmit his reaction to the originator of the thought.

The last point indicates that reading may not be a complete communication process which is a two-way process, because the reader does not always communicate his reaction to the stimulus of the author.

Sociologists look upon a person not as an isolated member of a community, but as an individual surrounded by and interacting with other people in the community. A written language is one of the major communication tools in a society. Fedler (1978) claims that written information constitutes about 70 % of the information communicated to us besides radio, television, films, etc. The reason he gives for this high percentage is that written information can be read at any time or place convenient to the reader, and provides a permanent record that is easy to preserve for future reference.

An individual who is illiterate, i.e. unable to read and write, is not only educationally handicapped but socially handicapped as well. If none of the written information available can reach him it means this person can only interact with the people and the world around him to a limited extent.

### 2.1.3 Who is a reader

Reading, if looked at closely, is a very complex skill which is acquired through the process of being taught:

- a) to recognize what written symbols of a language stand for;

- b) to make meaning out of these words:
- c) to understand, evaluate and think creatively about the text and interact with the author.

It has been mentioned in the introduction that if one goes only up to the end of the first process of reading, i.e. word recognition, then one is no reader.

When one speaks about cultivating a reader, one means the application of special skills to train a person in reading and also the exposure of the person to suitable literature at the correct age, time and conditions with a purpose of developing a positive attitude towards reading so that the person will voluntarily adopt it as a life long habit and as a desirable asset.

In the light of the above, Hatts' (1976:23) definition of the reader is the most acceptable when he says that a reader is a person who is literate, has gained access to information, has the right physical conditions and time to read and further, out of his own volition, chooses to take the opportunity to do so as a meaningful and rewarding exercise. Thus one can clearly identify certain aspects which have a bearing on the development of a reader, viz:

- a) literacy.
- b) access to reading material.
- c) favourable environmental conditions.
- d) time to read.

#### 2.1.3.1 Literacy

Literacy is dependent on education. An educated person might not have been taught to read as an art or a skill, but since education is acquired through reading, it follows that when one is educated one is able to read. At the same time education does not necessarily imply that one has adopted reading as a habit, and is therefore, a "reader". Vink (1983:64) estimates that in 1970, 50 % of the Blacks in South Africa above fifteen years of age were illiterate. In the same paper Vink refers to French who estimated the literacy rate amongst Blacks to be 60 % in 1980. This indicates a 10 % growth in a period of ten years. Hugo (1986:5) states that 75 % of Blacks in South Africa drop out of school before matric. 82 % of these dropouts do not go beyond primary level. Hugo continues that out of

the total number of Blacks that start school only 1.6 % reach matric and only 10 % of these pass matric.

What is of concern is the number of school drop-outs who have gone to school but can not cope with everyday reading. These are classified as "functionally illiterate." This refers to people who can perform the decoding process of words into their oral counterparts because they have been taught at school but have no ability to grasp meaning, interpret and react to what they have read. If a person only copes with basic reading material like certain parts of some newspapers and pages through magazines without reading this person doesn't have enough education and basic knowledge to understand most written material. Even if he were to become a "reader" his reading would be limited to literature with very little to offer towards self improvement or the acquisition of knowledge. It is true that reading skills can be acquired and improved with minimum education, but what should be borne in mind is

that reading is a host of activities which require a fairly good standard of education in order to be meaningful.

#### 2.1.3.2 Accessibility

When literature is accessible it means that it can be acquired. If it is easily accessible it means that a person is always in a position to acquire literature in a manner convenient to him.

There are two popular means of acquiring literature, viz; buying and borrowing.

- a) Buying of literature is dependent on two major factors. These are financial means of the purchasers and the availability of the literature. If one has no financial means to buy books one cannot acquire them. At the same time, if books are not available for sale or the bookshops are inaccessible or inconvenient because of distance or other reasons, one also cannot acquire them.

b) Books may be borrowed from friends, teachers, colleagues etc. or from institutions such as libraries, schools or churches. Borrowing from individuals depends on the interaction and relationship which one has with them, and on whether one belongs to a reading society. Borrowing from institutions can be influenced by distance and membership. Although libraries should form an infrastructure of any community, many South African communities have poor library services or none at all.

Hatt (1976:33) says:

"The existence of a reading public depends on the existence of a well organized system of book distribution, with degrees of competence and economic stability that we perhaps take for granted. One must also remember, of course, that even today, even in highly organized society, there are people who actively oppose the rights of some other people to have access to books."

It is an established fact that people who are encouraged to read through exposure and

easy access to books have a good chance of becoming readers in the fullest sense of the word. It is also true that the society which deprives people of access to books cultivates non-readers who can not cope with the demands of a modern society.

#### 2.1.3.3 Environmental conditions

The environmental conditions under which a person reads need to be favourable and conducive to reading. Since reading depends on visual perception for recognition of symbols, access to adequate artificial or natural light plays a very important role. One must be able to see easily what one reads.

Silence and privacy are also essential, especially to a type of reader who needs these in order to do effective reading. Studies have shown that an environment that is noisy, full of people and uncomfortable in other ways is not conducive to reading. Individuals respond differently to external

stimuli, however, and as Hatt (1976:35) states, "one man's noise is another man's message and a third man's background." What he really means is that some people have been observed preferring to read in crowded places like common rooms or tea-rooms, surrounded by sound while others choose to read in bed assuming postures that would 'kill' the next.

Good environmental conditions should also include a proper place to keep books, away from possible damage. Many Blacks would prefer not to keep books at home for fear of damage to the books and the resulting expense of replacement or repair.

#### 2.1.3.4 Time to read

Time available for reading is a common feature found in the lives of students and non-workers like pensioners and the sick. They are able to decide on the time most suitable for them to read. A working adult, however, has to create time to read at the expense of other activities i.e. he has to weigh the importance of

reading against other engagements. This is the time left after the demands of the work have been met. The type of work that one does contributes to whether a person can make time to read or not. People who work long hours, who do strenuous work, who travel long distances to work in crowded transports are unlikely to make time to read. Having time to read is a valuable asset to a reader. One also finds people who are literate, with easy access to literature, work comfortable hours but choose not to read. This may be attributed to the power of other media of information dissemination over the book, to differing information needs, to external pressures or to simple lack of interest.

#### 2.1.4 Reasons for reading

Each type of reader reads for a particular purpose but there are two main reasons why people read: to acquire knowledge and to be entertained.

##### 2.1.4.1 Knowledge acquisition

Any person who reads to be informed about something

is acquiring knowledge because he will probably learn something he did not know before he started reading. Knowledge thus acquired can be for:

- a) academic use;
- b) self improvement or continuing education;
- c) decision making i.e. dealing with a specific problem;
- d) being up-to-date with facts e.g. sports, politics etc.

Van Schalkwyk (1982:184) emphasizes the demands or requirements of reading for the acquisition of knowledge and states as follows:

"-the reader should understand the information and be able to retain the gist of it and also be able to interpret or reproduce it immediately or later.

-he should be able to see the relationship between different points.

-he should be able to make certain derivations or to reach certain conclusions after having read the material.

-he should be able to evaluate the material and then pass judgement.

-he should be able to apply the knowledge thus acquired."

The important thing about this type of reading is that the reader's reading skills must be at the same level or above that at which the information is presented in order for him to understand it.

#### 2.1.4.2 Entertainment

This is the type of reading which is sometimes referred to as "diversion reading" or "escape reading" because people resort to it as a way of passing time and it may not seem to add much to a reader's knowledge.

Reading for entertainment can be done because a person needs to:

- a) maintain mental balance;
- b) reduce stress;
- c) have companionship.

Reading of this sort is usually light, easy and pleasant but easily forgotten.

Coetzee (1983) maintains that people need this type of reading. He claims that if the element of amusement is found in creative works like films, theatrical productions, and musical performances it should also exist in literature. It does not mean that just because amusement has no immediate informational result it is therefore aimless and without value.

Robinson (1956:35) supports Coetzee by saying that reading for fun is, and always has been a worthy leisure-time pursuit. Our library shelves and our reading lists should be filled with humorous books, attractive narratives of youthful escapades whose aim is to delight and to entertain. Reading for amusement can be harmful though, if the only motive is to escape from the world and the reader isolates himself and refuses to face reality. Reading purely for escape may lead to living in a dream world where wishful thinking takes the place of action.

Reading for companionship is very fulfilling to people, such as single or retired people, who have no immediate or daily associates. They resort to finding companionship in an author who best satisfies their needs for communication.

## 2.2 Factors which affect the development of the reading habit in South African Black children.

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Although many research studies have been conducted on this topic, most particularly with children in developed nations such as America and England, and numerous factors have been unearthed, there are additional factors which have an effect on a Black child in a developing country like South Africa. Benge (1968) and Alemna (1982) refer to these factors in their studies on reading interests of Black children in Ghana and Nigeria. The factors mentioned by the two authors seem to be associated to some extent with underdevelopment and political oppression. I have identified the following as the factors to which a South African Black child is subjected throughout his childhood and over which he has no control.

### 2.2.2 Cultural factors and traditionalism

The oral medium has always been the most acceptable manner of communication in the social structure of Africans throughout the continent. Oral communication has a specific role in African culture and the socialization of an individual. In addition to

this, African culture has always guarded against any form of behaviour that might lead one into being individualistic. Solitude is seen as an abnormal behaviour and is discouraged. Human contact through oral communication is valued to an extent that any force that threatens this contact is feared. Being educated and reading are sometimes associated with madness and as a result remarks like: "Uyoze ahlanye elokhu efundana namabhuku!" or "Myekeni, ungamthinta yini uma esefundana nalamabhukwana akhe" are very common. These are figurative expressions which by inflexion of the noun are diminutive, derogative and sarcastic and show disapproval. Such remarks are said not only with reference to reading but all activities that are antisocial and tend to alienate a person from his immediate associates e.g. eating, drinking, building and many others.

While it is however a much accepted practice in Western culture to retreat for the purpose of reading, it is unacceptable for a member of an African family to seek for a quiet corner and read while other members of the family are engaged in leisure oral communication.

This attitude towards reading however does not in any way indicate the Black people's poor perception of the

importance of reading (which is to acquire knowledge) or of other activities that a person engages in as an individual, but should be looked at in the total context of the value system of the Black people. In terms of this value system collective activity is the norm and is encouraged. Alemna (1982:109) says:

"In the traditional African society, any activity which threatens the equilibrium of a social group is regarded as anti-social or as showing a lack of etiquette on the part of the offender. Reading is considered to be against social etiquette if done while others are having a conversation, and this reluctance to break up the harmony of a group exerts a negative influence on the search for knowledge. As a result the art of conversation is far more developed in Africa than the art of reading."

When the importance of education, which necessitates learning through reading amongst other methods, was realized, people's attitudes changed. It is unfortunate though that because of other factors which I shall deal with later on, reading is still associated to a great extent only with studying. This attitude causes reading amongst Africans to be an activity associated with a particular class of society, i.e. students.

### 2.2.3 Authoritarian syndrome

A syndrome is a term used in the medical sciences meaning an occurrence of more than one symptom pointing to a specific disease. If applied to the behavioural sciences it means a characteristic combination of behaviour patterns pointing to one cause. (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1985:1084).

An authoritarian syndrome in my opinion is a condition into which a person is conditioned to regard himself or a person in authority as infallible and to know everything. It manifests itself into an observable behavioural pattern whereby this person (who is a student) will look at authority (a teacher) as the only source of information and that the teacher is always right.

Teachers in most Black schools have always had the status of a person who can provide answers to everything. This attitude is difficult to discourage because of the absence of any other source of information in these schools. The teacher and the textbooks are the only available sources of information. Black students who are taught in schools

which have no library service are taught to regard a teacher and the textbook as the only source of information which thus cannot be challenged as to interpretation or accuracy.

Nduna (1971:49-50), however, states:

"it is humanly impossible for any teacher to cope with the mass of knowledge and information necessary to keep abreast of times. Only basic instructions can be given in the classroom. For additional and related information the child must be prepared to do additional reading."

The dependence on the superior knowledge of the teacher, even when the factors which contributed to poor access to literature have been eliminated, has so conditioned students that they find it unnecessary to do independent reading to augment or challenge teaching. This behavioural pattern has led to a belief by other racial groups who have been exposed to library facilities in their schools and have developed a skill for independent information searching, that Black students in South Africa lack the intellectual curiosity necessary for the critical exploration of ideas. This behavioural pattern becomes a problem when Black students go to university where they are expected to use library facilities and

work independently. While other racial groups see a university library as an extension of their school library most Black students are meeting the library for the first time. Makhubela (1986:46) states that in 1985 46 % of the students who came to the University of Zululand for the first time had never used a library before. This implies that these students had very little or no knowledge of the importance or role played by basic reference tools in their studies.

#### 2.4 Social, political and economic factors

The standard of educational development in a society is associated with social, economic and political development. Development here refers to the improvement of the quality of life of individuals in a society through the exposure to and use of information. The ability to read and its adoption as an essential component of life is an indication of social development.

The social, political and economic factors which may have a negative effect on the development of reading are not presented here individually only for ease of discussion. They are inextricably interwoven. Since the cultivation of reading is a form of education, it would be proper to

discuss the provision of educational facilities for Blacks in South African against the South African political background.

The South African society has been ruled with varying degrees of racial discrimination under all its White Governments. When the Nationalist party took over Government in 1948 it placed all its allegiances to the Afrikaner heritage and devoted itself to the implementation of apartheid. It was only in 1984 that Indians and Coloureds were invited to participate in Parliament and form what is called a Tricameral Parliament, but because of their restricted voting rights both Indians and Coloured have very little say and influence on Government policies.

Since the Nationalist Government has been in power, it has passed many laws which propagate apartheid and result in Blacks being oppressed politically, socially and economically. The absence of Black representation in Parliament has meant that Blacks have been able to make few decisions on matters affecting them. All important planning and administration was decided at levels that did not accommodate Blacks. Even within the autonomous and "independent" homelands, control has remained in the hands of the Government through its control of money, and many Black homelands officials have White, Government appointed, "assistants" who in fact make many of the decisions.

Under the segregated use of facilities the Government provided poor or no facilities for Blacks. One of the most important rights that Blacks were deprived of is education. The intended lack of support for Black advancement through education is marked by the poor status of schools, library services, school equipment and other supportive facilities which are pillars of any education system.

The control of education for Blacks by the Nationalist Government was determined on the basis of the Christian National Education Philosophy. It is based on control, guardianship and segregation. Gabela (1983:5) quoting Jones states:

"We believe that any system of education of the native should be based on the life and world view of the European, more particularly that of the Boer Nation as the senior European guardian of the Native and that the Native should be led to a mutatis mutandis but independent acceptance of the Christian and National Principle in education" (Jones 1970:56).

In order to make sure that Blacks did not occupy any senior posts that would put them in decision-making positions, Blacks are prevented by law from occupying such positions. Under the Public Service Act of 1984 the most senior post held by a Black civil servant in the Department of Education and Training is that of inspector of schools. According to the

Education and Training Act 1979 the most senior post occupied by a Black is that of a rector of a teacher training college. Presently the other highest post that could be occupied by a Black under the Department of Education is that of a regional director which is equivalent to a rectorship. The Government has not made any provision to include Blacks in chief educational planning positions. As a result Blacks are deprived a right of self determination in as far as educational advancement is concerned.

Separate education for Blacks was implemented from the 1st of January 1954 following the passing of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Themba 1975 : 34). According to Pelzer (1966:83) through this act the education for Blacks was structured and controlled so that products thereof should find no place or position above the levels of certain forms of labour and become perpetual subordinates to Whites.

After the government had taken control of Black education it wanted to make certain that a Black received "an education which will keep him in his place" (Gabela 1986:4) i.e. for life in subordinate society.

Few Blacks were exposed to education before the introduction of Bantu education, because the missionaries who provided for the educational needs of the Blacks had few schools.

With the introduction of Bantu Education in 1953, however, there was "mass education" with more Blacks being exposed to education. Nkomo (1984:100) states that the primary and secondary school enrolments of African pupils increased from 747 026 in 1950 to 1 506 034 in 1960; 2 737 450 in 1970 and 3 532 233 in 1980.

Even though the number of Blacks who were exposed to education increased, the type of education they received was inferior and intended to produce a semiliterate industrial labour force of obedient servants (Nkomo, 1984:xviii).

Bantu Education however also produced "unintended consequences". It raised the level of literacy amongst Blacks so that they became aware of the intent of Bantu education and were able to articulate their political grievances not only locally but even outside South Africa. This they would otherwise not have been able to do if they were not exposed to any education at all. Nkomo (1984:xx) states, "many of the students who are the product of Bantu Education are demonstrating attitudes and behaviours that are contrary to official expectations ..."

The inferior Bantu Education has been successful in reinforcing among Africans a belief in their own self-worth rather than being misled into believing that the green pastures of the European society were meant for their grazing.

In order for the Government to shape the education for Blacks in accordance with Government policy, the Government through many acts and regulations deprived Blacks of their rightful share of citizenship rights, wealth, ownership and prosperity of the country (Pelzer, 1966:15). The Government made very little financial provision for:

- a) an up-to-date building programme of schools and classrooms;
- b) proper supply of school equipment and teaching aids;
- c) an adequate supply of contented and well paid teachers (Thembela 1979:49).

A comparison of the expenditure on education for Blacks and other races in South Africa clearly shows the extent to which the financial provision for Black education by the Government falls short of the amount necessary to maintain a proper quality of education.

TABLES 1: PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE BY THE STATE ON DIFFERENT RACE GROUPS IN SOUTH AFRICA BETWEEN 1950-1985

	<u>TEN YEAR SPAN</u>			<u>FIVE YEAR SPAN</u>		
	1950	1960	1970	1975	1980	1985
WHITES	100,00	144,57	-	644,00	913,00	1 702,00
INDIANS	32,00	-	81,02	189,53	513,00	1 112,00
COLOUREDS	32,00	59,13	75,00	139,62	253,16	639,04
BLACKS	14,00	13,60	15,97	41,80	139,66	227,29

(Horrell, 1952:50; Horrell, 1963:219; Horrell, 1971:253, 273, 279; Gordon, 1977:461; Randal, 1982:465; Cooper, 1985:460).

TABLE 2: THE ACTUAL EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION FOR 1985/86

WHITES	=	2 973 697
INDIANS	=	323 986
COLOUREDS	=	724 065
BLACKS IN HOMELANDS	=	1 025 063
BLACKS IN WHITE AREAS	=	917 486

(Cooper, 1985:461)

While Black constitutes 68,2 % of the total population of South Africa and the Whites only 18,5 % (Population census 1985), Blacks end up being allocated far less than the Whites. This discrepancy is not only found in education, but in all other services as well.

The quality of education is further affected by the poor quality of life Blacks are subjected to. Many Blacks in South Africa live under conditions that have a negative effect on education e.g. poor accommodation, with no proper lighting, overcrowding, lack of proper transport, noise, poor diet and general poverty.

KwaZulu, a homeland for Zulu people was established in 1972 in Natal as part of the homelands structure designed by the South African Government. All services which were initially under the Natal Provincial Administration or the State were handed over to KwaZulu periodically. Amongst these services were the library services. A survey conducted by Zondi (1980) showed that none of the areas zoned as KwaZulu had a library worthy of a name. Only one library existed at Umlazi Township in Durban which was the size of the four roomed house found in Black locations. When the responsibility for library services was handed over to KwaZulu by the Natal Provincial Administration, KwaZulu was to start from scratch, both with school and public libraries. This responsibility was further endorsed by the passing of the KwaZulu Library Act of 1980 which provided for the institution of a library service for KwaZulu.

The Report of the Interdepartmental Committee of Inquiry into Library Services for Non-Whites contains a direct recommendation for library services in the homelands (1965:24) and it reads:

"In the Transkei, and other self-governing Bantu areas, public libraries and depots should be established in partnership with the respective provincial administrations and homeland governments until such time as the latter accept full responsibility."

It was on the basis of this recommendation that Vink, C.M., then Deputy Chief Director of the Division of Library Services, Department of National Education proposed a structure for a national library service to be adopted by homelands in readiness for the take over of library services from the provincial administrations.

Besides outlining the plan for a national library service in the homelands, Vink also recommended that the library services should fall under the departments of education of each specific homeland, and only resources and advisors were to be received from the Central Government towards the development of these library services. Provincial and municipal library services which had in the past provided help in these areas were to gradually hand over the responsibility to the national library service, which would then buy and prepare books for all libraries under it (Vink and Frylinck, 1978:48-49).

The proposed structure entitled Recommended Library Structure for Library Services in Homelands was passed in 1976 and adopted by the Co-ordinating Committee for National Library Service to Non-Whites as a guide on which national library services in various African homelands should be based.

While this proposed structure might have had all good intentions, i.e. to alleviate the backlog in the library services for Blacks in South Africa and involve the homelands in the establishment of their own national library services, it required a good financial base. The national governments had to accept not only the proposed structure but the financial responsibilities as well.

When the KwaZulu Library Act of 1980 was passed, no provision was made to employ suitably qualified staff who would have implemented the proposed plan. At the same time the Natal Provincial Library Service and Municipal Library Service were relieved of the responsibilities to provide library service in areas that fall under KwaZulu.

In addition to this the library services had to compete with other services for a slice of the financial cake. Frylinck (1983:36) states that in developing countries this battle is intense as the cake is smaller and, to satisfy the needs of

one sector often requires that "non-essential " services should receive nothing at all, or very little. He further points out that unless the policy makers are convinced that a national library service is desirable, the service stands little chance of receiving adequate financial support, even if the policy makers were convinced of a need for a library service, there are always other priorities with which to contend, such as health, housing and many others.

It is in the light of the above that the following discussion on library services in Mehlwesizwe circuit will be viewed.

#### 2.4.1 Library services

School library service is a function of education. A library is an information centre of any society and cannot be divorced from educational development. It is one of the major free services that should form part of the infrastructure of any community along with schools, clinics and postal services.

Library services for Blacks in South Africa lagged behind from the beginning. The provision of funds by the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1930 through provincial committees to implement the resolution taken at the Bloemfontein librarians conference of 1928 had no overall impact on the formation of library services for Blacks in the whole country (Peters 1983 : 29).

The Transvaal is the only province that took advantage of that offer and the results are evident even today.

Frylinck (1980:56) gives the extent of the services as:

"The TPA serves 51 public libraries for Africans, the CPA 12, the OFS 3 and Natal has 3 libraries and plans are afoot for 11 in the near future. ... In addition to its public libraries TPA has 38 depots, the NPA 14 and OFS 1."

Although the Transvaal has the highest number of libraries for Blacks in South Africa compared to other provinces, the services remain inadequate in terms of population demand.

Zondi (1980) described the condition of libraries in Natal as close to non-existent. The whole of KwaZulu does not have a single public library except one that was established in 1980 as a nucleus of the KwaZulu National Library at Ulundi. This library is also used as a general public library. According to Zimu (1985:15) it stocks 5 734 books, 14 magazines and 11 newspapers. He also states that the building has become too small for the available stock and membership of 1 463. One can conclude from the above information that this is a fairly small library.

Presently there are only nine public libraries in the rest of Natal situated in Black residential areas outside KwaZulu known as "White areas." These are under the Natal

Provincial Library Services. Both the Provincial Library Service and the Museum Services of Durban and Pietermaritzburg are legally prevented from providing branch libraries in areas designated as KwaZulu (KwaZulu Library Act 1980).

KwaZulu school library statistics provided by Zondi (the first and only inspectress of libraries in the whole of KwaZulu) in the 1984/85 annual report indicates the position as follows:

- a) a total sum of R 70 950 was allocated for school libraries in KwaZulu for 1985.
- b) R 11 450 was allocated to nine colleges of education libraries.
- c) R 59 500 was distributed amongst 117 secondary and high schools only, while KwaZulu has a total of 2 906 schools.
- d) Each of the 117 schools received a grant between R 600 and R 1 000 from this allocation.
- e) None of the primary schools received funds towards school libraries.

Further, according to Zimu (1985) KwaZulu had a total enrolment of 1 176 789 pupils in 2 906 schools. If R 70 950 was budgeted for library services, it means that each school was to receive R 24 or six cents per pupil. Only certain schools though were granted library funds based on certain criteria like - existence of a library in the school, or the status of a school e.g. colleges of education or enthusiasm expressed by teachers to start a library. It is therefore obvious that library services in KwaZulu are still given a very low priority and will not take off when such poor financial provisions are made.

Attention is now being paid by the Government to Black library services only in the Black schools that fall under the Department of Education and Training. Mocke (1986:3) points this out in the following extract:

"Soos u seker ook weet, het die verloop van die verskaffing van biblioteekdienste in die Departement 'n jong geskiedenis. In die lig van die reeds genoemde prioriteite, verbaas laasgenoemde feit geensins - alhoewel ek u die versekering kan gee dat onderwysinsette soos die van die skoolbiblioteek hoegenaamd nie in die verloop van sake as gering of onbelangrik beskou is nie. Inteendeel - dit is van besondere belang dat mediadienste in die Departemen van Onderwys en Opleiding ten volle tot sy reg sal kom."

This however does not apply to schools in the homelands.

Although Blacks are now free to use some of the originally White-only libraries e.g. Empangeni Public Library, Natal Society Library, distance from where they reside to the library is a major inhibiting factor. Even though the service is open they must still pay out of town subscription and transport fee to get to the library. Library service for Blacks do differ from province to province, but in total is very meagre and inadequate and sometimes completely absent. This service amongst other important services has been given the least priority for a long time, as a result most Blacks, even the literate ones, have been deprived of the privilege of being exposed to books.

#### 2.2.4.2 Environmental factors

Most Blacks in South Africa live in two types of environments:

- a) rural, and
- b) townships

The rural environment is characterized mainly by lack of electricity, inadequate household furniture, poor educational facilities and extreme poverty. The township environment is characterized mainly by overcrowding, poor lighting and lack of other

amenities. It has a few wealthy families, a small middle class and a majority of poor people. The conditions which prevail in these environments are not conducive to reading.

Hunger, illness, depression caused by political oppression, violence, retrenchment and closure of schools which prevail presently in the greater part of South Africa have had a very big impact on further degrading the already poor environmental conditions for Blacks. Such a situation is also not conducive to reading. Peer group pressure is another inhibiting factors especially in areas like Soweto where most schools have been closed by the State because of political violence. Students are afraid to be seen carrying any books or doing any form of reading because they will be labelled as conforming to a school going group or Government policy.

#### 2.2.4.3 Publication industry

The observable increase in the literacy rate of Blacks as confirmed earlier on implies that there should be a relative increase in the market for publishers of African literature. Obviously if more people could read, the potential market for publishers would be

larger. Ntuli (1982:22) states that the quality of material available at present can also to a certain extent, be blamed on lack of reading interest amongst Blacks. This material is often not suitable for adults, particularly in the field of light literature. He goes on to say that because literature is usually written for use in schools, controversial topics like sex and politics which are of interest to adults are avoided. At the same time this literature does not provide for light reading or recreation for school children. Molope (1982:54) attributes this unsuitability of literature for Blacks to the fact that South African publishers are often White owned or controlled by White commercial enterprises, and themes of particular relevance and interest to Blacks are overlooked. Phalatse (1982:40) expresses an opinion that some teachers relegate material in the mother tongue to a secondary position and promotion of literature in African languages is seen as an endorsement of separate development.

As Blacks begin to redefine themselves, there is a realization by Blacks that salvation from political oppression can be brought about by a reawakening of Black cultural heritage and values. This amongst other things can be done by infusing pride and dignity in their own language. As a result, such things as African literature

are gaining more importance as symbols of culture. More Black writers are beginning to write in a language that best reflects their social milieu and that can be read by most Black people. An increase in the literacy rate among Blacks will also exert pressure on the publishers to publish more books.

## 2.3 Promotion of reading interest in children

### 2.3.1 Introduction

The main goal in promoting the reading interest of a child is to produce an adult who regards reading as a valuable activity in life.

There are various ways of promoting this interest and sustaining it so that it becomes permanent. What is of importance is the sequence and logic with which the promotion skills are applied, i.e. either concurrently or immediately one after the other e.g. It is obvious that little will be achieved if the child is presented with a lot of reading material but little or no guidance. At the same time no reading interest will be promoted if the literature necessary is unavailable or unsuitable. An ideal situation is one where these activities are both present.

Promotion of a reading interest implies that one has a young reader whose interest in reading needs to be supported with adequate and suitable literature under the correct physical and mental conditions make sure that the interest thus cultivated is not lost. This task should be done with the full co-operation of the child.

The following are the means that I have identified from various sources and selected as of specific importance in the case of the Black child. They are:

### 2.3.2 Provision of adequate and suitable literature

Hugo, Director of Read Educate and Develop, which is a private organisation supported by the private sector and aimed at providing library services to the under privileged in South Africa, (1986:1) outlines the "Five Pillars" of READ's success in her paper delivered at the Conference of Librarians (SALIS) in 1986. Of these five, the most relevant to this study is the first one, "adequate bookstock, not second hand, outdated charity books, but books of excellent quality selected for their relevance to the school curriculum and pupils' needs to develop the skills, and knowledge which will enable them to cope with the real world."

It is true that charity and second hand books are not always of poor quality, but it is necessary that when such books are received they are checked thoroughly and repaired if necessary before they are handed to the child.

2.3.2.1 Availability of literature as an aspect in the promotion of reading interest points to the fact that a child must have a book within his reach to read for a prescribed period. This period can be decided upon by the supervisor of reading i.e. parent, teacher, librarian or by the child himself. When I refer to availability, I am actually looking at the whole process from the originator of the book who is the author to the consumer who is the child. Thus there need to be:

- a) authors and illustrators of children's books with both talent and linguistic competence;
- b) publishers who will produce children's books for the growing market of Black children;
- c) middle men who will make these books available to the public e.g. stores, bookshops, libraries. These must be

within reach of the consumer who will buy or borrow them depending on the circumstances. It goes without saying that when the middleman is the library, adequate government funding must be available;

- d) The consumer who will be parent, teacher or the child himself.

If this sequence exists (and there is a constant flow), we can then talk of a chain to the future, i.e. when some of these children who will have become adult readers and future authors of children's books. Not much need to be said about publishers and bookshops, because as long as the market and a profit is guaranteed they should be willing to supply. It is their duty, however to see to it that once a potential market has been identified, they bring the goods closer to the consumer.

Bamberger (1975:25) refers to a situation in Alma Ata, the capital of Soviet Kazakhstan. He observed that books accompanied children everywhere - at home, at school, in the Pioneer clubs, in kiosks, at the parks or swimming

pools, in the hospital and even in the huts near the fields where the children often waited for their working parents - very inexpensive books were sold in shops of EVERY KIND and parents bought these for their children while shopping.

2.3.2.2 Suitability of the literature as an aspect that affects the promotion of reading interest in children means that the author must be able to reach that child in such a manner that the child understands without difficulty what the book is all about. There must be compatibility between the book, the language, age, cultural background and educational level of the child.

Studies by Manaka (1971), Bamberger (1975), Moon (1976), Ogunsheye (1980) and others have cited many criteria as important in determining the suitability of a book for a child. I have selected the following because of their particular relevance and relationships to a Black child:

#### 2.3.2.2.1 Age and educational level

A child is an immature person who is finding his way towards maturity. Reading is one of the basic requirements for future development and correct reading skills should be learned from the beginning.

pools, in the hospital and even in the huts near the fields where the children often waited for their working parents - very inexpensive books were sold in shops of EVERY KIND and parents bought these for their children while shopping.

2.3.2.2 Suitability of the literature as an aspect that affects the promotion of reading interest in children means that the author must be able to reach that child in such a manner that the child understands without difficulty what the book is all about. There must be compatibility between the book, the language, age, cultural background and educational level of the child.

Studies by Manaka (1971), Bamberger (1975), Moon (1976), Ogunsheye (1980) and others have cited many criteria as important in determining the suitability of a book for a child. I have selected the following because of their particular relevance and relationships to a Black child:

2.3.2.2.1 Age and educational level

A child is an immature person who is finding his way towards maturity. Reading is one of the basic requirements for future development and correct reading skills should be learned from the beginning.

The amount of reading a child can do depends on internal and external influences. The external influences refer to social and environmental factors which have been discussed earlier. Internal influences refer to the age, intelligence and educational level of the child.

Intelligence exerts an observable influence on the reading ability of a child. The brighter children tend to read at an earlier age, spend more time reading, and read more books than children of average and below average intelligence.

Age and level of education in children should be parallel i.e. every child should be at the right age to qualify to be in a particular class. If a child is made to read a book that he does not understand either because he has not reached the correct level of education to grasp what is said in the book or he is not matured enough to make sense of what he reads, that child will lose interest in reading. The reverse is also true. Reading interest may be lost if the child is intellectually more advanced or is older than his classmates and literature for his age or

intellectual level is not provided. Thus there must always be compatibility between the content of the book and the age and level of education of the child. Lack of expert guidance and supervision in the selection of reading material for children can lead to unsuitable books being read with consequent bad results.

This study will look at the provision of suitable reading materials for Black children during the formative period for reading skills. It will include the first and second year at school with classes Sub-standard A and B, and third and fourth year at school with classes Standard one and two. The children's age in the above categories varies from five years to ten years.

#### First and second year period

This is the starting point for formal education. When a child comes to school, his vocabulary in his mother tongue is usually rich. At this point the child will be presented in school with factual information commensurate

with his intellectual development and will begin learning the skills necessary for his future educational development. In order to do this successfully activities from home or pre-school should be continued and upgraded and not stopped abruptly.

It is at this stage that the type of reading described by Moyle (1982:25) takes place:

"This is the turning of a collection of symbols seen upon a piece of paper into "talk", or in the case of silent reading into an image of speech sounds. This means gaining an ability to read from the left to the right and from the top to the bottom of the page, recognition of letter symbols and grouping into words and sentences and what they stand for."

It is only later that a child will be called upon to make a mental response and assess the value of what has been read in comparison with previously learned concepts.

The basic reading material for this age group will constitute little text and many pictures. Books for this level should display some of the following basic qualities:

- a) they should stimulate the child's interest;
- b) they should have ideas in simple and brief language;
- c) they should have colourful and attractive illustrations;
- d) the words used should appear in large print;
- e) they should be strong and durable.

Early book encounters should be a truly active experience through book displays, drawing and reading. Children must talk, think, sing and hear books. Besides pleasure in the book the children might be interested in the author because reading by author further increases the reading interest since it introduces a new dimension in reading.

#### Third to fourth year at school

At this stage a distinction should be made between reading to learn new words as single concepts and learning to acquire the skill of reading. The two can be taught independently or simultaneously. Teaching new words involves the teaching of spelling, meaning and pronunciation. Too many

unknown words in the text prevent a child from gaining adequate comprehension in his reading. It is, therefore, important that before reading commences unfamiliar words be explained to avoid too many stops which affect the meaning of the text.

Books at this level should introduce more text and less illustrations and eventually some of the text should have no illustrations at all. Other qualities such as interest, simplicity and clarity should not be overlooked.

A child must adapt to reading independently during this level and learn to take the following decisions with some help:

- a) what to read;
- b) when to read;
- c) where to read;
- d) how much to read.

It is very important that the above adaptation takes place because the child will be growing towards a transitional period during which his reading interests should have been clearly defined.

Bamberger (1975:31) says, "On the basis of broad experience it can be said that if by the fifth year of school a child is not an enthusiastic reader and has not developed any special reading interests, there is little hope of the situation changing later."

Reading interest can be promoted or destroyed completely at this time of a child's life because this is a stage of high adventure which needs to be directed. From my personal experience children at this age are highly motivated towards pleasure and excitement and are extremely energetic. The teacher of reading should help children to realise that there is a lot of adventure, pleasure and excitement to be found in books. At the same time the authors should provide such books. Children need to be guided not to lean too much on material of inferior quality produced under the pretence of promoting reading interests.

2.3.2.2.2 Language

The language that a child speaks plays a very significant role in learning to read and in the development of the reading interest. Hall and Ramig (1978:39) say:

"A child must know the language that he is going to learn to read. Since in reading a child must be able to reconstruct messages from print that are similar to messages he can already understand in spoken form, knowledge of the spoken language is required."

The above is further confirmed in what Pflaum-Connor (1978:111) says about the language and learning to read.

"If it is accepted that printed words are signals of spoken words and that they have meaning analogous to those of spoken words, it is obvious that a child while reading must be able to apprehend the meaning of the total message in the same way that he would apprehend the meaning of the corresponding spoken message. Therefore a child can only learn to read within the limits of his own language experience."

Competence in the spoken language appears to be a necessary base for competence in writing and reading. Reading comprehension requires a

comprehension of the similarity of the pattern of language structure in the reading material to the oral pattern of language structure used by children. Children expect that the sentence structure that they read should conform to the structure of the language that they already know.

It is on the basis of this that children, when learning to read, should be presented with literature in their own language. If we also accept that every normal child comes to school in possession of a wealth of information and ideas conceptualized and best articulated in the child's own language, then it seems obvious that early texts should make use of this knowledge.

Mocke (1986:5) refers to a class library project for primary schools which was started by the Department of Education and Training in 1983. He says:

"Die projek is daarop gemik om die beskikbare voorraad geskikte materiaal in die moedertaal van die leerlinge in die primêre skool te vermeerder sodat die leerlinge leesvaardighede in hul moedertaal deeglik kan bemeester voordat hulle gekonfronteer word met ander tale wat as medium van onderrig hoë lees-en begripvereistes stel. Die bekendheid met die moedertaal is 'n belangrike brug. Voorkeur word tans gegee aan die voorsiening van boeke wat deur Swart skrywers self geskryf is, in plaas van om boeke uit ander tale te vertaal."

Teaching a child to read in a foreign language has been criticized by many educationists, because if language mastery is inadequate a child can not make sense of what he reads. It is, therefore, both theoretically and practically impossible that a child will develop any interest in reading in a second language. In conclusion, I refer to Manaka (1971:27) in his address in the ALASA Conference (1971) when he said:

"May I venture to give my views, the average child is handicapped by the absence of books suitable for him in the vernacular. This lack of children's books in the Bantu Languages robs the children of developing the love of reading during the formative years when the desire to read is intense and when children absorb almost everything they read."

#### 2.3.2.3.4 Language usage

The role played by books written in the language of a child in the promotion of his reading interest has been discussed as very important. While this is important it is also crucial to mention at this stage that the manner in which the language is used is also important.

Language usage can be simple or complicated. A simple language is used when the author has

used what is sometimes referred to as "everyday language" i.e. the language expression that people use in the daily conversation. When a language is complicated it means that the author has used either idiomatic expressions or unfamiliar words which make the text difficult to understand.

When an author has decided to write for children, he must realize that he must communicate with them by using a language in a manner that they will understand. Excitement and interest in reading children's books can be achieved if the language usage is simple and the style is familiar to the child. Poorly structured sentences and incorrect use of simile or metaphors leads to confusion and frustration to a child.

e.g. UJafta - ubaba wami by Hugh Lewin

pp. 2 reads

"uma engiphakamisela phezulu engigona -  
kunjengokukhwela uye kwelenyoni emthini uwatela  
Uma ehleka.

Kunjengemithi amapoplaras eshwibeka emoyeni

UJafta - Umama wami by Lewin, Hugh pp. 3 reads

Umama wami ufana nomhlabathi ogcwele ubuhle -  
ufudumele, unsundu uqinile.

In the above two examples the underlined phrases show incorrect use of the Zulu language. I am of the opinion that even if these idiomatic expressions were correctly used, their mere use in a children's book would be undesirable and create a barrier to learning.

#### 2.3.2.2.4 Illustrations

The role of illustrations as a criterion to measure the suitability of children's books to promote the reading interest has been appreciated by many authors and educationists. The controversy lies in their suitability.

An illustration in a children's book must have a function and a goal to achieve. Schultz (1985 : 14-15) states that the rightness of the illustration is decided upon by the child himself. Not every child will like the same picture as another child of the same age.

Schultz mentions the factors which contribute towards the differences in attitudes and preferences of illustrations found in children as:

- a) the children's level of development;
- b) their differing temperaments;
- c) their different practical experiences;
- d) the circumstances in which they grow up;
- e) the experiences which they already have with picture books.

Illustrations will contribute towards better understanding of a text if there is a close interplay between the text and the pictures. An illustration will further contribute towards an understanding of a text if

- a) it does not veil the text but rather reveals what is hidden;
- b) the interpretation of the picture is easy and the reader is in agreement with the manner of presentation;
- c) it meets the child's understanding of reality.

A child looks for confirmation of his experience and would like to find features of his real world either confirmed or broadened in an illustration. According to Alemna (1982:109) the extent to which the illustrations in books relate to the cultural environment of a reader is another problem. She says that illustrations which might look simple to the Western child can confuse the African child. In such instances the illustrations instead of adding to an understanding of the text will detract from it. Alemna maintains that this also applies to the Western child if exposed to African illustrations.

2.3.2.2.5. Typography, paper, binding and size

While the above could have negative effect on the cultivation of a reading habit in children, they are general to all children's books and can not be associated only with Zulu children's books.

2.3.3. Reading guidance

Book education is a feature of reading guidance whereby a child is trained in the proper use of the book and all that relates to the book. The intent is not only to promote reading interest but also a respect for the book as a carrier of information. Any attempt directed towards helping a child to select the correct book and to properly interpret the text can be looked upon as a form of guidance in reading.

#### 2.3.4 Activities to promote reading

The cultivation of reading interest is a didactic task which needs a variety of teaching methods to be achieved. Activities which confront young people directly or indirectly with books are necessary. Some of the activities are:

##### 2.3.4.1 Story telling

This method of encouraging young readers is very effective. It can be done by a children's librarian, teacher or parent at home. Since listening is easier than reading, the reader, through pictures, voice adaptation, facial expression and movement, can make the meaning of the text exciting to and better understood by children. This awakening of interest will encourage children to want to read more such stories on their own.

##### 2.3.4.2 Book displays

Book displays give children freedom to touch and page through new books. Experts on children's books or the authors of such books are normally available at large book displays to talk to

children, give them advice and, perhaps, small gifts such as bookmarks.

Book displays may be part of an annual children's book week. This is when different publishers display their collections of children's literature. A display may also be organized by a school where pupils take part in promoting books that they have read and advise others on the content of these books. In order for a book display to be successful and lure pupils, it must be well advertised through posters and be colourfully displayed.

#### 2.3.4.3 Reading clubs

In many countries an attempt is made to help children discover the pleasure of reading good books through membership in a book club. The approach used by book clubs is that of providing a child with a book suitable for him after analysing and testing all his reading abilities. This is usually done by having the child fill in a questionnaire or by interviewing him. Once a child has been started off at the correct level of reading, the suppliers send books to a member by

"build-on" methods i.e. each book that is sent will be slightly more advanced than the previous one, hence mastery of every copy sent becomes important for continuity and progress. Reading of books sent through book clubs needs to be supervised and parental help is vital. Book clubs also utilize other activities to encourage reading such as competitions and small gifts.

#### 2.3.4.4 Use of other media

Other forms of media for information transmission e.g. videos, slides, films, etc. should not be seen as competition to the book but rather as complementary to reading. These media can present information in ways which stimulate the imagination and arouse the interest and desire to learn more. Through proper guidance children can be made to read ahead of the program due to be screened on television or read more on what they saw on television or heard on the radio. Endeavour of this kind can have positive results if systematically and closely monitored by parents and teachers.

#### 2.3.4.5 Children's performance

Children like to express their experiences and imaginations in many ways. They like playing the roles of favourite heroes discovered through reading. Through watching performances by others, curiosity is aroused in children who have not read the story enacted and they will be encouraged to read it in order to participate.

#### 2.3.4.6 Reading competitions

Competitions in reading can be part of other activities or may be an activity on its own. When dealing with children, competitions should be held with greatest caution. Children should understand what is involved in order to win and how one loses and taught not to be discouraged if they do not win.

The organisers of a children's competition should have an abundance of consolation prizes to encourage those who have made an effort so that they aim for better results next time. Reading competitions can be organised within one school or amongst a group of schools.

This brief discussion on activities to promote reading interest is by no means exhaustive, but cites only a few that have been tested in practice by children's literature experts.

#### 2.3.5 Conclusion

It has been adequately displayed in this chapter that in order for a child to develop into a "reader" who will experience intellectual growth from reading, certain requirements and conditions must be met. These requirements are influenced by social, political and economic stagnation which may deny opportunities to a Black child of becoming a reader during his formative years.

It is only the Government which has the financial resources to facilitate advancement in a direction that will create better opportunities for Blacks to be exposed to information. The success of the Government is also dependent to a large extent on the full co-operation of the producers of literature, teachers, parents and the child. Should any of the parties mentioned above fail to do his share, the efforts of the other parties will be wasted and nothing will be achieved.

CHAPTER THREE

3. AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE AVAILABILITY OF ZULU CHILDREN'S BOOKS  
FOR LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS OF MEHLWESIZWE CIRCUIT

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to investigate whether the main sources from which children can get books are available in Mehlesizwe Circuit, and also whether these sources have literature of a general nature in Zulu for children between the ages 5 years to 10 years.

The sources to be investigated are:

- a) schools;
- b) libraries and
- c) bookshops.

Lack of reading material has been identified by the author as one of the major factors that interferes with proper cultivation of reading interest among children, and therefore needs to be investigated.

The author will only investigate the availability of Zulu children's books because all Black children in Mehllwesizwe Circuit who attend Black schools speak Zulu. As previously stated children can only learn to read and

enjoy reading if they read books written in their own language first, otherwise they become frustrated if required to read in a language they do not understand.

### 3.2 Research Methodology

Three techniques of data collecting were implemented: viz mailed questionnaires, a letter survey, and interviews.

#### 3.2.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire with twenty one questions was constructed. The questions were 90% closed ended and 10% open ended. Questionnaires were sent to all forty eight schools with lower primary classes. A self addressed envelope with postage was enclosed in each one of them. The designated respondents were principals or the teachers responsible for the library in a school if such a responsibility had been delegated.

#### 3.2.2 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in order to eliminate possible problems from the questionnaire. Four respondents were selected and used for this.

As a result one question was eliminated because its validity was dependent on testing the pupils themselves.

### 3.2.3 Letter surveys

Letters were written and sent to twenty six South African publishers. The publishers were selected from the South African National Bibliography 1985 which, amongst other things, lists all registered publishers in South Africa. The publishers were chosen because of their reputable publication record of books. In each instance, the publishing manager was requested to supply the author with the author/title list of Zulu children's books (excluding textbooks) which had been published or planned for publication.

### 3.2.4 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with managers of four bookshops and the librarian of the Empangeni Public Library. The children's library operated by the Department of Library Science at the University of Zululand was also surveyed. After establishing that all these services are open to all races, the author established the number of children's books in Zulu normally held by each of the above sources

### 3.3 Presentation of results

The data that will be presented is the result of the findings obtained from the questionnaire analysis, response from publishers and the results of the interviews conducted. The data will be tabulated or presented in the form of statements with interpretations.

#### 3.3.1 Responses to the questionnaire from teachers

Forty eight questionnaires were mailed and thirty two responses were received. None of them was disqualified. The following are the findings from the questionnaires.

TABLE 3: AVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PUPILS PER SCHOOL AND PER CLASS IN MEHLWESIZWE CIRCUIT.

Average No. of pupils per school	500
Average No. of pupils per class	50

70% of the schools have more than one class per standard. Two schools, with the highest enrolment of more than a thousand pupils, have five classes in the substandards. The schools that have high enrolment were those in the urban and semi-urban areas.

TABLE 4: LIBRARY FACILITIES IN THE SCHOOLS

Total Number of Schools = 32

Schools with a library building	1
Schools with class-room collections	15
Schools with no library facility	16

The above table indicates that 50% of the schools investigated have no library facility of any kind while 47% have classroom collections and only 3% indicated the existence of library buildings. Principals indicated that the schools with classroom collections do not have them in all classes. It is a responsibility of every class teacher to build a collection for her class.

The location of the schools was checked on the map and the following was noted:

- a) all schools that have no form of library facility are in the rural areas.
- b) all the schools with a library or classroom collections are in urban or semi-urban areas.

The following table shows the size and nature of the collections found in the schools. The numbers given are the total of the books for the entire school and are divided among the classrooms.

TABLE 5: THE SIZE AND NATURE OF THE COLLECTIONS FOUND IN THE SCHOOLS

Number of schools	Number of books	Nature of the books
1	250 - 500	90 % textbooks 10 % general books
6	100 - 250	90 % textbooks 10 % general books
9	0 - 100	100 % textbooks
16	0	-

The above table shows that sixteen schools have no books of any kind. These results correspond with those of Table 4. The rest of the schools have a collection that constitutes mostly of textbooks and a few books of a general nature. As a rule, these textbooks are supplied by the Department of Education and Culture to the schools. One of the schools which indicated that it possessed a few general books stated that the teachers make block loans from the University of Zululand Children's Library.

In response to a question concerning library periods in schools, the following results were found:

TABLE 6: LIBRARY PERIODS IN THE SCHOOLS.

	Number of Schools
Library period present	17
Library period absent	15

The average library period reported is between twenty and thirty minutes long and held once per week.

A question was asked to ascertain the attitude and level of enthusiasm of the school principal towards the library. Since the respondents were free to indicate more than one answer, scores are calculated as a percentage of the total number of respondents.

The responses were as follows:

TABLE 7: RESPONSES OF THE TEACHERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS	POSITIVE RESPONSE IN %
Have you thought of starting a library in your school?	88 %
Have you thought of taking your pupils to the nearest library?	44 %
Have you thought of buying books from school funds?	50 %
Have you thought of putting aside a class for a library?	69 %
Have you thought of asking for professional help in librarianship?	78 %

The principals were then asked an open ended question and were free to express their opinions about the library and the development of library skills in their schools and their reasons for not implementing library services or not following through on the above.

Summary of remarks

- a) The nearest public library, located in Empangeni, is too far for most of the school children, and expensive to visit.
- b) The shortage of teachers and overcrowding in most schools, results in a lack of effective teaching.
- c) Most teachers have no training in library skills so they have no idea of what is expected of them. Teachers themselves need professional guidance in book education through seminars and short courses.
- d) Principals work under tight financial budgets because of the general poverty in Black schools. Thus the purchase and use of books receive no priority.
- e) Because of the absence of Zulu children's books, books are available only in English or Afrikaans. This is frustrating to the teacher and the child and as a result these books are ignored completely.
- f) Because of the absence of libraries and suitable books, the time allocated for the library in some of the schools is used for the teaching of the other subjects.
- g) Many children in rural areas cannot even afford to eat, let alone contribute towards building a class-collection of books.
- h) The inspector of school libraries seems to be concentrating on the schools around Durban. Most of principals of Mehlesizwe Circuit feel neglected.

3.3.2. Response from publishers

Nineteen answers were received to the twenty eight letters send to the selected publishers of Zulu books. Ten of the respondents indicated that they publish between one and twenty one titles of Zulu children's books, and nine indicated that they do not publish Zulu children's books appropriate for lower primary schools.

Although Qualitas publisher did not respond, it had to be added to the list of ten publishers that responded because twenty two titles of Zulu children's books published by Qualitas were discovered by the author. In a bibliography of African children's and youth books compiled by Unitra Dept. of Library and Information Science (1983), 83 titles are listed under Qualitas.

50% of the all respondents expressed an intention and willingness to expand the publication of Zulu children's books for general reading.

A list of the publishers that responded and their publications has been compiled. See annexure E.

The following table shows the summary of the number of Zulu children's books so far published by each of the eleven publishers.

TABLE 8: LIST OF PUBLISHERS AND THEIR PUBLICATIONS

Publishers	No of books published
1. Bible Society .....	21
2. De Jager Haum .....	4
3. Educum .....	3
4. Haum-Daan Retief/Errol Marx .....	19
5. MacDonald Purnell .....	6
6. Maskew Miller .....	2
7. Oxford University Press .....	2
8. Qualitas .....	83
9. Shuter and Shooter .....	3
10. J.L. van Schaik .....	1
11. Via Afrika .....	11
Total	<u>146</u> Books

### 3.3.3 Response from local libraries and bookshops

#### Libraries

Two libraries were investigated, viz. Empangeni Public Library and the University of Zululand Children's Library.

An interview with the librarian of Empangeni Public Library revealed the following:

- a) the library is open to all races;
- b) people who reside outside Empangeni have to pay a registration of R 20 which covers for the whole family;
- c) few Blacks are now members, some use the library for studying especially during examination time;
- d) the library has very few Zulu books in general and Zulu children's books were even fewer. The librarian did not seem to be aware of a general shortage of Zulu children's books in the whole country. She was hoping to order them as soon as readership was guaranteed;
- e) the location and distance from the library was pointed out by the librarian to be the major deterrent for Blacks. Another reason was that most Blacks were still under the impression that the library is not open to them.

The author who is in charge of the University children's library states the following:

- a) the library is very small, both in size and collection, it has a collection of + 2 000 books, and only thirty of these were Zulu children's books;
- b) it is open to all school pupils of all ages, but tends to be used by pupils of lower and higher primary;
- c) it is run by the students of library science and is therefore not open everyday but only twice a week;
- d) it is used by pupils from the local schools, i.e. Kwa-Dlangezwa, Esikhawini and Ngwelezane;
- e) the library hopes to expand into a building outside the University Campus so that all school children in the surrounding area may use it;
- f) the library makes block loans to schools;
- g) it receives no financial support whatever but is dependent on donations and volunteers.

### Bookshops

Four bookshops were visited, and managers thereof interviewed. Three of these bookshops are in Empangeni and one is on the University of Zululand campus. The University bookshop was included in the survey because

invariably one has found books of a nature which students and lecturers buy for their families. In the absence of a bookshop in the whole of Kwa-Dlangezwa, Zulu books would be bought not only by lecturing staff but by the employees of the University who reside at Kwa-Dlangezwa.

The following table represent the number of Zulu children's books which were in the bookshops at one time or another:

TABLE 9: BOOKSHOPS IN THE MEHLWESIZWE CIRCUIT AND THEIR HOLDINGS OF ZULU CHILDREN'S BOOKS

BOOKSHOPS	NUMBER OF TITLES OF ZULU CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR GENERAL READING
C.N.A.	0
Educumus	0
Logans	May order any book from main branch in Durban
Kenart	3
Team	9

Table 9 shows that three out of the five bookshops in the vicinity of Mehlwesizwe circuit do not stock Zulu children's books at all, even the few that have been published.

Kenart Bookshop had only three titles of books for general reading, while Team Bookshop had nine titles of religious books.

CHAPTER 4

4. A BRIEF INVESTIGATION INTO THE SUITABILITY OF ZULU  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

4.1 Introduction

It has been mentioned earlier that one of the factors that may have a negative influence on the cultivation of a reading interest in children is the unsuitability of the reading material. Suitability as used in children's literature has been explained under 2.3.2.2. When a child is introduced to reading for the first time, it is important that all potential causes of frustration have been eliminated, and the language, theme, illustrations, size, etc. of the book should be appropriate. The experience of reading should be a pleasant one, which a child will wish to relive over again.

An aim of this study is to determine whether the Zulu children's books that are presently available are suitable for the purpose of cultivating a reading interest in children who read for the first time.

4.2 Method of investigation

The author attempted to locate and analyse every Zulu children's book that is available in South Africa. Out of a total of 146 titles by different South African publishers, 58 books were found and all were read and the contents analysed on the following basis:

4.2.1 number of translations and original works,

4.2.2 type of illustrations that are found in these books,

4.2.3 suitability of the contents of the books

4.3 Findings

4.3.1 An analysis of the number of translations and original works

TABLE 10: ORIGIN OF ZULU CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Total number of books		58
Original Zulu books		7
Translations from	English	32
	Afrikaans	11
	Other languages	5
	Undefined	3

The other languages were German and Japanese while those undefined were written as translations without mention of the original language.

Table 10 shows that 88% of the books analysed are translations from other languages.

The books were further analysed to determine the authorship.

The following are the findings:

TABLE 11: AUTHORSHIP OF BOOKS WRITTEN IN ZULU

Total number of original works	=	7
Black authorship	=	2
Non-Black authorship	=	2
Authorship not indicated	=	3

TABLE 12: AUTHORSHIP OF TRANSLATED BOOKS

Total number of translations	=	51
Black translated work	=	33
Non-Black translated work	=	7
Undefined	=	11

Tables 11 and 12 show that 60% of the books involved a Black author or translator while 16% were done by Whites.

4.3.2 An analysis of the type of illustrations found in the children's books investigated

TABLE 13: SUBJECT CONTENT OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Main characters	Number of books
Black	= 9
White	= 32
Black and White	= 2
Other	= 15
Total	= 58

The above table shows that out of the total number of books that were analysed by the author 55% have illustrations of White characters only, 16% Black only, 3% both Black and White and 26% contained illustrations of plants, animals etc.

4.3.3 An analysis of the suitability of the children's books investigated

The analysis will be based on whether the vocabulary has been controlled, the language has

been used properly and there is cultural compatibility. Other factors like style of presentation, size of the book, etc. will not be analysed. The author will limit the analysis only to the above three factors.

In the analysis the author will select one or more sections from each book, with page reference to show words or sentences that display some form of unsuitability.

#### 4.3.3.1 Vocabulary control.

The following books with examples show poor vocabulary control, and as a result of this, confusion might be created while a child is reading which could interfere with his reading interest.

##### EXAMPLES

(a) Impungushe yagijima  
yaya entombini, yaluma  
isidwaba sayo, yayihu-  
dula, iyikhipha ogedeni.

Intombazane yalala  
sengathi ifile

This paragraph is taken from Ukuqalekiswa wuThekwane by Liguori-Reynold, Rosalie page fourteen. The author refers to the same person as intombi and intombazane which are two different stages of development in the female. Intombazane is a girl. Intombi is a sexually matured woman.

- (b) In the book UNyamazane noFudu by Liguori-Reynolds, Rosalie there are few spelling mistakes e.g. on page ten ukeqomisa should be ukuqomisa.  
on page twelve umsondo should be umsindo  
on page nine uqatshuzwe should be uqatshulwe  
on page twenty nine bathandiwe should be bathandwe.

- (c) A book entitled USemi, uBhetsi neNkohliso by Ness, Evaline vocabulary control has not be exercised. Some words have been translated into Zulu like - Sematha and Bhetsi while others have been left untranslated e.g. kangaroo and gerbil, without explaining their meaning. If the English format is preferred, this should be adhered to throughout the text for uniformity and control.

- (d) Poor vocabulary control is also found in a book by Ehlich, Bettina entitled Umfana Wezimbuzi. Some names of places have been translated while others have been left in their original form. The underlined words in the next paragraph are examples of this lack of uniformity.

UNkosazana Phathrishiya Bakenisi wayezithanda  
izintaba eziphakeme namahlathi athulileyo.  
Wayevame ukuchitha amaholide ezindaweni ezinjalo.  
Sonke-ke esinye isikhathi sonyaka wayesichitha  
ngokukhwishiza efundisa ulimi lwesiJalimane  
esikoleni samantombazane eNgilandi.

Kulelihlobo wayekhetha indawo eseAustria ukuhlaba  
ikhefu khona ukuze athole ithuba lokukhuluma  
isiJalimane ngenkathi ezikholisa ngobuhle  
bezintaba.

- (e) The book by Liguori-Reynolds, Rosalie entitled iMpungushe neNgwekazi has a number of wrongly spelled words throughout the text. This shows a poor control of the Zulu vocabulary. e.g. on page one izinyoni ezinya nje should be ezinye, on page three iNgwekazi yabuka yazidla should be yazindla.

on page eight Lomculo uvela kimawundlu akho  
should be kumawundlu.

on page nine Inhliziyo yeNgwekazi yayishaya  
kakhulu inkamunka should be inkanuko.

on page seventeen angiqale ngwokhele umlilo  
anduba sihambe should be ngokokhela.

- (f) Iningi labahwebi lalivela kwinhlokodolobha iRangoon. Izimpahla babeziletha ngemikhumbi benyusa umfula i-Irrawaddy. Abanye babefika ngezindwendwe zeminyuzi ngezindlela ezidilika ezintabeni bevela eNdiya naseShayina naseTibet.

Lack of vocabulary control is found in the words underlined in the paragraph above taken from Umbese kaShan wenhlanhla by Merrill, Jean. While the underlined words are left in their original spelling, the ringed words have been translated. Such inconsistencies interfere with reading in children.

- (g) The unusual spelling of Zulu words is found in uJani umenzi wekilogo by Ardizzone, Edward in which some words are spelled as follows:

ubhaskidi instead of ubhasikidi

indlhela instead of indlela

zehhashi instead of zehashi

ibhokisi eligabayo instead of ibhokisi elihle.

This form of writing Zulu is no longer used. Children should be taught the correct spelling of names and words without causing confusion and uncertainty.

- (h) The following example is from a children's science book entitled Ukwazi umzimba wakho translated by Khathi, N.P. in a chapter entitled Uphahla lomzimba on page four: The translator refers to the radius as ithanjana elingaphandle likagalo wengalo while at the same time he does not attempt to translate the ulna. Ithanjana is the diminutive of ithambo. If the radius which is longer is referred to as ithanjana while phallanges which are much smaller than the radius are referred to as amathambo an anomaly is created. This illustrates some type of inconsistencies found in translations which confuse a young reader.

- (i) Poor vocabulary control is also found in the following book, Usosi, imvubu, udinga abangane translated by Msimang, C T. The names of the characters have been translated as follows:

William - Willi

Peter - Pita

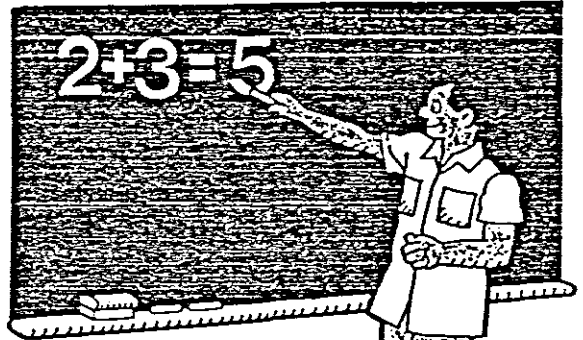
Frida - Fedilitha

Gavin - Gavini

- (j) While in another book entitled Ungibhonabhonephi by abafu bakwa Grim, the people's names have not been translated but left as Conrad, Harry, John etc. This inconsistency might not bother the translators, but one should not overlook the fact that people's names belong to them in their language and should be maintained in their original format.

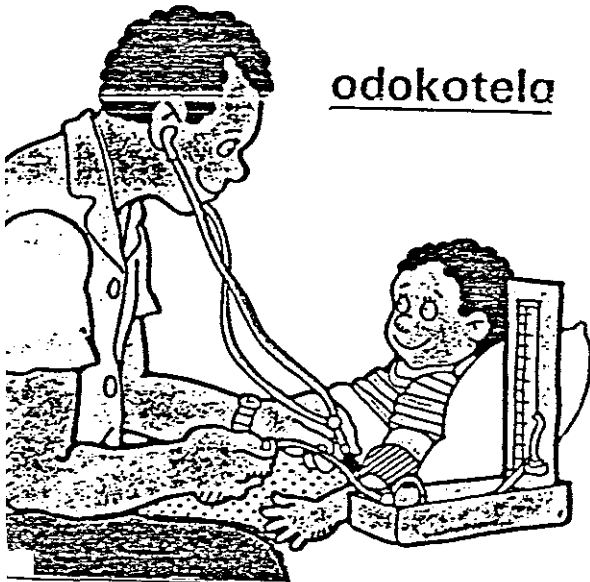
The title of the above book Ungibhonabhonephi is also incorrectly spelled. When one reads the text, Ungibhonabhonephi is the name of a mysterious character. In correct Zulu it should therefore be Ungibonabonephi.

unesi



uthisha

odokotela



umlimi



(k) The above illustrations are taken from a book entitled Amagama okuqala by Kikine, S. page fourty. While all the other words are in singular odokotela is in a plural form but there is only one doctor. This shows poor control of vocabulary.

4.3.3.2 Poor language usage.

EXAMPLES

- (a) UDanyele emhumeni wezingonyama by Stobbs, Williams a paragraph on page five reads as follows:

“Bonke omongameli bombuso, nababusi, nezikhulu, nabeluleki, nezinduna zamabutho babonisene ngokuthi kumiswe isimiso sobukhosi, kwenziwe nesimemezelo esiqinile esithi noma ubani oyokwenza isicelo noma kumuphi uNkulunkulu noma kumuntu ezinsukwini ezingamashumi amathathu, ngaphandle kokucela kuwe Nkosi! uyophonswa emhumeni wezingomama.”

The underlined words have been wrongly used. If corrected in their order, they should read as follows:

kunoma yimuphi, wezingonyama.

- (b) In uAnathole by Titus, Eve it is difficult to make sense out of the paragraph below:

UDositha wamduduza.

“Uqinisile impela Anathole,” esho edabukile.

“Uma nje kungabakhona abantu esibanika khona nathi. Kodwa lokho kuyinto engenzeke!”

U-Anathole wagxuma wabheka phezulu esina egcwala indlu yonke noDositha wakhe.

“Kungenzeke? Mhlawumbe qha, sithandwa! Ungiphe umbono omangalisayo.”

This is due to the misuse of the word ngenzeke which means 'it can not happen' but according to the text the author meant that 'it can happen' which should then have been ngenzeka

- (c) UNungu neNdllovu by Cole, Babethe page one has the following paragraph:

"Abantu abasakholwa yini yilokho manje?" uNungu wabuza. URa Dikeladi, owayekholelwa emlingweni, wabukeka edabukile. "Abasebangingi abantu abasenza lokho manje. Amakhanda abo asagcwalwa ngamaqhinga esimanje basebekholwa yizindlela zakudala. Mhlawumbe yingakho-nje izimvula sezehluleka."

Emva kokudla kwakusihlwa uNungu waya kolala. Wacabanga ngeNdllovu yokuDuma waze wazumeke. Waphupha kukhona ukuzamazama okunamandla: Umhlabathi unyakaza nezindonga zeqhugwane lakhe elincane zidlekezela.

The first set of underlined words should read asagcwala amaqhinga. There is also inconsistency in the use of the word umhlabathi and umhlaba. In subsequent pages of this book, the author rightly states that umhlaba onyakazayo and not umhlabathi as indicated above.

- (d) UJafta - Umama Wami by Lewin, Hugh page three reads: Umama wami ufana nomhlabathi ogcwele ubuhle, ufudumele unsundu uqinile. In the above sentence, the idiomatic expression as used does not exist in the Zulu language and the concordance is wrong.
- (e) Ingungumbane nentenesha by abafu bakwa Grim. A sentence on page five reads as follows: Intenesha, eduze kwayo ngolaka yakhala ... instead of Intenesha yakhala ngolaka eduze kwayo ...
- (f) The use of similies is popular in children's books because this brings excitement and a lot of imagination to children. Unfortunately some translators use similies and metaphors that do not exist in the Zulu language. e.g. in UJafta - Ubaba wami by Lewin, Hugh a sentence on page two reads: Ubaba wami kwasho UJafta mude futhi unamandla njengomuthi. In Zulu the correct way of using this expression is unamandla njengebhubezi. In the same book a sentence on page four reads: Uma engiphakamisela phezulu engigona kunjengokukhwela uye kwelenyoni emthini uwatela. Uma ehleka kunjengemithi ama-poplars eshwibeka emoyeri. The use of similies is wrong as a result this sentence does not make sense to a child who is Zulu speaking.

- (g) The following extract is taken from Untombencane by Bruna, Dick.

Uthenga ubhontshisi ongagwala  
isandla

ukuze enze ukudla kwezilimo, futhi  
uthengela umyeni wakhe ipheya

elivuthwe kamnandi laphuzi futhi

elingemnandi nje, elehla esiphundu.

The above sentences are disjointed and difficult to read even by an adult. The underlined words as used in this sentence are confusing: Laphuzi should be labaphuzi and elingemnandi should read elimnandi elehla esiphundu.

- (h) Kodwa wayesezwile ngokungabonakali komntanenkosi  
nangomvuzo wenkosi oyingxenye yombuso.

Wase azi ukuthi amadoda aqinile nahlakaniphile ayeseceginge kude naba  
“Ngizocinga eduze nase mncingweni,” wacabanga.

The above extract is taken from a book entitled, Ingxenye yombuso by McGovern, Ann. The underlined phrase displays improper use of an idiomatic expression which does not exist in the Zulu language. In Zulu it is said ayeseceginge phansi naphezulu.

- (i) Ukuoalekiswa wuThekwane by Liguori-Reynolds, Rosalie page twelve has a sentence that reads as follows:

Isilwane sasizimisele ukuyihudulela ogedeni lwayo intombazane, bese sibiza amazinyane aso.

The underlined words are wrong, ogedeni should read emgedeni. The concordance lwayo as used with ogedeni is wrong; it should have been lwaso.

- (j) Kwake kwakhona kudalo umgayi ompofu owayene-ndodakazi enhle kakhulu. Manje kwenzeka ngelinye ilanga waba nengxoxo neNkosi, ukuze-ke abonakale engumuntu osemqoka wayitshena ukuthi unendodakazi ekwazi ukuthandela utshani kube igolide.

The concordance as underlined in the above paragraph is wrong. It should be bube. This example is taken from uNgibhonabhonphi by Stobbs, William on page three.

- (k) In the book Unungu nemvubu by Cole, Babethe the following paragraph is found on page four.

"miningi imithi engayinikwa umkhulu. Kukhona owodwa osemqoka umuthi ozokwenza imvubu ikhohlele kakhulu kangangoba onke amanzi aphume emlonyeni wayo. Seso-buyelwa-ke umfula wethu!"

The underlined sentence should read as follow; Kukhona umuthi owodwa osemqoka, ongenza imvubu ikhwehlele kakhulu, kangangokuthi wonke amanzi asemlonyeni wayo aphume.

(1) Masinyane amanzi asefika edolweni, ngakho-ke abuza ilanga uma kwakungakabikho ngozi, ilanga futhi lathi, "Yebo," ke iningi lako langena phakathi.

Kwathi amanzi esethe ngqo phezulu ekhanda lendoda, amanzi, athi elangeni, "Usabafuna abaningi abantu bami beze?"

The above paragraph is found on page thirteen of a book entitled Yingani ilanga nenyanga kuhlala esibhakabhakeni by Dayrell, Eliphistone. For this paragraph to make sense and be understood it should read as follows:

Masinyane amanzi asefika edolweni, ngakho-ke abesebuza ilanga ukuthi akukakabi nangozi na?, ilanga lathi; "Yebo". Iningi lamanzi lase liqhubeka nokungena. Kwathi amanzi esethe ngqo phezulu, ekhanda lendoda, athi elangeni, "Usafuna yini abantu bami abaningi ukuthi beze?"

(m) In a book entitled Ikhaphethe elibomvu by Parkin, Rex the following paragraph has been extracted from page one.

Kwakumi ihotela elincane, iBellevue ibizo lalo. Emafasiteleni linamabhokisi aluhlaza ezimbali ezinhle. Umpheme onemithende emihle ukunqanda imvula . . . Ngezinsuku ezikhethiwe umlindi-mnyango oshaye eziluhlaza Ikhaphethe elihle elibomvu wayelendlala!

All the underlined words should be corrected as follows:

ibizo should be igama

ezimbali should be anezimbali

ukunqanda should be wokunqanda

oshaye should be wayeshaya

and the last sentence should read as follows:

andlale ikhaphethe enhle ebomvu .

- (n) UMbese kaShani wenhlanhla by Merril, Jean on page three we find the use of the word ezimtoti referring to izinkomishi. This is not a proper way of using a Zulu language. In Zulu ezinhle should have been used because mtoti is usually used to describe the taste of water.

- (o) Kiboko by Baum, Willi has a paragraph on page ten that reads as follows:

Ekuseni ngelinye ilanga uKiboko  
wavuka wazifumana esomile kuze kufike  
emadolweni akhe amakhulu, kanti  
nechibi linyamalala ngokushesha.

Poor use of the Zulu language is shown in the underlined words and also in the last sentence. Wazifumana should be wazithola and the last sentence should read; kanti nechibi laselinyamalele ngokushesha.

- (p) The following paragraph is taken from uMsamariya onesihawu by the Bible Society of South Africa page twenty four.

Wayeseya kuyo,  
wafike wagcoba ngamafutha amanxeba ayo  
wayesewabhandesha.

The word order is wrong and corrected as indicated above. Bandesha is an unnecessary translation because there is a Zulu work bopha which is still in use.

- (q) Indlovu enkulu nencane by Baumann, Herbert a paragraph on page two displays poor usage of the Zulu language in the underlined sentences.

Umbuzo-nje: "Awuthandi yini ukukhula?" owayewesaba.  
Ngoba-ke abanye abafana babengenakuyeka ukumbuza lokhu, wayeka wangadlala nabo. Wasethola indawo lapho owayezokhululeka kuyoyonke imibuzo: isiqhingi esincane phakathi nomfula. Lapho kwakumi umuthi omkhulu kunayo yonke imithi uRoy owake wayibona.

If corrected it would read as follows:

Umbuzo ayewesaba wawuthi; "Awuthandi yini ukukhula?"

Isiqhingi should be eyabe iyisiqhingi.

Owake wayibona should be ake ayibona.

- (r) In the book entitled Uthingo lwami lwenkosazana by Freeman, Don page fourteen a sentence reads as follows; Ngothi nove phezulu kwelinye icala ngishibilike, ngimpininize kwelinye.

Nove is not proper Zulu it should be nombe.

In the same book on page twenty five wrong word order is displayed in a sentence that reads ... selingenzele uthingo lwenkosazana nje kuphela lwami.....

The correct word order would be .... selingenzele uthingo lwenkosazana lwami nje kuphela...

- (s) The paragraph below is taken from i-Apula by Bruna, Dick on page nine. The words underlined are incorrectly used. The first sentence should either be "Ungakhathazi futhi ungakhathazeki" but preferably "Ungakhathazeki, Ungakhathazeki."

‘Ungakhathazi, ungakhathazeki,’  
sekusho

uQhude, ‘ngizokulanda kusihlwa,

bese sizivakashela kamnandi.

Ungakhali, yesula izinyembezi.’

(t) iNyamazane noFudu by Liguori-Reynolds, Rosalie the word Kwayinjwayelo on page four should read Kwakuyinjwayelo. On page six we also find a sentence that reads UMathonkana wanyonyobela kuNkosana eyayilele,... instead of UMakhonkana wanyonyobela iNkosana eyayilele,... On page twelve there is another short paragraph with a wrong word order. It reads as follows; Yajabula iNkosi - phela isangoma sasicebile futhi iNkosazana ilobolo lomhlambi wezinkomo ezikhuluphele. The correct sentences should have been; Yajabula iNkosi - phela isangoma sasicebile, futhi sizolobola iNkosazana ngomhlambi wezinkomo ezikhuluphele.

(u) The paragraph below is taken from a book by Fatio, Louise entitled UBhatomu Obomvu on page one. The underlined words are not Zulu but Xhosa, kwakungomncinci should read kwakungomncane and wezikhukukazi should be wezikhukhukazi.

**UBhatomu obomvu kwakungomncinci**  
kunazonke izilwane epulazini likaMnumzane Dumollet.  
Ngaphandle kwenyonyana eyayilapho.  
UNina wezikhukukazi wayazi ukuthi ngenke abamkhulu futhi  
aqine, ngoba iqanda lakhe lalilincanyana esidlekeni.

- (v) Use of Xhosa words instead of Zulu is also found in a book by Brown, Margaret Wise entitled Uma Umoya uvunguza the authors refers to eceleni as ecaleni whenever the word is used throughout the text.

4.3.3.3 Cultural incompatibility.

It is unacceptable in Black culture to address an adult by their names (Krige 1957:7). This is also reflected in their literature. In Black culture this displays total lack of respect and is never encouraged. This is however not the case in some Western cultures.

EXAMPLES

- (a) In uJani umenzi wekilogo by Ardizzone, Edward the following conversation takes place between Joe and Jani on page four:

"Uxolo Joe" kusho uJani enephika.....

"Kulungile", kusho uJoe, oyindoda enomusa.

UJani in this story is a boy who was asking for a favour from Joe. Joe is a grown up man or an adult as indicated above. According to Zulu culture adults are never addressed by their names by children. Jani should have said "Uxolo baba Joe" which is a more respectable and acceptable way of addressing an adult.

- (b) In the book entitled Ukuqalekiswa uThekwane by Liguori-Reynolds, Rosalie on page fourteen, there is also a display of cultural incompatibility.

The author states that "impungushe yagijima yaya entombini, yaluma isidwaba sayo....."

Isidwaba is only worn by married women and not izintombi. This young girl could not have been wearing isidwaba but another piece of garment called isigege.

- (c) Another example which shows cultural inconformity is the manner in which females address their male counterparts and vice versa. In a book entitled Ugogo uNomayacayaca

by Jacobs, Joseph the following is found on page three:

Ugogo uNomayacayaca wagxuma waphuma embhedeni, ngaphandle kwefasitela waveza ikhanda lakhe eligugile:

"Maye ndoda yami, maye ndoda yami ihansi elimpunga selihambile....."

This old lady was calling her husband's attention to what had happened. Indoda is a Zulu word for a man or husband while it is acceptable to refer to a man as indoda, it is unacceptable to refer to a husband as indoda in a language used for children's literature. It is more acceptable for a husband to be referred to as ubaba or umyeni.

Umama wami

(d)



Cultural incompatibility sometimes comes out in illustrations. e.g. The above illustration comes out of uJafta-Umama wami by Lewin, H. Illustrated by Kopper. In the above illustration the author can point out the following;

- (a) the type of pot used is never put directly on the fire but is put on a tripod stand or any other form of support, otherwise the fire goes out;
- (b) African mothers do not sit in the manner indicated i.e. legs apart, wearing short garments.
- (c) Traditional African women use mats for sitting and not logs. Besides the type of log she is sitting on is put in a wrong and dangerous position. Logs are specially prepared for sitting.

TABLE 14 AN ANALYSIS TO SHOW CHILDREN'S BOOKS THAT ARE UNSUITABLE

Total number of books	58	100 %
Books which showed poor vocabulary control	11	19
Books which showed poor language usage	22	38
Books which showed cultural incompatibility	4	7
Books with predominantly White illustrations	32	55
Total number of Titles that displayed one or more types of unsuitability	32	55

From the above we can see that 55 % of the 58 books showed one or other form of unsuitability.

#### 4.4 Discussion of the findings

The results show that 88 % of the books are translations, 55 % are unsuitable and 55 % have only White characters illustrated. The following discussion will look at the effect that these could have on a child who is learning to read for the first time.

#### 4.4.I. Translations

When a work is translated it means it is transferred into another language without altering the meaning, main theme or illustrations.

A translator needs to be a person who is fluent in both the original language of the work and the language into which the work is translated.

Since children's needs are universal, certain practices by children from one country are similar to those of children from another country. These practices are associated with general human behaviour like, eating, sleeping, fighting, working, use of the senses, etc. Needs which have been identified as similar are, however, governed by culture, and environment, which cause them to be expressed or interpreted in different ways.

Original literature of a country is centred around these practices with a background of the culture, environment and the language of the people.

Translations can handle the language but not the culture, environment or the people against which the story is based. This means a translator can translate the language but not the context of the story. This is what makes translations different from original works. Translations serve to broaden and improve a child's understanding of the world and people.

Children do need to be exposed to what they do not know so that they may know things they have not experienced, meet people they have not seen, see places they have never visited and understand the way of living of other people in different parts of the world. Such exposition is easily achieved through the reading of literature from different parts of the world. Because most children can only read one language, translated works serve to meet this demand.

Translations, however, should not be seen as a sole source of reading materials. They are a useful addition, but care should be taken that they are:

- (a) not going to be a complete substitute for original literature;
- (b) not going to be the only literature available to children learning to read for the first time;
- (c) done by people who are completely fluent in both the original language of the work and the language into which the work is translated.

It is therefore important that there is a good core collection of original literature for every language group and that this literature is written by people who will provide a portrayal of their own culture and their own situations.

When a child is introduced to reading for the first time he not only expects the language to be familiar but he also expects illustrations that will be an affirmation of his own culture.

This instills pride and a sense of belonging to a child.

Studies have shown that learning to read is as natural as learning to talk (Farr & Rose, 1979 : 4). In both instances the first step is to participate gradually in meaningful activities that are familiar to you and are part of your life. Thus the books available to a child during the formative reading period need to reflect familiar meaningful activities and experience, and be written in a language easily comprehended by the child.

#### 4.4.2. Vocabulary control

Every language has a store of terms referred to as a "vocabulary" which are used to express ideas in speech. Because a language belongs to a group of people, it is an expression of their way of life and as a result symbolises their culture. Thus people who speak different languages tend to have different ways of life.

People will not have terms or vocabulary in their language which will accommodate things that do not form part of their way of life. This is most significant when it comes to food, attire, environment, behaviour etc. e.g. Isidwaba, a traditional Zulu garment, similar to a pleated skirt, made out of treated cowhide, and only worn by married women at all times has no English equivalent. There are many such terms, describing different types of attire, food, etc. which do not have simple English equivalents, just as there are English terms which do not have Zulu equivalents, e.g. a bow tie, a sandwich, etc.

The translators of books from a foreign language into Zulu are faced with a problem of finding suitable words which sometimes do not exist. As a result new terms are created which are non-standard. The problem is compounded when it comes to culturally based idiomatic expressions and these are often poorly handled in translations.

4.4.3. Language usage

Language usage refers to the proper and acceptable use of the language. The correct use of the language also implies the correct use of grammar, correct sentence construction, and proper use of idiomatic expressions. Most of the books that the author read have very poorly constructed sentences and poor word structure mostly due to direct translation. When children read such literature they fail to apply prediction which plays a major role in reading. Through prediction children who know the language know how sentences are likely to proceed and be completed. Applied correctly, prediction may bring about excitement in reading, but frustration and conflict if the established language pattern is broken.

4.4.4. Cultural incompatibility

Swart (1983 : 31) states:

"But translations from other languages - and/or the original English texts - cannot be a complete substitute. Translations have cultural undertones, or unfamiliar and even unacceptable values, which might be incomprehensible to the young and average reader. They often have a cultural bias, or even a stereotypical portrayal of a culture and people to whom the reader of the translated work belongs, and thus be offensive and degrading".

Thus practices found in foreign books and translated directly into an African language might be in direct conflict with Black teachings or the Black people's way of life.

Some practices which are acceptable in one culture are sometime regarded as offensive in other cultures.

e.g.

According to Western culture one is free to give and receive from another person using either of one's hands, while in Black culture use of both hands or the right hand shows respect (Msimang 1975 : 9)

4.4.5. The illustrations in which White characters predominate

The role of illustrations in a children's story is to visualize parts of the text to help a child understand and enjoy the story. Illustrations also help to stimulate the child's imagination of some of the characters and to give more meaning to the story. While this is happening, a child seeks for the affirmation of his own existence and experience through the literature that he reads.

As shown in Table 13, out of the 58 books read 55 % have only White characters illustrated. This is understandable because they are originally from books written by and for Whites and also illustrated by and for Whites.

What is of concern at this stage is the effect which literature with predominantly White characters might have on a Black child.

Swart (1982 : 32) refers to Eloise Greenfield, a Black American author of children's books, who says:

"I write primarily for Black children because there are so few books for them and because I think it is so important for them to be able to look into a book or to look at a painting and see a reflection of their lives and the people in their family. It is important for everyone to see themselves reflected in the arts and to have that affirmation of their existence."

The presence of many familiar things in any learning situation is important. It helps a child to relate to the situations and gives him confidence. The young reader not only identifies himself with the central character, but is able to accompany him in his adventures (Zucrowski 1982 : 23).

In a South African situation where Black and White children do not grow up as playmates such an experience is unknown. The possibility exists that Black children will find it strange and unreal to participate in books with predominantly White characters.

CHAPTER 5

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study fulfills its primary task, viz to establish the fact that Zulu children's books are not available in the various places where one would normally expect to find them, in the Mehlwesizwe circuit. This paucity of children's literature, which makes the task of promoting reading interest among children difficult if not impossible, is due to a plethora of factors. The most significant ones are summarized in this chapter. This study would be incomplete if it simply identified the problem without suggesting solutions, consequently the author also submits recommendations which in her opinion, if implemented, could contribute significantly towards reducing the magnitude of the problem.

5.2 Summary of findings

5.2.1 Library service

Except for the Empangeni Public Library which is now open to Blacks, but is inaccessible to most

Black children because of distance, and the children's library at the University, which also caters for a limited number of children's because of its size and location, there are no other library services for Blacks in this circuit.

Libraries were also not provided for in the planning of school buildings. Existing classrooms cannot be converted into libraries because of the chronic overcrowding which also makes it difficult to build classroom collections.

5.2.2 Unavailability of Zulu children's literature in South Africa.

This study reveals that Zulu children's books for general reading are not only unavailable in Mehlwesizwe circuit but also that very few of these books have been published in South Africa. The main reason for this is the financial implication. Publishers argue that South African Blacks do not guarantee a market for books in the vernacular, since they are known to be non-

readers. This argument is supported by Van Schaik (1982:59) when he states:

"There is as yet no reading public for books in the African Languages other than that created artificially by educational requirements."

As a result of the above requirements publishers often turned down manuscripts written in vernacular if they were not designed for school use. Bookshops only stock those titles which will be purchased by schools and colleges.

### 5.2.3 Unsuitability

A large fraction of the few available Zulu children's books are not suitable for various reasons. It is noteworthy that 88 % of them are translations from other languages. The problems that most of these translations pose to Black pupils who are beginning to read can be insurmountable, as has been discussed in Chapter 4.

### 5.3 Recommendations

From this study it can be deduced that the following could go a long way towards promoting a reading interest, not only among children but also among those adults that can only read the vernaculars.

#### 5.3.1 Public\*library services

Since the Central Government is the body with the most resources in South Africa, it must address the backlog that exists in the provision of library services for the Black community. Every Black township or settlement should have an access to a library facility as is the case with the White counterparts.

Homelands like KwaZulu which adopted a Library Act but has difficulty in implementing because of various reasons could consider the following:

- a) handing over all the library services to the Natal Provincial Administration. This could be simple because the structure already exists through which library services to Blacks in Natal would be facilitated.

Provincial library services have also declared themselves willing to assist in the homelands or undertake this task on an agency basis (Frylinck, 1980:57).

- b) filling of the post of Director of Library Services with a suitably qualified person, who will be capable of establishing and developing a library service through proper staffing and making sure that a library service receives a fair share in the financial cake.

#### 5.3.2 School libraries

The government education departments should incorporate a library in every new school that is planned. Existing school buildings should be extended to include a library. A school library should be regarded as serving a central purpose of supporting the curriculum.

As an interim measure, core libraries could be established to serve several schools which are in close proximity. Such libraries could also serve the public library needs for Black communities. Libraries of this nature should be staffed by full

time professional librarians paid by the education department. Schools could either make block loans, or children could visit individually or both.

### 5.3.3 Training of Teachers

Library skills should be taught in all teacher training institutions. All teachers need to be equipped with basic library skills so that the running of a school library is not confined to only one person or to no one.

The departments of education together with the professional librarians from library schools and public libraries could draw a library course and decide on the venue where teachers could be trained to acquire basic library skills so that they can start library services in their own schools.

This can be done during vacations, and continue as long as there is need for it.

5.3.4 Role played by:

a) Black authors

Black authors should be encouraged to produce literature written in the child's language and compatible with their culture and natural environment as suggested by Mocke in Chapter 5. Writing opportunities should be created for those uneducated Blacks who have a writing talent but lack the professional skills of script production.

b) Publishers

White publishers will have to shift their emphasis from a primarily profit orientated approach into one that focuses on the information needs of the people they are serving as suggested by Mphahlele (1982:56):

"My guess is that publishers do not see it as their function to develop good taste. They are out for business and profits. They want a ready market which only needs commercial and advertising gimmicks to set it "jumping". They do not want to have to get down to grassroots, such as need to be reckoned with in the production of African language literature. I also suspect that publishers of African languages are scared of manuscripts that appeal to the political consciousness of an adult readership, fear of the brutal realities of official censorship - who knows?"

More independent Black publishers, such as Skotaville Publishers for Nation Building need to be established. These publishers should form the missing vital link between the author and the society for which he is writing. Reading needs for Blacks are better understood by other Blacks.

c) Media

The various media can promote the development of reading interest through drama, whereby literature is made alive, especially to children. Interviews with authors could be televised and book reviews can be published in the popular magazines and newspapers read by the Black society.

5.4 General conclusion

Since suitable Zulu children's books were found to be unavailable in Mehlwesizwe circuit, the possibility exists that the same dearth of Zulu children's books exists in the rest of KwaZulu and even in the whole of South Africa. As a result of this the cultivation of reading interest in the children at the age when they are most susceptible to it is hampered. The political situation in South Africa which has oppressed Blacks educationally, economically and socially takes most of the blame for most of the problems that have been identified in Black communities including lack of reading material. This must be addressed and equal opportunities be implemented as well as discussed.

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ANNEXTURE A

LIST OF SCHOOLS WITH LOWER PRIMARY IN MEHLWESIZWE CIRCUIT

Lower Primary = Sub-standard A - Standard 2  
Primary = Sub-standard A - Standard 5  
Combined Primary = Sub-standard A - Standard 4

- |     |              |   |                  |
|-----|--------------|---|------------------|
| 1.  | Dokodweni    | - | Primary          |
| 2.  | Ebuhleni     | - | "                |
| 3.  | Ekudonseni   | - | Lower Primary    |
| 4.  | Emhlubulweni | - | Combined Primary |
| 5.  | Emoyeni      | - | Primary          |
| 6.  | Empembeni    | - | "                |
| 7.  | Emuseni      | - | "                |
| 8.  | Emvutshini   | - | "                |
| 9.  | Endlovini    | - | "                |
| 10. | Ensingweni   | - | "                |
| 11. | Enyezane     | - | "                |
| 12. | Ethakasani   | - | Lower Primary    |
| 13. | Exhaphozini  | - | Lower Primary    |
| 14. | Gobandlovu   | - | Primary          |
| 15. | Isinyabusi   | - | "                |
| 16. | Ivukayibambe | - | "                |
| 17. | Khulekani    | - | Lower Primary    |
| 18. | Lambothi     | - | "                |
| 19. | Lindelihle   | - | "                |
| 20. | Lokothwayo   | - | Lower Primary    |

21.	Macambini	-	Lower	Primary
22.	Mangethe	-		"
23.	Mangqakaza	-		"
24.	Manzamnyama	-		"
25.	Maqhama	-	Combined	Primary
26.	Mantshangule	-	Lower	Primary
27.	Mgovuzo	-	Combined	Primary
28.	Mhlanga	-		"
29.	Mzingwenya	-	Lower	Primary
30.	Ncekwana	-		"
31.	Nhlangenyuke	-	Combined	Primary
32.	Nkunzemalunda	-	Lower	Primary
33.	Nsiwa	-		"
34.	Nteneshane	-	Combined	Primary
35.	Ntshidi	-		Primary
36.	Obanjeni	-		"
37.	Ongoye	-		"
38.	Oyemeni	-	Lower	Primary
39.	Phalane	-		"
40.	Qambokwethu	-	Lower	Primary
41.	Sibambisene	-		Primary
42.	Sakhesethu	-		"
43.	Sonqoba	-	Combined	Primary
44.	Umkhukhuze	-	Combined	Primary
45.	Wangu	-		Primary
46.	Wombane	-	Lower	Primary
47.	Xabisweni	-	Lower	Primary

ANNEXTURE B

QUESTIONNAIRE TO PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Name of School .....

Please NOTE what is meant by the following terms:

- a) Textbooks : books designed for teaching purposes, usually prescribed books.  
e.g. Modern Graded English.  
Umasihambisane.
- b) Books of a general nature : books other than textbooks for leisure reading or to supplement textbooks.  
e.g. Umadevana umfana wekati.  
Goldilocks and the three bears

INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE INDICATE THE CORRECT ANSWER BY MEANS OF A CROSS (X) IN THE BLOCKS PROVIDED.

1. What is your position in the school?

- Principal  
 Vice-Principal  
 Assistant Teacher

2. Does your school have:

- a school library building?  
 a class-room used as a school library?  
 class-room book collection (not textbooks)?  
 None of the above

3. What type of books does your school keep?

- Textbooks only
- Mainly textbooks and few general books
- Textbooks and general books equally
- More general books than textbooks
- No books at all

4. If your school has books other than textbooks did you obtain them from:

- Department of Education & Culture?
- School funds?
- Donations?

5. How many books does your school have of a general nature?

- More than 1 000
- 750 - 1 000
- 500 - 750
- 250 - 500
- 100 - 250
- less than 100
- None

6. In your school, do you have

- a)  a teacher librarian responsible for the school library?
- b)  an assistant teacher responsible for the library as an additional duty?
- c)  each teacher responsible for the collection in his/her own class-room?
- d)  No one responsible for the library?



8. Are you aware of the existence of a children's library at the University of Zululand? 

Yes	No
-----	----

9. Do any of the pupils in your school use it? 

Yes	No
-----	----

10. Do you know that Empangeni Public Library is open to all races? 

Yes	No
-----	----

11. Do you know its location in town? 

Yes	No
-----	----

12. Do you have a period in your school time-table allocated to library or reading? 

Yes	No
-----	----

13. If YES, a) length ..... min  
b) No of times per week .....

14. Do teachers use it for the:

- reading of prescribed books only?
- reading of prescribed & general books?
- reading of general books only?
- teaching of other subjects?

15. What type of reading takes place?

- pupils read quietly on their own
- pupils read aloud in turns
- teachers reads aloud to a class
- all of the above on different days

16. Do pupils read books in

- English?
- Zulu?
- English and Zulu?

Fill in the details

a) Sub standard A

Total number of pupils .....  
Number of classrooms allocated .....  
Number of Teachers for Sub standard B .....  
Subjects taught .....

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....
9. ....
10. ....

b) Sub standard B

Total number of pupils .....  
Number of class-rooms allocated .....  
Number of pupils in each class-room .....  
Number of Teachers for Standard 1 .....  
Subjects taught .....

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....
9. ....
10. ....

c) Standard One

Total number of pupils .....  
Number of class-rooms allocated .....  
Number of pupils in each classroom .....  
Number of Teachers for Sub standard A .....  
Subjects taught .....

1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....  
4. ....  
5. ....  
6. ....  
7. ....  
8. ....  
9. ....  
10. ....

Standard Two

Total number of pupils .....  
Number of class-rooms allocated .....  
Number of pupils in each class-room .....  
Number of Teachers for Standard 2 .....  
Subjects taught .....

1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....  
4. ....  
5. ....  
6. ....  
7. ....  
8. ....  
9. ....  
10. ....



LIST OF PUBLISHERS SELECTED FROM SANB FOR THIS REASEARCH

1. Academic (H & R) (Edms) Bpk.
2. Africa Institute of South Africa.
3. Balkema (A A) Uitgawers.
4. Bible Society of South Africa.
5. Books of Africa (Pty Ltd).
6. Haum - Daan Retief Uitgawers.
7. De Jager-Haum.
8. Educum.
9. Errol Marx.
10. Human & Rousseau.
11. J.L. Schaik (Edms) Bpk.
12. Juta & Kie.
13. KwaZulu Booksellers.
14. Lovedale Press.
15. Macdonald-Purnell
16. MacGraw-Hill Book Co.
17. Macmillan S.A. (Publishers) (Pty) Ltd.
18. Maskew Miller Longman.
19. Oxford University Press.
20. Perskor Boeke.
21. Qualitas Publishers: Mandini and Pretoria.
22. Ravan Press.
23. Skotaville Publishers for the New Nation.
24. Shuter & Shooter.
25. Van Schaik (J.L.) (Edms) Bpk.
26. Via Africa.
27. Zulu Publication.

ANNEXURE D

University of Zululand  
Private Bag X 1001  
KWA-DLANGEZWA  
3886

10 July 1986

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a lecturer at the University of Zululand (Department of Library and Information Science) and I am busy with my M.A. Dissertation entitled: "An investigation into the availability of Zulu children's literature for lower primary school pupils of Mhlabesizwe Circuit as a prerequisite for the cultivation of a reading habit."

After establishing a children's library at the University which is used mainly by lower primary school pupil of this area I discovered that Zulu children's literature is very scarce, the little that is available is unsuitable, hence this research. It is my opinion as a librarian which I share with most of my colleagues that children can only enjoy reading and adopt it as a habit if they are provided with literature written for them in their own language during their early stages of education.

May I ask you at your earliest convenience to send me an Author/Title list of ALL ZULU CHILDREN'S BOOKS that have been published by your company, including translations and those planned for publications. Results of my research will be made available to you if you so wish.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation.

M M NHLANHLA (MRS)

P/S Please note that lower primary school include classes from Sub-standard A - Standard 2.

ANNEXURE E

LIST OF PUBLISHERS AND THEIR PUBLICATIONS

NB \* denotes all books read by the author for this research

1. BIBLE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

*UMsamariya onesihawu.	1981
*UMsamariya onesihawu.	1985
*UJesu usodwendweni.	1985
*UJesu nesiphepho.	1985
*Iziqephu zendaba enhle ezilungiselwe abasaqala ukufunda.	1977
*Ukuzalwa kukaJesu.	1985
*UJesu uyaphila.	1985
UZakewu.	1985
UJesu uphilisa isiguli.	1985
UJesu uphilisa impumputhe.	1985
Ingane enguJohane.	1985
UJesu nentombazanyana.	1985
Indodana eyabhunguka.	1985
UJesu useyavalelisa.	1985
Ekuqaleni.	1985
UNowa.	1985
UAbrahama.	1985
UJakobe noEsawu.	1985
UJosefa.	1985
UMose.	1985
UDavide.	1985

2. De JAGER HAUM

BRUNA, D. (trans. by MSIMANG, C.T.)

*I-Apula.	1980
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