

THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.


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SIGNATURE

ANNEMARIÉ DE BRUIN


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DATE

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SUMMARY

Chapter 1 introduces the study by means of its aim, scope, methodology and terminology. It also hosts summaries of all the folktales that are analysed in this study.

Chapter 2 is a study of parenthood and its portrayal in Zulu folktales. Motherhood and fatherhood will be scrutinised separately.

Chapter 3 concentrates on girl characters as siblings, brides and companions to old men.

Chapter 4 analyses boy characters as herd boys, villains, tricksters and companions to old women.

Chapter 5 concentrates on the status of the Zulu folktale. The influence of urbanisation, gender, and the media will receive attention. The lessons that folktales teach will be noted.

Chapter 6 concludes and summarises this study and hosts recommendations on the promotion of Zulu folktales.

KEY TERMS:

Parenthood, girlhood, boyhood, Zulu culture, portrayal, didactic, ubuntu, rewards, punishment, gender, urbanisation, media, grandmothers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVE.

1.1 PREAMBLE.

Much has been written about the Zulu folktale. Investigations have been done into the roles of women, magic, family structures and animals in these folktales. Yet, the most important ingredient of a successful folktale was left untouched: the child!

Children are the main audience or readers of folktales. In fact, one can go so far as to claim that folktales are formulated for children. Not only in the Zulu culture, but also in most other cultures, folktales are employed to entertain, educate, warn and inspire children. Folktales are however not enjoyed exclusively by children; children are just more in awe of them than adults!

One of the reasons why children are so fond of folktales may be that the heroes are very often children themselves; good ones and bad ones. The actions of these characters and the consequences of their actions serve as lessons and examples to the folktale audience. Children easily identify with child characters.

The setting of a Zulu folktale is obviously the Zulu society. Norms and rules of the Zulu society are portrayed in these folktales. The children who listen to these tales will realise that the actions of the child characters always bear consequences. Characters who do well according to the rules of Zulu society are rewarded, whereas characters that disobey these rules are punished.

The Zulu society consists of men, women, boys and girls and for each group there is a different set of rules and standards to live up to. Girls have to be well behaved and obedient. They should also be subordinate, timid, hardworking and clever. In most of the Zulu folktales "good" girls are rewarded with a good husband and the prospect of bearing him healthy children. "Bad" girls are always punished.

Boys have their own set of rules to follow. The rules mainly demand that a boy should be brave, clever, respectful and a very good cattle herdsman. Boys who are all of the above always receive rewards, usually in the form of cattle. Boys who do not comply with the expectations are punished.

In the traditional Zulu society children are viewed as part of their parents' wealth. Sons are the bearers of their fathers' names and thus also their pride. Daughters are said to be the cattle of their fathers, because they bring in the **lobola** cattle when they get married. Every Zulu man or woman will thus strive to have children. The inability to produce children is considered abnormal and treated

with suspicion. If parents are blessed with children they have to raise them according to a fixed set of rules and discipline them to become responsible members of society.

In the Zulu folktale there are often lessons to be learnt about parenting. Although children are usually the folktales' audience, there are also often young adults present who stand on the threshold of becoming parents themselves. They will learn how to raise their prospective children well and what the consequences can be if a parent is neglectful, loveless, etc.

Grandmothers originally performed folktales at night, just before bedtime, intending to educate and entertain their grandchildren. Unfortunately this has changed dramatically as a result of several factors, westernization being the most influential.

Today few children have the opportunity to hear folktales from their grannies. Today folktales survive by means of the modern media, such as the radio, television and storybooks. The availability of the above will thus influence the knowledge that children have of their culture's folktales.

1.1.1 AIM OF STUDY.

This study focuses on the roles that children play in the Zulu folktale. It does not only investigate the roles that children play as characters in the folktale, but also the role that children play as the folktale audience.

Zulu folktales are about Zulu characters. Zulu characters live in a fantasised Zulu society. It can be said that folktales are mirrors of society, because the actions of the characters are influenced by the society of which they are part. Actions that are condoned in some societies may be viewed as trespasses in others.

This study will aim to answer the following questions:

How does the Zulu folktale portray the reality of being a parent in the Zulu society? Which lessons are there to be learned about parenting in the Zulu folktale? The answer to these questions will be given in Chapter 2.

What effect do Zulu norms have on the actions and the consequences of the actions of girl characters in the Zulu folktale? What are the lessons to be learned regarding girlhood? Chapter 3 will deal with these questions.

How does the Zulu culture reflect on the boy characters in the Zulu folktale?

What is taught about boyhood in the Zulu folktale? Chapter 4 is dedicated to answering these questions.

What is the status of the Zulu folktale today? How do folktales reach their audience today? Chapter 5 will aim to answer these questions.

1.1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

Structuralism plays a minute part in this study. Little attention will be given to literary components such as time, and plot. Characterisation and setting are the focal points. Structuralists however, do not look beyond the language in a literary work. This study aims to look at the lessons taught beyond the actual literary work. Attention is also given to the ethnography of the Zulu culture. It is necessary to understand this culture in order to understand the actions and the consequences of these actions committed by characters in Zulu folktales.

This study is also not guided by feminism. Although Chapter 3 is involved with the role of girls in the Zulu folktale, the aim of this chapter is not to criticise folktales as being degrading towards girls. The aim of this chapter is rather to show the reality of being a girl in the Zulu society and how this reality is portrayed in Zulu folktales. According to Peck and Coyle (1984:152) feminism does not only describe the way things are, but also aims to change the way they are. This

study is about folktales which are usually rather ancient. They depict life as it was in the past and which thus can not be changed.

None of the popular literary criticisms are utilised in this study. This study is not purely literary. Anthropology also plays a significant role. In each of the chapters the ethnography of the Zulu culture is associated with folktales. The importance of ethnography in the study of folktales is summarised in the following quotation by Röhrich (1991:xii):

In short, a folktale is not an isolated text and must be considered within the context of the ethnic group from which it originates.

1.1.3 DELIMINATION OF SCOPE.

The role of children in Zulu folktales is investigated in this study. Zulu folktales with children as heroes or villains are sampled. Folktales with parenthood as a theme are also chosen. Some of the folktales appear in more than one book. The chosen folktales are found in the following books:

Canonici, N.(1993)	Izinganekwane. An anthology of Zulu Folktales.
	<i>Wangiweza phela.</i>
	<i>Uhlakanyana.</i>
	<i>Inyoni yensimu nenyoni yamasi.</i>
	<i>UMshayandlela.</i>

UNanabosele.

UMphangose.

UNoqandakazana.

Inyoka enamakhanda ayisikhombisa.

UMamba kaMaquba.

UBhadazela noMningi.

UMabhejana.

UNokuthula.

Intombi eyayiyochanguza.

UGubudela kaNomantshali.

Izimuzimu nentombazana.

UZembeni noma Uzwanide.

UDumudumu.

UGunqu.

UNKombose noSihlangusabayeni.

Umkhwekazi namasi.

UBuhlaluse beNkosi.

INtombi yaphansi.

Indaba kaPhoshozwayo.

UTulube.

Du Toit, B.M. (1976)

Content and Context of Zulu Folk-Narratives.

The young man who was unkind to animals.

Mshayandlela -The Striker of the Road.

Ntombo and the Water Snake.

Mabuya, L.T.L.(1983)

Intshengula.

ULuyeza, inyoka enkulu.

Makhambeni, N.(1990)

Izaqheqhe.

UBuhlaluse beNkosi.

UDemana noDemazane.

Mhlope, G&Thladi, N.(1998) **Kwesukesukela. Stories from Africa.**

Jabulani and the lion.

Msimang, C.T.(1987)

Folktale influence on the Zulu novel.

UMshayandlela.

UDemane noDemazane.

UNkombose noSihlangusabayeni.

Ukwelusa kukaChakijana.

UHlakanyana.

Wangiweza phela.

UGubudela kaNomantshali.

UDumudumu.

UMphangose.

UMabhejane.

UMamba kaMaquba.

USikhulumi kaHlokohloko.

Msimang, C.T.(1988) **Osiyazi kanye nezinye izinganekwane.**

UZimu-madlabantu

Mutwa, C. V. (1997) **Isilwane, The animal.**

King Mageba and the lion.

Makiwane and the ant bear.

Mutwa, C.V.(1997) **Usiko.Tales from Africa's Treasure Trove.**

The story of Mzikayise.

Theal, G.M.(1882) **Kaffir Folk-lore.**

The story of Hlakanyana.

A compact summary of each of these folktales will follow.

1.1.3.1 Summary of Folktales.

i) Wangiweza phela.

A woman has 10 children. Chakijana must cook for her while she goes to the fields. One by one Chakijana cooks her children and gives them to her to eat. He tricks her by bringing the same child over and over to be fed. Chakijana flees after he has told the woman what he did.

ii) UHlakanyana.

The wife of a chief could not get pregnant. After ancestral intervention, she falls pregnant. Hlakanyana orders her from inside the womb to give birth to him. After he has been born, he takes his father's spear and cuts his own umbilical cord. Then he sets out to the cattle byre, where he sits down and eats meat. He steals the men's meat and gives it to his mother to cook. The woman sings a song in which it is told how clever and prodigious Hlakanyana is.

Hlakanyana empties the bird traps of the other boys. He asks his mother to cook the birds for him. He secretly eats the birds and then accuses his mother that he is not her and her husband's child. Then he leaves.

Hlakanyana is caught by an ogre while he is stealing his birds. He convinces the ogre to take him to his home to wash him before he eats him. The ogre leaves him with his (the ogre's) mother. The ogre's mother is supposed to cook Hlakanyana.

Hlakanyana plays cook-in-the-pot with the ogre's mother, but tricks her to her death. The ogres unwittingly eat their own mother, Hlakanyana flees.

Hlakanyana offers to look after a leopard's two cubs. He eats one and gives her the remaining one twice to be suckled. He sets a trap for the leopard in which she is killed. He then eats her and the remaining cub. He then leaves with one of the leopards' legs.

Hlakanyana befriends an ogre by giving him the leopard's leg. Two cows appear. They cook and eat the first cow. It was very lean. Hlakanyana suggests that they do some thatching before eating the second cow. He braids the ogre's hair into the thatching. Then, with the ogre helplessly entangled in the thatching, Hlakanyana cooks and eats the remaining cow. Then he leaves.

Hlakanyana meets an ogre with a musical calabash. The ogre refuses to have anything to do with him. Hlakanyana gives him a bag filled with snakes, wasps and scorpions. The ogre is killed when he opens the bag.

Hlakanyana finds the lizard at the water. The lizard has stolen his flute. Hlakanyana kills the lizard. He takes his flute and decides to return to his home.

Hlakanyana's mother eats the tuber that he has left in her care. She gives him a milk pail as compensation. He lends the pail to some boys. They break the pail. They give him an assegai as compensation. He lends the assegai to some other boys. They accidentally break the assegai. They give him an axe as compensation. Hlakanyana lends his axe to a few women who are trying to cut wood. The women accidentally break the axe. They give Hlakanyana a blanket. Hlakanyana meets two boys who are sleeping without a blanket. He lends them his blanket. They tear the blanket. The boys give him a shield as compensation. Hlakanyana lends his shield to some men who are fighting a leopard. The shield breaks. The men give him a war assegai. Hlakanyana goes on his way.

In another version (in Msimang, 1987) of this tale, Hlakanyana loses his flute to an iguana. Theal's (1882) version of this tale ends where Hlakanyana is killed. He has put a tortoise onto his back. The tortoise does not want to get off. Hlakanyana's mother pours hot fat on Hlakanyana's back. The tortoise escapes, but Hlakanyana is killed.

iii) *Inyoni yensimu nenyoni yamasi.*

A woman tries to weed the field. A bird, however sings a magical chant and the woman's work becomes undone again. This happens twice. On the third day her husband goes with her to the field. The husband catches the bird and puts it in a pot. This bird squirts maas.

The husband and wife eat maas everyday without giving their children, Demane and Demazane, a drop. Demazane opens the bird's pot, takes out the bird and then eats the maas. Demane tries to warn her, but she doesn't pay attention and the maas bird escapes. She replaces the maas bird with a crow. When he finds the crow, their father is furious. As punishment, their parents force sharp needles into their ears, right through their heads.

The children run away and remove the needles. They reach the Rock of Ntunjambili. Against her brother's orders, Demazane roasts fat meat and, so doing, attracts an ogre that steals the rest of their meat. Demane scolds his sister. They stay at Ntunjambili until they both get married.

iv) *UMshayandlela.*

Some cannibals approach a boy while he is herding. They take his cattle. The boy follows them. The big bull, Mshayandlela, refuses to walk. The ogres

threaten to eat the boy if he doesn't drive the cattle. The boy sings to Mshayandlela. Mshayandlela obeys. This happens several times.

Mshayandlela refuses to be killed, skinned and cut up. Each time the boy has to sing and Mshayandlela obeys. Mshayandlela is killed and skinned. The cannibals go to the river to wash. They leave the boy with an old blind woman. The boy miraculously restores Mshayandlela and flees with the cattle.

The cannibals follow the boy, but he cunningly drowns them. At home, the boy receives Mshayandlela as a reward.

v) *UNananabosele.*

Nananabosele builds a house on the animal path. All the animals warn her child, who is sitting on the path, that Sondonzima is coming. Sondozima comes and swallows the child.

Nananabosele takes a spear, a pot filled with water, a hoe handle and a burning log and puts it in her basket. She aggravates Sondonzima until he swallows her. Sondonzima's stomach is full of people. Nananabosele starts to cut, cook and eat Sondonzima from inside. Sondonzima dies. The people praise her and agree to become hers. Nananabosele stays with her newly found people.

vi) *UMphangose*.

Mphangose's people were killed by an army. Because of her beauty, Mpangose is saved. Mphangose escapes and decides to go to her father's sister at Mkindinkomo's place.

She meets an **imbulu** (monitor lizard). The **imbulu** tricks Mphangose into accepting the role of a servant. The **imbulu** pretends to be Mphangose. It is decided that Mphangose (the **imbulu**) must marry Mkindinkomo. The real Mphangose, together with an old man, has to chase the birds away from the fields. Mphangose sings to the birds and they go away. Mphangose has a magical stick which, if she hits the ground with it, can produce food as well as all her father's cattle.

The old man sees the true beauty of Mphangose after she has bathed. He reveals her secret to Mkhindinkomo. Mkhindinkomo digs a pit and puts a calabash in the bottom. The brides are ordered to jump over the hole. The **imbulu** falls in the pit. The **imbulu** is buried, but its one eye comes out and changes into a pumpkin plant. Mphangose marries Mkindinkomo. The pumpkin tries to kill Mphangose's first child. Her husband cuts up the pumpkin, burns it and throws the ashes in the water.

vii) *UNoqandakazana.*

Noqandakazana and Thembeletsheni are sisters. A chief wants to marry Thembeletsheni, but Noqandakazana decides, against their father's wishes, to marry this chief. The sisters leave to pursue marriage. Noqandakazana misdirects her sister towards the homestead of dogs.

Noqandakazana then goes to the chief's place, saying that her sister has refused to come along. A cape canary tells the chief the truth. Meanwhile Thembeletsheni leaves the homestead of the dogs. On her way to the chief's place, she encounters some ogres. She manages to kill them all.

At the river near the chief's place, the two sisters meet each other again. Noqandakazana convinces Thembeletsheni to become her mud-smearred slave. She tells her that the chief does not want her anymore after she has been with the dogs. Thembeletsheni is taken to the chief's place where she, together with an old man, must guard the gardens. Thembeletsheni sings to the birds, telling them her story. The old man follows her and sees how she uses a magical stick to produce food and also how beautiful she is after she has bathed. He tells the chief. The chief then takes her home with him. Noqandakazana is sent home without an escort.

Noqandakazana then marries Nsolo. She opens Nsolo's pot. A snake comes out and bites her. Noqandakazana dies.

viii) Inyoka enamakhanda ayisikhombisa.

There lives a snake with seven heads in a pot in a certain woman's room. The children are forbidden to go there, because the woman is a great witch.

Some naughty children decide, in spite of the warnings of others, to enter the room and to open the pot. The snake with seven heads escapes, the children run away. The snake goes to stay at the water. At the water, some girls see the snake. They run away and report to the woman of their village. The woman also goes to the river to view this snake. She is scared away too.

Disbelieving, the men of the village go to seek the snake. The snake is by now very annoyed and chases the men. Everybody throws long thorns on the path. The snake is killed by the thorns.

ix) UMamba kaMaquba.

Two sisters go to collect water. The elder breaks her calabash and sends the younger home to tell their mother. Although their mother has said that is

forgivable, the youngest lies and tells her sister that their mother banned her from home.

The older girl decides to marry Mamba of Maquba. On her way she meets an old woman. She helps the old woman by licking her oozing eye. The old woman blesses Thokozile. The old woman gives her advice on how to be a successful bride. Thokozile meets Mamba and by following the old woman's instructions, is successful in her marriage and bears a child.

Thokozile goes to see her mother. The younger sister is envious of Thokozile's success. She too pursues marriage to Mamba. She meets the old woman, but refuses to help her. She is cursed by the old woman. Not having received any advice on the matter of marriage, she is unsuccessful. Mamba chases her home. The people of her homestead kill and burn Mamba. Thokozile buries his ashes in her hut. A man arises from the ashes. Thokozile and Mamba, now a man, live happily ever after.

x) *UBhadazela noMningi.*

A new king needs the liver fat of a water dragon for his strengthening. Mningi, a snake with many heads, protects the water dragons. The king promises the hand in marriage of his daughter, Ntanyana, to any man who can bring him the

dragon's liver fat. Many men tried, but failed. Bhadzela, who is not very big and strong, also wants to try.

He builds a house, leaving only a small hole in the walls. He takes his horse and rides to Mningi's pool. He steals Mningi's lamp and then flees with Mningi behind him. He reaches the house and enters it. Mningi forces his heads one by one into the small hole in the wall. One by one Bhadzela cuts off Mningi's heads. Mningi is dead. Bhadzela goes back to the pool to get the dragon's liver fat. The king is strengthened and Bhadzela marries Ntanyana. They live happily ever after.

xi) UMabhejana.

Mahlokohloko, the son of Sikhulumi, wants to marry Mabhejana's daughter. Mabhejana is a witch. Mahlokohloko sends ten men to the bride's home. Mabhejana kills them with lightning. Another ten men are sent. Mabhejana kills them also.

Then Mahlokohloko himself goes. He meets an old woman. On her request, he licks her oozing eye. She gives him the gallbladder of a house lizard. The gall bladder advises Mahlokohloko on several occasions. Mabhejana is outwitted. Mahlokohloko returns to his home with his bride. He is warned by the gallbladder

not to step onto the footpath. He accidentally sets a foot onto the path. Mabhejana bewitches his footprint. Mahlokohloko turns into a bull.

The gallbladder advises Mabhejana's daughter to stab and burn the bull. The ashes are thrown into the water. Mahlokohloko emerges from the water. They live happily ever after.

xii) UNokuthula.

Two sisters leave home to visit their granny. The eldest did not pay attention to their mother's warnings and so they arrive at the house of Nokuthula's mother who is a cannibal. Nokuthula's brother is also a cannibal, but she is not.

Despite Nokuthula's efforts to hide the girls, her mother finds out about them and tries to kill them. Nokuthula takes an egg, a stick and a stone and leaves with the girls. The egg helps the girls by causing a dense mist; the stick by changing into a thick forest and the stone by changing into sharp stones. Nokuthula's mother, however, is able to overcome all these obstacles. Nokuthula buries some of their hair. This hair calls to Nokuthula's mother. She gets confused and returns home. Nokuthula and the two girls reach the grandmother's place. An ox is slaughtered in honour of Nokuthula. She stays there until she gets married.

xiii) *Intombi eyayiyochanguza.*

A girl, who is entering puberty, loses her grass skirt while she is swimming with her friends. She goes to search for her skirt. On her way she meets a chief. He takes her to his home to look after his children. One day she swings in a tree. The branch breaks and she lands in a large village. The chief, who has only one leg, marries her.

She bears two one-legged and two two-legged children. The chief orders her, and the two-legged children, to be killed. The soldiers go to collect reeds to kill her. She remains alone with an old woman. On request she cooks fat for the old woman. The old woman informs her about the chief's plan. The old woman gives her advice. She leaves with her two-legged children.

She reaches a river. She throws her necklace in the river. The water parts and she crosses over. The water fills up again. The chief and his soldiers want to cross the river. She throws them a rope, but as soon as they are in the river, she lets go of the rope and they drown.

The one child collects two rock pigeon eggs. A leopard wants to eat the bride and her children. One egg advises her to throw some groundnuts covered with fat on the road. The leopard eats the groundnuts and then starts to lick the fat off the road. The bride escapes with her children. They reach her family home.

There are ogres at her home. The eggs advice her to lie on a shelf and to throw a stone on the ogre-leader's stomach. The chief ogre dies. The other ogres run away.

The bride's father and mother and some other people come out of the ogre's stomach.

xiv) UGubudela kaNomantshali.

Gubudela takes the cattle to the veld. He meets a cannibal. They play a game of getting into- and out of the cannibal's bag. The cannibal returns to his home and boasts to his friends that he will catch Gubudela on their third encounter.

After they have played on the second day, Gubudela stalks the cannibal and hears how the cannibal plans to catch him. He also hears how the cannibal is going to throw him into a burning house. On the third day, Gubudela refuses to get into the bag first. The cannibal gets into the bag, Gubudela takes him to the homestead of the cannibals and throws him into the fire. The cannibals are furious.

At home Gubudela's father roasts a cow. The cannibals come after the smell. Gubudela flees, but his father gets eaten. Gubudela brews beer with dagga in and he invites the cannibals. While they are drugged, he burns them all in a

sealed hut. The cannibals' ashes are thrown into a river. Some people drink the contaminated water. They ask Gubudela to join them. He refuses and kills them all. All the cannibals are gone from Gubudela's country.

xv) *Izimuzimu nentombazana.*

A family moves away from their house. The daughter, Nomvula, refuses to go. Her mother brings her food everyday. Nomvula only opens the door when she hears her mother's singing.

A cannibal comes and imitates the mother's song. Nomvula realises that it is not her mother's voice. She shuts the door. The cannibal goes away. Nomvula's mother pleads with her to leave with her, but Nomvula refuses. The cannibal swallows red-hot needles. With his new-soprano voice he sings to Nomvula and she opens. He puts her in a bag. The cannibal carries the heavy bag until he reaches the house of Nomvula's uncle. A small girl recognizes Nomvula's toe. Nomvula's uncle is furious.

Nomvula's uncle sends the cannibal to fetch water with a broken bucket. While the cannibal is away, Nomvula is freed and some wasps and a fierce dog are put into the bag. The cannibal leaves. He reaches his home. His wife and children complain that something in the bag is stinging and biting them. The cannibal locks himself in the house to eat his prey alone. The wasps and the dog attack

him. His family deserts him. He runs and turns into a tree. The zimu-tree catches Nomvula's hand. Her father frees her by smearing ox-fat on the hand. They live happily ever after.

xvi) UZembeni noma uZwanide.

Zembeni is a cannibal with two beautiful daughters. She has eaten all the men in the country. She even tastes the cheek of her own daughter, but finds it bitter.

Sikhulumi, the son of a chief, wants to marry one of the daughters. They like him. They hide him in their room. They deny his presence when Zembeni interrogates them about his odor that fills the house. Zembeni goes out to hunt. The one -cheeked sister urges her sister to go with Sikhulumi. She will remain behind to be the receiver of their mother's wrath.

Zembeni pursues Sikhulumi and her daughter. They hide in a tree. She starts to chop down the tree with her axe. Sikhulumi's dogs kill her. She is resurrected. The dogs kill her again. The dogs grind Zembeni's ashes and throw them in the river.

Sikhulumi and his bride arrive at his place. Everybody is very happy. Oxen are slaughtered.

xvii) UDumudumu.

Dumudumu has four wives. They all have crows for children. He marries Nyumbakatali. She is barren. Because of her barrenness, she is maltreated by everybody; even the crows.

One day in the field she meets two green doves. They advise her to draw blood from her legs and to put it in clay pots. A boy and a girl come from the blood. They are sealed in the clay pots. Nyumbakatali is warned not to open the pots, except when she wants to feed the babies. Nyumbakatali is happy now. An old man discovers her secret babies. He tells Dumudumu.

Dumudumu finds the babies. He is overjoyed. He orders all the crows to be killed. The other wives are very jealous. They try to kill Nyumbakatali. Dumudumu promotes her to the position of chief wife. One wife then dies and another leaves. The other two stay on as Nyumbakatali's slaves.

xviii) UGunqu.

Gunqu is a chief with many wives. One of his wives, whom he rejected, has a beautiful son. Out of jealousy he orders Ndoda, a servant to kill Sivi, his son.

Ndoda takes Sivi away to be killed. However he decides to let Sivi live, and Ndoda never returning to the chief. The chief thinks that wild animals have eaten them.

Sivi has the magical ability to make things appear. With his magical abilities, Sivi makes houses appear. He also makes a wife for Ndoda appear. Sivi does not want to take a wife before his mother can join him. Sivi makes a regiment appear. He goes to his father's house. He takes his maltreated mother away. He punishes his father and his other family members by taking their possessions. He also takes all their cattle. Sivi's father dies. Sivi rules over his father's homestead.

xix) UNkombose noSihlangusabayeni.

A woman has a son, Nkombose, and a daughter, Sihlangusabayeni. She favours the daughter. She orders the children to protect the mealies from the fowl while she is away.

Nkombose entices his sister to play, rather than to watch the mealies. Reluctantly she joins him. The fowls eat the mealies. Their mother is furious. Sihlangusabayeni blames her brother. The mother squeezes Nkombose's throat until he dies. The mother is shocked. She throws Nkombose's body in a pool.

One day Sihlangusabayeni goes to fetch water at that pool. She calls her brother. Nkombose appears. He tells her that the Mamba wanted to eat him, but the python wanted him to be the king of the pool. He helps her with her water pot. He orders her to secrecy. The people of the village are curious to see who helped her with the large water pot. They follow her to the pool. Nkombose comes out. They grab him and take him home. The snakes get two white oxen as compensation.

xx) *Umkwekazi namasi.*

An old woman stays with her daughter and son in law. Everyday when they work in the fields, she finds some excuse to go back to the house. Her magical hoe continues to hoe. At home she puts on her son-in-law's clothes, sits on his stool and uses his utensils to make porridge. She eats the porridge and maas and then, after returning everything, goes back to the field. When asked about these strange happenings, she denies any knowledge of it.

One day the son-in-law decides to keep an eye on her. He hides in the house where he witnesses everything that she does. He comes out from his hiding place and punishes her: she has to fetch him some water from a stream where there are no frogs.

The old woman goes to many streams, but everywhere there are frogs. At last she finds a frogless stream. She filled her son-in-law's pot. The stream belongs to the king of the animals. He wants to eat her. The genet saves her. She returns to her surprised son-in-law with the water.

xxi) UBuhlaluse beNkosi.

Buhlaluse, the king's favourite daughter, goes with the other girls to quarry red ochre. The other girls do not like her. They bury her alive in an old quarry. Back at the village they tell the king that his daughter is lost. He sends out several regiments to find her, but all in vain.

One day a woodcutter is cutting wood near Buhlaluse's quarry. She calls to him, telling him her story. He digs her out and takes her to her father. The king is furious with the other girls. Secretly he nurses Buhlaluse back to strength. He orders the other girls to quarry ochre. At the quarry the king shows Buhlaluse to them. They cry, knowing their evil deed is known. The king lets them all be killed. They are buried in the same quarry where they buried Buhlaluse.

xxii) Ntombiyaphansi.

A king has three children: Silwane, Silwanekazi and Ntombiyaphansi. Silwane has a leopard cub which he treats as a dog. Silwanekazi loves her brother and

therefore, when she hears that the people suspect Silwane of witchcraft, she kills the leopard by giving it hot food.

Silwane is furious. He stabs her to death. He prepares Silwanekazi's body so that it looks as if she is just sleeping. He cooks some of her blood together with mutton. He offers the food to Ntombiyaphansi. A fly warns her not to eat it, also telling her about Silwane's foul deed. Silwane tries to stab her, but Ntombiyaphansi disappears under the ground. Silwane is torched by his father.

Ntombiyaphansi mounts her ox to go to her sister's place. She meets an **imbulu** (monitor lizard) who convinces her to let him ride her ox and to wet her feet. The monitor lizard now has Ntombiyaphansi in his power. He pretends to be Ntombiyaphansi while she has to be his slave and be called Dog's tail.

Ntombiyaphansi's sister weeps when she sees how ugly she (in fact the monitor lizard) has become. The monitor lizard eats whey and maas, but Ntombiyaphansi spills the maas, refusing to eat it. The next day Ntombiyaphansi has to watch the fields. She is accompanied by Dalana, an old man. Ntombiyaphansi sings to the birds. They obey her and move away from the field. Dalana is surprised. Ntombiyaphansi goes to the pool. She washes herself and then makes all her father's people, many cattle and food appear. She eats and sings with them. Then she makes them disappear and covers her body with mud. She returns to Dalana, not telling him what she has done.

The next day Dalana secretly follows Ntombiyaphansi to the pool. He witnesses her beauty and everything that she does. Dalana relates Ntombiyaphansi's secret to her sister's husband.

The chief (Ntombiyaphansi's brother-in law) hides himself near the pool the next day. Ntombiyaphansi sees that somebody disturbed the dew on the grass and does not perform her usual ritual. The day after the chief is more careful and is able to witness her rituals and her beauty. He catches Ntombiyaphansi while she is still beautiful. He takes her to his hut and shows her to her sister. Her sister is overjoyed.

The chief orders the boys to dig a deep hole. A pot of milk is lowered into the hole. The chief orders all the women, including the **imbulu** to jump over the pit. The **imbulu's** tail sees the milk and causes it to fall in the hole. The women pour hot water in the hole. The **imbulu** is dead. Ntombiyaphansi marries her sister's husband and lives happily ever after.

xxiii) Indaba kaPhoshozwayo.

An old woman looks after her two grandsons. Qakala is the eldest and therefore he inherited most of his father's belongings. Phoshozwayo inherited only two horses. Soon Phoshozwayo's horses are in a superb condition, because he is very intelligent. Qakala kills the horses out of jealousy. Phoshozwayo returns

home and sees that his horses are dead. He removes one horse's gallbladder and takes off with it. He eventually reaches a house and decides to sleep on its' roof. He sees a thief stealing meat from the house. When the homeowners have returned, he convinces them that the gallbladder can assist them in finding the culprit. He sells the gallbladder to the unsuspecting people. They give him a lot of horses.

Phoshozwayo returns to his grandmother's house with the horses. Qakala is jealous. He kills all his horses and tries to sell their gallbladders. His plan is unsuccessful. Qakala tries to kill Phoshozwayo, but accidentally decapitates his grandmother. Phoshozwayo takes his granny's corpse to town. He tricks an Indian into believing that he is responsible for the old woman's death. The Indian pays a lot of money as compensation. Phoshozwayo tells Qakala that he sold their granny's corpse. Qakala kills two old women and tries to sell their corpses. The police pursue him, but he is able to return back home. He once more tries to kill Phoshozwayo, but this time his plan boomerangs and he is killed.

xxiv) UTulube.

A boy is herding cattle. Four people approach him and want to take his cattle away. The bull, Tulube, refuses to be driven away. The people warn the boy that they will stab him if the bull does not obey them. The boy sings to the bull and he is driven away. Several times along the way the boy has to sing to the bull.

At the homestead of the people the bull refuses to be stabbed. The boy sings to him. The bull obeys and is killed. The bull refuses to be skinned. The boy sings to him. The bull is skinned, but refuses to be cut up. The boy sings to him. The bull is cut into pieces. The boy suggests to the people that they must go and wash in a frogless river before they can eat Tulube. All the people go. It takes them a long time to find a frogless river.

In the meantime the boy sings to Tulube. Tulube resurrects himself and is driven back to the boy's home. The boy's people are happy that they have the boy and their cattle back. The boy stays in the cattle kraal with Tulube. The people slaughter cattle in honour of the boy.

xxv) The boy who was unkind to animals.

A young man encounters a pig. The pig is covered with stinking mud. The young man is revolted and spits on the ground. The pig sees this. The pig warns the young man that one day people will look at him and be revolted. The pig's warning does not disturb the young man, because he comes from a respected family.

The young man sees a rat trying to tear a bag of mealies. He kicks the rat away from the bag. The rat falls on the ground. The rat curses the young man that one

day he will be hungry, but no one will give him food. The young man laughs at the rat's warning.

One day the young man and a go-between go to the homestead of his future bride. The go-between advises the boy that he should not eat too much. The go-between says that he will touch the young man's foot when he has eaten enough. As soon as they have started to eat, a cat touches the young man's foot. Although he is still hungry, he stops eating.

That night the hungry young man sneaks to the place where the food is kept. Having no spoon, he starts eating directly from the pot. His head gets stuck in the pot. He hides under the fence. The next morning his girlfriend's family finds him under the fence with his head in the pot. They laugh at him. Some of them are so revolted that they spit on him. The young man is so humiliated that, after they have freed his head from the pot, he runs away as fast as he can. All the girls reject him after he has made such a fool of himself.

xxvi) Ntombo and the water snake.

Gumede and his wife, MaMthethwa have two daughters, Ntombo and Sholo. They are lovely girls and everyone likes them. One day they go to the river to fetch water. A great water snake comes out of the water and takes Ntombo with him. Sholo is heartbroken. Ntombo is nowhere to be found.

Sholo goes to the river to fetch water. Ntombo comes out of the water and helps her sister with her heavy water pot. Then she disappears again. This happens many days. Gumede and his family are curious to know who helps Sholo with the heavy pot. They follow her to the water. When Ntombo comes out, the men grab her. She wants to go back to the water where she has reigned as queen, but the men take her to her parents' home. Everybody is happy to have her back.

xxvii) ULuyeza, inyoka enkulu.

A king is very ill and the only medicine that can cure him is the liver of the big water snake, Luyeza. The king is looking for a brave man to fetch Luyeza's liver. All the men are too afraid to volunteer. A small boy volunteers. The king promises the boy a kraal full of cattle if he succeeds.

The boy lures Luyeza out of the water by inviting him to come and eat him. Luyeza comes out of the water. The boy runs to the cattle pen. Luyeza follows him into the pen. The boy escapes. Luyeza is stuck in the pen. He struggles until all his power is gone. They kill Luyeza and remove his liver fat. The king gives the boy his reward of many cattle. Luyeza is resurrected and returns to the water.

xxviii) Jabulani and the lion.

Jabulani is a herdboys. He is very likeable. One day he encounters a lion that has

fallen into a trap. The lion begs Jabulani to help him escape. Jabulani hesitates, because he is afraid that the lion will eat him when it is freed. The lion promises Jabulani that he will not eat him. He tells the boy that they will be friends.

Jabulani frees the lion. They go to the river to drink water. The lion tells Jabulani that it is going to eat him. Jabulani says that they must first ask the other animals if it is right to eat someone that has saved your life. The lion agrees. A cow comes along. She agrees that Jabulani must be eaten, because humans have treated her badly. Many animals agree that the boy should be eaten. All of these animals have been maltreated by humans.

A jackal comes. They tell him the story. The jackal asks to see the trap in which the lion fell. He tells the lion that he wants to see what happened. The lion climbs into the trap. It is trapped again. It asks Jabulani to free it again. The jackal tells the boy to run to his home. The lion is furious, but powerless.

xxix) USikhulumi kaHlokohloko.

A certain king, Hlokohloko, orders some old women to kill all the sons that are born to him. He does this, because he is afraid that one of them will take over his kingdom.

One of his wives has a baby boy, Sikhulumi. She begs the women not to kill the baby, but to take him to his uncle. The old women grant her her wish. The baby is taken to his uncle.

The boy turns out to be a good herdboyc and is respected by everyone. One day some of his father's warriors pass him in the veld. They see that he resembles the king and take him with them. The king is not happy to see him. He sends the boy, his mother and his sister to a forest where a multi-headed man-eating monster lives. The mother and sister leave the boy in the middle of the forest.

The monster does not kill the boy. It gives the boy food and a large nation of subjects. The boy wishes to visit his father. He takes many people along. On his way to his father's place he visits his uncle. His uncle is happy to see him.

His father is again not happy to see him. He orders his warriors to throw their spears at Sikhulumi. The monster has strengthened the boy. The warriors are not able to kill him. He takes his spear and stabs all of them to death. Sikhulumi becomes king.

xxx) King Mageba and the lion.

Wise men bring gifts to Mageba: a lion's skin and a small lion cub. Mageba and his lion become inseparable. The lion accompanies Mageba wherever he goes,

but Mageba decides that it would be unfair to keep the lion among people forever. He sets the lion free.

Some years later Mageba, who is now the king, is involved in a terrible war.

The enemy is about to kill Mageba when suddenly a great pride of lions appears and attacks them. The enemy is defeated. Mageba recognises the leader of the pride as the lion that he has set free. The lion watches over Mageba wherever he goes.

xxxii) Makiwane and the ant bear.

One day, while on his way to his girlfriend, Makiwane encounters an ant bear that is trapped in a snare. Makiwane frees the ant bear. He sees that the ant bear is hurt and nurses it. The ant bear is grateful.

Makiwane marries his beautiful bride, Nomaza. One day a tribe of cannibals attacks Makiwane's village and steals Nomaza. Makiwane is heartbroken.

The ant bear brings herbs to heal his broken heart. Although Makiwane feels too depressed to be healed, the people call an old woman, Namuteya, to prepare the herbs for him. Namuteya says that she will heal him if he will agree to marry her. Namuteya heals Makiwane and they get married. They live happily ever after.

xxxii) The story of Mzikayise.

Mzikayise has courted Ntombinani for two years. Ntombinani has not answered his love. His sister, Bagangile, comes to him where he is sitting on a rock, thinking about Ntombinani. She tells him that Ntombinani has decided to marry a man called Kondekulu, big baboon.

Mzikayise is heartbroken and angry. He wants to challenge Nkondekulu to a duel and kill him. Suddenly Ntombinani and her friends appear. She places a bead loveletter of acceptance around Mzikayise's neck. Bagangile reveals to him that Kondekulu is the nickname that Ntombinani uses for him. Mzikayise is very happy.

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS.

1.4.1 CHILDREN.

For the purpose of this study children are people who are young, unmarried, pre-pubertal or pubertal. They may be ready to enter into marriage or to be soldiers.

1.4.2 PARENTS.

Parents are adults who have children. These children may be of any age.

1.4.3 ROLES.

The roles that children play in the Zulu folktale can be divided as those of characters in the folktale and those of folktale audience. The roles of boys and girls as folktale characters will be investigated separately.

1.4.4 NORMS.

Bierstedt in Gibbs (1981:7) defines a norm as follows:

A norm is a rule or standard that governs our conduct in the social situations in which we participate. It is a societal expectation. It is a standard to which we are expected to conform whether we actually do so or not.

Norms are thus a set of rules that has to be followed. Norms are usually extremely rigid and any deviation from them may lead to punishment. The norms of the Zulu society will be used to analyse the actions of boy and girl characters in the Zulu folktale

1.4.5 ZULU FOLKTALE.

For the purpose of this study a Zulu folktale is any folktale that originated from the Zulu folktale tradition. Some of the folktales used in this study have been

translated into English to appeal to the general public. They are however still Zulu folktales, belonging to the Zulu culture.

1.4.6 CULTURE.

Culture is the selection, the rearrangement, the tracing of patterns upon, and the stylising of the random irradiations and resettlements of our ideas. (Nieburg, 1973:37)

Kneller in Beyers (1982 :7) defines culture as follows:

Culture is at once the creation of man and the condition of human living. Man creates culture, but culture in turn makes man.

Both of the above quotations make it clear that man and culture are inseparable. Folktales are a part of the Zulu culture; invented by Zulu storytellers. Folktales convey messages and lessons to their audiences, thus contributing to the creation of man.

1.4.7 REWARD.

A reward is a positive incentive given to a folktale character for heroic or praiseworthy actions. The rewards that Zulu folktale characters receive are in line with those that are given in the Zulu reality, such as cattle, marriage, children etc.

According to Berndt in Gibbs (1981:11) reward is part of the attempts to manipulate behaviour. It attempts to get people to do the right thing. It is the carrot in front of the donkey's nose!

1.4.8 PUNISHMENT.

Deviation from the norms set by society will always lead to punishment. Punishment can be defined as negative attention given to a person that has trespassed or neglected his or her role in society. Like rewards, punishment serves as an attempt to manipulate behaviour. Punishment is therefore an attempt to get people to not do the wrong thing. It is the boogy-man that gets you for being bad!

Zulu folktale characters are punished in line with Zulu reality: losing cattle, physical beatings, losing loved ones etc. Being surreal, folktales can also contain more extreme punishments such as changing shape and being eaten by cannibals.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

As previously mentioned the roles that children play in the Zulu folktale have not yet been investigated.

Pottow (1992) does an investigation of family structures in the Zulu folktale. She uses the socio-cultural background of the Zulu people to analyse these folktales. The theories of Propp and Levi-Strauss are also applied in her study. She pays attention to folktale components such as plot, theme, setting, style, language and characters.

In his book, **Folktale influence on the Zulu novel** (1987) Msimang does not aim to study the Zulu folktale as such. He rather aims to investigate how folktales influence Zulu novels. Although it is not specifically aimed at, the Zulu folktale is studied in terms of its' themes, characterisation, setting and plot. Like Pottow, he also applies the theories of Propp and Levi-Strauss.

Du Toit (1976) does not only focus on the Zulu folktale, but also on other traditional literature forms such as praise poems. He gives a short overview about the history of folk narratives in South Africa, as well as their socio-cultural background. Du Toit aims to establish the difference between the status of folktales in urban and rural settings. He uses secondary school pupils in a study to establish the influence that urbanisation has on the status of the Zulu folktale.

Several anthropological studies have been consulted to understand the Zulu culture. The most significant is that by Raum (1973). Through countless interviews Raum succeeds to capture the Zulu culture in **The social functions of avoidances and taboos among the Zulu**. In this study Raum does not only

note the avoidances and taboos among the Zulu, but also gives valuable insight into the prescribed behaviour of boys, girls and parents.

Vilakazi, A. in **Zulu Transformations** (1962), investigates the effect that westernisation and christianity had on Zulu culture. His work was valuable to this study, because it gave an insight into some possible reasons why folktales are dwindling.

African Renaissance (1999) is a collection of papers and speeches that were delivered at the first African Renaissance conference held in Johannesburg in 1998. The editor of this anthology is M.W. Makgoba. P.P.Ntuli's paper, *The Missing Link between Culture and Education: Are we still chasing gods that are not our own?*, proved to be very informative in the writing of Chapter 5.

All of the above books have been cited in this study, yet none of them are similar to this study. Du Toit's study does aim to establish the status of folktales today, but his methodology differs radically from the methodology used in Chapter 5 of this study.

1.6 CONCLUSION.

The aim of this chapter was to introduce this study by means of its' aim, scope, methodology, definition of terms and literature review. The following chapter will investigate the role that parenthood plays in the Zulu folktale.

CHAPTER 2

PARENTHOOD IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

2.1 INTRODUCTION.

In this chapter the portrayal of traditional parenthood in the Zulu folktale will be investigated.

Barrenness among the female characters in the Zulu folktale and its consequences in the development of the plot will also receive attention.

In any society there are norms of behaviour that must be adhered to. In the traditional Zulu society there are specific rules for parenthood. These rules are either obeyed or ignored by parent characters in the folktale. In this chapter attention will be paid to the portrayal of the positive -, as well as negative behaviour of parents and how it effects the course of the storyline.

2.2 PARENTHOOD AND BARRENNESS IN ZULU SOCIETY.

According to all the anthropologists who studied the Zulu culture, the importance of the desire for children among the traditional Zulus can not be over emphasised. It seems that a person's main purpose in life is to be a successful parent. Having

children is the most important (often only) reason for marriage; marriage is only a platform for bearing children.

At this point it must be stressed that parenthood without marriage is not tolerated in traditional society. Girls must remain virgins until their marriage; therefore illegitimate children are not as welcome as their legitimate peers. Graafland (1977 : 23) and Binns (1973: 177) enlighten the seriousness of this custom by stating that in traditional society an unmarried couple who is caught having intercourse or being pregnant, would be executed. In the same text though, the importance of childbearing is given:

It is clear that respect for, and fear of, the king constitute a powerful incentive, urging girls towards motherhood. (Graafland, 1977: 23)

The severity of the punishment for having broken the traditional laws of morality seems to differ from kraal to kraal and from area to area. According to Vilakazi (1962: 51) a girl who has become pregnant without being married, is 'soiled' and a bad influence on all the other girls. Such an unfortunate girl is often assaulted by the other girls, since she is believed to have brought **umkhokha** (unpleasant consequences) on them, as well as the unborn girls of that kraal. The boy who has rendered the girl pregnant, has to pay a fine (a goat, or its equivalent in cash) to cleanse the girls. The prospective father also has to pay the fine for premarital pregnancy, which are traditionally two oxen. The fine will be lower if the couple was already engaged- to- be- married. The status of an illegitimate child can be restored

once its father pays **lobola** (bride's fees) to the girl's father and marries the girl according to the traditional requirements.

A girl thus really does not have a choice - she must get married. A young man who wants children must also get married before his manhood is proven. Children are seen as a blessing that can be prayed for from the gods, which can increase a man's importance in the chief's eyes. (Shooter, 1857:61)

Owomoyela (1990: 14) states the importance of child bearing as follows:

If one asks the traditional African his or her reason for marriage the most likely answer would be the desire for children and one would be most cynical, and also most incorrect, to construe this desire as one for so many fieldhands. Marriage or even love - making has no other purpose.

Although the ultimate reason for marriage is child bearing, a person has to choose a marriage partner who is suitable to him or her. A marriage partner will also be chosen for his or her genetic suitability to bear children. Radcliffe-Brown and Kuper (1977: 234) state that romantic love often has nothing to do with Zulu marriages. He also reveals the following:

...beauty as well as character and health are sought in the choice of a wife. The strong affection that normally exists after some years of successful marriage is the product of the marriage itself conceived as

a process, resulting from living together and co - operating in many activities and particularly in the rearing of children.

Bearing the above in mind, it does not come as a surprise that some folktale characters leave their homes in pursuit of marriage without ever even being introduced to their prospective husbands or wives; not knowing their nature or appearance as in the folktale *Mamba kaMaquba*, where the prospective bride is unpleasantly surprised by her snake - husband. Impossible though it may seem, this extraordinary marriage turns out to be prosperous - the couple is rewarded with a child, although one doubts if there was any love lost between them.

The unimportance of romantic love, as a reason for marriage, is once again evident in the tale of *Mamba kaMaquba*, when the younger sister also leaves home to marry

Mamba:

..uthe ukuba abone ukuthi udadewabo uhlezi kahle emendweni wafikelwa ngumona.Naye wayesefisa ukuyogana uMamba kaMaquba. Wayengazi ukuthi uMamba kaMaquba yinyoka. Udadewabo omkhulu akazange asichaze isimo somyeni wakhe.

(Realising that her sister was happily married, her jealousy increased. She decided that she too wanted to marry Mamba kaMaquba, although she did not know that he was a snake. Her older sister never explained what kind of a husband she had married.) (Canonici, 1993:61)

The enthusiasm and joy about the new baby is so overwhelming that the

husband is never even mentioned. Marriage, more specifically marriage resulting in childbearing, is often the reward that is given to folktale characters for being obedient, honest, hardworking, helpful and all the other qualities that are viewed as assets to society. Folktale characters, such as the two sisters in *Mamba kaMaquba*, often leave their homes only to get married. An undeserving character will not be granted the privilege of marriage as a reward. (The younger sister in *Mamba kaMaquba* is chased home, without her goals being reached.)

Marriage and childbearing are seen as the ultimate signs of adulthood. Only after a woman is married, is she allowed to tie her hair up in an **isicholo** (high head - dress). Accordingly, after obtaining permission to get married, a Zulu man is also given the right to wear an **isicoco** (headring). (Bosman, 1984:95) Marriage thus definitely increases a person's status in society.

It is also important to mention that a woman is only really honoured as being an asset to her husband after the birth of her first child. A marriage is only considered as being complete when children have resulted from it. If a woman seems to be unable to produce children, her husband can reclaim his **lobola**. (Pottow, 1992:68) This is however debatable: Zulu traditionalists maintain that reclaiming the **lobola** will lead to the dissolution of the marriage, which was unheard of in traditional Zulu society. The bride's family would rather turn to the practice of sororate: sending the bride's sister to bear her husband's children.

To join the ranks of the **amadlozi** (ancestral spirits) a person most obviously would have to have some children or grand -children whose ancestor he could be. These descendants would ensure that a person's name would be honoured even after his death.

Children are also raised as an old - age security plan since it is expected of them by traditional law to take care of their parents when they are old. There is a proverb in Zulu that highlights this custom:

Ukuzal' ukuzelul' amadolo

(to bear children is to lengthen oneself.)

This proverb suggests that children can be regarded as an extension of their parents, since they will be their aged parents' hands and feet when the parents are not able to do something anymore. (Nyembezi, 1974: 142)

As depicted above, it is clear that parenthood among the Zulus is of utmost importance. Since it is a known fact that folktales are a mirror of society, it can be expected that parenthood will be commented on in them.

2.2.1 Barrenness in the Zulu folktale.

Barrenness can be defined as the inability to bear children. Barrenness is not tolerated in traditional society.

Previously in this chapter it was stated that marriage often has nothing to do with romantic love. Girls are sometimes given in marriage by their parents to old, unattractive husbands:

In the past, it was quite proper for the father of a girl to give his daughter away to even an old man who had cattle...Then came the whites and they said the girls must be asked if they were in love with the men they were marrying.

(Vilakazi, 1962: 71)

It seems logical that those unfortunate girls would not be eager to have sexual intercourse with their husbands, resulting in barrenness by choice. This obstinacy on behalf of a girl is severely rejected by her mother-in-law:

That children are earnestly desired for the bride by her mother-in-law is also implicit in the mother-in-law's attempts to set matters right for a woman who refuses to have sexual intercourse with her husband.

(Graafland, 1977:34)

In *Mamba kaMaquba* this crisis that a bride may face is depicted. The worthy, selfless and helpful bride allows her repulsive husband to conceive a child with her and is rewarded not only with a healthy child, but also with a presentable husband. The second bride is also much disgusted with her husband, but unlike her sister, refuses him physical contact i.e. chooses to remain childless rather than to sacrifice a 'little' of herself. This girl is humiliated by being chased away from her prospective husband's kraal. Once rejected by one husband, a bride is unlikely to be courted by other men. If the girl listened to the old women who asked her for assistance, she might have decided not to pursue a marriage with Mamba kaMaquba, before she found herself in that unfortunate position, because a girl is allowed to reject any young man while she is not yet engaged to him (Vilakazi, 1962), but a girl may not reject a man after she has accepted him as her lover.

Although there are some cases like the above mentioned incident, where childlessness is brought on the woman through her own choice, true barrenness is in far more cases something totally out of the hands of the woman - a menacing physical defect which the bearer would gladly rectify if she could.

As mentioned previously a wife is only regarded to be an asset to her husband after the birth of her first child. (Pottow, 1992:68) A husband seems never to be suspected to be infertile; thus the wife has to go to great lengths to produce an heir if there seems to be no fruit in their attempts to conceive children. Shooter (1857: 85) depicts the seriousness of barrenness as follows:

Dissolution of marriage may, in some cases, be effected by the husband. If a wife has no children, she is sent home for a time, when the father offers a sacrifice on her behalf; but if, after having returned to her husband, she continues childless, she may be dismissed and the cattle given for her recovered. Sometimes the father gives the husband another of his daughters, one or more of whose children will be accounted as belonging to her sterile sister. By this arrangement the father retains the cattle.

Binns (1975:153) emphasises the importance of childbearing to a woman by stating that childlessness was the

*greatest misfortune that could befall any woman, for not only would it bring upon her head the bitter taunts of other married women who had been fortunate enough to produce offspring, but also, should her barrenness persist in spite of frequent visits to the **inyanga** to promote conception, her husband might even be led to divorce her.*

The debatability of this statement was already stated earlier in this chapter. The father of a bride who seems to be barren has the responsibility to rectify the problem by either consulting a traditional healer, or by sending another one of his daughters to conceive a child on behalf of her sister.

Barrenness is thus a most important flaw in a woman, often totally overshadowing all the other traits that a woman may have, such as beauty, obedience and eagerness to work.

According to Propp in **The Morphology of the Folktale** (1968), there is always a lack in the initial situation of the morphology of a folktale. The quest to rectify this need often influences the actions of the characters and thus also the story line of that folktale.

In the folktale *UDumudumu*, the plot is introduced with the statement that the chief's, (Dumudumu) fifth wife does not have any children - she is barren. The other four wives already have an offspring, but it consisted of crows, instead of babies. The fifth wife is called Nyumbakatali (barren one). This barrenness causes the unfortunate wife great anguish and it is told how she spent her time alone and crying. Nyumbakatali finds herself in a far worse position than the other wives who have born crows. Dumudumu is blissfully unaware of the true obscurity of the crow - children. She is rejected by Dumudumu for her barrenness.

Except for her barrenness, Nyumbakatali is depicted as an asset to her community - she cultivates the lands and reaps sorghum. Her unselfish nature is evident in her feeding of the doves, which did not demand nourishment from her. Since it is known that goodness will prevail and prosper in folktales, it comes as no surprise that the tragic heroine's needs are fulfilled.

Assistance comes to Nyumbakatali in the form of two green doves that miraculously conceive her children by incising her legs, drawing blood and incubating that blood in clay pots filled with dung. Nyumbakatali's obedient nature is thrice tested when the

doves advise her not to open the clay pots until the children are ready to be taken out. Nyumbakatali obeys and her joy is great when she is blessed with a human boy and girl. She is also rewarded by being taken again as Dumudumu's chief wife. The pitiless, hateful and proud mothers of the crows are punished for their initial hatefulness - the crows are killed and they thus find themselves without children, like Nyumbakatali, whom they have abused. Two of the women are degraded to be Nyumbakatali's slaves.

Although there are not many folktales that feature childlessness as an initial problem situation, the theme of parents losing their children as a result of their misconduct or negligence, is often repeated. This newly obtained childlessness comes as a punishment to undeserving parents, and will be assessed in the next paragraphs.

2.2.2 Traditional expectations and guidelines for parenting in the Zulu society.

Since children are such important assets to the Zulu people, it can be expected that there are many rules for those who have been blessed with offspring. The importance of childbearing in the Zulu culture is already commented on earlier in this chapter. Not properly projecting and raising one's children can put one back to an initial situation of childlessness.

Parents are expected to raise their children with dignity and discipline to become useful members of society when they reach adulthood. Parents are expected to

protect their children and to supply them with the necessary means of survival, such as clothing, food, shelter etc. Children are seen as an extension of their parents, which does not only imply that children are there to assist their parents when they have grown old and feeble, but also that children must be treated in the same way that parents treat themselves, not skimping them on food, attention or any other means on which they would not skimp themselves.

The roles that the father and mother play in the Zulu family differ radically from each other. Therefore they will be discussed separately.

2.3 Motherhood in the Zulu society.

Nyembezi (1974:142-143) lists a number of folk proverbs that deal with the ideal relationship between a mother and her children:

Unina wunina maZulu!

(A mother is a mother, ye Zulus!)

There usually exists great love between a mother and her children. She will do all in her power to see that they are comfortable. She will deny herself many things for their sakes. Thus when people see her suffering great inconvenience and hardship for their sakes, they will remark that, indeed, a mother is a mother.

Ingan' igaba ngonina

(A child places reliance on its mother).

To a child, the mother is everything.

Intandan' enhl' ekhothwa unina

(A good orphan is one that is licked by the mother)

A mother is capable of making great sacrifices for the welfare of her children, whereas a father may not care so much. Thus a child without a father is generally in better circumstances than a child without a mother.

From the given proverbs it is obvious that a mother is the key - person in a child's life. She is supposed to live her life for her children. Her children must come first in all instances. Her children have trust in her and she is the one that must see that they are content, both physically and psychologically.

The mother inculcates culturally defined patterns of sleeping, eating, speech, walking and hygiene from the earliest infancy. Relatively few aggressive techniques are practised, for the mother - child relationship is characterised by indulgence. (Graafland, 1977 : 6-7)

A mother is not regarded as a threat by her children. She refers her naughty children

to their father or another relative of the same category for discipline. She often acts as a messiah between the children and their father. (Graafland, 1977:6 -7)

2.4 Motherhood in the Zulu folktale.

In the Zulu folktale good mothers are rewarded, whereas bad mothers are always punished by being rendered childless again. Motherhood in the folktale can be bisected into bad mothering and good mothering.

2.4.1 Negative motherhood in the Zulu folktale.

In the following paragraphs examples of bad mothering will be analysed. It must be remembered that children are often not the only audience at folktale narratives - there may also by chance be a young or prospective mother present who may benefit from the lessons to be learnt.

i) Zembeni.

There are several mother characters whose actions are in total opposition with that which is expected of them. Perhaps the most repulsive of all these is Zembeni in *UZembeni noma UZwanide*.

Zembeni is a cannibal who has already eaten all the men in her country. She is not even morally above attempting to devour her own two daughters. After she has cut a sample of flesh from her one daughter's cheek, she finds that their meat is too bitter. In this folktale we thus find a mother who is not feeding her children, but is instead feeding on them.

Zembeni also acts unmotherly by not allowing her daughter happiness - when Sikhulumi takes the one girl away to marry her, she pursues him. Deservedly, Zembeni is punished for her deeds. Sikhulumi's dogs tear her apart and her bones are ground to powder. Through her evil deeds Zembeni has lost everything - her daughters and her life.

ii) Nokuthula's mother.

Another mother who would not hesitate to endanger her own child, is the mother of Nokuthula in *Nokuthula*. She is a cannibal who becomes furious, because her daughter, Nokuthula, has been hiding two girls from her. She has no regard for her own daughter's life and tries to punish her as follows:

Kuthe phakathi kabusuku unina wathatha ucelemba. Wangena endlini kaNokuthula. Washaya kakhulu ngocelemba. Wabuye waphinda futhi washaya kakhulu. Waphinda futhi okwesithathu. Wayesephindela elawini lakhe futhi eyolala.

(Canonici, 1993:70)

(During the night the mother took a sharp knife. She went into the room of Nokuthula. She struck hard with the sharp knife. She repeatedly struck hard with the sharp knife. She struck again for the third time. She returned to her room and slept.)

Nokuthula's mother is not only very uncaring when administering the stabs, she also shows no remorse about her evil deed - it is told that after she had attempted to kill her own child, she goes to sleep.

Nokuthula's mother does not get the usual harsh punishment that such an evil mother would deserve - her only punishment is that she loses her daughter in marriage without receiving any **lobola**.

iii) Demane and Demazane's mother.

In the tale of *Inyoni yensimu nenyoni yamasi*, the mother of the house neglects her children by not giving them any of the maas which the maasbird has produced :

Njalo - ke ekuseni umfazi wayevala ibhodwe alithole ligcwele amasi avuke anike umnumzane, badle; abantwana bangawezwa nangephunga amasi.

(Canonici, 1993:41)

(In the morning the woman found that the pot was filled with maas, she went and gave it to the man; they ate; the children did not even get a sniff of the maas.)

The hungry, curious children are hereby enticed to investigate and steal some of the maas.

Parents are supposed to be trustworthy, but the mother of Demazane and Demane is deceiving and cunning. She lures her daughter into believing that she is being deloused, but instead of delousing her she forces a sharp needle into her one ear and out from the other. This deed reminds one of the traditional ear piercing ceremony, **ukuqhumbuza**, which is usually performed by caring parents to celebrate their children's status as new members of the family. (Krige, 1965 : 82) The cruel way in which this ceremony is twisted by the mother in this tale, also emphasises her ambivalence to the Zulu traditions.

According to the folktale narrator, Demane and Demazane are the only two children present at that home. When they went away, their mother is thus rendered childless - a severe punishment for her bad behaviour.

iv) Nkombose and Sihlangusabayeni's mother.

There is a Zulu proverb that states that a mother should be like a leopard which likes her black as well as her white spots - a mother may not differentiate between her children. She must be totally impartial and may never be seen loving one child more than the other. In *Nkombose noSihlangusabayeni* the mother's behaviour is an example of parental partiality; she loves her one child more than the other:

USihlangusabayeni nguyena owayethandwa kakhulu ngunina.

(Canonici, 1993:90)

(Sihlangusabayeni was the one who was very much loved by her mother.)

After both girls have allowed the birds to eat the mealies, the mother punishes only Nkombose - she kills him by squeezing his throat.

Kodwa uSihlangusabayeni akangenziwa lutho yena.

(Canonici, 1993:91)

(But nothing was done to Sihlangusabayeni)

Nkombose's mother is shocked to see that her son is dead. The fact that she did not intend to kill her child can be regarded as extenuating circumstances in her case. She will not be punished as severely as Nokuthula's mother or Zwanide who had the intention to kill. In contrast to the latter mothers who have lost their children forever, Nkombose's mother gets a second chance. She is punished however by having to pay a fine of two white oxen to the snakes before she could get her son back.

Had she given her son a proper funeral instead of throwing her body in the pool, she might have been given total amnesty. This mother shows that she does have love for Nkombose too, since she has agreed that the oxen must be paid to retrieve him.

v) **The mother in *Wangiweza phela*.**

The mother in *Wangiweza phela* is portrayed to be hardworking. She has ten children and is in urgent need of a nursemaid. She is however not careful and bright enough - she allows a stranger, Chakijana, to baby sit her children without any doubts or queries. True to his deceitful nature, Chakijana starts cooking the babies one by one as soon as he gets tired of hunting. He tricks the mother time and time again by letting her think that she is feeding all her babies whilst in the meantime she has been feeding on some of them. At this point of the narration it becomes apparent how foolish this mother must be - she does not even know her own offspring well enough to miss some of them or to notice that the same ones are brought to her repeatedly! This is an undeserving mother - according to standards she should not have been blessed with ten children. She receives the ultimate punishment for her stupidity - she is rendered childless.

Mothers who unwittingly eat their own children is apparently a popular theme in Zulu folktales, also being found in *USankombe* (Canonici, 1993:11) It seems that a mother who eats her children unwittingly, is regarded with the same resentment than the known cannibal mothers such as Zwanide and Nokuthula's mother.

vi) Mabhejana.

A mother-in-law from hell, is how Mabhejana in the tale *UMabhejana* can be described. Mabhejana's behaviour is directly opposed to the expected norms of traditional behaviour. She does not participate in the festivities and jubilation that normally surround a wedding. She does not allow her daughter happiness, instead she tries to kill her daughter's husband to - be, who is the son of a very kind chief, Sikhulumi.

Mabhejana successfully disposes of the bridegroom's first two envoys, each time summoning lightning to strike them. When the chief's son comes, he has already been warned against Mabhejana's evilness and escapes even a severe hailstorm sent by her.

Mabhejana, however, is not yet prepared to let him escape. She incises and cups his footprint, thereby cursing her daughter's husband to transform into a black bull.

Mabhejana does not receive the punishment that she deserves, perhaps as a result of the fact that she is such a powerful witch and nobody would dare to act against her. As punishment for her evil deeds, Mabhejana loses her daughter forever, because it is adamant that her son-in-law would never allow mutual visits between his wife and his mother-in-law, fearing that she might try to harm his wife or his future children.

Mothers such as Zwanide and Mabhejana who try to prevent their daughters from marrying good men, are probably motivated by jealousy. An intensive psychological assessment of their behaviour may lead to the conclusion that they might be suffering the consequences of the 'Electra complex', which has to do with the animosity that may occur between mothers and daughters. Both these mothers have some kind of physical deformity, in the case of Zwanide it is a long toe and in the case of Mabhejana a horn on her head. Both these women have daughters who are regarded as beautiful enough to attract the attention of chiefs. Zwanide successfully mutilates her one daughter's face by cutting off her one cheek. To the chief this girl is still very beautiful, but in her own mind she will be a disgrace to her future husband. Zwanide thus succeeds to ruin this girl's chances on happiness.

All the mothers who were mentioned in the previous paragraphs share one flaw: they are not acting according to the rules of motherhood in the Zulu society. They are all punished according to the severity of their guilt. The most common punishment is to be rendered childless. All the above folktales have a common lesson to be learnt by all mothers and prospective mothers: to have children is a privilege, not a right. If one misuses one's privileges, it will be taken away from you!

2.4.2 Positive motherhood in Zulu folktales.

It is often said that it is more likely to learn from other people's mistakes than it is to learn from their good deeds. Even in William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** (Act 3:

scene 2) Mark Anthony, in his famous soliloquy, says that the good that people do is buried with their bones, whilst the evil that people do, lives after them. People will more likely be remembered for the evil that they do than for their good deeds. Children will rather be taught by means of horrible characters that perform sensational, gruesome deeds, than by means of the exemplary behaviour of nice characters. People like to hear the worst side of a matter; a juicy gossip story would not receive much attention if it were positive!

Keeping the above in mind it is not surprising that there are no totally deserving mother characters to be found in the chosen folktales.

There are however a few examples of good mothering, but never so perfectly good that it could be seen as the direct opposite of the evil mentioned in the previous paragraphs. Most of the examples of good mothering can be found amid other somewhat dubious deeds.

i) Nananabosele.

Nanabosele in *Nanabosele* is described as cunning. She builds her house on an animal track, ignoring all the other animals' warnings about Sondonzima. By doing this she endangers her child's life - she leaves her child on the track for Sondonzima to eat. After Sondonzima has eaten her child, Nanabosele puts her initial plan into

action. She collects a spear, a pot and a hoe and allows herself to be swallowed by Sondonzima.

When viewed optimistically, it can be said that Nanabosele endangered her own life to save the life of her child. With less naivety, it could be said that Nanabosele allowed herself to be swallowed in order to save the other people from Sondonzima's stomach. She did this so that she could have a family. It may also be said that Nanabosele is a good mother, because she makes a plan to ensure that she and her child will have the security of a family. The outcome that she gets just does not justify the methods that she uses to obtain it. A truly good mother would never endanger her child in such a way. Although all the other animals have warned Nanabosele against Sondonzima, she chooses not to listen to them.

ii) The mother in *UMamba kaMaquba*.

There is not much information given on the mother in *UMamba kaMaquba*. Her oldest daughter breaks her clay pot and sends the younger daughter to their mother to see what her reaction is, before the oldest daughter returns home. This is a forgiving mother who is eager to receive her daughter home, regardless of her error. The youngest daughter, however, returns to her sister with the false information that their mother does not wish to see her ever again. The devastated older sister then leaves in search of a husband who would take care of her.

Much later the older sister returns to her mother's home with her baby. Her mother accepts her with joy and is also very happy about the new grandchild. After hearing about the younger daughter's deceit, the mother is described as very upset. Once again her forgiving nature is apparent, since she does not punish her younger daughter for her evil deed. She thus abandons her own emotions of rage to accommodate the happiness of her other child. In contrast to punishment, she allows her younger daughter to go away and seek a marriage with Mamba kaMaquba.

As expected, this mother will be rewarded for her goodness - she does not only get her long-lost daughter back, but also gets a grandchild and a son-in-law that is fair enough to allow her daughter to visit her.

This mother seems to be almost too good to be true. There is however a flaw in her relationship with her children. When the girl breaks her pot, she is too scared to return home and she readily believes her sister when she falsely reports that her mother is not only angry, but that she also forbids her to ever return home. This mother must have done some horrible things to her children in the past, if the girl is too afraid to face her after accidentally breaking her pot and also readily believes her sister's lies about her mother's anger. It seems that there is not very much trust between the mother and her oldest daughter.

When the younger daughter's deceit is more closely analysed, it is apparent that she wants her sister to leave her mother's home as a result of deep jealousy, probably

because her mother loves the older girl more. All these negative aspects are however covert, being overshadowed by the mother's good traits.

iii) **The mother in *UNokuthula*.**

There are several good mothers who are only mentioned in one or two lines of a tale. In **UNokuthula** (Canonici, 1993 : 69) the mother of the two girls who want to visit their grandmother is portrayed as a very caring mother. She cooks pancakes and chicken for her children to ensure that they are well fed on their journey. She also ensures that her children have a relationship with, and respect for their father by first enquiring whether they have his permission to leave, before giving hers. She fulfils her role as the primary educator of her children by advising them which road they must follow and which road is to be ignored.

She receives her reward when not only both her daughters, but also Nokuthula, return safely to her.

It is interesting to notice that the two mother figures in *UNokuthula* are in direct opposition to each other: good versus evil.

2.5 Fatherhood in the Zulu society.

It seems a necessary consequence of polygamy, that the father should feel less attachment to his children than the mother.

(Shooter, 1857:90)

Fathers spend far less time with their children than mothers do. This is a result of polygamy and, in these days, as a result of employment that is far from their homes, such as the mines in Gauteng. Vilakazi (1962:37) describes the absence of a father as follows:

*The husband plays a very minor part in the "growing" of a child. He is away from home most of the time and only sees his children over the week - end. Even when he is at home, it is not considered proper for him, among the traditionalists, to play with them, for that detracts from him his **isithunzi**; ea. dignity and personality.*

A father may have a lot of children with a lot of wives, making it difficult for him to love all of them in the same degree that each mother loves her own children. He must, however, adhere to the laws of fatherhood that are to be maintained by the Zulu nation.

A father is expected to provide for his family everything that the mother can not provide, such as paying for the care of an **inyanga** (herbalist) when one of the children gets sick. (Vilakazi, 1962:37) The mother provides her children with everything to eat, except meat, since a woman is traditionally not allowed to have anything to do with cattle.

A father's word is the law in his family and any child that disobeys him is severely punished, sometimes even by death. It is very important for a Zulu father to discipline his sons, since the society will blame his education and the example that he sets for his son's sins:

If a son is a disgrace, father is seen as a dog by his neighbours for allowing his son to grow up in such an evil way
(Binns, 1975:169)

A father is the most important role model for his sons. He has almost nothing to do with the education of his daughters; that is the mother's responsibility. A father is usually less strict towards his daughters, since they are regarded as 'temporary' members of his lineage, because they will someday leave his home to marry into another family for whom she will bear children. A boy has the responsibility to keep his father's name honourable. (Vilakazi ,1962:39) Boys are often referred to as '....the son of...', for example **uGubudela kaNomantshali** (Gubudela the son of Nomantshali).

According to Binns (1975 : 165), a father has three objectives in the training of his sons, which can be summarised as follows:

They must be honest, loyal and conscientious towards their parents, their king and their country. They must obey the laws of the country and take responsibility in the government. A father that neglects to discipline his sons in order to obtain these goals will be punished in some way or the other.

Since it is apparent that fathers are almost regarded to be untouchable by their children, it makes sense that there are not so many father characters in the folktales as there are mothers. This can also be as a result of the fact that the folktale narrators are usually old women who would have much more to say about motherhood - a topic of which they have firsthand experience.

2.6 Fatherhood in the Zulu folktale.

2.6.1 Negative fatherhood in the Zulu folktale.

i) Demane and Demazane's father.

In *Inyoni yamasi* the father neglects his children by not revealing to them the maas bird and also by not giving them any of the maas that the bird has produced. He selfishly hides the bird in a pot and forbids his children to open the pot. He is therefore in breach of the primary duty and obligation of a father; namely the maintenance of his children. Hiding something from the curious mind of a child will only motivate him to investigate. The children investigate and the bird flies away - the father is punished for not educating his children well enough regarding the bird, because the children would have taken more care if they knew there was a bird in the pot that could fly away.

The father misuses the trust that his son has in him. He lets Demane believe that he is delousing him, but then forces a sharp needle into his one ear and out through the other. It is significant to notice that the father only punishes the boy - the mother punishes the girl. This procedure is almost similar to the **Ukuqhumbuza izindlebe** (ear piercing) ceremony that is performed by grateful parents to celebrate their children's' formal inclusion into the family group. The fact that the children are forbidden to eat some of the maas is also a link to the above-mentioned ceremony, since children are forbidden to eat maas during the time of this ceremony. (Binns, 1975:163)

This father is mocking the Zulu customs, since he totally twists the **Ukuqhumbuza** ceremony: instead of performing this ceremony to his child's benefit, he harms him. Instead of piercing his child's ear, he pierces his brain. The person that performs the **Ukuqhumbuza** ceremony on the children is supposed to be clean: to have refrained from sexual intercourse the previous night. Pottow (1992:130) explains that the verb - **dla** may also mean to have sexual intercourse. When the narrator thus says that the father and the mother eat together inside the hut, it may also covertly mean that they are having intercourse and by doing so disobey another Zulu custom.

The father and his wife are punished by losing their children. The father is especially struck by the lost of his daughter, since he is not going to receive the **lobola** cattle when she marries. By losing his son he loses the one person who could ensure that

his name would be carried on to future generations. There is also nobody who would take care of him in his old age.

ii) Nomantshali.

Nomantshali, the father of Gubudela in *UGubudela kaNomantshali*, is a foolish, stubborn man who endangers his, as well as his son's lives by cooking meat where the cannibals can detect it. When the cannibals come, he again acts foolishly by not running away, but instead hiding in the chyme of a cow. This father does not trust the education that he has given to his son, since his son advises him to run away and he does not listen. This father is punished by losing his life.

iii) Hlakanyana's father.

Hlakanyana's father is much too simple to deserve a cunning son such as Hlakanyana. He allows his son to trespass all the rules that are laid down for the honouring of a father by his son. It is forbidden to touch the utensils of the head of the home, yet, Hlakanyana takes his father's spear to cut his umbilical cord just after he is born. He also allows familiarity between his son and himself, something that is unheard of in traditional society. This inability of the father to control his son leads to his son leaving the home without even asking permission. The father thus loses his son.

iv) The izimu father.

The **izimu** father in *Izimuzimu nentombazana* is not prepared to share his meal with his wife and children. He also chooses not to believe his wife and children when they report that there is something biting in his bag. As punishment for his misbehaviour, nobody assists him when he is attacked by the dangerous animals that were placed in his bag in the place of his girl. The narrator sums up the situation in her last sentence:

Isala kutshelwa sibona ngomopho.

He who refuses to be told, learns by the oozing of his blood.
(Canonici, 1993 : 81)

v) Hlokohloko.

The story of Hlokohloko in *USikhulumu kaHlokohloko* begins with a chief that orders all his baby sons be killed so that they can't try to usurp his power. This reason for infanticide unfortunately is not only found in stories: it is told that King Shaka was also guilty of this atrocity. Much further back in history, Herode ordered all the Jewish babies to be killed in fear of Jesus who was predicted to become king. A Roman emperor, Caligula, killed and ate his son while he was still in utero.

The old women that are appointed as assassins feel sorry for Sikhulumu's mother and let him live. Many years later the boy returns as a man. HlokoHloko has not repented his evil deeds. If he had accepted Sikhulumu as his son, the story would have ended on that joyful note. Yet, he orders his son to be taken to a forest where a monster lives. He thereby repeats his sins.

It is a known fact that, in the Zulu folktale, all evil will be punished. HlokoHloko receives his punishment from Sikhulumu, who stabs him to death. It is ironic that in the end, HlokoHloko dies in the way that he has feared so much: being killed by one of his sons.

vi) Gunqu.

The story line of *UGunqu* is basically the same as that of *USikhulumu kaHlokoHloko*. Gunqu is however not motivated by the fear that his boys may try to take his power. Like the evil stepmother in *Snow White*, he is jealous of a child that is very beautiful.

Out of childish jealousy he orders Ndoda to kill the boy, Sivi, in the wood. Like the servant in *Snow White* who was not able to kill the innocent girl, Ndoda cannot kill Sivi. With the aid of magical powers, Sivi and Ndoda are able to stay alive in the wood. Sivi makes a regiment appear with his magical abilities and then goes to his father's homestead for revenge. After he has lost all his possessions to Sivi, Gunqu dies of hunger. Justice is done.

2.6.2 Positive fatherhood in the Zulu folktale.

i) Intombiyaphansi's father.

A good father is a father that takes care of his family, ensuring that they are well taken care of and also well behaved. Such a father can be found in the tale *Intombiyaphansi*.

Already in the opening sentence of the tale, it is mentioned that the chief has cultivated a large field: he is taking care of his family's food needs.

The harmony is disturbed when Silwanekazi is killed by her brother, Silwane, because she has killed his leopard. She did this to protect him from being regarded as a wizard for keeping a wild animal. Silwane also tries to stab his other sister in order to prevent her from telling anybody about his horrible deed.

The father's protectiveness over his children is apparent when he orders that the old man and woman who proclaim Silwane's guilt, must be cast out of the garden for putting an evil spell on his children.

When the father finally hears that the proclamations of the old people are true, he acts in the way that society would expect him to. As mentioned previously, a father whose son acts disgracefully, is regarded to be a 'dog'. The grief for Silwanekazi and

the shame caused by Silwane's crime, cause the father to commit suicide. He also punishes Silwane by burning him with them in the hut. Even though Silwane is a great embarrassment to him and has also caused him much sorrow, the good father still calls him his child:

Qha, Mntanami, ngizakukuzwisa ubuhlungu obukhulu, ngoba uwena obulele umntanami.

(But the king said: "No, my child: I will cause you to feel great pain.)

(Canonici, 1993 : 99)

The father also finally directs his remaining daughter to a place where he can be assured that she will be cared for. He thus provides for her even after his death.

Other good fathers that are only very sparsely mentioned are the ones in *UMshayandlela* and *Izimuzimu nentombazana*. The first mentioned father rewards his son with a bull for his bravery. The second father slaughters an ox in order to save Nomvula, his daughter. Understanding the importance of cattle to the traditional Zulu, it is always commendable if they are willing to sacrifice or give away an ox, such as Mshayandlela. Both the above mentioned parents have got their lost children back as a reward for their goodness.

2.7 CONCLUSION

To be a parent is the most important function that a person can have in the traditional Zulu society. Therefore parenthood is a favourite topic in the Zulu folktales. There are examples of both positive - and negative parenting involving both mothers and fathers. Good parents are always rewarded, whilst bad parents usually lose their children and are thus rendered childless again. Barrenness is also found in the folktale as the initial lack that must be rectified. When a character is deserving according to the requirements laid down by society, she will be cured from her barrenness in a miraculous way.

It can thus be concluded that Zulu folktales can be seen as a child-raising manual for all prospective parents, showing them the do's and don'ts of positive parenting.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF GIRLS AS CHARACTERS IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

3.1 INTRODUCTION.

Girls are the heroines or victims in a great number of Zulu Folktales. This chapter is devoted to the roles that girls play in these tales. These roles will be analysed by taking into consideration the norms and standards of traditional Zulu society. The focus will mainly be on girl characters as siblings and brides.

3.1.1 Definition of a girl.

For the purpose of this study a girl is a young female person which is not yet married and also does not have any children. Most of these girls have already entered puberty and are of a marriageable age.

3.2 GIRLS IN THE ZULU SOCIETY.

As children begin to monitor their own behaviour and to identify themselves as either males or females, they develop a sense of what it means to be a boy or girl in their culture (Allgeier, 1983:21).

Child psychologists such as the above observe that boys and girls already know the

differences between their genders from as early as eighteen months. In western society a baby girl will be dressed in pink, a boy in blue. In traditional Zulu society the difference in attire is not so visible. The inequality between boys and girls is clearly depicted by Bosman (1984:92) when he states that the father of a newly born baby will more likely offer an animal of gratitude to the ancestors when the baby is a boy, than when it is a girl. Menzel and D'Aluisio (1997:223) state that the mother of a newly born child is likely to receive more and greater gifts when the baby is a boy than when it is a girl. However it would be very incorrect to conclude that the birth of a girl is not celebrated in much the same way - after all: girls are also referred to as the cattle of their fathers. They contribute to his wealth by bringing in **lobola**. In fact, the firstborn girl in a family will often be named **Zibuyile**, meaning the cattle have returned! Boys may be preferred because they are the carriers of the family name. The preference for boys is also noted in *The Crab Pond* (Samuelson , 1938:101) where it is told of a woman whose six daughters are turned into boys in an enchanted crab pond.

From their earliest childhood, girls in the traditional Zulu society are tutored to be the submissive sex. They must obey the rules of society and accept that their ultimate quest should be to become good wives and to produce and raise children. This must be done without any protest

Traditional Zulu girls grow up with the knowledge that they will always be subjected to the authority of a male figure; be it their fathers, their uncles, their brothers, their

husbands or even their sons after the death of their husbands. A girl is also traditionally not allowed to inherit her father's possessions after his death. Okpewho (1992:115) summarises a girl's position as follows:

But a woman can not claim such liberties; in fact her only security in life comes from having a husband and bearing him children.

It may seem as if these conditions could be the ideal breeding ground for feminism, but any feministic attitude would not be tolerated in this society where, according to most ethnologists, life is a harsh reality to be lived from the hand to the mouth. Each member of the society has his or her mission, which has to be fulfilled to ensure prosperity and survival. There is no room for a change in the attitudes of girls.

Allgeier and McCormick (1983:12) remarks the following:

As stated previously the push for women's rights seems to have had a more positive impact on the affluent than on those in the lower socio-economic classes.

By applying the above quotation to the traditional Zulu society, it becomes clear that women's rights, which usually have to do with free choices for women, such as career choices etc., would not have a large impact on a society where there are no schools (for teaching), no hospitals (for nursing), no law firms, no theatres or any other workplace for women other than to be wives and mothers.

Freedom to choose one's own career and destiny is characteristic of individualism, a concept which is not found in most African cultures. Molema in Beyers Nel (1982:9) states the following about individualism in African societies:

Individualism, as understood in the Western world, could not thrive. Collectivism was the civic law, communism and a true form of socialism and the dominating principle and the ruling spirit.

Beyers Nel (1982:9) enhances the above given quotation by stating that education in the traditional Zulu society was not targeted at the individual personal development of a child, but rather to unify the child with the group.

A girl is thus raised to be a useful member of the Zulu tribe, a mere link in the chain of daily survival and not to be an individual with her own norms and ideals. She had no other choice than to comply with the expectancy of her tribe. Any signs of wilful behaviour were punished, whereas conformity was praised.

In spite of the objections of feminist critics, the ultimate quest of a traditional Zulu girl would be to obtain a good husband and to bear him children. Folktale critics usually maintain that the type of girls that are depicted in these tales, is the exact type that the feminist movement would like to see emancipated. The critics maintain that by telling children tales in which the heroine is only successful when she is polite, obedient, willing and demure, the children will develop sexist attitudes. This criticism may well be applicable in the modern Western society, but it should be taken into

account that the Zulu Folktale was originally targeting the traditional Zulu child, for whom life was rather different. An emancipated woman would be strange phenomena in a society where people were still clinging to the customs that have proven successful for their survival over centuries.

Except for being a good wife and mother, a Zulu girl also has to fulfil certain other requirements which even the most hardy feminist can not criticise, such as being friendly, respectful, helpful and obedient. These qualities would be appreciated in even the most emancipated of women. The Zulu Folktale does not only convey women to be reduced to wives and mothers; it also describes the kind of behaviour that would be acceptable in all societies. Looking past the accusation that the Folktale reduces women to only wives and mothers, it is also clear that it teaches an universal lesson to all girls to obey the rules of the society to which they belong. Where there is no obedience in a society, the society will become decadent.

It is only incidental that in the traditional Zulu society the price for obedience and conformity is marriage and motherhood. In the modern, emancipated Western society the girl that obeys the rules of that society and who is hardworking, pleasant and respectful to others will also achieve her goals, be it winning a scholarship to enter an University, getting a glamorous job or even finding the richest husband.

At this point it can then also be necessary for the feminists to criticise all literature in which the heroine is described as pretty, helpful and well natured. The world may

change, but people will always stay the same. This study's intent is also not to be yet another feminist critique. It rather focuses on the reality of being a girl in the Zulu society and her portrayal in the Zulu folktale.

3.3 GIRLS IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

Girls play different roles in the Zulu folktale. This study focuses on the roles that girl characters play as siblings, brides and the companions of old men.

3.4 GIRLS AS SIBLINGS.

Girls in the Folktale never exist in isolation. They are always part of a family, someone's daughter, sister, niece or bride-to-be. The manner in which a girl deals with her family always leads to her success or downfall. When referring to family it is necessary to know that in the traditional Zulu society every one of a tribe is regarded as family. There are different codes of behaviour that have to be followed when interacting with the different members of a family.

As children are the most important possessions that a traditional Zulu can have, it is obvious that parents will strive to have as many children as possible (Morris & Levitas, 1984:77). Polygamy is also popular among many families, causing the families to be large and complex. A Zulu girl thus sometimes has to grow up not only with her blood brothers and sisters, but also with an array of half-brothers and

sisters. Between a girl and her siblings there are several demands to be met regarding their relationships and behaviour.

It is often found that Folktale characters have to co-exist with their siblings, be it in good or bad relationships. Sisters who are loyal, loving and respectful towards their siblings will be rewarded, whereas those few who are selfish, deceitful and jealous will be punished. The ultimate reward for a traditional Zulu girl is to be married to a prosperous husband and to bear him handsome, well-mannered children. It is therefore obvious that the greatest punishment will be to be denied the above mentioned.

According to Raum (1973:91) siblings of the same sex have more regular contact than siblings of the opposite sex. Girls will have more contact with their sisters than with their brothers. When assessing the sibling relationships in the Zulu Folktale, it is apparent that in most of the folktales there is some kind of interaction between sisters, whereas brother-sister interaction is seldom found. This can be seen as a result of the fact that in the traditional setting brothers and sisters are separated most of the time after their ear piercing ceremony. Boys then have to learn how to do men's tasks and girls have to stay near their mothers to learn womanly occupations, such as beer brewing, food preparation and beadwork (Graafland, 1977:9-20).

3.4.1 SISTER/SISTER RELATIONSHIPS.

The ideal Zulu girl is praised for her willingness, diligence, good nature and sociability (Graafland, 1977:12). So should she also be towards her sisters.

The relationship between a girl and her sisters is influenced by their order of birth. From elder sisters it is expected that they teach the younger ones how to greet the elders, accept gifts and dance (Graafland, 1977:31). An elder sister should also be tolerant towards her younger sister, since they have slept together on their mother's mat after the youngest one's birth (Raum, 1973:96).

An elder sister also plays an important role in the **ukuthomba** (puberty rite), **ukwemula** (coming out), **ukuqoma** (betrothal) and wedding ceremonies. A prospective lover asks the girl's elder sisters for permission before he would approach her. An elder sister is also held responsible for the behaviour of the younger sisters. A younger sister should accompany a bride to her husband's kraal, since it is said that they are not "strangers" to each other. It is strictly taboo for a wife to eat **amasi** (sour milk) at her husband's kraal. It is therefore of great significance that the intimacy between two sisters is bigger than this taboo - a bride may eat **amasi** at her husband's kraal only if she does so with her sister in her hut (Raum, 1973:281-293).

The sharing between two sisters often includes sharing a husband. True sisterly obligation among Zulu sisters is apparent in the practice of sororate, where a Zulu girl bears children for her barren sister. According to Mncube (1973:42) and Krige (1965:240) a younger sister can be chosen to bear children in the place of a barren married sister, because she is the nearest social equivalent to her sister and will not disturb the relationship between her sister and her husband.

3.4.1.1 Sisterly harmony among Zulu folktale characters.

i) Zembeni's daughters.

In the tale of *UZembeni*, the embodiment of loyalty and selflessness is found in one of Zembeni's daughters. Although her cannibalistic mother has cut off her one cheek, she is still described as being beautiful by the narrator. Her beauty is not like her sister's an external prettiness, but rather an internal goodness. According to Janning, Gehrts and Ossowski (1980:25) true beauty in a folktale character can be described as the beauty of the soul, or a spiritual beauty.

Greer in **Adult sibling rivalry** (1992:54) would classify the good sister in this tale as a *supersibling*, which can be defined as follows:

The Supersibling is the person who feels unconditionally responsible for a sister or brother's well being and undertakes all kind of helping actions to make things better.

Greer (1992:59) continues by explaining that in a culture (such as the Zulu culture) where girls are often given domestic tasks, such as baby-sitting, the girls will usually end up with a great sense of responsibility towards their siblings.

This daughter of Zembeni allows her sister to run off with Sikhulumi, the son of a king, while she is willing to face the wrath of their mother. She grants her sister true happiness without envy or hesitation. She also has the insight to predict her sister's new family's possible reaction when they will see her mutilated face and realise what kind of a mother the bride has. She offers to stay at home with her dangerous mother, without thinking about her own safety. She does all this without expecting any reward. This girl is however not killed by Zembeni, who instead is killed in her quest to prevent her daughter from obtaining happiness.

The selfless girl's reward lies within the fact that she is now rid of a horrible mother. Although the tale ends without further detail on the fate of the good sister, it is easy to imagine that she will be married by her sister's husband, will bear many, beautiful children and will live happily ever after...

ii) The sisters in *Ntombiyaphansi*.

Ntombiyaphansi loses her one sister, Silwanekazi, but then gains her other sister. As a result of Silwanekazi's murder, she flees to her older sister's homestead. Although

the **imbulu** (monitor lizard) pretends to be Ntombiyaphansi, it does not take into account the love that sisters share. The older sister remembers Ntombiyaphansi as being beautiful and cries when the **imbulu** says that she (Nntombiyaphansi) has lost her beauty as a result of sickness. She is really saddened by her sister's ugliness, but immediately accepts her new appearance. Ntombiyaphansi does not want to embarrass her sister by revealing that she is now in the power of the **imbulu**. She is able to entice the birds to leave her sister's garden, because she is really eager to save it. When Ntombiyaphansi regains her own beauty and marries her sister's husband, the essence of true sisterly love is captured in this:

Wahlala ejabula nodadewabo.

(She lived in happiness with her sister) (Canonici, 1993:106).

iii) **Ntombo and Sholo.**

In the tale *Ntombo and the Water Snake*, Ntombo and her sister, Sholo, are said to be very beloved and beautiful.

Zabe zikhonzwe kakhulu kwaGumede, ikakhulukazi uNtombo.

(Every body liked them at home, especially Ntombo)

(Du Toit, 1976:43)

One day the two sisters are sent to fetch water from the river. A big river snake leaps from the water and steals Ntombo. It seems that all over the world rivers, lakes and dams are not safe places to be! In Scotland water fairies often steal children and in Ancient Greece nymphs often pulled them into the rivers. In most cultures there are some kind of mystical beings that can seduce heroes and heroines into their realm. The function of these apparitions in folktales is likely to be to warn children not to go too near to dangerous waters.

Although it is said that Ntombo is more beloved than Sholo, the latter is not consumed by jealousy. Whereas a vindictive sister would be glad that her pretty sister is gone, Sholo almost dies from grief over her sister. The close relationship between the sisters is evident in the following quotation:

Yazehlukanisa izingane zikaMnguni inyoka. Yehlukanisa uNtombo noSholo bethandana futhi bekhonzene-babehamba ndawonye, konke babekwenza ndawonye.

(He, the snake, separated Mnguni's children. He separated Ntombo and Sholo when they loved each other and could not do things apart)
(Du Toit, 1976:43).

Although Ntombo is crowned as the queen of all the river creatures, she loves her sister enough to leave her kingdom to help her with her water pot. Sholo on the other hand, loves her sister so much that she is willing to keep their meetings secret so that Ntombo can keep reigning as the water queen, even if she knows that the

soldiers can bring her back. Sholo, being the good daughter that she is, can however not lie to her parents. She splits on Ntombo and the latter is brought back. Sholo must have felt like Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus with a kiss, because she herself is forced to betray her sister with a song that would call her from her water kingdom. Sholo is however not punished for her betrayal and she is allowed to live happily ever after with her beloved Ntombo.

iv) Summary.

Sisters that truly love each other are unfortunately in the minority. The reason for this can be that people are more likely to learn from somebody's mistakes and are more interested in a gossip story.

3.4.1.2 Sisterly rivalry in the Zulu folktale.

Greer (1992:11) states that sibling rivalry is a side effect of basic biological drives for physical and emotional sustenance. Sisters and brothers vie not only for their parents' physical care, but also for their love, attention, approval, intellectual stimulation and guidance.

As a result of the complicated structure of some traditional Zulu families, children often have to share everything from food to their parents' love with numerous brothers and sisters. This may cause extreme rivalry and jealousy. Although

harmony is the ideal, rivalry is the reality. Taking into consideration that an elder sister has to give permission for the younger to be courted (Vilakazi, 1962:46), it is obvious that she might deny this spitefully, especially if she is still single and loveless. In many Zulu folktales it is told of two sisters who have their focus on the same bridegroom. One of these sisters usually converts to foul play in order to reach her goal.

i) The sisters in *Noqandakazana*.

In *Noqandakazana* (Canonici, 1993:54) both Noqandakazana and her sister, Thembeletsheni, want to marry the chief. Only Thembeletsheni is wanted by the chief and has the permission of their father to pursue marriage. Although her father orders her not to go, Noqandakazana goes with her sister. Traditionally a Zulu bride should be accompanied by a sister to assist her in adapting well into her new family. (Vilakazi, 1962:46) In this tale, however it is ironic that the sister wants to do just the opposite: Noqandakazana directs her sister towards the homestead of the dogs where she is maltreated. She again deceives her sister by telling her that her prospective husband does not want her any more, because she went to stay with the dogs. (Dogs are often associated with immorality, implying that he thinks she might have chosen an immoral life.) She abuses their family ties to convince her sister that it would be for the best if she would cover herself with mud and become her slave. She calls Thembeletsheni endearing names, such as **ungumntakababa** (you are the child of my father) to regain her trust in order to be able to deceive her again.

True to the notion that the true beauty of a folktale character is found in the beauty of her soul, even the mud on her body can not hide Thembeletsheni's true beauty.

After the true bride is identified, Noqandakazana is chased away by the chief. According to Vilakazi (1962:5) it is the privilege of a girl to reject a man and to reverse the process is to lay an intolerable burden of shame on a Zulu girl. This, together with the insult of not being given an escort on the journey is the worst possible punishment that a girl can get. Because of her physical beauty she is accepted by Nsolo to be his bride. Her ultimate punishment comes when she again defies an order, and is killed by Nsolo's snake. As snakes are often symbols for the ancestral spirits, Noqandakazana can be said to have received her punishment directly from them, which is also an indication of how great a sin it is to deceive your own sister.

ii) **The sisters in *UMamba kaMaquba***

In *UMamba kaMaquba* the younger of two sisters deceives her elder sister by telling her that their mother does not ever want to see her again after she has broken her calabash. After she has seen that her sister has found happiness with Mamba of Maquba, she jealously decides to pursue marriage to him as well. She however does not fulfil all the requirements that are expected of her, such as licking the old woman eyes, grinding the mealies finely and giving herself to her husband. She too is punished by being chased away from the bridegroom's kraal, a great

embarrassment. She does not receive the greatest reward of them all - to be married and to bear children. Again a snake, in this case a mamba, is the personification of the ancestral spirits who will surely punish someone like the younger sister who does not have respect for the importance of family.

If the character of the younger sister is to be analysed it can be said that she suffers from a "me-too" syndrome - whatever you have got, I want. Greer (1992:27) has found that younger siblings often have a constant desire to have what the other siblings have. The younger sister was jealous and wanted her sister's life: the same husband and also the same children. Greer (1992:54) also found that older siblings often feel that they must be unselfish and sharing - this may be the reason why the elder sister is so helpful towards the old women and sympathetic towards her snake-husband. She is also loyal to her family: although she thinks that she has been chased away by her mother, she still goes home to introduce her new baby to its grandmother. Being what Greer (1992:54) describes as a *supersibling*; she also does not take revenge when her younger sister's deceit is revealed. She allows her sister to seek happiness with her own husband.

iii) **The sisters in *UBuhlaluse benkosi*.**

Buhlaluse is her father, the king's, favourite daughter. It is obvious that such favouritism will cause extreme jealousy among her siblings. Their hatred is so extreme that they bury her alive in an ochre quarry. At home they tell the king that

she has strayed and therefore has got lost. The king's men search for Buhlaluse in vain.

This folktale has a curious resemblance to the Biblical story about Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob. Joseph is also thrown into a hole by his jealous brothers. They tell their father that Joseph is devoured by wild animals. Later they sell him as a slave. True to the Biblical doctrine of forgiveness, Joseph's brothers are not punished severely. Buhlaluse's attackers, however, find themselves in a society where the king has the divine right over life and death. They are executed not only for cruelty towards Buhlaluse, but also for lying to the king.

iv) Summary.

It is obvious that in some cases it is true that blood is thicker than water and that there are sisters that cherish each other enough to overcome any obstacles on their way.

There are unfortunately also those sisters that would rather see their sister's blood on the water. Deeply seated jealousy is usually their motive to harm a sibling. Unloving sisters are always punished in the Zulu folktale.

3.4.2 SISTER/BROTHER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

*We walk side by side, not like a husband and wife behind each other. If my brother leaves me behind I shout: **Musa ukungikhwaya!** (Don't leave me behind; wait!) (Raum 1973:94).*

The relationship between a girl and her brother is relaxed until either of them gets married. A boy will **hlonipha** (honour) his sister by calling her **dadewethu** and she will call him **mnewethu** or **mfowethu** (Raum, 1973:94). Sisters also help their brothers by grinding their mealies, weaving their mats, cleaning their clothes and thatching the roofs of their huts. (Raum, 1973:95) All these services express sisterliness.

The relationship between siblings of opposite sex is however not as close as that of siblings who belong to the same sex. Raum (1973:95) explains that if a new baby is a boy, he may share a sleeping mat with his elder sister only if they sleep under their mother's blanket. He then soon has to get his own sleeping mat. If the new baby is a girl she may share a sleeping mat with her sister for as long as they want. A boy also has to leave his parents' hut as soon as he reaches puberty and go to share a hut with the other boys of his age. As previously mentioned boys have to occupy themselves with masculine activities after their ear piercing ceremony. Brothers and sisters thus do not spend much time together.

If a girl's father dies, her older brothers look after her. Her older brother also receives the **lobola** (bridal fees) cattle when she gets married. These cattle are often used by him to pay **lobola** when he wishes to get married. Girls generally have to be submissive and obedient towards their brothers. They however often share jokes and advise each other on the matters of the heart. A girl will often serve as a go-between for her brother and the girl he is in love with. She will also take care of the fancy clothes that he will need to court a girl, providing him with fancy bead work. After he has won a girl's heart, he will only wear her bead work.

3.4.2.1 Brothers and sisters in harmony in the Zulu folktale.

i) Bagangile and Mzikayise.

Mzikayise had courted Ntombinani for two whole years, ably assisted by his diminutive elder sister, Bagangile, who acted as a go-between in this important and complicated matter.... (Mutwa, 1997:7)

There is a close relationship between these two siblings. It is said that Bagangile is the eldest of the two. She has probably carried her brother on her back when she was a girl and he a baby. Such is the custom for young Zulu girls. She is used to taking care of her brother, even now that they are of marriageable age. Although Bagangile knows that, as it is the Zulu law, her brother is the heir to all their father's possessions, she is not jealous. In fact she helps him to get a wife with whom he can some day share it all.

The casual relationship between them is obvious in the name that she teases him with: **Kondekulu** (big baboon). Greer (1992:55) differentiates between the *clown* and the *joker* in a family: a clown laughs with her siblings whereas a joker laughs at the expense of her siblings. Bagangile is full of mischief, but not in a harmful way. She tells her brother that his beloved has decided to marry some one else. This may seem cruel, but it is necessary to agitate him into giving a great performance in front of Ntombinani who is following the conversation out of sight. The severity of his pain and anger upon hearing the "bad" news convince Ntombinani to accept his marriage proposal. Bagangile's plan is successful. She also calls her brother a big ox, teasing him again with his inability to believe in his own virility.

ii) **Summary**

This brother and sister are unfortunately the only admirable pair that can be found in all the folktales that are analysed in this study. In the other folktales, the relationships between brothers and sisters are spoiled by greed, incest, murder etc.

3.4.2.2 **Brother and sister rivalry in the Zulu folktale.**

i) **Nkombose and Sihlangusabayeni.**

It is remarkable how often snakes form part of the Zulu folktale; usually they are powerful forces that have power over life and death. Knappert (1995:221) states that

snakes are often believed to have a special relationship with the spirits, or to be inhabited by spirits, to carry them, or to be spirits themselves. Venomous snakes, like mambas, are often associated with punishment or death (as in the previous two tales) whereas pythons are usually benevolent characters (as in *UNkombose noSihlangusabayeni*). In this tale an elder brother (Nkombose) defies the orders of his mother and persuades his young sister (Sihlangusabayeni) into playing instead of protecting their mother's mealies from the fowls. He ruthlessly endangers his sister without taking up the responsibility, which was bestowed upon him. It may be that he did all this on purpose to bring Sihlangusabayeni in to their mother's black books, since it is told that their mother loved her daughter more. When their mother returns home, Sihlangusabayeni shows herself to be a worthless sister, since she immediately accuses Nkombose to be the initiator of the disobedience, proclaiming her own innocence. Both these children are punished: Nkombose is strangled by their mother. Sihlangusabayeni thereby loses a sibling who could have helped her with her chores.

When Sihlangusabayeni has difficulty in loading her water calabash on her head, Nkombose appears from the water to help her. It is often said that blood is thicker than water. In this instance the love between siblings is strong enough to let Nkombose rise from his watery grave to assist his sister. Sihlangusabayeni has developed a sense of loyalty towards her brother; she tries to keep her brother's secret although she is later forced to reveal it. Both these children have learnt their lesson and have earned a second chance. Although the mamba wanted to eat

Nkombose, the python wanted to save him. The python, being **inhlwati** (the one that can hypnotise) changes the mamba's mind and therefore Nkombose may live to become the king of the water. The python thus represents life whereas the mamba represents death. The python, being the wiser of the two, convinces the mamba to let Nkombose live. These two snakes (possibly ancestral spirits) are rewarded for their benevolence by receiving two white oxen as compensation for the happiness of the two children. Understanding the high value that cattle have in the Zulu culture, the two snakes should be happy with their compensation.

ii) Demane and Demazane.

According to Greer (1992:19) the bond between siblings is strengthened by names that are almost similar. In Zulu folktales there are Demane and Demazane, Silwane and Silwanekazi as well as Nka and Nkazane. Although the narrators of the above mentioned tales do not mention it specifically, it may well be that such similarities indicate that the children are twins.

In *Inyoni yamasi*, Demazane corrupts her brother into opening the pot and eating the maas belonging to their father. Demane does not fulfil his role as being a member of the "stronger" sex and allows himself to take part in the feast. He however still tries to warn Demazane thrice that the bird is escaping. Perhaps Demane is aware that, in the olden days, touching your father's utensils without his consent was punishable by execution. It was believed that if a boy touches his father's belongings without

his permission, he indicates that he wishes his father dead (Raum, 1973:89). Demazane is too greedy to pay attention to her brother's warning. Perhaps she is aware that the punishment for girls is usually less serious. Her selfishness and greed bring them both great peril, but she is so occupied with eating maas that she doesn't realise it. Greed is one of the well known " seven deadly sins" and therefore a serious offence.

Demazana is not only greedy, but also dishonest: she tries to hoax her father by putting a crow in the pot, hoping that he won't discover the difference. Both these children are severely punished. Their parents pierce awls through their heads.

After having received her punishment from their parents, Demazane is still disobedient to her brother. Her character has not evolved, as would be expected. She roasts the fat meat, again disregarding her brother's orders. Again she endangers both their lives when the ogre enters to steal their food.

Demane's character has evolved; he assumes responsibility for his sister after their parents have punished them. He scolds his sister for her disobedience and also provides for them. Although he has evolved, he still cannot control his disobedient, greedy sister:

Phela yena uDemane wayesayakuthetha asizeni?

(Demane scolded his sister severely, but was it any help?)

(Canonici, 1993:43)

It is often said that every dark cloud has a silver lining: in this case the silver lining is that both Demane and Demazane obtain happiness and marriage in the end.

It is in some sense not fair to categorise the above mentioned brothers as instigators of rivalry, as it was the sisters who were disloyal and disobedient towards them. In the end the brothers proved to be caring and forgiving towards their undeserving sisters.

iii) Silwane and Silwanekazi.

There are some strong suggestions that the relationship between Silwane and Silwanekazi is deeper than an ordinary sibling relationship. A strong bond between them is initially suggested by their names that are very similar. The narrator also mentions that they love each other, a fact that is not often mentioned in other folktales about brothers and sisters.

Although intercourse between siblings is taboo amongst the Zulu, there is a proverb regarding incest that states:

imVelo ayitshelwa, imVelo iyazenzela

(Nature does it, for nature is not told)

The meaning of the names Silwane (beast) and Silwanekazi (beast woman) suggests that they are not human. They may therefore be capable of performing beastly acts such as incest.

Raum (1973:97) also states that a brother and sister are allowed to eat sour milk (maas) from the same pot. This is an announcement of their siblinghood and their inability to marry each other. Silwanekazi, however, does not prepare sour milk but rather sweet milk (**ubisi**) for her brother's leopard, suggesting that she regards her brother as a possible marriage partner. In contrast with Bagangile who encourages her to court a girl, Silwanekazi kills her brother's leopard while he is out courting.

Silwanekazi thinks that the relationship between her and her brother is positive; that he is joking when he orders her to lift her arm to be stabbed. Silwanekazi's love for her brother comes to an end when he spears her to death. A spear is a well-known symbol for a penis. The suggestion in this instance is that Silwane had intercourse with his sister. After her death he dresses her as if she is a bride, putting on her armbands and anklets and smearing her with oil and fats. This is peculiar: after the death of a young Zulu woman, her jewellery is buried apart from the body. Silwane does not obey the usual taboos regarding the treatment of his sister's corpse. He treats her corpse as if it is still alive. The abnormal love

between Silwanekazi and her brother causes both their deaths. Silwane is burnt to death by his parents.

iv) **Summary.**

The Zulu folktale can be regarded as a manual on the way a girl should treat her siblings.

3.5 GIRLS AS BRIDES IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

Marriage completes the transition of the girl to womanhood.
(Graafland, 1977:26).

To be a bride in the traditional Zulu setting is a difficult role to fulfil. A bride should adhere to an array of taboo rules regarding her behaviour and language. Just prior to her marriage she is informed by the older women of her family what is expected of her.

Röhrich (1991:94) states that the folktale is not about two people who belong together. The obstacles to marriage are often more important than the actual love and marriage. The journey that the bride has to take to eventually become a respected wife and mother is thus more important than the actual marriage itself.

3.6 TRUE BRIDES AND FALSE BRIDES.

A theme that is frequently found in folktales is that of the true bride and the false bride who deceitfully tries to steal the true bride's husband and marriage.

3.6.1 False brides.

According to Janning, Gehrts and Ossowski (1980:53), false brides are usually confident that the listener or reader of the folktale may start to believe and forgive them.

i) **Imbulu.**

The **imbulu** (monitor lizard) is the most notorious false bride. Although it is not a real girl, it plays the role of a girl in this tale. Even though it is quite ugly, it is able to disguise itself to take the place of a lovely bride. Its malevolence and greed however always leads to its downfall.

In *Intombi yaphansi* (Canonici, 1993:100), the true bride-to-be, Intombi yaphansi, is tricked to hand over her ox and attire to the **imbulu**. The **imbulu** refuses to return the ox and attire back to its rightful owner and assumes the role of the bride. Cattle are usually closely related to a family's ancestors, therefore, when the **imbulu** mounts Intombi's ox, it aims to take over her identity. It adapts the persona of the bride but makes its first error when it enters the bridegroom's

village without being invited. According to Raum (1973:291) a bride has to remain at the gate of the village until she is invited to enter. The **imbulu** has a strange effect on people: although it is very ugly, it is able to convince Intombi yaphansi's sister that she is in fact Intombi yaphansi, but has been deformed by illness and suffering. The **imbulu** is lazy; it sends Intombi yaphansi to watch the birds in the garden instead of offering to do it herself. Her laziness gives Intombi yaphansi the opportunity to go to the field and to wash in the river where her true beauty and identity are revealed to Dalana.

The **imbulu's** cruelty is apparent in the name that she calls Intombi yaphansi: Dog's tail. The **imbulu's** final downfall is staged by its own greed. It cannot resist the milk in the pot that is put in the deep pit. It's tail sees the milk and the **imbulu** falls into the pit. The **imbulu** breaks another taboo rule by aiming to drink the milk. A bride may not drink milk from her in-laws' cattle until a cow is presented to her in a special ritual.

Mphangose in *Mphangose* (Canonici, 1993:50), is also confronted by an **imbulu**. At the river the **imbulu** sprays Mphangose with water which results in Mphangose taking off her clothes. It is possible that both the **imbulu** in *Mphangose* and *Intombi yaphansi* bewitched the girls by means of water, because the girls are totally powerless after getting wet. The **imbulu** in *Mphangose* also smears the "true" bride with mud, which makes her even more vulnerable. This **imbulu** does not adhere to the taboo rules about not drinking

milk at the bridegroom's homestead. Its greed entices it to steal the milk calabashes. The **imbulu** falls into the pit.

Goldschmid and Phillips (1972:287) remark that falling into a pit symbolises sexual intercourse. The fact that the **imbulu** falls into the pit, but Mphangose not, reflects on the soiled nature of the **imbulu** and the purity of Mphangose.

The **imbulu's** eye rolls away and sprouts a pumpkin plant that intends to kill Mphangose's baby. According to Jobes (1961:539) an eye is often a symbol of evil. The **imbulu's** evil powers live on in the form of a murderous pumpkin plant. Only when the eye (pumpkin plant) is burnt, the **imbulu** is really destroyed. The **imbulu's** deceit began at the water where she met Mphangose: ironically it also ends in the water when the bridegroom throws her ashes in the water.

ii) Noqandakazana.

False brides are however not always ugly. Vilakazi (1962:60), states that in the Zulu culture people are often warned against too big a reliance on physical beauty:

Ikhiwane elihle ligcwala izibungu

(The fine fig gets full of maggots)

Noqandakazana (Canonici, 1993:54) is a beautiful girl. She is however criticised for her wilful personality. Even though she is rejected as a bride, she insists on being married. The ideal Zulu girl should be demure and restrained. (Graafland, 1977:12) Noqandakazana is also rude to her father who orders her to stay. Her eventual downfall is predictable, since there is a belief that a girl who is rude to her father will never conceive (Raum, 1973:426). When a girl has the blessing of her father to get married, he takes her to the cattle kraal where he begs the ancestral spirits to be with her (Raum, 1973:293). Noqandakazana does not have her father's blessing, thus also not the blessing of the ancestors.

Noqandakazana, like the **imbulu**, does not remain outside the gate of her bridegroom's homestead. She enters and lies about her sister, Thembeletsheni. Noqandakazana, although she is beautiful, is very similar to the **imbulu** – she also smears her sister with mud and sends her to guard the fields against birds. When her deceit is discovered, she is humiliated by being sent away without an escort.

Noqandakazana's beauty strikes Nsolo and he accepts her as his bride. Nsolo keeps a snake in a pot. It is strictly taboo for a bride to touch her husband's utensils, but being a false bride, Noqandakazana opens the pot and is killed by the snake.

iii) **Thokozile's sister.**

The younger sister in *Mamba KaMaquba* (Msimang, 1986:259) seeks marriage to Mamba KaMaquba for the wrong reason: jealousy. Her failure is predictable when she refuses to assist the old women on her journey. An ideal Zulu bride should be keen to work and be helpful. (Graafland, 1977:13) The second old woman predicts her failure.

A Zulu bride is appraised on, amongst other qualities, her ability to cook. (Raum, 1973:448) The youngest sister cooks a very rough meal. A Zulu bride should also **hlonipha** (honour) the ancestral spirits of her groom's family. When the bride thus saw the mamba, it could well be an ancestral spirit. She should have restrained her fear and behaved in a better manner. Raum (1973 :300) states that a bride may not call out in her in-laws homestead. Her disrespect and laziness are the catalytic agents of her being chased away.

v) **Summary**

Bearing in mind the importance of finding a nice husband in the Zulu (and others!) society, it is understandable that some girls will resort to cheating in order to get married. Especially if she is cursed with the looks of the **imbulu**, or the personality of Noqandakazana!

3.6.2 True brides.

Raum (1973 :448) lists the following as the qualities that good brides should possess:

*(a) She **hlonipha's** the elder generation in her husband's home, especially her parents-in-law. She cooks food, brews beer for them, complies with their instructions, supplies the husband's brothers with food too. (b) **UkuSebenza**: she works hard, thatching, weeding, hoeing when necessary; she fetches water, makes mats and pots, and keeps the kraal clean. If she can't work she is looked down upon; if she can work, she will earn the affection of her in-laws. (c) Kindness: She is kind to the children of the home, whether they belong to her brothers, her sisters, are legitimate or illegitimate. She feeds them, plays with them, tells them stories and laughs with them. (d) She must please her husband, have warm water for him at any time, wash and iron his clothes, abide by his orders; wrap up his sleeping mat in the morning, spread it in the evening (listeners laugh at this suggestion of sexual intercourse) - but she may not do so in his absence. (e) She must conceive and bear children: this stands to reason!, and she will do so, if she observes the in-law avoidances! (f) She should remember her father and mother at her home: No bride forgets this.*

In the Zulu (and other) folktales, only girls that live up to the above mentioned expectations will obtain the ultimate reward for a traditional Zulu girl: a prosperous husband and healthy, well-mannered children.

Brides are not always approached by their husbands-to-be. For several reasons a bride may approach her husband-to-be first, offering herself to him in marriage. Raum (1973 :291) describes this practice as **ukubaleka** (to run away), the running of a girl to a man to whom she is not engaged to and possibly does not love.

i) Mphangose.

Mphangose is forced to seek marriage at the home of Mkhindinkomo, after her family has been killed. She runs away from her kidnappers in order to avoid being married to one of them. The **imbulu**, however, tricks her during her journey and she becomes a slave instead of a bride. Although she is covered with mud, her true beauty and good nature are apparent in the fact that she refuses to eat the food from her husband-to-be's homestead. There are several taboos regarding the food that a bride may eat at the groom's homestead. Because magic is usually on the side of the deserving folktale character, Mphangose is able to obtain food by hitting the ground with a stick.

Her inherent kindness becomes obvious when she gives the old man all the food that she has. Mphangose's sexual purity is determined when she jumps over the pit without falling into it. As previously mentioned, falling into a deep pit symbolises sexual intercourse, a taboo which is not broken by Mphangose. Mphangose's marriage is prosperous and she gives life to a baby. She has a

caring husband, who protects her and her baby from the dangerous pumpkin (the **imbulu**).

ii) Mabhejana's daughter.

Mabhejana's daughter (Msimang, 1986:255-259) defies some important taboo rules in order to save her husband. Since the goal justifies her actions, she is not punished. She is obedient; she listens to the gall bladder. Although it is forbidden for a bride to enter the cattle kraal, this bride takes an assegai and stabs the black bull (her husband). It is also taboo for a woman to handle an assegai. (Raum, 1973:294) This bride is also demure and respectful: when the other, elder wives accuse her, she remains quiet and restrained. Her actions return her husband to her and also bring her favour with her co-wives.

iii) Thokozile.

Thokozile in *Mamba KaMaquba* is the icon of an **Intombi mpela** (ideal girl). On her journey to seek marriage to Mamba KaMaquba, Thokozile proves to be a demure, helpful and polite young girl.

The first person that she meets on her journey is an old woman that has eye oozings in her eyes. In the traditional Zulu society body dirt, such as eye oozings, contains certain magical powers. Witchdoctors often collect body dirt to use in

their witchcraft (Raum, 1973:153). When the old woman begs Thokozile to lick her eye oozings, she is therefore also offering her magical intervention and assistance. Thokozile does lick the old woman's eyes and in return she is granted the wisdom to obtain a successful marriage.

The second woman on Thokozile's path carries her load on her buttocks and begs Thokozile to help her to lift it to her head. Again Thokozile helps her. This time Thokozile receives a blessing and a promise that her marriage will be happy.

It is said that the way to a man's heart runs through his stomach. Raum (1973:448) claims that a wife that cooks well may well become the husband's favourite. Thokozile prepares a fine meal for her husband.

Because of the wisdom that she has obtained from the old woman, Thokozile is prepared to accept her husband, putting aside her own fear and repulsion. Since she has licked the eye oozings from the old woman's eyes, she seems to be able to see Mamba through the eyes of the old woman. According to Jobes (1961:539) an eye is also a symbol of foresight, insight and knowledge. Thokozile respects Mamba for being a mamba, which may be the spirit of one of the homestead's forefathers. She also respects her role as a bride that may not shout out in her husband's homestead.

As reward Thokozile falls pregnant by Mamba (girls should be warned not to try this at home!) and gives birth to a beautiful baby girl. She proves herself again to be a good wife by first asking her husband's permission before she could go and visit her family. She also obeys the orders of the old woman: she chops up the snake and is rewarded with a handsome young husband. She frees her husband from the magic spell that turned him into a snake. This is a classic beauty-and-the-beast tale in which patience and love is more powerful than the evil magic that turned the handsome hero into a monster. The magic spell can usually only be broken if the beast (snake, frog, black bull etc.) is killed. No pain no gain. Suffer to be beautiful!

iv) Intombi yaphansi.

Ntombi yaphansi (Canonici, 1993:101) seeks marriage to her sister's husband, but is tricked on her way by the **imbulu**. Ntombi yaphansi is so demure and polite that the **imbulu** is able to manipulate her. She, however, does not forget her role as a bride. A bride is not allowed to eat sour milk in her husband's home, therefore she lets it spill when her sister pours it in her hands. When she is given boiled mealies, she eats it. The birds are sent by the gods to assist Ntombi yaphansi. This gives her enough time to go for a bath – an opportunity for Dalana to observe her hidden beauty.

If she speaks to her brother-in-law, she uses terms of honour, such as **Nkosi** (Sir). Her pride forbids her to reveal herself to her husband-to-be and her sister. She would be embarrassed if it would be revealed that she was gullible to the **imbulu's** trickery. After her true identity has been revealed, she also passes the chastity test that is often found in the Zulu folktale: to jump over a deep pit. As a reward she is married to her brother-in-law and it is said that she lived in happiness with her sister.

v) Thembeletsheni.

Thembeletsheni is sent to the dogs' homestead on her way to her husband. She has been chosen to be the chief's bride for her beauty and character. In contrast with her sister, Noqandakazana, she has her father's blessing. She is obedient to her father and will thus be blessed with children. Being a true bride she is entitled to mystical intervention from the ancestors. Thus when she is disguised as a slave by her evil sister, she can survive by means of a magical stick. Her luck turns when the old man reveals her true identity. She lives happily ever after with her husband.

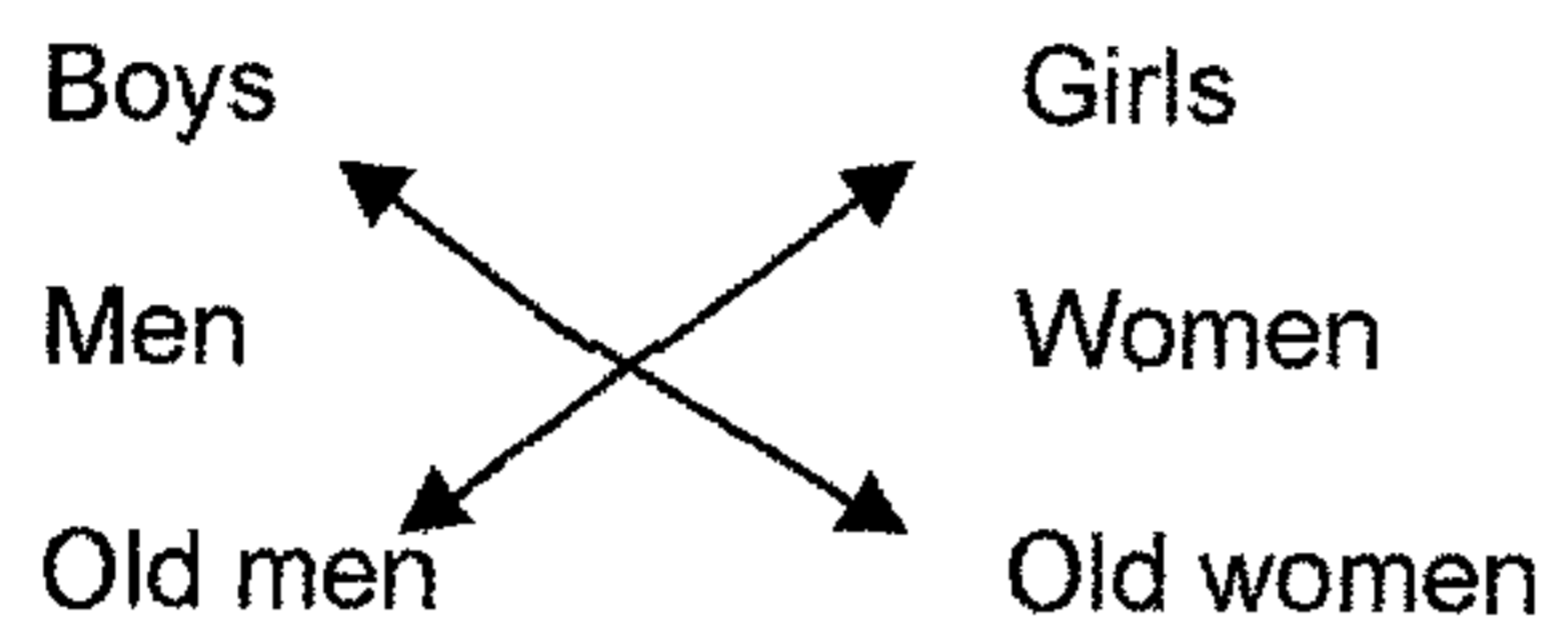
vi) Summary.

The Zulu folktale can also be used by the old women to instruct the upcoming brides on how to be an **'makoti 'mpela** (perfect bride). It can also serve as a

manual to upcoming bridegrooms on how to differentiate between a true bride and her false counterpart.

3.7 GIRLS AND OLD MEN IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

Girls and old men stand in social opposition to each other:



Girls are females, old men are males. Girls are young, old men are old. Girls may not have their own opinion, old men are revered for theirs. Old men are already trained in life, whereas girls are on the threshold of it. In the Zulu culture it is not uncommon for fathers to marry their daughters off to old men. Usually these men are rich and have already married other wives. In Chapter 2 it has already become obvious that love is not the deciding factor in the marriages of the traditional Zulu.

Men who were in Shaka's regiments had to serve for at least twenty years before they were allowed to get married. They were severely punished if they took girlfriends during their service, because the king believed that love would draw their attention away from their duty to him. Legend says that Shaka let naked

girls dance before his regiments and if a warrior showed any signs of arousal, he was killed there and then. Taking in consideration that a man had to serve the king until he was almost forty years old, it is obvious that, by the time he takes his last wife, he could be very old.

Unlike women who cannot have children after their menopause, men can remain fertile until they die. Young girls can thus be impregnated by their old husbands. Often girls have to marry the husband of one of her elder relatives, as is the case with Mpangoshe.

i) Nyumba-ka-tali and Somaxhegwana.

Old men are often portrayed as being the chief's spies. They are often interfering in the lives of other folktale characters. They are also often gossiping and love to spy on young girls. Somaxhegwana spies on Nyumba-ka-tali and sees that she is hiding the children in her hut. He reports this to the king.

If it were not for this old man, the chief would never have known that he had real children. The old man assists the king in killing the crow children and re-instating Nyumba-ka-tali to her position of honour.

ii) Ntombi yaphansi and Dalana.

Dalana means *little old man*. He is already past his virile years and does the chores that are usually given to children: he has to chase the birds away from the crops. He is regarded as being genderless and therefore can work with Intombi yaphansi.

Dalana is a voyeur; he follows Intombi yaphansi when she goes for a bath and is surprised to see her true beauty. As Dalana is already too old to adore her body in the same way in which a virile man would, his greatest awe of the situation is about the way that she managed to cover her whole body with mud!

Dalana reports the situation to the chief and by so doing assists Intombi to take up the position which is rightfully hers.

3.8 CONCLUSION.

Girls are often found in the Zulu folktale. Virtuous girls are usually rewarded with marriage, whereas bad girls remain loveless.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF BOY CHARACTERS IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

4.1 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter is dedicated to the role that boy characters play in the Zulu folktale. Boys never function in isolation in folktales; they are always interacting with other people or with animals. Some boy characters show exemplary behaviour, whereas other boys are less admirable. Boys that behave as is expected of them will receive rewards, whereas boys who defy the laws of the Zulu society, will be punished.

The Zulu norm is that the boy should not be spared pain and trouble and that he must be hardened into a man who will face difficulties with fortitude (Vilakazi, 1962:37).

4.2 Boyhood in the Zulu society.

For the purpose of this study a boy is a male child who is not yet married and has no children, but can stand on the threshold of adulthood.

The burdens of responsibility and honour are laid upon the shoulders of a Zulu boy from early on in his life. Whereas girls are in some ways suffering in this

chauvinistic society, they are also protected from decision making, and having to provide the physical means for the family to survive on. Girls are not expected to be brave and clever, being of the lesser sex. Boys however, are their fathers heirs and in this patrilineal society, will also be the bearers of the family's name after his death. In the same way in which the traditional Zulu society prescribes to a girl how and what to do, it also keep its boys in order by a set of strict rules and expectations, which have to be obeyed. A boy has no chance of acting as an individual, for example being a homosexual or being inclined to like to do "feminine" jobs. Such behaviour would not be tolerated.

Although boys are not discriminated against in the same ways as girls are, they are made aware that although they enjoy more privileges; they also have more responsibilities. Boys are expected to be stronger and wiser than girls.

Maturing into adulthood is not an easy task for either boy or girl, man or woman. Having said that, we might also argue that the developmental tasks faced by the boy/man are the more formidable because the rules are more rigid (Schoenberg, 1993:4).

After the death of their father, a boy has to assume responsibility for his unmarried sisters, providing for them in all ways that their father would have. Once they marry he is rewarded by receiving the **lobola** (bridal fees). After the death of his married brothers, a young man however, also has to be responsible

for the deceased widow and possible children. He even has to father children in his brothers' name (Bosman, 1984:28).

Boys are more often punished than girls. They are given the responsibility to herd cattle from a very young age, and are severely punished if, due to their negligence some cattle are lost. Boys are separated from their mothers and sisters for most of the day after the age of about 7 years. Before that time, they are often pampered by their mothers and looked after by their sisters. They are however, since birth made aware of their "higher" status.

Fathers had 3 objectives in the upbringing of their sons (Binns, 1975:165).

- 1) They must be honest, conscientious in their duties, loyal to their parents whom they must respect and honour.
- 2) Train them in the duties of patriotism in unswerving loyalty to their king and country and in implicit obedience to those in authority above them.
- 3) Teach them to respect the laws of the land and to accept their share of the responsibilities of government.

Other than those mentioned above, there are also numerous other taboos that are taught to boys, such as:

- not to speak until spoken to.
- not to sit in the company of the adult men.

- not to touch their fathers; utensils/spear etc. without his consent
- not to use their father's name in vain.
- to sit with their knees drawn up.
- not to step over their father's legs.
- to keep away from women (Krige, 1965:86).

4.3 BOYS IN THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

In several Zulu folktales boys play the role of a hero, trickster or villain. There are however less folktales about boys than there are about girls. This can be as a result of the fact that it is usually women who tell these tales. In all the folktales about boys it is usually true that evil will be punished whereas goodness will be rewarded.

4.4 BOYS AND CATTLE.

Cattle play various roles in the traditional Zulu society. Cattle are used for, among other functions, in rituals such as marriage, funerals and ancestral worship. The wealth of a traditional Zulu man is measured in his number of cattle and also his children. According to Krige (1965:86) the following advice is given to Zulu boys:

Love cattle, for no man is without cattle.

It is remarkable how often folktales with boys as their heroes start with a boy taking the cattle out for grazing. As in the tales *Mshayandlela* and *Jabulani and the lion*, *Gubudela Kanomantshali* (Gubudela, son of Nomantshali) opens with a boy who is releasing the cattle into the veld (Canonici, 1993:75). **Ukwemuka kwezinkomo** (driving out of the cattle) also has another meaning. When a boy has had his first nocturnal emission he has to rise early the following morning and take the cattle secretly out of the kraal. He hides them and waits until his peers come to fetch him, bringing along an assegai from his father. This means that his father now recognises him as a man. In the folktale the driving out of the cattle usually results in the metamorphoses of a boy into a man.

i) The boy in *UMshayandlela*.

In order to be the "hero" in a Zulu folktale, a boy has to fulfil all the necessary "requirements", such as being brave, clever, cunning etc. Probably the best-known hero is the boy in *Mshayandlela* (Du Toit, 1976:35). Whereas girls are rewarded with marriage and children, boys are often rewarded with cattle. This boy is clever; he sits on a high rock while herding. Although the hero in this tale is a brave young boy, he could not have succeeded without the magical intervention of *Mshayandlela*, the bull. When the cannibals seize the cattle that he is herding, the boy has two choices: he can flee like a coward or he can perform the "manly" deed and try to save the cattle. Knowing the importance of

cattle he would be severely punished if he loses the cattle. Especially such a prize bull as Mshayandlela.

Schoenberg (1993:3) explains the masculine way of thinking as follows:

Men were expected to be in control at all times, of themselves as well as their situation. For the individual male, winning the day often became more important than living it: a cherished folk belief held that it was better to have played the game and lost than never to have played at all.

Being brave and clever, this boy deserves the assistance of Mshayandlela's supernatural powers. Just as the robbers in Sinbad had to recite a chant to open the doors of the treasure cave, this boy also uses a chant to access Mshayandlela's magic.

The herdsman had to form a good working relationship with the leading bull or bulls in the herd. For this purpose, he developed a system of calls and whistles which were well known to the bulls, and which he could use in an emergency to instruct them to lead the herd to the safety of the village. Very often, the leading bull was so well trained that the cattle-thieves had great difficulty in driving the cattle away. The bull would frustrate the cattle-thieves by scattering the herd if it sensed that the herdsman had been killed. For this reason, many cattle-thieves developed a strategy of capturing the herdsman alive and forcing him to use his system of

whistles, calls and songs to assist them in driving the cattle
(Mutwa, 1997:75).

He strategically goes along with the cannibals' plans, allowing Mshayandlela to be stabbed and chopped. When alone with the slaughtered animal and a blind old woman, the boy again uses the chant to restore Mshayandlela to his former glory. It is significant that the boy is left only in the company of an old blind woman. Eyes often represent wisdom in folktales. This old woman has no functional eyes, thus also lacks the wisdom to hinder the boy when he escapes. Cannibals are also believed to have only one eye, thus it can be interpreted that they are also half witted!

When the boy and the cattle reach the ravine, the water divides and they can walk through. This supernatural interference strongly reminds the listeners of the Bible story of Moses, who lead the Israelites through the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21). Just as God was on the side of the righteous Moses, the water spirits also assist the boy (Knappert, 1995:256).

*In almost every pool and stream, we are told, there lives a spirit
and in the rivers and lakes there are many spirits including the
spirits of the dead and drowned.*

The assistance of the water spirits also enables the cunning hero to kill the cannibals: he outwits them by letting them believe that he wants to help them

across the ravine, but instead lets them drown. It is known that cannibals lose their strength when their toes are not touching ground.

It is evident that this boy is well loved by his family. The narrator mentions that his family was weeping, because they thought that he was dead.

The boy's joy to be home is heightened when his father gives him a reward: Mshayandlela. Knowing the attachment of the Zulu to their cattle, this reward is phenomenal for a young boy.

The fact that this boy remains nameless could be purposeful. Any young boy listening to this tale could imagine that he is this fortunate boy. The importance of cattle is also again stressed by the anonymity of the main character: the boy has no name, but the bull does, thus the bull is more important than the boy.

ii) **Jabulani.**

Jabulani is, as his name indicates, a cheerful, industrious boy. His best attribute is that he is a good herd boy. It is mentioned that his best time of the year is winter. For some boys winter is a miserable season, but not for the ever-optimistic Jabulani. He makes clay oxen and hunts field mice.

It is his happy-go-lucky attitude that lands Jabulani in lethal trouble. He is gullible to the lion's promise that it would not eat him. He is also altruistic and too proud, fantasising of how he would be the object of the other boys' envy if he has a lion as a pet. But he is also compassionate. He saves the lion from the trap. Jabulani is not a perfect protagonist; he endangers the cattle by setting the lion free from the trap.

He however soon realises that he has made a mistake when the lion threatens to eat him. He tries to rectify this by calling on the interference of other animals, hoping to be saved. All the animals side with the lion urging him to eat the boy. Jabulani's naivety causes him to believe that the animals will protect him. He learns the truth about his fellow men's abuse of animals through the words of the cow and the donkey. In fact it seems as if all the animals despise humans for their cruel ways.

Salvation comes to Jabulani in the character of a jackal.

The jackal is one of the most popular characters in the storyteller's repertoire: cunning, quick, eloquent, the ideal common man, the lonely boy who made good. (Knappert, 1995:125).

The jackal is widely regarded as the cleverest and most cunning of animals. The jackal in this story is fair and just, taking into consideration that the lion has promised that he would not eat Jabulani. The jackal is able to discriminate

between Jabulani who is kind and his fellow humans who maltreat animals. The jackal recognises Jabulani as someone who will be missed by his mother i.e. some one who is loved.

Well that looks very well indeed. Jabulani, your mother must be missing you, run home boy - RUN!!! (Mhlophe & Thladi, 1998:27)

Jabulani is also polite, he thanks the jackal before he rushes home. There is a Zulu proverb that goes;

Ukubong' ukuzibekela

(to give thanks is to provide for your future) (Nyembezi, 1974:185)

Jabulani's reward lies in the fact that he is given a second chance and that he is taught a lesson in life.

iii) **Gubudela.**

Gubudela in *UGubudela kaNomantshali* is said to be an **insizwa ekhuluphele kakhulu** (a very plump young man). The ideal feast for a hungry **izimu** (cannibal). Could there be a warning in this description, perhaps urging the listeners of the story not to allow themselves to get too plump? Is it Gubudela's plumpness that enticed the **izimu** to try and catch him? It is obvious that cannibals prefer fat victims. In the German folktale Hansel und Gretel (Zilak &

Gaudore, 1995:55), the fact that Hansel is underfed saves him from being the cannibalistic witch's next meal!

Although Gubudela is the hero in this tale, he is far from perfect. He leaves the cattle to fend for themselves after sunset while he follows the **izimu**. He also chooses to run away when the **izimu** stalks the cattle. He complies with the proverb that goes "rather sorry than dead" (Nyembezi, 1974:170). A perfect fairy tale hero would have stayed and defeated the cannibals. Gubudela however is a strategist. He gains the **amazimu's** trust by offering them dagga-filled beer and then burns them to death.

Gubudela uses the **amazimu's** magic against themselves. The ashes of the burnt **amazimu** bewitch the other **amazimu** when they consume it in the water.

iv) **The boy in *UTulube*.**

The folktale *UTulube* (Canonici, 1993:48) is a variation of that of *Mshayandlela*, but there is a slight difference in the ending. In this instance, the hero is not given the bull, instead he becomes one with the bull. It is said that he sleeps and eats in the cattle kraal. The cattle kraal is known to be the dwelling of the ancestral spirits. This boy is thus honoured to sleep in the kraal. Cattle are also slaughtered in his honour, as it would have been for the ancestral spirits. According to Krige (1964:88) this is the greatest honour that can befall someone.

v) Summary.

All of these folktales demonstrate the intimacy between the Zulu and their cattle. The bulls are willing to be slaughtered to save their herders' lives. The herders are willing to endanger their lives instead of abandoning their bulls. It can thus be said that in biological terms, the bulls and their herders have a symbiotic relationship: to the benefit of them both and to no one's detriment.

4.5 BOYS AND OTHER ANIMALS.

The traditional Zulu were very protective of the wild animals that shared the natural resources with them. Unnecessary killing of or cruelty towards animals was punished by extreme sanctions. Mutwa (1997:23) describes the sanctions as follows:

If you were responsible for killing a sacred animal, you were first beaten unconscious by a troop of women and then, if you were male, you were publicly castrated or, if you were female, your breasts were slashed off. It was said that the great Earth Mother is a very sensitive and quick-tempered goddess, and that only the hideous death of those who offend her can placate her and prevent her from taking revenge on the rest of the tribe.

Mutwa continues by remarking that:

It is not an exaggeration to say that African people had more laws governing people's behaviour towards the Earth, plants and animals than they had governing other acts of human behaviour.

All Zulu families belong to greater clans which each has its own totem animal. It is even more taboo to harm one's totem animal, as it can cause one's death (Mutwa, 1997:222). Children who are listening to Zulu folktale are warned through these tales that animals should be respected. Folktale characters that treat animals with respect are guaranteed a prosperous life, where as animal bullies meet a sad fate.

4.5.1 Boys and lions.

The Zulu name for a lion is **ingonyama** (master of all flesh). Mutwa (1997:152) reveals that, because a lion's tail ends in a tuft of dark-coloured hair, African people believe that the lion has the gentle characteristics of a cow. The lion thus combines fierceness and gentleness.

All over the world, the lion is often referred to as "the king of the animals". As a matter of fact, the lion is on the top of the feeding chain, having no natural enemies. That is before people came into their world. Although people do not eat lion flesh, they hunt lions in order to prove their own virility.

i) Mageba.

Prince Mageba is given a lion cub by his warriors. It is said that Mageba fell in love with it and that they became like brothers. Mageba has the fate of the lion in his hands. He chooses to be fair to the lion and decrees that the lion, when it has grown up, should be set free:

I cannot keep another king slave in my village, said Mageba to his warriors. The lion has grown. Very soon it will be a fully matured male. It must go into the forest and enjoy life as uNkulunkulu has decreed (Mutwa, 1997:153).

Years go by and Mageba is now the king. One day, while engaged in a bloody war, Mageba is hurt and about to be killed by his enemies. A pride of lions comes to his salvation. The leader is the lion he has set free. The lion thus returns the courtesy.

The similarities between the tales of Mageba and that of Androculus in the Greek mythology are commendable. Androculus nurses a lion that has a huge thorn in his paw. Later when Androculus is thrown to the lions in the circus, the same lion saves his live.

The lion who is saved by Jabulani is a prodigy. He has no scruples and therefore wants to eat his saviour. He is punished by having to spend his life in the same trap from which he was saved.

ii) Summary.

Lions are truly the kings of the jungle and to respect them for being that, will bring rewards to a Zulu boy.

4.5.2 Boys and dogs.

There is a Zulu proverb that states, 'The bone of a dog smiles together with the bone of a human being,' and this refers to the great spiritual bond that has always existed between human beings and dogs - and which is something that still exists to this day (Mutwa, 1997:45).

i) Sikhulumi and his dogs.

A dog is indeed man's best friend. In the case of Sikhulumi in *Zembeni noma Zwanide*, this is very true. Sikhulumi wants to marry Zembeni's daughter, but Zembeni, being a cannibal, wants to kill him.

After a long, tiring chase, Zembeni traps Sikhulumi and his bride in a tree. She starts to chop at the tree with her axe. Sikhulumi's dogs, which were hidden in a nearby reed bed, attack and kill Zembeni. She is resurrected once, but they attack her again and throw her remains in the river. These dogs are able to grind Zembeni's legs with stones, indicating that they have divine assistance.

Sikhulumi's dogs do what dogs are supposed to do: to rid the world of evil. Mutwa (1997:47) tells of fierce dogs that kill sorcerers who ride their baboons backwards!

ii) **Summary.**

Dogs are sometimes accused of being dirty, immoral animals. Sikhulumi's dogs have given dogs a better name.

4.5.3 Boys and leopards.

The Zulu name for a leopard is **ingwe**. Which, according to Mutwa (1997:144), means *pure sovereignty*. Therefore only the kings and princes are allowed to keep or kill leopards. If a king favours a brave warrior he too may wear a leopard skin.

i) **Silwane.**

Poor deranged Silwane thinks that his leopard is a dog! Being a prince he is actually entitled to keep a leopard as a pet. He even gives his sister instructions on how to cook his "dog's" food. She kills the leopard, because she is afraid that the people will brand Silwane as a sorcerer. Sorcerers are known to keep members of the wild cat family as pets.

In many cultures cats of all kinds are associated with witches. It is said that members of the cat family have power over the **Mantidane** and **Tokoloshe** (Mutwa, 1997:32).

African people believed that the leopard, like domestic cats and other wild cats found in the wilderness, was specially brought to this world by the gods. Their purpose was to protect the Earth and all living things against destructive demonic entities that wanted to corrupt creation from within. They believed that if the leopard and other cat-like animals disappeared from the face of the planet, a great spiritual darkness would descend upon all life (Mutwa, 1997:145).

By killing the leopard Silwanekazi thus unleashes all the evil contained in Silwane. Both Silwanekazi and Silwane die as a direct result of the leopard's death.

ii) **Summary.**

Boys must know that leopards are to be respected and revered.

4.5.4 Boys and monstrosities.

The rivers and pools of the traditional Zululand seem to be infested by monstrous snakes. These snakes often possess something that is highly prized by kings and chiefs. But in general these snakes menace the cattle, women and children

of a certain area. One of these snakes can even cause tornado's (Knappert, 1995:243). Only the bravest of the brave will attempt to approach such a monster. If a boy has successfully dealt with it, he is rewarded lavishly.

i) Bhadzela and Mningi.

In folktales from all over kings are willing to give their daughters to anybody that can complete a certain task successfully. The given tasks vary from making the serious princess laugh to obtaining the liver fat of a water dragon.

Bhadzela's new king needs the liver fat of a water dragon. The only obstacle is Mningi, the snake with the many heads, who lives in the same pool as the water dragons. Mningi seems to be similar to the hydra that can be found all over the world. The desperate king promises his daughter, Ntanyana, to any man who can conquer Mningi.

Bhadzela, who is not very strong looking, volunteers. In a true David - and - Goliath fight Bhadzela chops off all Mningi's heads. The king is strengthened with the fat of both the water dragon and Mningi. He keeps his promise and gives his daughter to Bhadzela. Taking into account how many cattle a man would have to pay as **lobola** for a king's daughter, it is obvious that Bhadzela is very well rewarded. It is also said that Bhadzela became an important person.

ii) The boy and Luyeza.

Luyeza is a **inyoka enkulu** (a big snake). The king of this particular country is very ill and can only be healed if he partakes in the liver of Luyeza. A certain boy, who is said to be very small, volunteers to approach Luyeza. In this instance the king has promised the successful young man enough cattle to fill a big kraal. The prospect of having so many cattle, as well as the knowledge that a good Zulu boy will lay down his life for his king, motivate and inspire the boy.

This boy's strength lies not in his body but in his head. This boy fits the profile of tricksters in the Zulu folktale: he is small and cleverer than other people. He tricks the snake out of the water and into the cattle byre. The king gets his medicine and the boy gets all his cattle. Even Luyeza is rewarded: he may return to his pool. That is until the next time the liver of a great water snake is needed....

iii) Summary

Boys who are brave enough to face monstrosities, deserve to be rewarded.

4.6 BOYS WHO DISRESPECT ANIMALS.

The importance of animals to the Zulu people can never be overstated. Mutwa

1997;13) states the following regarding the relationship between traditional Zulus and nature:

In old Africa we did not regard ourselves as superior to the animals, the trees, and the fishes and the birds. We regarded ourselves as part of all these living things. We believed that far from being created, we were, in fact, the weakest of all the creatures that God created.

i) The young man who was unkind to animals.

If a Zulu disrespects animals, he may be punished like the young man in *The young man who was unkind to animals*. This young man thought that he was superior to a rat and a pig, but was harshly brought to his senses.

This young man passes a pig that is covered by mud. He is revolted and spits on the ground. He laughs at the pig, never stopping to consider the pig's feelings. The pig has done nothing wrong, it is just the way that it has been created. Although the pig is covered in mud, it does not mean that it may be disrespected. The pig warns the boy that one day people will laugh and spit when they see him. This indeed happens at his girlfriend's kraal when he is caught with a pot on his head.

The young man also passes a rat that is tearing a bag of mealies. The rat is very hungry. The young man is merciless; he kicks the poor rat onto the ground. It

would make him no poorer to give the rat a bit of mealies. Rats don't eat much! The rat curses him that one day he too will be hungry, but have no food. This curse comes true when the young man suffers from hunger at his girlfriend's kraal.

The young man is punished by being humiliated. It is also said that no girl wanted to be associated with him afterwards. He is thus also denied the privilege of getting married and fathering children.

Pigs and rats are usually regarded as carriers of diseases or dirty animals. It is degrading to call a person a pig or a rat. It is therefore ironic that these animals are instrumental in the downfall of a young man that thought he was superior and untouchable.

ii) **Summary.**

Never think that all animals are not equal!

4.7 BOYS AS TRICKSTERS.

By definition a trickster is someone that tricks, cheats, double deals etc. (Collins, 1994;695). The best known trickster is probably Hlakanyana.

i) Hlakanyana.

Although Du Toit (1976:72) states that Zulu tricksters are always animals, it is not always the case. Hlakanyana (Msimang, 1986:237) is a boy born from a human mother. It is said that he resembles a weasel, but he is none- the- less a boy. It is even possible that Hlakanyana is derived from Chakijana, a weasel (chakide) that often features as the trickster in Zulu folktales. Hlakanyana is derived from **hlakaniphile** (clever).

Throughout most of the folktales, tricksters are almost always described as having a slight, small physical appearance. In the traditional Scottish folktales there are the fairies and elves; in the folktales of Grimm there is the dwarf Rumpelstilskin and in other tales Little Tom Thumb, gnomes and leprechauns cause trouble. We find other tricksters in the Zulu folktales that are small, but cunning, such as the **unogwaja** (rabbit), **imbila** (rock rabbit), **impungushe** (jackal) and **imbulu** (monitor lizard). Even the great William Shakespeare declares in **Julius Caesar** that he prefers men around him that are fat; men that sleep at night. He continues by making the statement that thin men are dangerous, because they are always hungry for power.

The much feared **Mantindane** and **Tokoloshe** are both only a few stones in height. In fact the **Tokoloshe** is small enough to ride a baboon!

In a society such as that of the traditional Zulu, beauty and richness are associated with being "well covered". In the folktale *Gubudela kaNomantshali*, the hero is described as being plump. Plumpness is also usually an indication of being lazy and gullible. Gubudela Kanomantshali twice allows the cannibal to shove him into a bag. Larger animals such as elephants, crocodiles, lion etc. always fall prey to the trickery of the smaller tricksters, such as mice, rabbits and jackal. Philip (1999:29) has the following to say about larger folktale characters:

Giants are found throughout mythology. Their size makes them terrifying, but often they are portrayed as slow, stupid, and easily outwitted...

Knappert (1995:77) describes Hlakanyana as follows:

In South Africa the dwarf called UCakijana or UHlakanyana is born with an adult intelligence and a ruthless character, from a human mother... He plays tricks on everybody and when he is almost caught he simply disappears. He strongly resembles the English changelings and the Irish leprechauns of yore, children looking like wizzened (sic) old men in midwives' tales.

In Theal (1882:85) Hlakanyana is described as follows:

It was a boy, but in size very little, and with a face that looked like that of an old person.

Hlakanyana is already distinguished from ordinary babies while he is still in-utero. His mother, the wife of a chief was barren until an ox had been slaughtered to appease the ancestral spirits. The foetus speaks to his mother even before he is born, commanding her to give birth to him. Hlakanyana is born without all the usual precautions which are associated with childbirth, such as the burial of the umbilical cord in the **umsamo** of the hut and the administration of the root of the **umThambane** plant to the baby (Krige, 1965:66).

Krige (1964:66) also states that a newly born child is supposed to be fed on fresh cow's milk or **amasi** (maas). Hlakanyana demands meat. A newly born is also traditionally welcomed into the family by anointing him with, among other ingredients, the body dirt of his father.

This dirt is thought to contain part of the father's personality and has therefore an intimate though undefined connection with the itango or spirit of the grandfather and so of the clan (Krige, 1965:67).

Mother and child stay in isolation until the umbilical cord falls off. Their isolation protects other members of the kraal against impurity.

After he has been born, Hlakanyana immediately stands up, cuts his umbilical cord and goes outside. He thus is not anointed to be a part of the clan - he is his own person, following his own rules and defying the rules of his society.

Hlakanyana breaks the one taboo rule after the other. He uses his father's spear to cut his own umbilical cord. Children are not allowed to touch the personal belongings of their fathers without their consent. A baby is supposed to stay in isolation for a period after its birth, but Hlakanyana goes to the cattle kraal. Boys are also expected to be seen but not heard by their elders and to have no familiarity with their fathers or other men. Hlakanyana, however, joins the men in the cattle-byre and converses with them. He demands meat from them. In many African traditions meat is not given to children before these children are at least able to walk, which is around one to two years of age. Traditionally, Zulu babies are only weaned at the age of 2 to 3 years old (Krige, 1965:73). Hlakanyana, however, never needed mothers-milk as nourishment. He thus has no bond with his birth mother, that being the reason why he can bedevil her scandalously without any remorse.

Hlakanyana, at the tender age of a few hours, commits his first crime by stealing the men's meat. In Msimang (1986:237-239) Hlakanyana is described as being a "prodigy". At first, when he spoke from inside the womb, his mother said that he was a prodigy, meaning a child genius, miracle, marvel etc. After this first fraudulent act, Hlakanyana is again called a prodigy, but this time with the meaning of monster, monstrosity and spectacle (Collins, 1994:528). The women of the kraal even start to doubt whether Hlakanyana is at all human. For them it is inconceivable that a child can outsmart the elder men.

Yet, his mother loves him. She addresses him as follows:

My boy is a man. He is wise. You surpass all the men, including your father and your friends (Msimang, 1986 :239).

A Zulu mother is supposed to act as a mediator between her children and their father. (See chapter 5). Hlakanyana's mother, however, chooses the side of a boy who will never return the favour. He leaves her, without fulfilling his duty, which will be to take care of her in her old age.

The other boys in the villages do not readily accept Hlakanyana. He does not belong to their peer group, but still insists on sharing sleeping quarters with them. A baby of his age is supposed to sleep in his mother's hut, leaving her hut only after the age of 7 years.

Although the boys say that he's just a baby, they have to recognise the fact that he has "mouth-and-word-strength". They are thus obliged to let him sleep with them.

Hlakanyana bedevils his own mother; then accuses her of letting the birds turn into dung. He admits to his flabbergasted mother that he is not her and her husband's son. He was only born out of her body.

Since it is known that there is universal justice, it is obvious that Hlakanyana must be punished for his wrong doings. In Msimang (1986:241) Hlakanyana's punishment comes in the figure of an iguana. The iguana is well known for its ability to trick its foes! It steals Hlakanyana's whistle.

According to Theal (1882:110) Hlakanyana meets a much harsher fate. He dies when his mother tries to save him from a tortoise. She accidentally pours hot fat over him. A tortoise is a respected animal by many Africans, because:

They believe that the tortoise, like the snake, the frog and the lizard, were the animals that God first created in this world. The tortoise is the symbol of longevity, because many tribes in southern and central Africa believe that a tortoise lives for several hundred years (Mutwa, 1997:211).

Knappert (1995:244) describes the tortoise's role in African folktales as follows:

In the tales of all the African peoples the tortoise is never defeated. Its slow movements and wrinkled skin give it an appearance of being very old and very wise, cautious and prudent.

By trying to kill the tortoise, Hlakanyana's mother acts against natural laws. The tortoise has been on earth much longer than Hlakanyana and should have been respected for its age. Therefore she loses her only child. Hlakanyana provokes the spirits by not only killing, but also eating the leopard cubs that are entrusted to him by their mother. **Ingwe** (leopard) is an ancient word that originally meant

"pure sovereignty" (Mutwa, 1997:144). It was forbidden to kill a leopard since it was regarded as a sacred animal.

It is only in folktales that a fierce animal such as a leopardess will allow anybody near her cubs. Moreover, a leopardess can usually bear only one or two cubs. This leopardess, however has ten cubs. This supernatural event enhances the ability of the folktale to stretch the truth.

ii) Phoshozwayo.

Canonici (1993:107) states that this is a modern folktale. The presence of horses, Indians, policemen and Whites can therefore be explained. Phoshozwayo is the only folktale character in this study that mentions all of the above.

Phoshozwayo is the younger of two brothers. As usual the youngest, smallest brother is also the most cunning. Phoshozwayo's name already indicates his nature: the talkative garrulous one (Doke, 1972:671).

Unlike Hlakanyana, Phoshozwayo is provoked into becoming a trickster by his brother's actions. Being the youngest brother, Phoshozwayo is not his father's heir. His brother inherited most of his father's cattle and property. Phoshozwayo inherited only two horses. Phoshozwayo's tale will remind the Western European

folktale reader of the boy Hans Christian Anderson's *Puss in Boots*. In this tale the youngest brother is also disadvantaged - he only inherits a cat. Like Phoshozwayo, this boy is also favoured by strange circumstances and events and ends up better off than his brothers.

Qakala, the elder brother, kills Phoshozwayo's two horses out of jealousy. It is said that

Umona usuka esweni utshele inhliziyo

(Jealousy starts from the eyes and they inform the heart) (Canonici, 1993:107).

Phoshozwayo is forced to leave his home after he has seen that his horses are dead.

Phoshozwayo turns his misfortune into opportunity. He uses the gallbladder of his slaughtered horse as a hoax to earn the respect of the men at the homestead from which meat was stolen. Since traditionally the rural Zulu are known to be extremely superstitious, Phoshozwayo can persuade them that the gallbladder can be used to divine. He trades an useless gallbladder for a whole herd of horses. A gallbladder also fulfils a role in several other Zulu folktales.

Unlike Hlakanyana, Phoshozwayo uses his trickery only to revenge himself on his brother. He does not have an inborn vendetta against the human race. He persuades his gullible brother Qakala (which is said to be rather stupid) that he sold the skins of his dead horse to a white man for the price of a whole herd of horses.

Suffering from the everything-you-can-do-I-can-do-better syndrome, Qakala kills ten horses in order to sell their hides to the white people. But naturally his plans are not successful and he ends up being chased by the police.

Brotherly jealousy erupted as soon as God created the first pair of brothers. Cain murdered Abel (Genesis 4), because God favoured Abel more. Qakala now decides to kill his more successful brother, but being the stupid villain that he is, accidentally chops off the head of his grandmother who is sleeping in Phoshozwayo's place.

Unlike Hlakanyana, Phoshozwayo actually has a conscience. He is really stricken by his granny's death. This however does not restrain him from pulling a macabre joke on an Indian. As this is a modern folktale, it is acceptable that Indians are mentioned. The Zulu's first met Indians in the 1800's when the first Indians came to KwaZulu Natal's sugar fields.

Phoshozwayo deceives the Indian into believing that he is responsible for Granny's death and then blackmails him into paying a huge compensation fee. Phoshozwayo is an opportunist that is able to capitalise even on the tragic event of his granny's death.

The difference between Hlakanyana and Phoshozwayo is also that the first rejects all family ties, whereas the latter uses his money to give granny a grand funeral. Phoshozwayo is not truly as devious as Hlakanyana. He does not get mad, he gets even. He only uses his trickery to the disadvantage of those who provoked him. In fact he is able to devise a clever plan to cause his brother to be responsible for his own death. Phoshozwayo never stains his hands with blood; through trickery he uses his opponents' vices against themselves. After his brother's death, Phoshozwayo, as the second son, now succeeds to the property and status of the kraal head (Krige, 1964:180).

iii) Summary

The similarity between Phoshozwayo's trickery and that of Donald O'Neary in the Irish folklore is amazing. Donald's brothers kill his only cow. He cuts slits in the cow's skin and fills them with coins. Then he convinces his brothers to sell the magical cow. His brothers slaughter all their own cows believing that they will make a profit (Georgiou, 1969:159). Tricksters indeed thrive on the stupidity of others.

4.8 BOYS AS VILLAINS.

Msimang (1986:104) defines a villain as somebody who is usually more bad than good. Peck and Coyle (1982:79) state that what villains have in common is that their evil deeds disrupt society

The difference between a villain and a trickster in the Zulu folktale is usually intelligence or the lack thereof. Whereas tricksters such as Hlakanyana and Phoshozwayo are very intelligent and cunning, villains are usually quite stupid and therefore always meet a horrible death. Villains are also wittingly evil and therefore punishment will be inevitable. Villains disobey the laws of their society and dishonour the traditional values, such as honesty, love for family etc.

i) **Silwane.**

As often in the Zulu folktale, a character's name is descriptive of his nature. Silwane means animal (beast); i.e. someone with an inhumane nature or that does beastly acts.

Silwane (in *Ntombiyaphansi*) keeps a leopard cub as a pet. Members of the wild cat family are often associated with wizards (**abathakathi**) and witchcraft (Krige, 1964:324). Could it be possible that Silwane is misunderstood by the community and that he keeps the cub out of the gentleness of his heart? Could it be possible

that Silwane only adopted the cub because its' mother died? In traditional Zulu society any behaviour that strays from the norms of society is ogled with suspicion. Therefore it is said that Silwane will become a wizard.

However, regardless of Silwane's familiarity with a leopard he still proves to be a villain. His sister, Silwanekazi kills the leopard in order to save him from the judgement of the people. It is said:

Babethandana uSilwane no Silwanekazi

(Silwane and Silwanekazi loved each other) (Canonici, 1993:97).

Although it is not specifically mentioned, it is very possible that Silwane and Silwanekazi are twins. Greer (1992:19) indicates that the bond between twins or siblings is strengthened by names that are almost similar. If Silwane and Silwanekazi are twins, it is understandable that so much misfortune is bound to strike their family. Krige (1964:75) states that when twins are born in the traditional Zulu society, one of them must be killed:

It was believed that if this was not done, someone in the family would die.

In this story this ill omen is truly fulfilled.

Silwane orders his sister, Silwanekazi to feed his "dog" (for he believes that the leopard is a dog) only on cold **isithubi** (porridge mixed with milk). She kills the "dog" by feeding it hot food. Silwane is outraged and fails to accept that she did this to protect him. Silwane stabs his beloved sister to death. If the reader or listener was previously tempted to see Silwane as a sympathetic animal lover, this act certainly serves as an eye opener. Perhaps it was his association with the leopard that influenced him?

After he has murdered his sister, Silwane performs a peculiar ritual with her body:

*Wathatha ukhamba uSilwane, wathela khona ububende
bukaSilwanekazana. Wabuya wamesula kahle, wamgeza,
wamlalisa ocansini lwakhe, wathatha isicamelo sakhe,
wamcameliso ngaso; wamlungisa ekhanda, emthela ngamakha
emqhelisa; wamgqiza ezandleni nasezinyaweni; wamgcoba
ngamafutha, wamembesa ingubo yakhe. Kwangathi ulele nje.*

(Silwane then took a pot and put in it Silwanekazana's blood. He then wiped her carefully, washed her, placed her down on the mat, took her pillow and put her head on it; he arranged her head and put scents on it, he put a fillet on her brow; he put armlets on her arms and anklets on her legs; he smeared her with fat and covered her with a blanket. It looked as if she was just sleeping.) (Canonici, 1993:97)

According to Krige (1965:141) a bride is *well greased and perfumed and wearing beautiful bead ornaments*. It is possible that at this stage Silwane regrets killing his sister and tries to make amends by dressing her up as the bride that she will never be. It is also possible that the fact that Silwane dresses his sister as a bride may insinuate that they had an incestuous relationship. In some cultures a piece of fillet is often put on a "black eye" to reduce the swelling and to ensure a speedy recovery. Usually a bride's face is covered by beads, Silwane, however covers his sister's face with a fillet. Silwane wants his sister to be revived, because it is said that they loved each other.

It is significant that Silwane mixes the blood of his sister with the blood of a sheep. Mutwa (1997:69) reveals that *imvu* (sheep) means *voiceless animal*. He explains that:

Sheep are called by this name because unlike a goat, which bellows blue murder while it is being slaughtered, the sheep dies quietly. Xhosa and Zulu sangomas never use sheep in any of their ceremonies because if they do, the ancestral spirits will fall silent, like sheep, and never talk to them or through them again.

By slaughtering a sheep and mixing its blood with Silwanekazi's, Silwane aims to mute the ancestors. He wishes for his evil act to remain a secret, passing unnoticed and unpunished by the ancestors. If Ntombiyaphansi (their younger sister) could eat the sheep's meat, she too will be silenced. If Ntombiyaphansi could eat her sister's flesh, she too will be guilty of her death. Therefore Silwane

offers her some of the meat in the pot. According to Mutwa (1997:70) there lives a **ituku** (worm of insanity inside the brain of a sheep). Sorcerers, such as Silwane, use these worms to bewitch a person, causing him or her to become insane.

It is highly irregular for a brother to cook food for his sister. Silwane is usually dominant over his sister, this is obvious in the way in which he ordered Silwanekazi to cook for his leopard and to raise her arm to be stabbed. Thus, when Silwane offers her food, Ntombiyaphansi is naturally cautious. She however, decides to obey him and picks up some food...

No villain will get away unpunished. If Silwane were to be successful, the didactic function of this folktale would be corrupted. Magic intervenes in the form of a **impukane** (fly) that warns Ntombi against her brother and thus saves her from sharing Silwane's guilt. Ntombi flees from her murderous brother and after a long and complicated process is able to implicate Silwane in his sister's murder.

Silwane's father, the king, sentences him to an exceptionally harsh punishment - to be burnt alive. Silwane's deeds were so horrible that they cause his father and mother to be ashamed to live - they choose to be torched with him. To be burnt alive is a well-known method of execution for witches and wizards. Silwane begs to be stabbed to death, but this way would be too easy and inadequate for the seriousness of his offences.

ii) **Qakala.**

In the folktale *UPhoshoswayo*, Qakala is supposed to be happy. He is, as the eldest son, the sole heir to his family's cattle, goats and horses. He however is governed by the green eyed monster: jealousy. The name Qakala is derived from **qakala** which *means provoke, arouse and incite and make unfounded attack on* (Doke, 1972:685). Qakala is the personification of all the above mentioned actions. Jealousy reigns in his heart and therefore he kills his brother's two horses. By doing this he provokes his brother Phoshozwayo to become a trickster. He certainly is not a role model or a respectable elder brother to his brother. His greed dictates his actions.

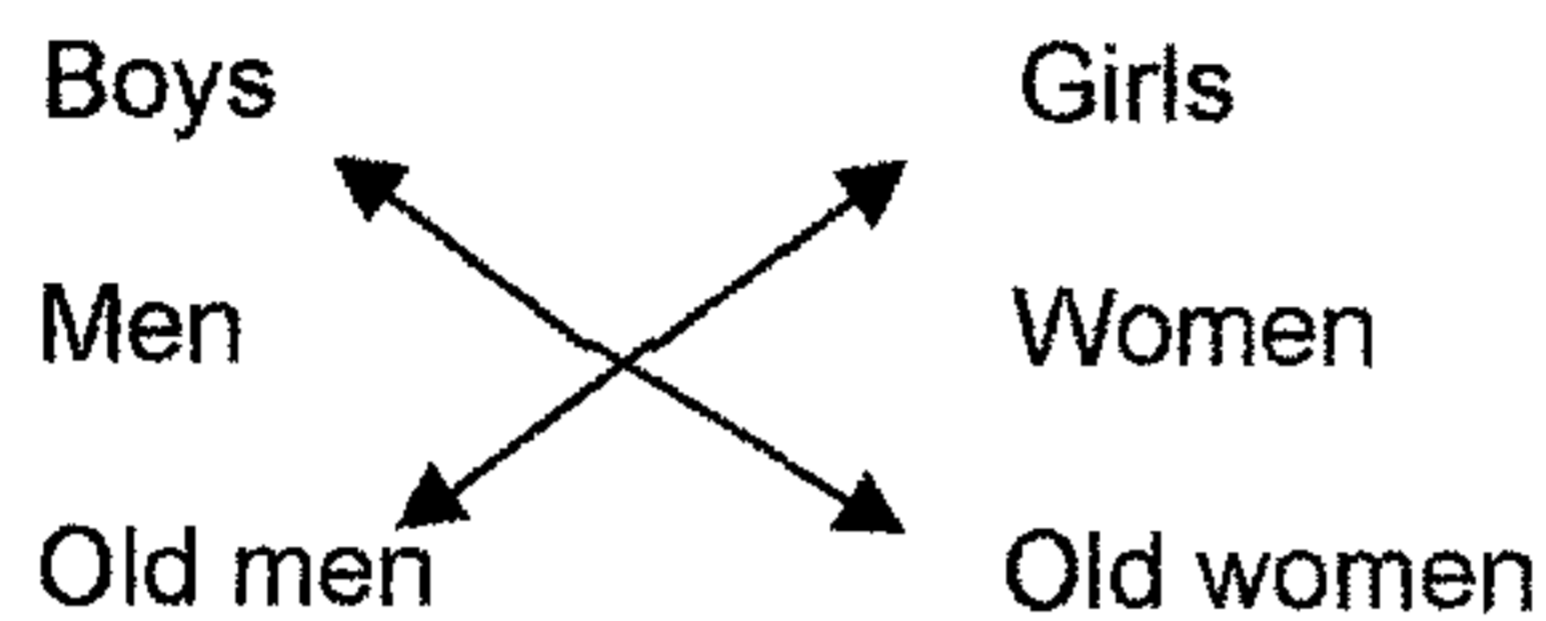
Apart from killing his own horses, he also kills his own grandmother. Although he meant to kill his brother (like Cain killed Abel) and then accidentally chopped off his granny's head, this is still an unforgivable felony. In the Zulu culture, as in most of the world's cultures, a granny is an indispensable asset to a child. Qakala's granny would be the one person that would be able to cure him from his greed. But now she is dead, his parents are dead and he is left to stray further. He sends his own grandmother to the realm of the **amadlozi** (ancestral spirits), but can not reckon on her protection since it was he that killed her. He jeopardises his relationship with the ancestors further by killing two other old women. Qakala unwittingly causes his own death.

iii) Summary.

Do to others as you would want them to do to you. If one harms your neighbour, harm will also come to you.

4.9 BOYS AND OLD WOMEN.

Boys are the genealogical opposites of old women.



Boys are male, old women are female. Boys are young, old women are old. Boys are able bodied, old women are not able bodied.

There is however a special social relationship between boys and old women. Old women past their menopause and sexually active years are regarded as being pure and are able to fulfil the same ritual functions as pre-pubertial children. When King Quphu held a census in the olden days, children and old people were not even counted (Mutwa, 1997:22). They are regarded as "not able bodied".

Old people's strength does however not lie in their bodies, but in their brains. Raum (1973:18) describes the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren as follows:

Alternate generations are both sexually inactive and have other resemblance: they are without teeth share the same food, are helpless; they are both nearer to the "unknown".

The spirit of a child has just been sent from the realm of the **abaphansi** (spirits of the dead), whereas the spirit of an old person is on its way to it.

Phoshozwayo shares a hut with his grandmother, for in the eyes of the community it is totally inconceivable that they may commit incest. Old women will not often get married to young, but old men often marry young women.

Old women are usually depicted as being wise and able to predict the future. They are used as agents to differentiate between a deserving and an undeserving character. They are also often able to cast spells, good or evil. This phenomenon occurs in fairy and folktales from many cultures: Cinderella's Godmother, The witch of Endor, Baba Yaga, Satan's granny etc. Old women are also often regarded as witches and either respected or torched for their abilities. The passing of time has however different consequences for young boys and old women. Young boys become strong men, whereas old women become feebler with the passing of time. In such times young boys lack the wisdom that old

women possess. That may be the reason why young men and old women are often found in symbiotic relationships in Folktales. If either party fails to regard the other with the necessary respect, the tale will end with the demise of one or both. Boys and girls that do well to old people are usually rewarded.

More often than not, though, the person helped has done some act of kindness for an elderly person who turns out to be a magical being... (Georgiou, 1969:160)

i) Mahlokohloko and the old women.

Mahlokohloko the son of Sikhulumi, wishes to marry Mabhejane's daughter. Mabhejane has a long horn on her head, indicating her evil nature (Horns are usually associated with the devil). It is also said that she used to kill people. She is a powerful witch who can command lightning to strike her victims. And unfortunately for Mahlokohloko, she is opposed to his marriage to her daughter. She is a mother-in-law from hell!

Mahlokohloko, the son of the chief, is a good young man and therefore it is likely that he will be assisted by some kind of magical agent. As it very often happens in the Zulu folktale, his salvation comes in the form of an old woman. He is polite and obedient towards the old woman; licking her oozing eye. It is already mentioned elsewhere in this study that eyes are often symbolic of wisdom, and that when a hero licks someone's eye oozings, a part of that wisdom becomes

his. This old woman remains anonymous. She only acts as a conveyer of the magical powers that the gods want to bestow upon Mahlokohloko. She gives to him the gall bladder of a lizard. According to Raum (1973:123) the ancestral spirits of old women often appear to mortals in the form of a lizard. Thus it can be assumed that this old woman has some kind of connection with the **amadlozi** (spirits). The ancestral spirits usually assist a deserving hero; in this case they remain with him in the form of the gall bladder. Mahlokohloko follows all the instructions given to him by the gall bladder and is thus able to leave Mabhejane's place with his bride. He makes a mistake by stepping onto the path, allowing Mabhejane to cast a new spell on his footprint. Mabhejane's spell turns Mahlokohloko into a black bull (**inkunzi emnyama**).

The close relationship between boys and cattle became obvious earlier in this chapter. The significance of transformation of Mahlokohloko into a black bull is however something else! According to Raum (1997:406-419) so the king is identified with a black bull during the **umKhosi omkhulu** or **ukweshwama** (the Great Royal Ceremony or First fruits). A black bull is killed during these rituals to strengthen him and to remind him that he too will be replaced if he loses his virility.

This bull also plays a part in the Kings acquisition of **umMnyama** (a mystical kind of fierceness which makes him fit to perform the various ritual acts, in particular the *Biting of the First Fruits and the Crushing of the Guard*).

The chief's association with a black bull thus makes him stronger. In this folktale, the chief becomes the black bull. Therefore the black bull has to be killed in order to let the chief return with all his strength with the guidance of the gall bladder. His new bride enters the cattle byre and stabs him to death (a bride dances with a spear in marriage rituals). His ashes are thrown into the water.

All over the world water seems to have resurrecting powers: knights, deceased kings and beautiful maidens are often said to be rising from the water. Raum (1973:118) states that the **abaphansi** (spirits of the dead) often reside in water. Water spirits and snakes also have the power to resurrect people. Mahlokohloko emerges from the water and then lives happily ever after with his bride.

ii) Phoshozwayo and the old women.

Phoshozwayo and his brother Qakala are left in the care of their grandmother after the death of their parents. Phoshozwayo loves his granny and tries to please her. When he has obtained more horses, he firstly shows them to his grandmother. Typical of a child who wants to please his grandmother, he recites to her. In this case his own praise-song. His grandmother, knowing him as a trickster is suspicious of his sudden fortune. Her disapproval is very disappointing to him. He tells her the whole story and then she believes him and is happy again. Phoshozwayo's granny becomes his ally after he has sworn her to

secrecy. This narrow bond between them causes her death: Qakala kills her, thinking that she is Phoshozwayo because he sleeps in her hut.

Even through her death Phoshozwayo's granny takes care of him. He takes her body to town and tricks an Indian into believing that he killed her. He collects compensation money (actually blackmail money) from the Indian. The fact that Phoshozwayo is not so completely ruthless and evil as the folktale villains usually are, is apparent in the grand funeral that he gives his granny after he has made his fortune. His trickery however indirectly causes the deaths of two other old ladies! Since these old ladies' deaths are not directly his fault, there are no sanctions against him for them.

iii) Makiwane and the old woman.

Makiwane is depicted as a friendly, sensitive young guy. He loves all the animals and they love him. That is why he saves an ant bear in distress, even though it will mean that he misses an appointment with his girlfriend.

Makiwane marries the girl of his heart: the lovely, young Nomaza. Their fortune is short lived. Cannibals attack them and carry his beloved Nomaza away. Makiwane is severely injured. The ant bear comes to his salvation by bringing medicinal herbs to him.

Only Namuteya, a very old woman is able to prepare the herbs, but she demands Makiwane's hand in marriage as compensation. Makiwane has no other choice but to marry the old woman. As it was already said earlier in this chapter: young men can benefit from old women's wisdom, whereas old women need the strength of young men to survive. Taking into consideration that Makiwane has once rubbed the stomach of the ugly ant bear, it is not impossible that he can love Namuteya!

Mutwa (1997:189) concludes this tale by saying that Makiwane became a happy and wise man with Namuteya at his side.

Makiwane is not the only young man that is forced to marry an old woman in order to get healed. In the Greek mythology a young man called Jason had to marry Medea in order to secure her assistance in finding the golden fleece. This marriage, however, was less successful.

lii) Summary.

In reality, especially in Tinseltown, some young men do marry old women, but only for the financial security that it may bring. This is however a society where children are a commodity, not a need. Therefore modern men sometimes do not mind marrying women who are past their reproductive years.

4.10 CONCLUSION.

Boys will be boys! Good boys will be rewarded and bad boys will be punished.

CHAPTER 5

THE ZULU FOLKTALE TODAY.

5.1 INTRODUCTION.

The scope of this chapter differs dramatically from that of the previous three chapters. In the previous chapters the focus was on the role of children as characters in the Zulu folktale. In this chapter the relationship between flesh and blood children and the Zulu folktale will be investigated, as well as the influence that they have on each other. The status of Zulu folktales as a genre will also be discussed.

5.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

5.2.1 AIM OF THE STUDY.

The aim of this research is to determine the present status of the Zulu folktale among children. It is also necessary to find out what influence factors such as religion, gender, locality and family structure and urbanization have on the future of the Zulu folktale.

5.2.2 SAMPLING OF PARTICIPANTS.

Data were sampled from a total of 18 schools. The sampling of these schools was at random, but they were however selected to represent the most significant Zulu speaking communities in R.S.A. These communities are situated in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Gauteng and Mpumalanga. Schools were also selected to represent rural and urban communities equally. In each school a random selection of learners between the grades 4-7 were asked to complete a questionnaire. A total of 360 questionnaires were sent out. A total of 264 were returned.

Questionnaires were sent out to the following schools:

Nr.	Name	Province	Status
1	Bon'ukukhanya Primary School	Mpumalanga	Outstanding
2	Broodspruit Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
3	Brookfield Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
4	Emoyeni Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
5	Kaleni Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
6	Ladismith Christian School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
7	Musi Combined Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
8	Ndabambi Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
9	Newark Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
10	H.P. Ngwenya Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Outstanding
11	Nkwalini Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
12	Nottingham Road Combined School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned

13	C. Nxumalo Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Outstanding
14	ShriVishnu Primary School	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Returned
15	St Peters Primary School	Mpumalanga	Returned
16	Emadlelweni Primary School	Gauteng	Outstanding
17	Hlakaniphani Primary School	Gauteng	Outstanding
18	Vus'umuzi Primary School	Mpumalanga	Outstanding

Although, for the aim of this study, the questionnaire was compiled in English, it was translated and explained to the children in their home language, Zulu. Questionnaires were completed by the participants under the supervision of the school's Zulu teacher and then sent back to the researcher in the provided envelope. An extraordinary high percentage of questionnaires were returned, $264/360 = 73.3\%$.

5.2.3 The Questionnaire.

Children were assured that this was not a test and that there were no correct or incorrect answers. They were also assured that they would remain anonymous and could therefore be totally truthful in the completion of the questionnaires. Precautions were also taken to ensure that the participants were not able to copy from each other.

i) Question A.

Question A focuses on the demographic background of the participants. From

this multi-choice question the researcher would find out the following indicators: age, gender, religion as well as geographical distribution of the participants. For the purpose of this study, city, town and township are regarded as urban, whereas farm and kraal are regarded as rural.

ii) Question B.

Question B deals with the participant's knowledge of some of the best known Zulu folktale characters: *Chakijana, Demane and Demazane, Zembeni, Mabhejana, Mamba kaMaquba, Maqinase and Mshayandlela*. A few well-known characters from the European culture were added in order to find out if Zulu children know more about their own or the European culture.

Question B also aims to find out the role that the media, school and also the grandmother play in the survival of Zulu folktales.

iii) Question C.

This question aims to investigate the availability of electronic media, books and grandmothers to the participants. It also, very simply, aims to find out how the participants view the role of folktales in their lives. As this research involves primary school children, it is obvious that it could not be as complicated and thorough as it might have been, had it been compiled for older participants.

QUESTION A: CHOOSE ONE ANSWER ONLY						
1	I am in standard	2	3	4	5	6
2	My age in years is	10	11	12	13	14 - 18
3	I am a	Boy			Girl	
4	I live in	City	Town	Township	Farm	Kraal
5	I live with	Parents	Granny	Sister	Friends	Hostel
6	How many children in family	1	2	3	4	More
7	My church is	Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Traditional	Other
8	My father is	Zulu	Swazi	Xhosa	Ndebele	Other
9	My mother is	Zulu	Swazi	Xhosa	Ndebele	Other
QUESTION B: CHOOSE ONE OR MORE ANSWERS						
	Do you know about:	Where did you hear about it ?				
10	Chakijana	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
11	Demane and Demazane	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
12	Zembeni	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
13	Mabhejana	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
14	Mamba kaMaquba	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
15	Cinderella	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
16	Power Rangers	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
17	Zimbad	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
18	Maqinase	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
19	Teletubbies	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
20	Scrooge McDuck	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
21	Ninja Turtles	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
22	Lassie	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
23	Kermit	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
24	Mshayandlela	Yes	No	Grandmother	TV / Radio	School books
QUESTION C: CHOOSE ONE OR MORE ANSWERS						
25	At home we have	Electricity	TV	Radio	Books	Nothing
26	I like to read	Bona	Drum	Kickoff	True Love	Nothing
27	My father's mother is	Far away	Living with us	Telling stories	Dead	
28	My mother's mother is	Far away	Living with us	Telling stories	Dead	
29	Stories teach me to	Help people	Be naughty	Listen to people	Be good	Do nothing

5.3 THE INFLUENCE OF URBANISATION.

5.3.1 Urbanisation defined

Definition: Urbanisation is the tendency of rural people to relocate to urban areas. This also implicates the influence of urban culture on rural people, as well as the acculturation that may follow. In the case of a Zulu moving to the city where the life style is mostly western, the term "westernisation" as used by Minnaar (1972:12), can also be used.

Before the intervention of European people, the Zulu's had a strangely defined culture under the leadership of famous leaders such as Shaka, Dingiswayo etc. There was no formal schooling, radio, TV or books. Children were instructed and educated throughout the day by participating in chores and after the chores were finished at night, grandmothers telling folktales supplied instruction and entertainment. In traditional Zulu society, the cohabitation with one or more grandmother was the norm, not as it is today, an exception. Grandmothers did not only entertain the children at night, but also had to baby sit them during daytime when their mothers were working in the fields. Children thus got most of their education from their grannies.

Then came the white man, his religion and education system. The first contact between white people and Zulus was in the eighteen hundreds. The European

missionaries, who converted the traditional Zulus from their "heathen" religion to the doctrine of Christianity, brought most changes. Vilakazi (1962) devotes a significant part of his **Zulu Transformations** to the influence that Christianity had on the lifestyle of the Zulu. Christianity was preached to children in schools at missions. Children were taught that ancestral worship and most of the rituals connected to being Zulu, are mortal sins. Children were taught to read and to write. According to Vilakazi (1962:132-133) these literate children tend to lose respect for their illiterate parents. A destruction of the traditional social system was thus inevitable.

5.3.2 Aim

The aim of this indicator is to determine the influence that urbanisation had on the survival of the Zulu folktale.

5.3.3 Hypothesis.

Urbanisation has a negative influence on the knowledge that school children have of Zulu folktales.

5.3.4 Data sampling technique.

A total of 360 questionnaires were sent to a total of 18 Zulu schools in urban and

rural areas. The average age of the participants was 12 years and four months, ranging from grades 4 to 7. Urban schools cover the whole spectrum of "urban" areas: from big towns, small cities, townships and cities. Rural schools were mostly situated on farms. The schools were also chosen to cover most of the Zulu speaking provinces, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mpumalanga and Gauteng. A telephonic conversation, as well as a letter, accompanied the questionnaires to assist the Zulu teacher of each school to facilitate the test. The researcher herself also visited some schools.

However, from the 180 questionnaires that were sent to urban schools, only 88 were returned, thus 48.9%. Taking into consideration that there was a 98,3% (176/180 questionnaires) return at rural schools, it is already visible that there is a difference between the eagerness of rural and urban teachers to promote the Zulu folktale. For the rural teachers it might have been problematic to return the questionnaires, being (in some cases) very far from the nearest post office. Whereas the urban teachers should not have any such problem!

A number of the most famous (and infamous!) characters were laid before the participants in this test. The aim was, among others, to determine if there is a noticeable difference between urban and rural children regarding their basic knowledge of Zulu folktale characters.

5.3.5 Results.

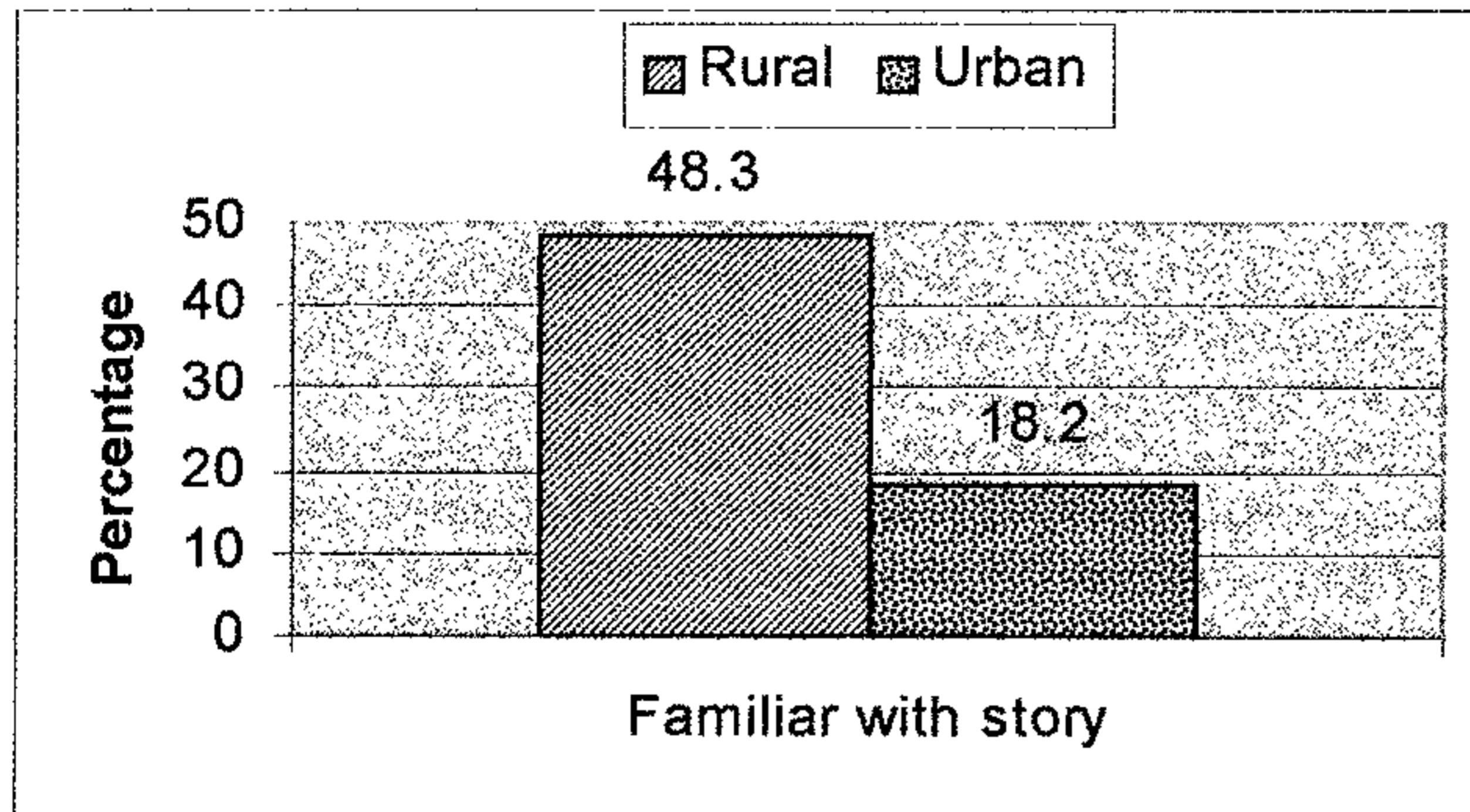


Fig. 1: The percentages urban and rural participants familiar with *Chakijana*.

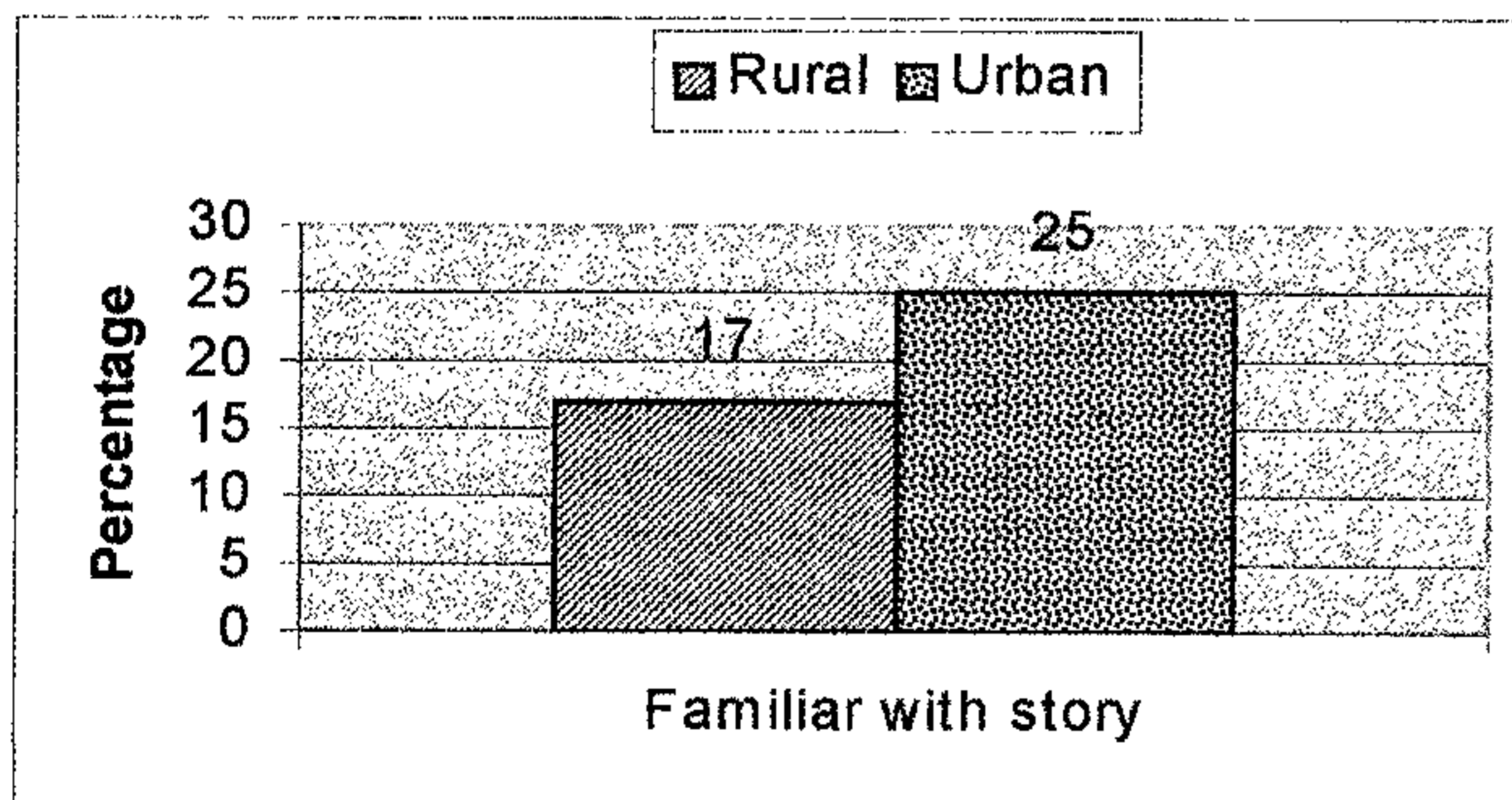


Fig. 2: The percentages urban and rural participants familiar with *Mabhejana*.

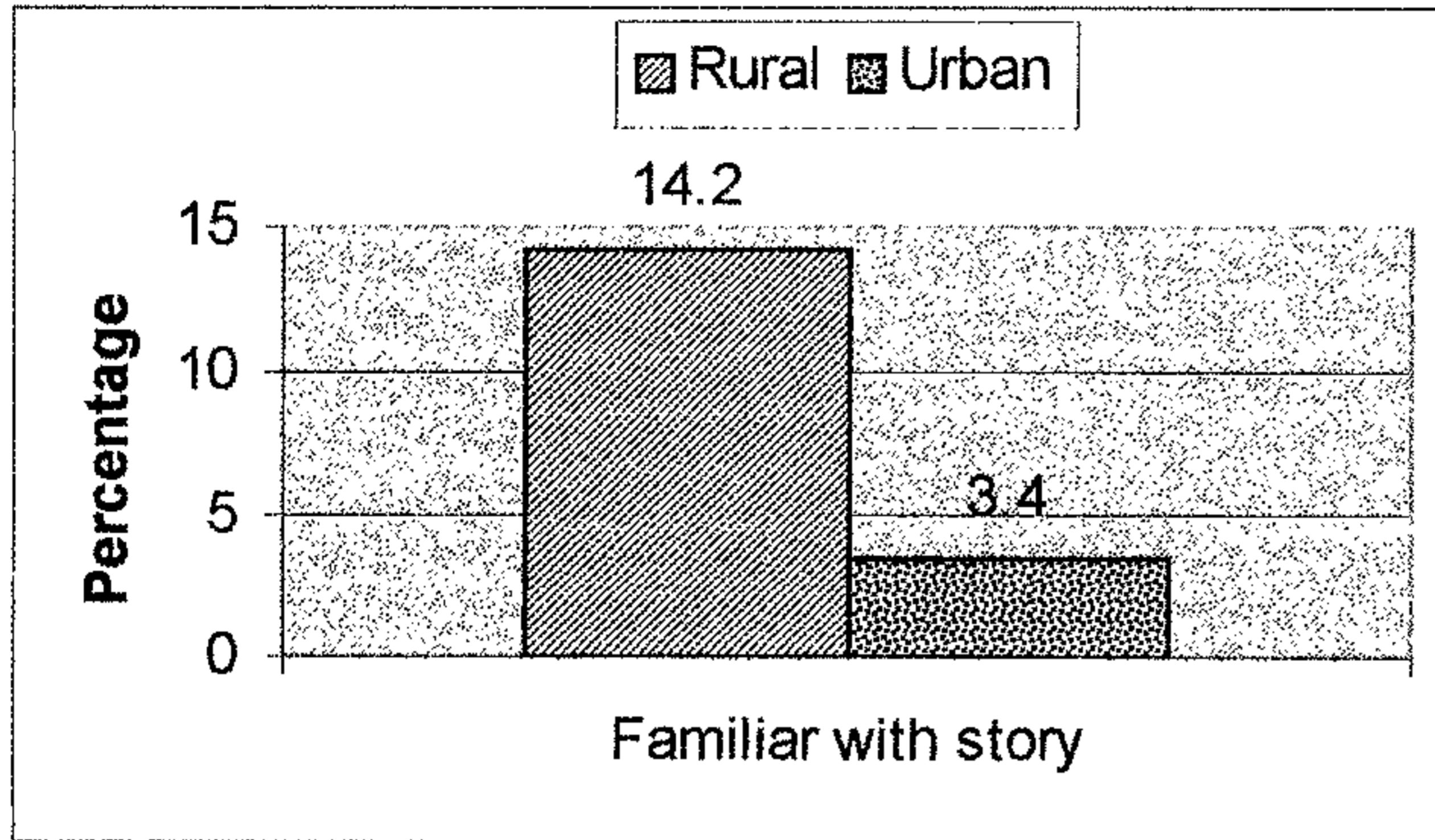


Fig. 3: The percentages urban and rural participants familiar with *Zembeni*.

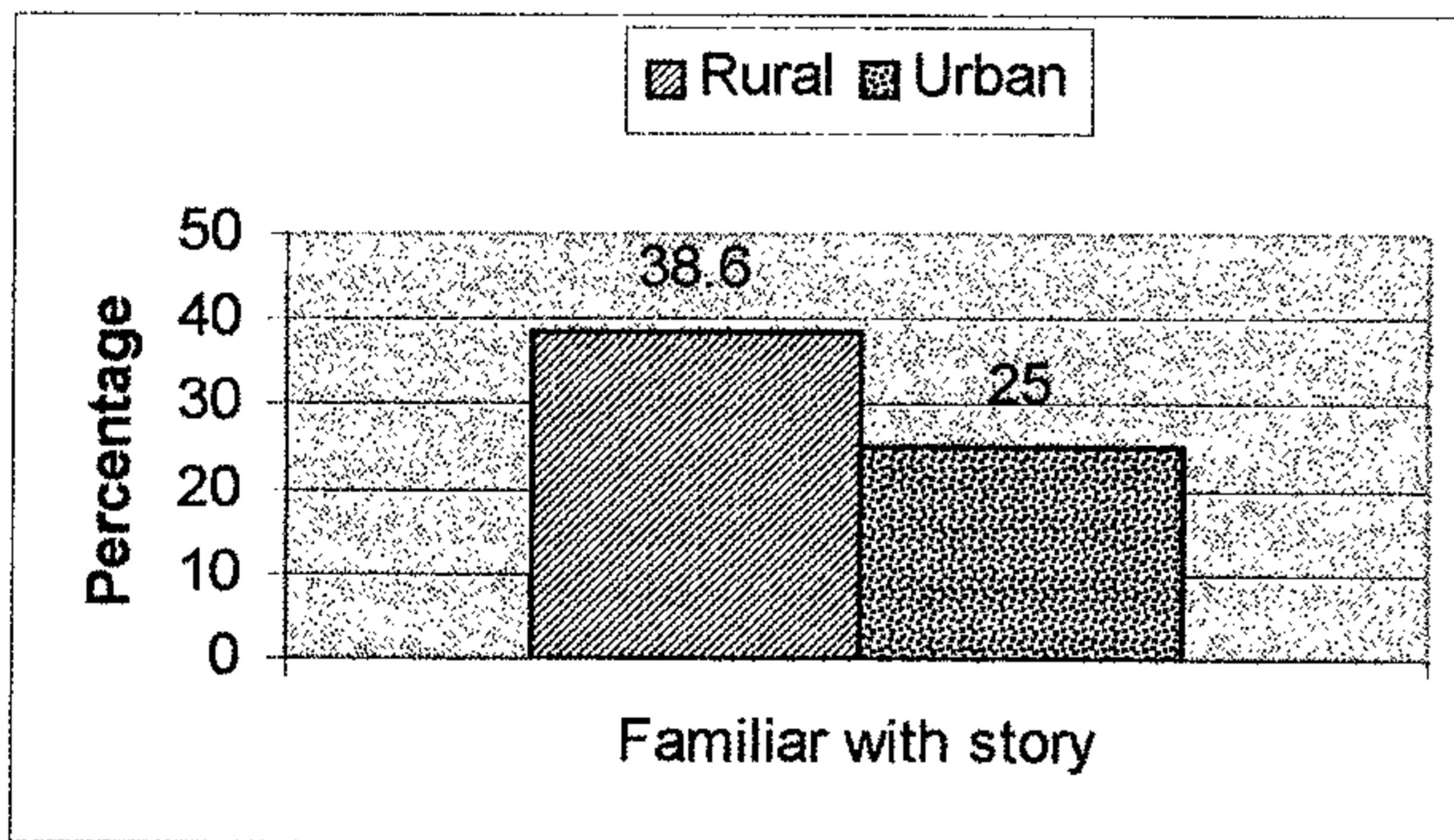


Fig. 4: The percentages urban and rural participants familiar with *Mamba*.

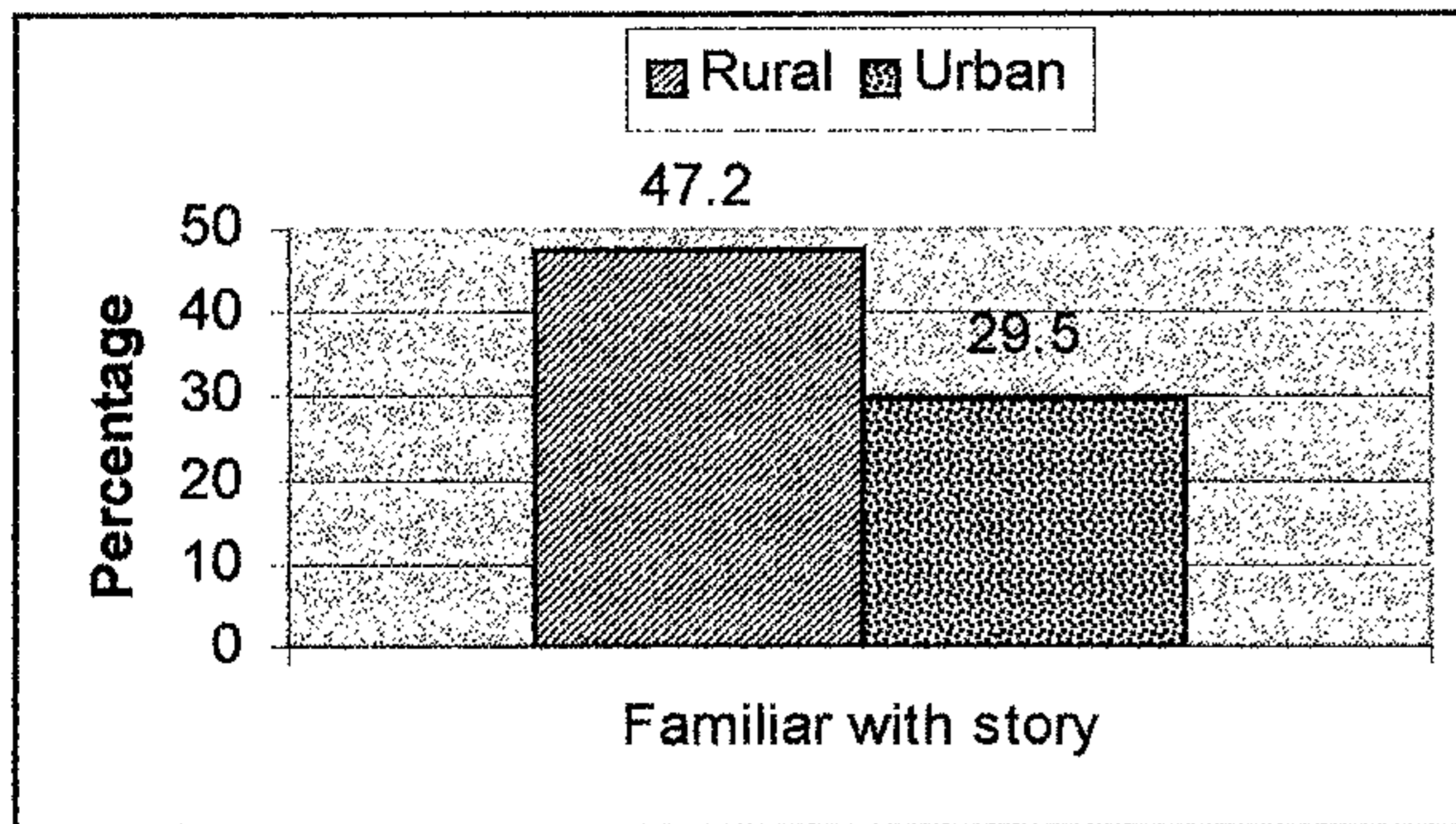


Fig. 5: The percentages urban and rural participants familiar with *Maqinase*.

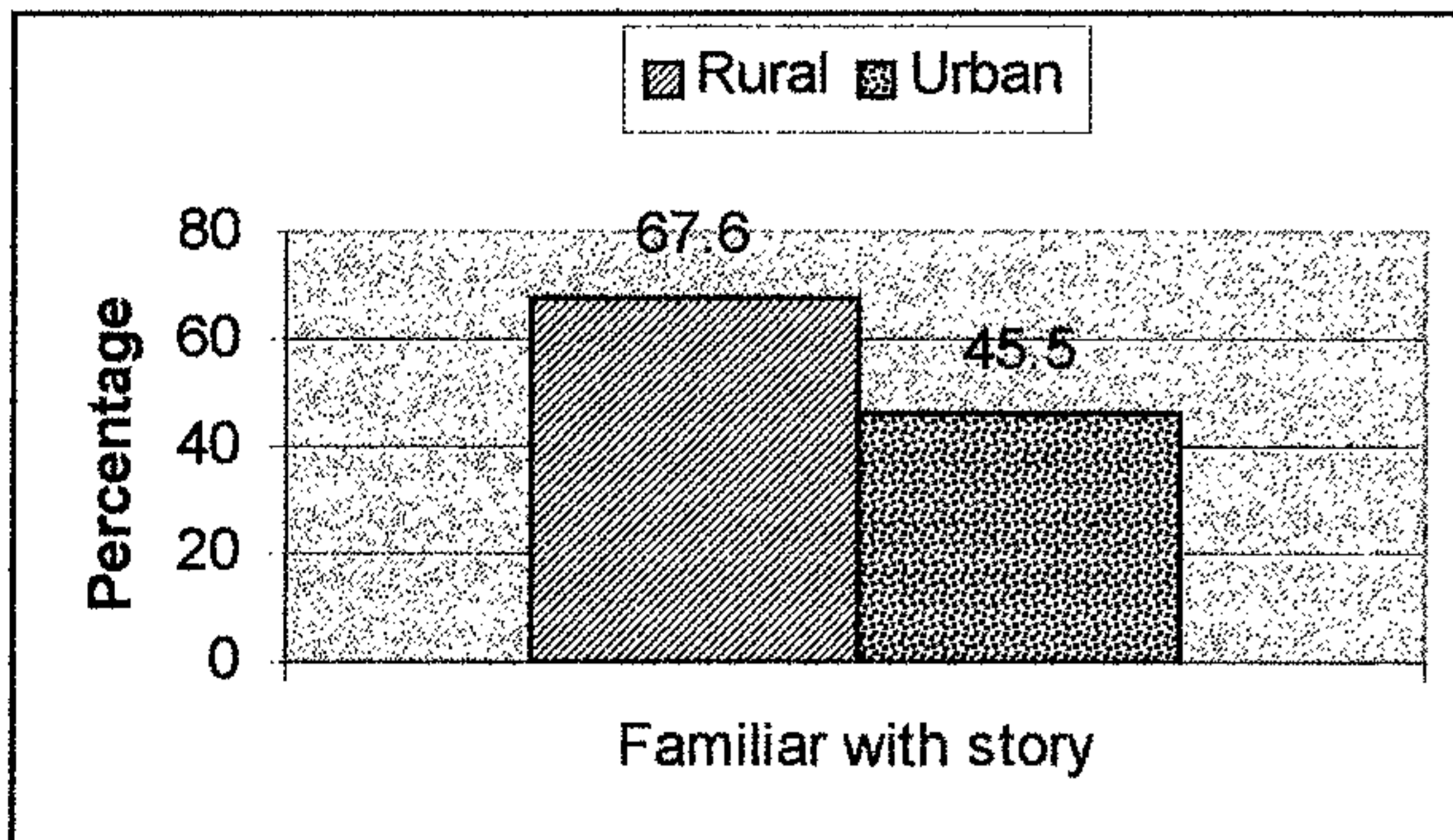


Fig. 6: The percentages urban and rural participants familiar with *Mshayandlela*.

5.3.6 Findings.

It can be concluded that urban children are less familiar with folktale characters from their own culture. Except for *Mabhejane*, the folktale characters were significantly better known by rural children than by urban children.

5.3.7 Possible reasons for the decline of familiarity with folktales in urban areas.

i) The absence of grandmothers.

Grandmothers are traditionally the performers of folktales. It is part of the traditional role that grandmothers play in the life of Zulu child. In Du Toit (1976: 50) it is stated that the presence of grandparents in a home gives confidence and humility to the children, because of the stories they tell them. He continues by remarking that when grandparents are not available, cultural change is accelerated.

The participants in this study were asked the following:

1. Do they have a granny living with them?
2. If their grannies are telling stories or not?

A total of 94/176 (53.4%) rural participants indicated that they have a granny living with them.

A total of 21/88 (23.9%) urban participants indicated that they have a granny living with them.

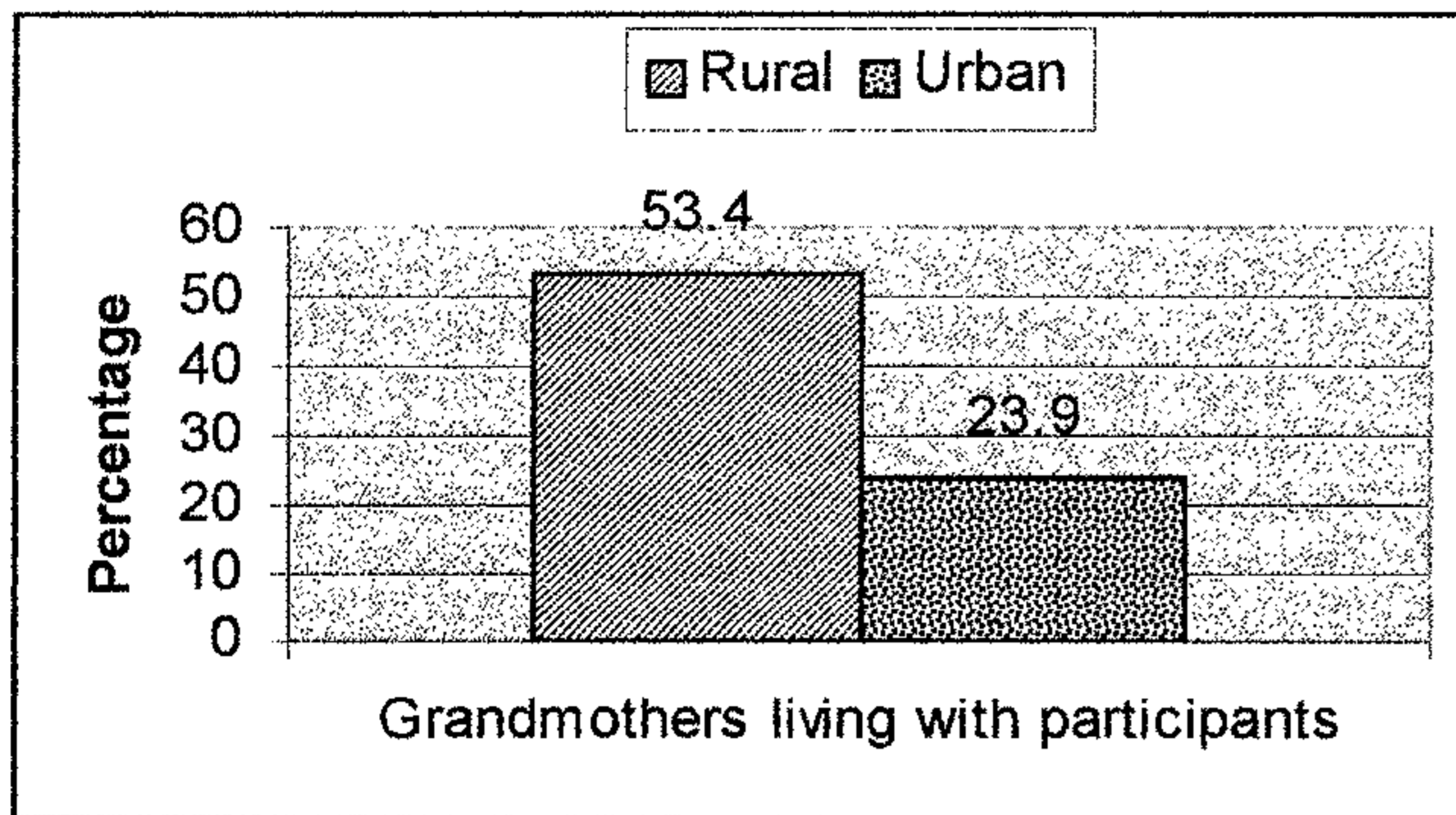


Fig. 7: Percentage of grandmothers living with rural and urban participants.

Furthermore the participants were asked to indicate whether or not their grandmothers are sometimes telling them stories or not.

A total of 85/176 (48.3%) rural participants' grandmothers tell stories.

A total of 16/88(18.2%) urban participants' grandmothers tell stories.

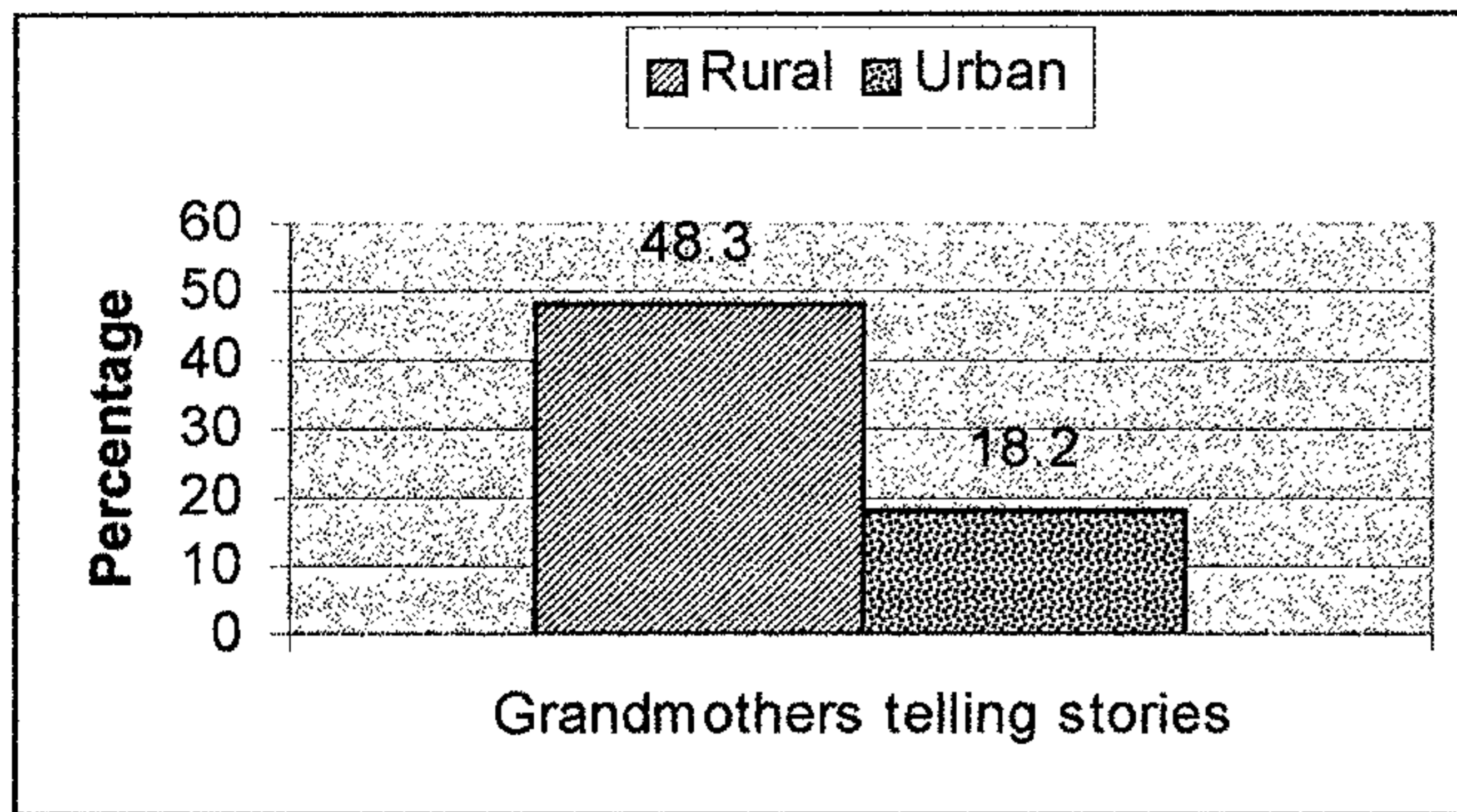


Fig. 8: Percentage of rural and urban participants with grandmothers telling stories.

In both the above tests it is noticeable that urban children are disadvantaged when it comes to interaction with the traditionally most important component of the folktale genre, the grandmother.

Where are the grandmothers?

a) Christianity.

A typical Christian household consists of a father, mother and their children. The Christian norm is for a husband or wife to leave his or her parents and to live with his or her spouse. The extended traditional family, consisting of grandparents, parents and children, has met an unfortunate fate! Christian men are indoctrinated to choose their wives before their mothers. Some Christians also go

so far as to forbid their children to listen to stories about "demonic" characters (such as *Chakijane*) and heathen rituals.

b) Education

As westernisation continues and each new generation is more and more affected by it, it is obvious that the older generations will always be one step behind in the process. Some young parents in the city have been educated in so called "white schools" where there are no trace of Zulu values or culture. It may also be that the children of these "yuppies" speak both English and Zulu as a first language.

In such a sophisticated milieu, it would be most surprising to find a grandmother, who among other factors, can only speak Zulu and still firmly believes in the intervention of the ancestors. It is said that people are afraid of change. The adaptation that will be necessary for an old woman from a rural area in Kwa-Zulu Natal, who comes to live in the city, will have to be enormous! Knowing human nature, it is also possible that her educated children will be embarrassed to introduce her to their educated friends. Vilakazi (1962:134) cites the example of an educated lady who invited only the "educated " members of her family to her engagement; leaving her grandparents and parents in the dry for fear of embarrassment.

Educated women are also not as timid and obedient as their rural sisters are. Words such as feminism and woman's rights are surfacing everywhere they go! There is no trace of the hlonipha-ing Zulu **umakoti** (bride). An educated woman is thus less likely to accept a despotic mother-in-law in her household. Her children are sent to a day school or crèche and in the evening they are entertained by the television. A grandmother in the home will thus not be fashionable.

ii) Westernised education.

Kamenetsky (1992:66) states that the Brothers Grimm collected their fairytales from the "simple folk" in the rural areas of Germany. It seems to be a universal fact that the bearers of indigenous culture and traditions are usually found in the remote rural areas. Vilakazi in **African Renaissance** (1999:203) is in accordance with this statement:

The peculiar situation here is that knowledge of the principles and patterns of African civilisation remained with ordinary, uncertified men and women, especially those in rural areas. The tragedy of African civilisation is that Western-educated Africans became lost and irrelevant as intellectuals who could develop African civilisation further.

Likewise in South Africa chances are stronger that one would find a traditional storyteller in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal, rather than in Soweto.

This phenomenon can be ascribed to the Eurocentric education in South African schools. Zulu children were taught the Western way which includes scepticism towards the traditional afrocentric way of life. Ntuli in **African Renaissance** (1999:186) states that Eurocentrism is therefore anti-universalistic, since it is not interested in seeking possible general laws of human evolution.

It is however true that the previous Department of Education and training did prescribe some traditional literature in their syllabi for Bantu languages (1985). Several readers with folktales as their main contents were introduced. To teach children a few folktales does not compensate for the lack of afrocentrism that was the norm at the time. English or Afrikaans was usually used as the medium of instruction, which caused the children to be exposed to Zulu language and culture during Zulu periods only. Subjects such as History were taught from the Western viewpoint, alienating the learners still further from their roots.

The more educated a person thus became, the further away he or she moved from his or her own roots. The fact that there are more and better schools in cities and townships than in rural areas contributes to the higher level of education in urban areas. Many parents who could afford it, preferred to send their children to private schools or "white" schools where children would be taught about Snow White instead of Chakijana.

The kinds of professions associated with city dwelling are normally those "educated" ones, such as teacher, lawyer, salesperson, medical professional or clergy. On the other hand rural areas supply jobs such as farm labourers, sugar cane cutters and kitchen staff. There is also a distinctive trend among teachers and other "educated" rural dwellers to send their children to city or township schools. Some educated people wish to disassociate themselves from their rural roots. Children are motivated to take part in organised school sports, such as soccer and athletics, instead of having stick fights etc. Today almost all-urban areas have electricity and many households have television. Children thus spend their evenings watching programs that have little to do with their culture, let alone Zulu folktales.

In rural areas schools often don't have organised sports (due to a lack of facilities or motivation) and children still occupy themselves with traditional games. In the evenings they can still be found sitting around the fire listening to their grandmothers repertoire of stories, since in the absence of electricity or a television, there is nothing else to do.

The above predicament seems to be a global problem. Virtanen (1978:73) describes the situation in Finland as follows:

People would pass the long evenings telling strange and wondrous tales and this custom was not really abandoned until television arrived.

The blame can, however not be placed on the current education system, which is still being introduced. New learning areas, such as Arts and Culture attempts to familiarise learners with all facets of their own cultures. Even in other learning areas, such as Language and Literacy, folktales are frequently introduced. Terms such as African Renaissance and **ubuntu** (humanness) are surfacing, aiming to motivate learners to venture back to their roots. Most of the participants in this study were still being taught according to the old syllabi. Some were already following the new. If this study were done a few years later, the results may differ drastically from these.

5.3.8 Summary.

Urbanization has a negative influence on the survival of the Zulu folktale.

5.4 THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER IN THE FAMILIARITY WITH THE ZULU FOLKTALE.

5.4.1 Gender defined

Boys and girls in the traditional Zulu setting spend most of their time apart. That is after their ear piercing ceremony. Boys go out to herd cattle and girls assist their mothers with chores around the house as well as working in the fields. Boys occupy themselves with "masculine" hobbies whereas the girls occupy

themselves with "feminine" activities such as basket weaving and cooking. Girls spend much more time at home and in the company of the elderly women who instruct them on different topics such as proper behavior, being a good mother and wife etc. The assumption can therefore be made that girls might have a slight advantage over boys in their exposure to Zulu folktales. Although folktales are traditionally told at night when both sexes are present, it is likely that even during the day a grandmother might refer to this or that character.

In the present situation (as seen in the previous paragraphs) children seldom occupy themselves with traditional activities. The Zulu society, even in urban households, is still very chauvinistic. It is more likely to find a girl in the kitchen with her grandmother than a boy. With new labels, such as homosexuality, easily stuck on a boy, boys prefer to be associated with men rather than with their grandmothers and sisters!

The researcher also assumes that, coming to modern media, boys and girls have very different preferences. Boys would rather watch an action movie than a romantic folktale of a damsel in distress and her heroic saviour.

Girls become romantically inclined long before boys do. Tales of princesses and ogres have fascinated girls forever. Traditionally boys are expected to be inclined towards superheroes and action. (Girls, even Zulu girls, buy Princess Barbie and boys buy Spiderman!).

When hearing a folktale, girls fantasise about the wedding, the bride and the charm of the groom. Boys focus on the cutting up of the mamba, the oozing of the old woman's eyes etc.

A total of 264 children participated in this study, consisting of 139 (52.7%) girls and 125 (47.3%) boys (Fig. 1). This ratio is in line with the 1996 national census results, namely 50.6% women and 49.4% men.

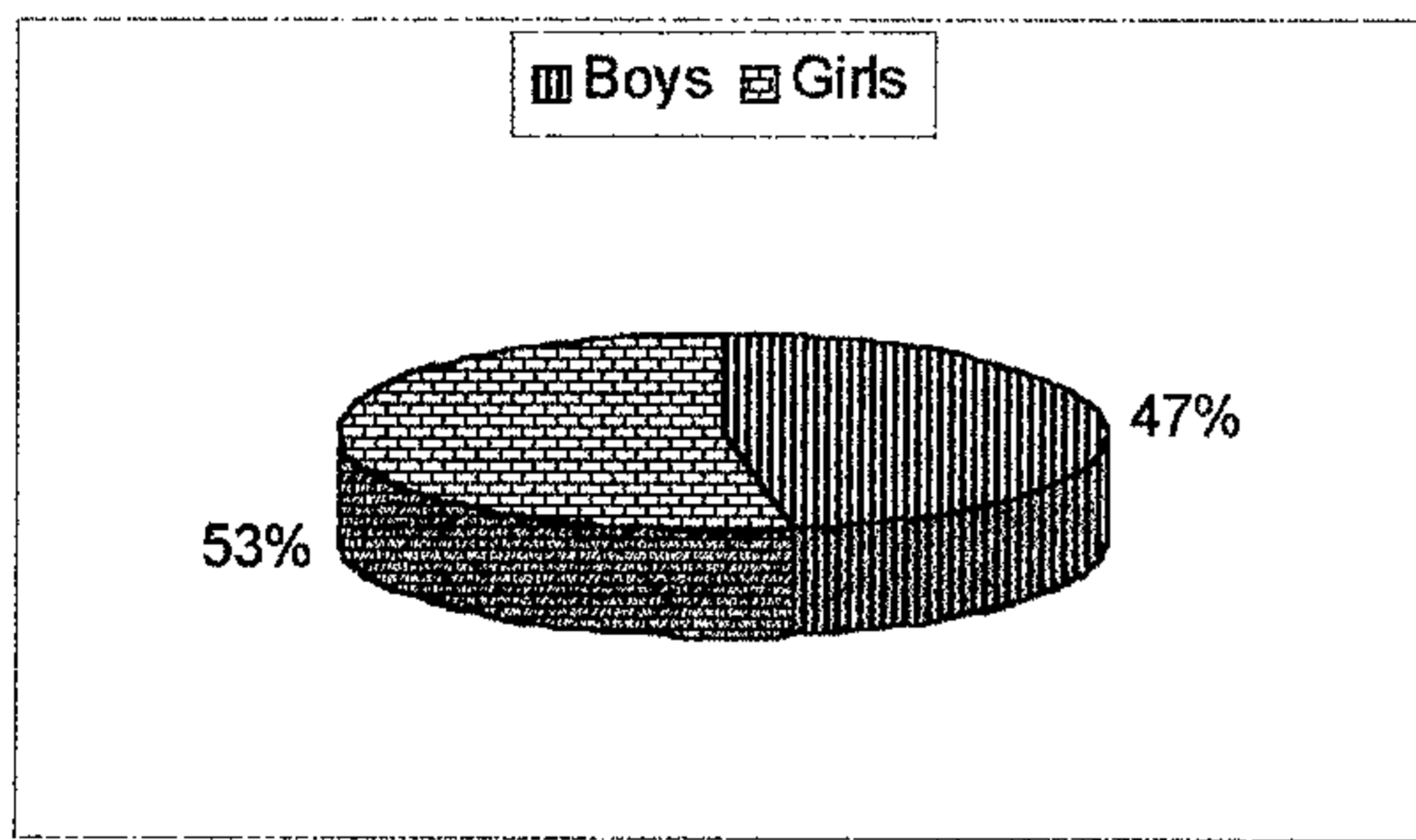


Fig. 9: Percentage of girls and boys taking part in the study.

5.4.2 Aim.

The aim of this instrument is to find out if gender has an influence over the familiarity that children have of folktales.

5.4.3 Hypothesis.

Girls are more familiar with Zulu Folktale characters than boys.

5.4.4 Results.

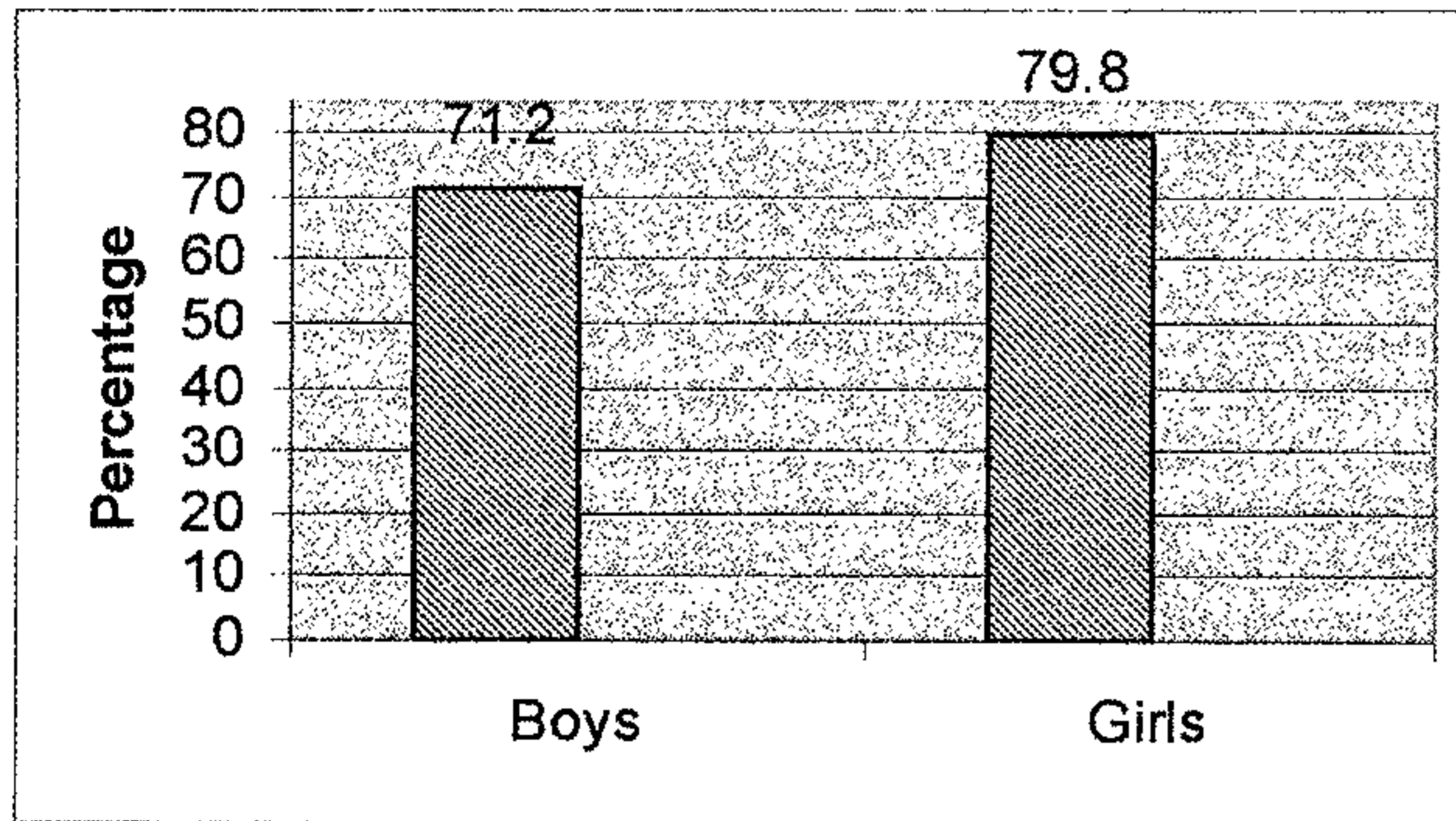


Fig. 10: The percentage of boys and girls knowing *Chakijana*.

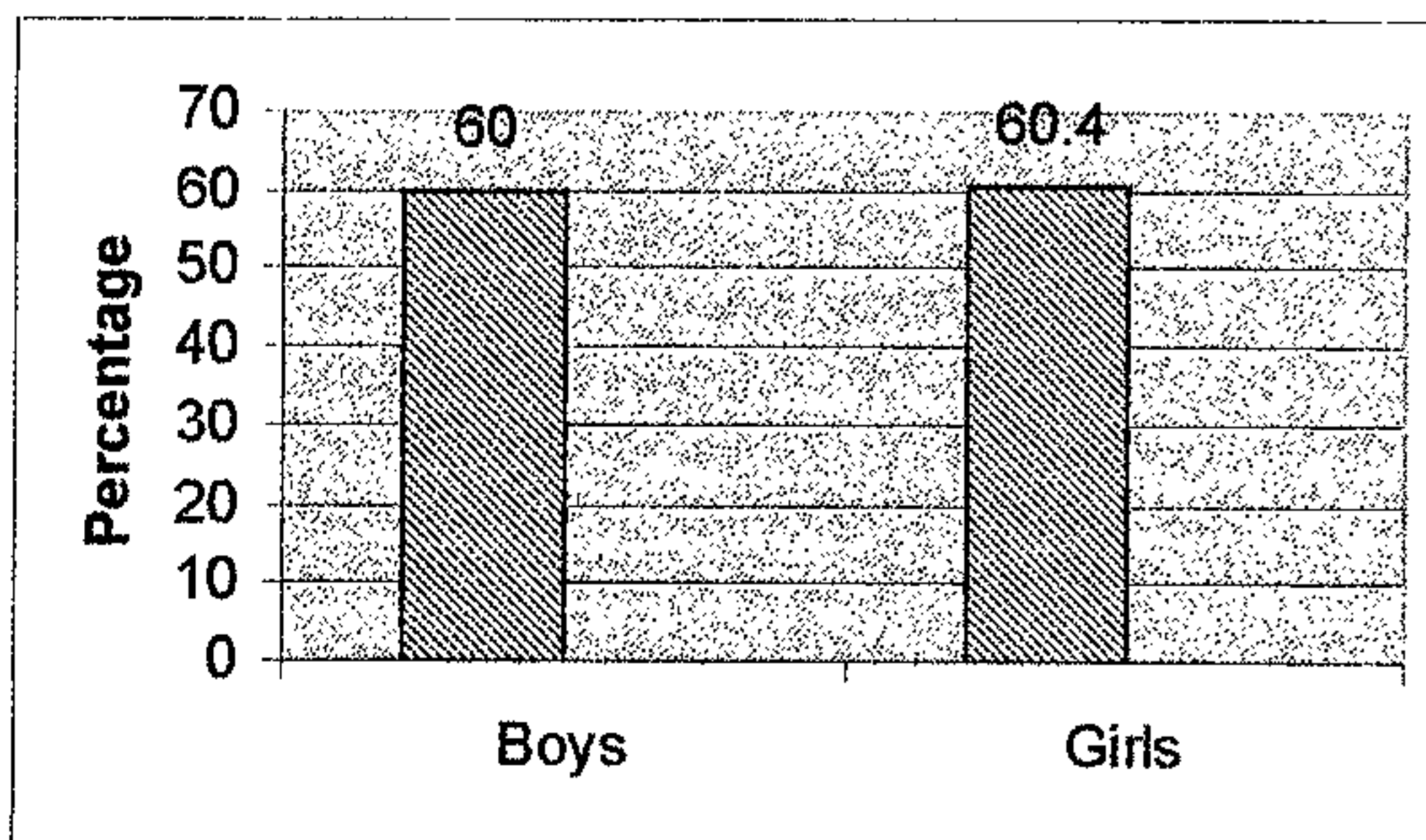


Fig. 11. The percentage of boys and girls knowing *Mshayadlela*

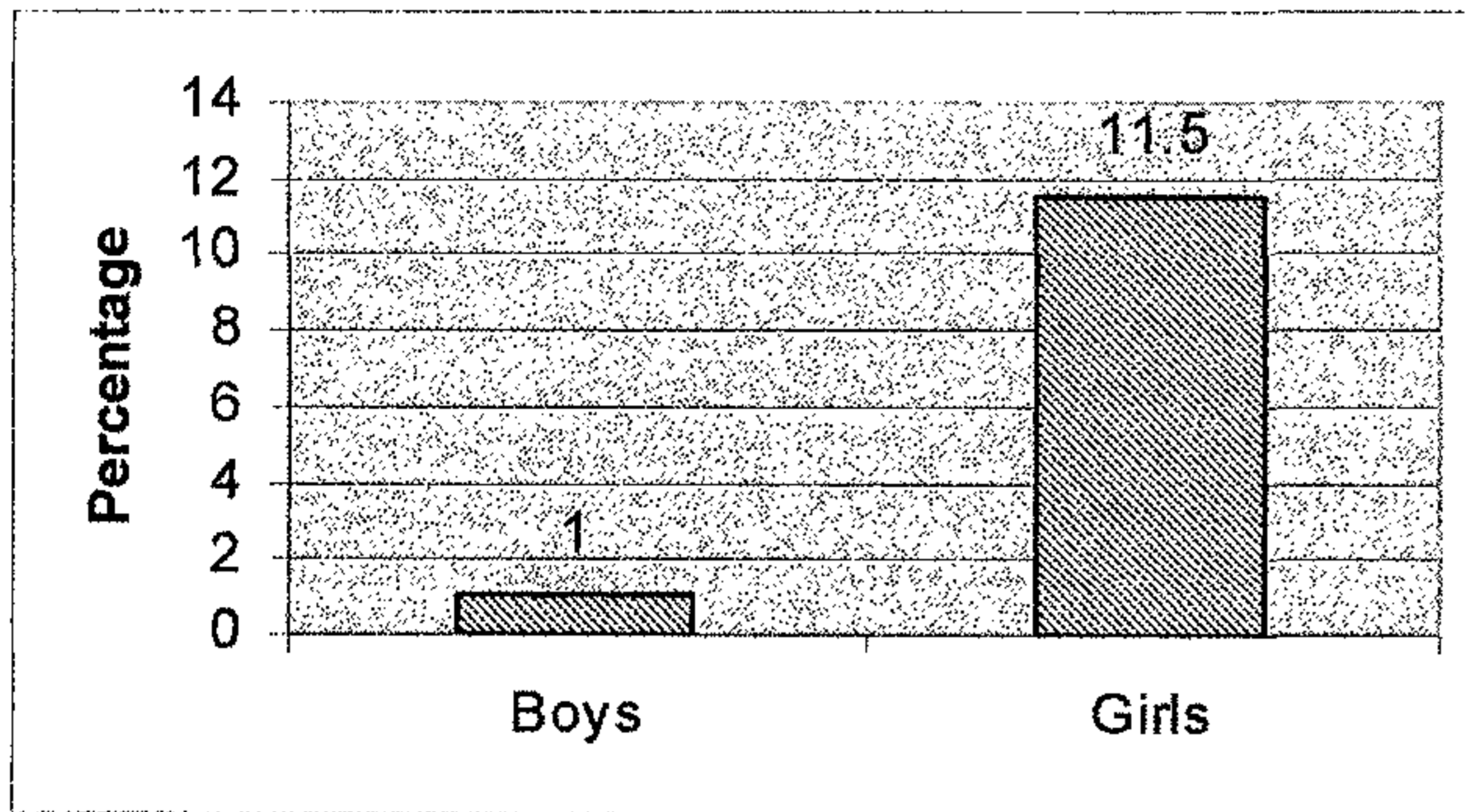
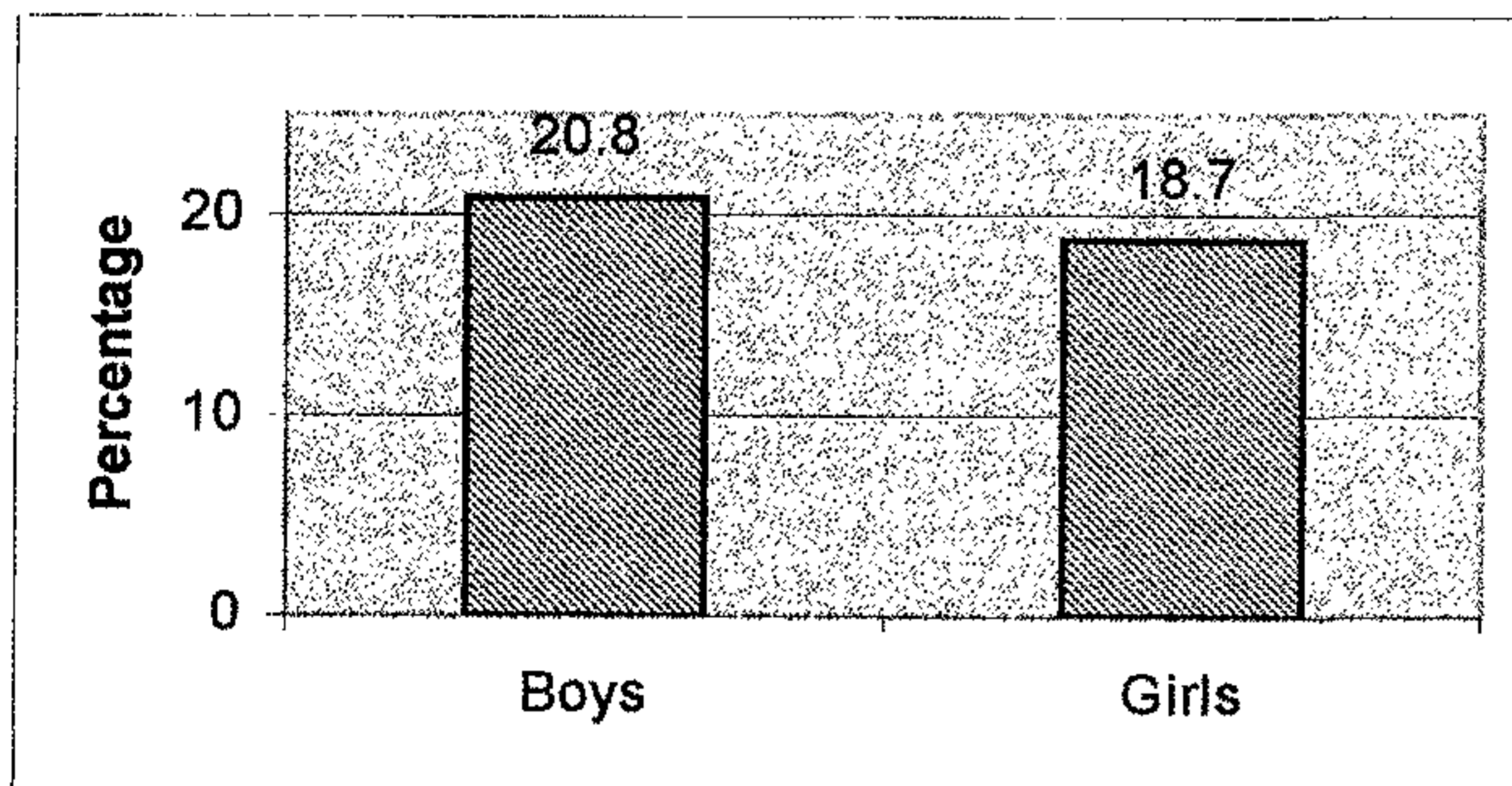
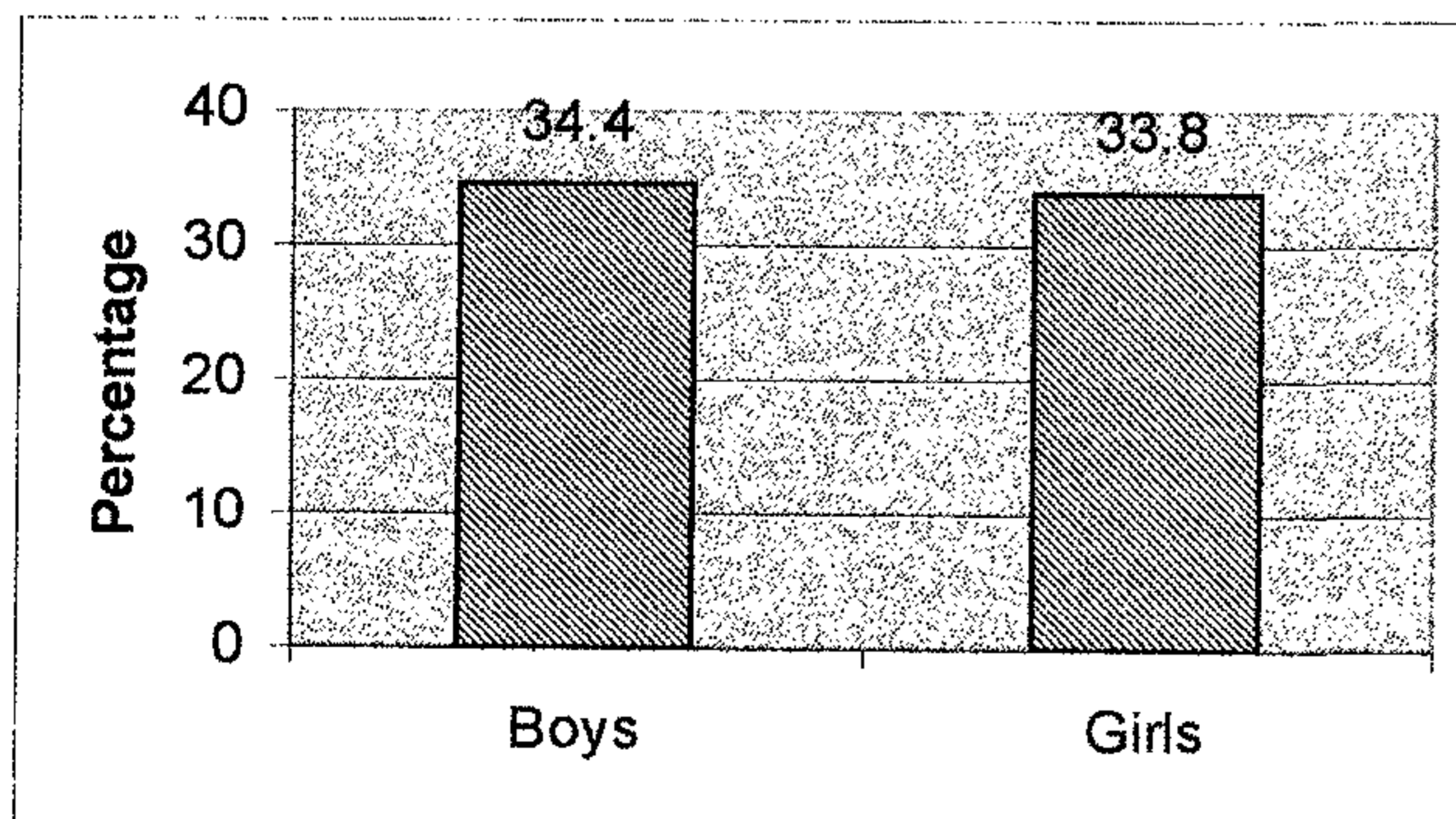
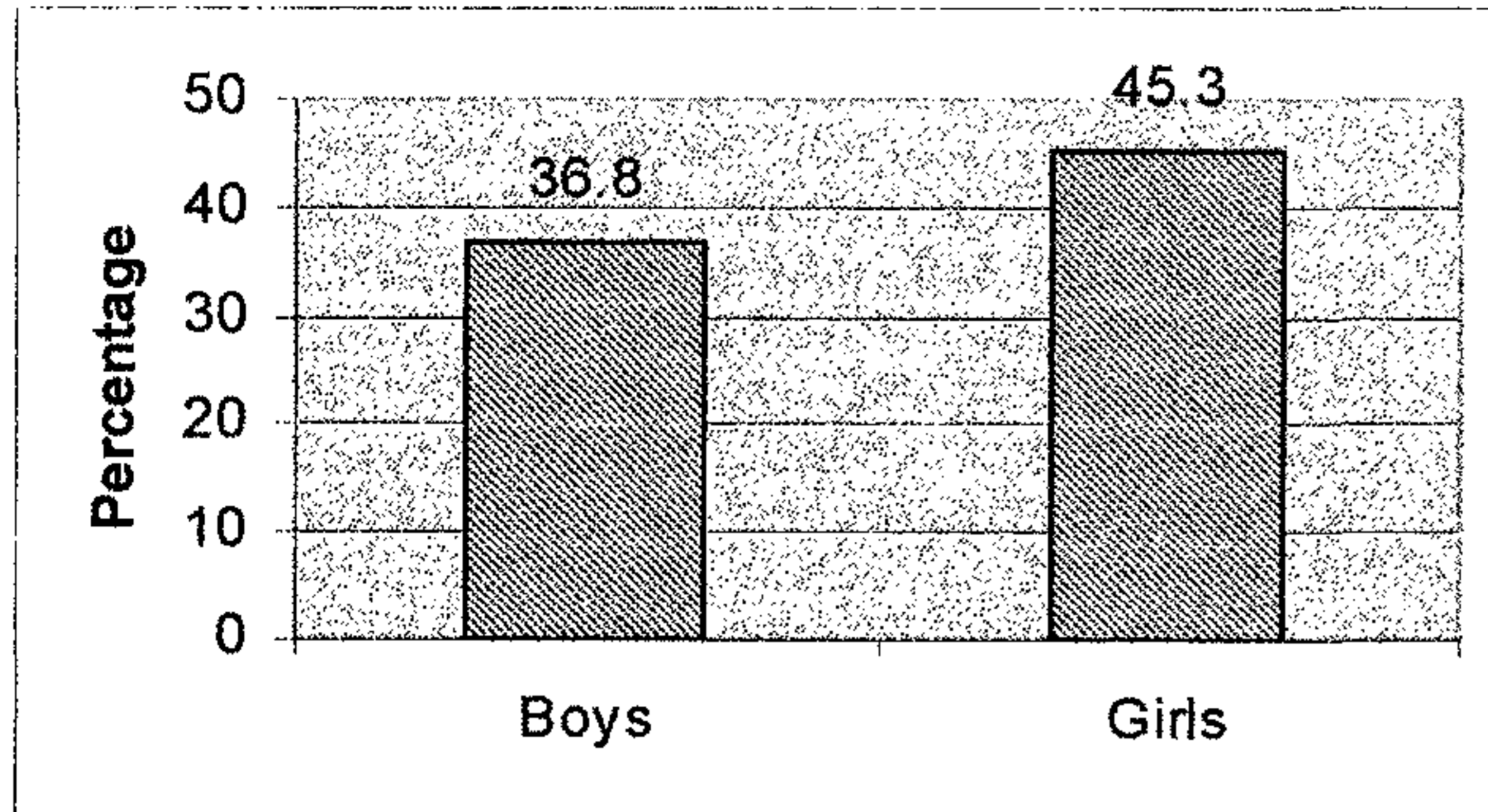
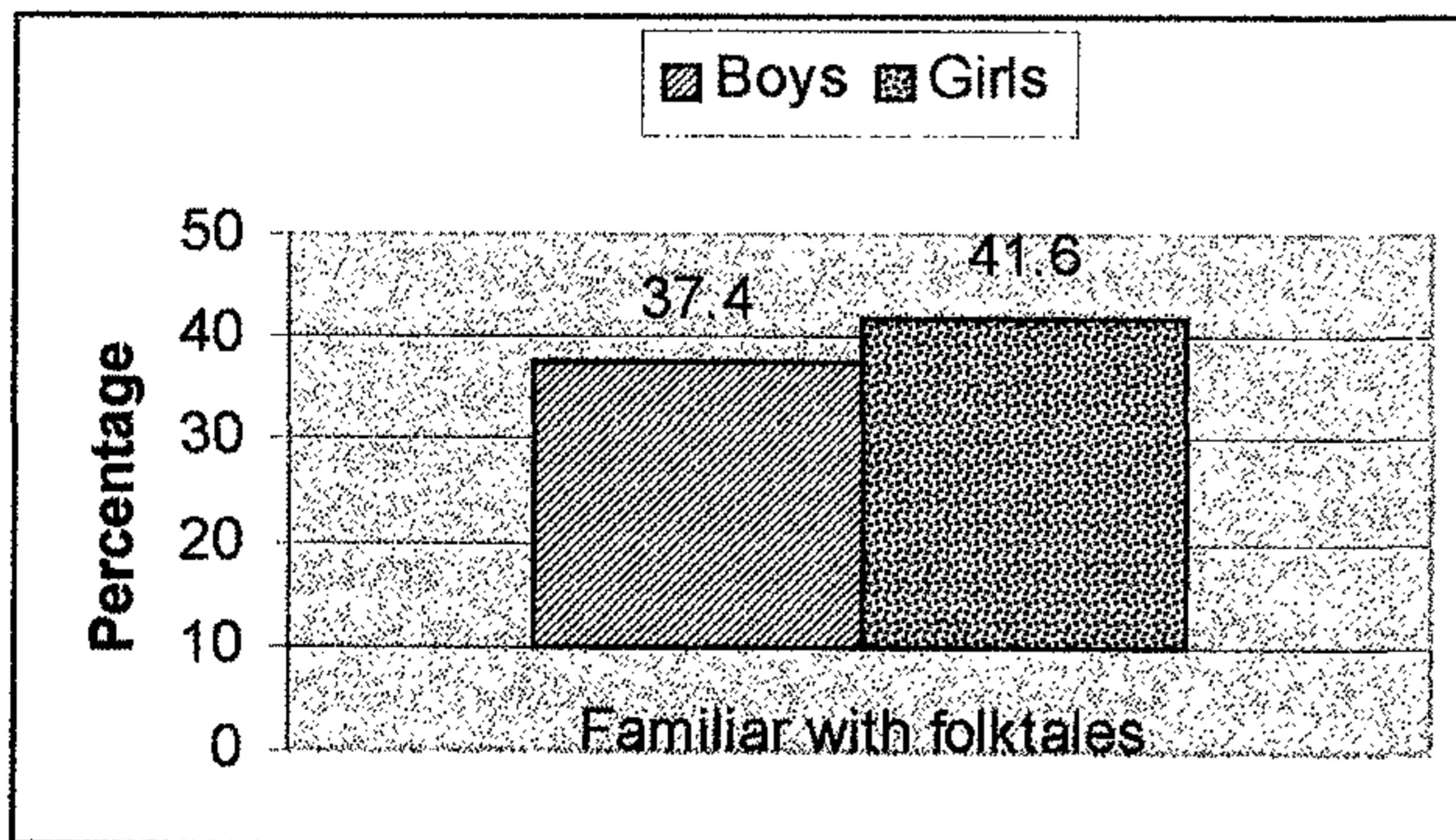
Fig. 12. The percentage of boys and girls knowing *Zembeni*.Fig. 13. The percentage of boys and girls knowing *Mabhejane*.Fig. 14. The percentage of boys and girls knowing *Mamba*.

Fig. 15. The percentage of boys and girls knowing *Maqinase*.



5.4.5 Findings.

Fig. 16: The average of boys and girls knowing all the folktales in the study.



The outcome of this test is quite surprising! It seems that boys and girls have approximately the same knowledge of folktale characters. There is an insignificant difference of 4.2% in the total average of familiarity with folktale

characters. Girls thus have slightly more knowledge about folktales than boys, however not as definite as was expected.

5.4.6 Possible reasons why only a small difference exists between boys and girls regarding their knowledge of folktales.

i) Education.

Boys and girls attend school together. Later on in this study it will be proven that, at present and in the new afrocentric system of education, folktales are progressively being promoted. Even at urban schools, where folktale consciousness is lower than in rural schools, children are confronted with folktales. In this paragraph the issue of urban and rural schools is not important.

Folktales are often employed in reading and comprehension lessons. Some schools also have libraries stocked with brightly demonstrated folktale books, supplied by initiatives such as **READ**. Boys and girls thus have to know some characters without ever having a grandmother entertaining them in the evenings. The children have no control over what they hear and learn at school. They can however decide what they want to see on television or hear on the radio. I assume that this choice accounts for the slightly higher percentage of girls that are familiar with folktales.

5.4.7 Summary.

Boys and girls have approximately the same knowledge of folktales; girls having the slightly better.

5.5 THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT MEDIA IN THE SURVIVAL OF ZULU FOLKTALES .

5.5.1 Media defined.

As previously discussed in this chapter, the role of grandmothers as the most important narrator of Zulu folktale is declining due to several factors. But still children seem to know something about the folktale heritage of their culture. If their grandmothers are not telling them, where do they learn about them?

After 1994, the focus in South Africa has started to move slowly from the Western to the African styles of art and culture. Where, before 1994 theatres were hosting mostly western events such as ballet and opera, theatres today also host African dances and folktale performances. In the same way the SABC has changed its repertoire dramatically to afford time for broadcasting in eleven languages and cultures. On TV, special programs such as **Storytelling with Gcina** and **Takalani Sesame** have surfaced. The television actresses play the role of narrator with the same flair as grandmother would at home and viewers

are encouraged to participate in chanting the necessary rhymes. A total of 179 out of 264 participants have access to a television set at their homes, which amounts to 68.8%.

Zulu radio stations such as **Ukhozi FM** devotes an early morning slot to the performance and promotion of folktales. As radios are far more available than televisions among Zulu people (batteries being cheaper and more available than electricity) their importance cannot be underrated. In this study 242 out of 264 participants have access to a radio at their homes, which amounts to 91.7%.

Some Zulu magazines, such as **Bona**, from time to time feature special booklets containing folktales. These booklets are usually additional to the magazine itself and are sponsored by large non-governmental companies who have committed themselves to the so-called African Renaissance. Sometimes magazines also feature folktales in their children's pages. A total of 174 out of 264 participants have access to magazines and books at their homes, which amounts to 65.9%.

The folktale is, however, a dramatic genre which comes to its right when being performed by a skilled narrator. Zulu teachers reading folktales to their learners will agree with the fact that the audience are always willing to interact with the narrator, but only if the performance is well done! After oral discussions with some Zulu teachers and librarians, it became clear that more and more writers are taking up the pen to publish children's books exclusively on folktales. It is a

simple, legal process, since their grandmothers did not take out the copyrights on their stories!! Folktales belong to everybody until somebody publishes them under his or her name.

5.5.2 Aim.

The aim of this instrument is to find out the efficiency in which different media promote folktales.

5.5.3 Hypothesis.

The school will be the greatest source of Zulu folktales for Zulu children

5.5.4 Results.

Participants were asked whether they know a certain folktale and then had to indicate the source from which they learnt about it. Six folktales were given and from each folktale it was determined what percentage of positive responses chose the following possible sources: Radio, TV, School/books and grandmother.

Fig. 17: Percentage of sources responsible for participants being familiar with *Chakijana*.

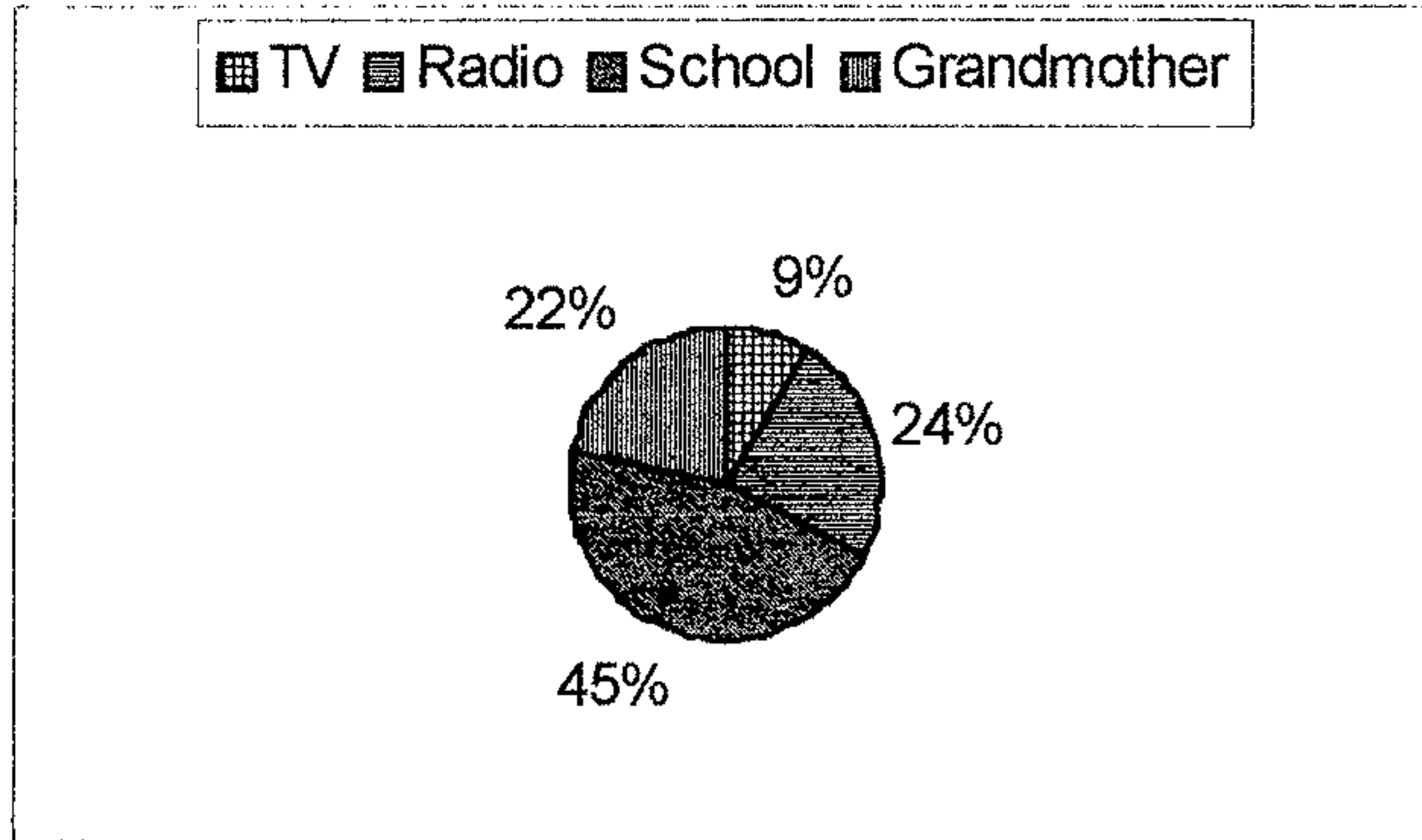


Fig. 18: Percentage of sources responsible for participants being familiar with *Mshayandlela*.

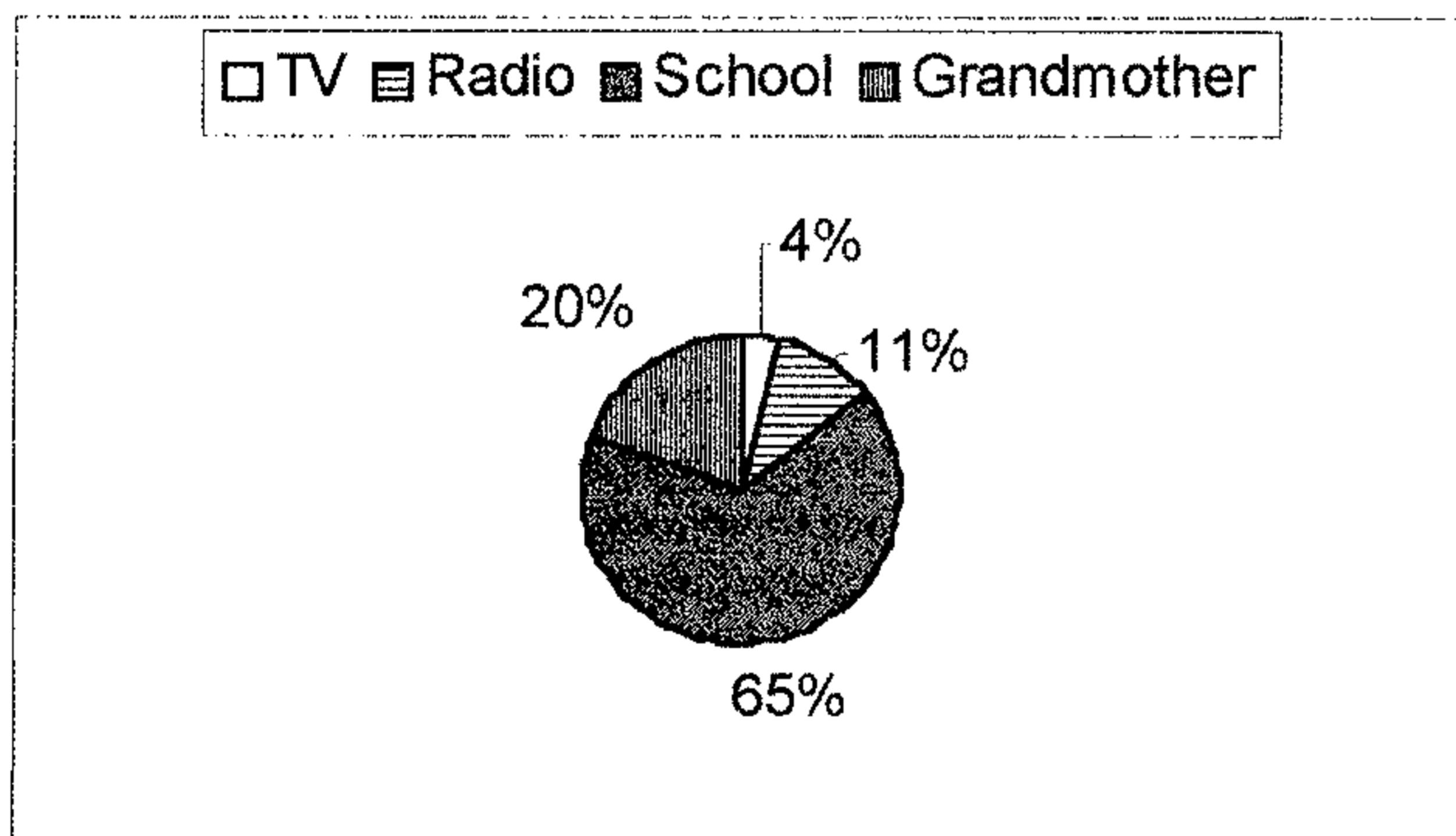


Fig. 19: Percentage of sources responsible for participants being familiar with *Zembeni*.

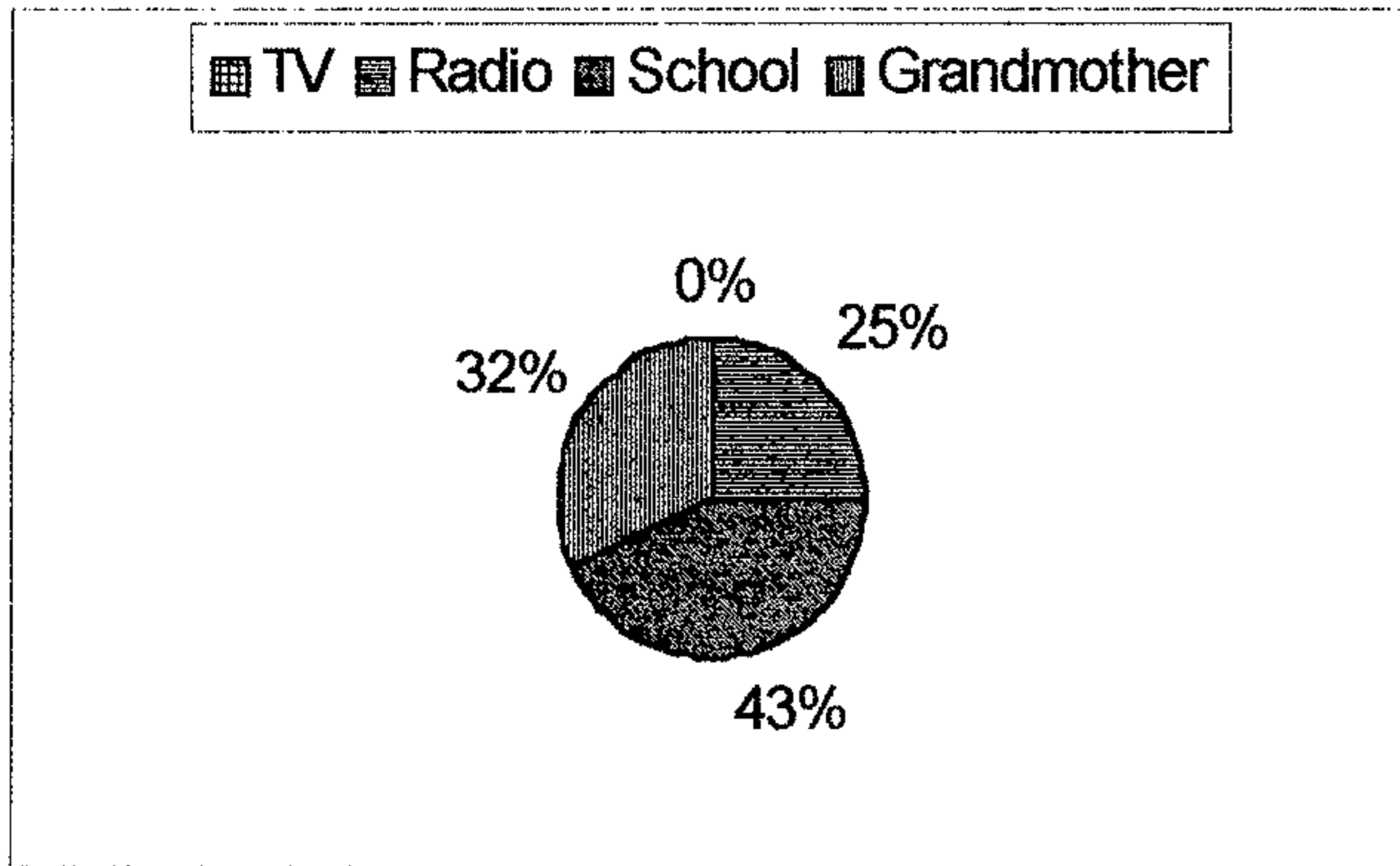


Fig. 20: Percentage of sources responsible for participants being familiar with *Mabhejane*.

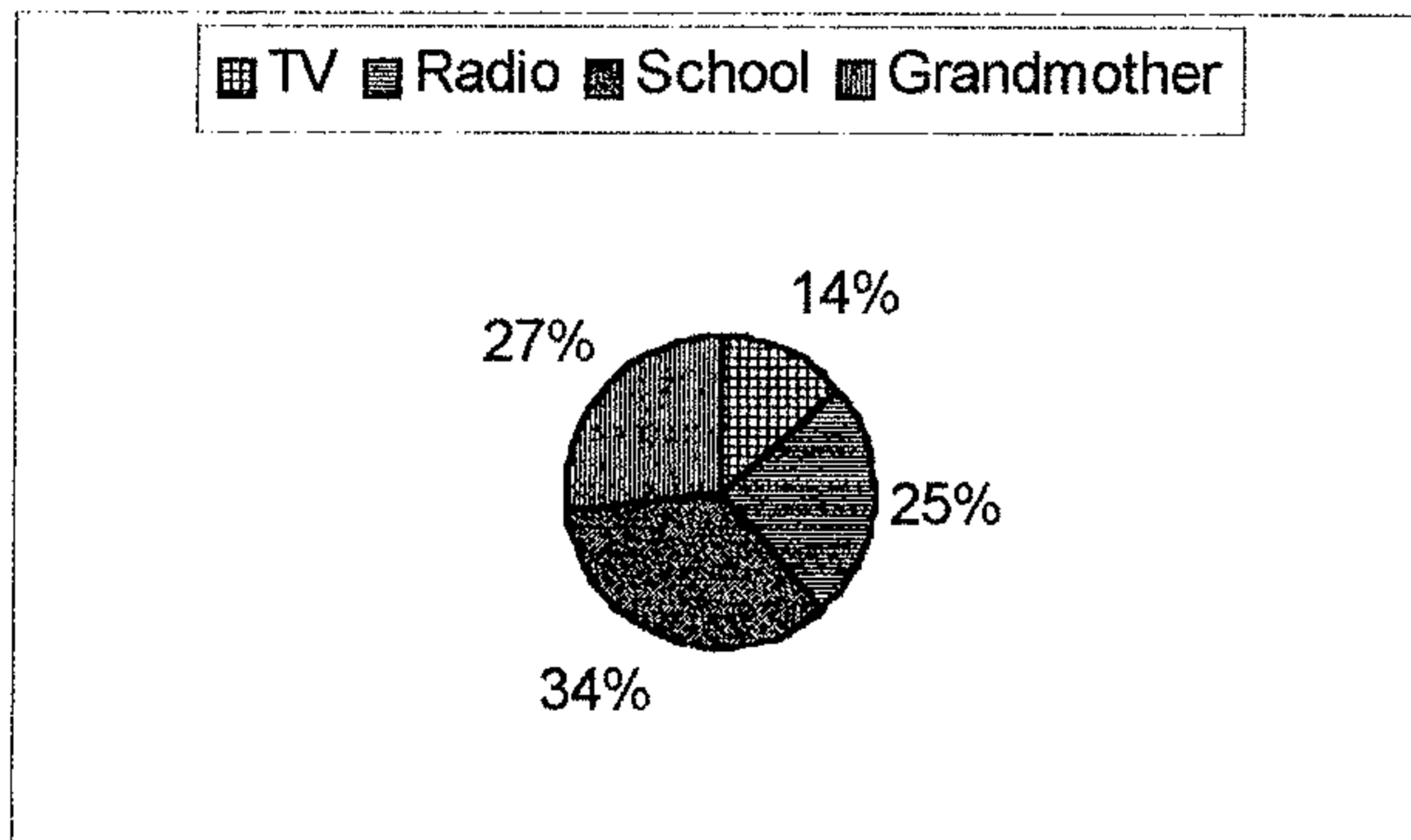


Fig. 21: Percentage of sources responsible for participants being familiar with *Mamba kaMaquba*.

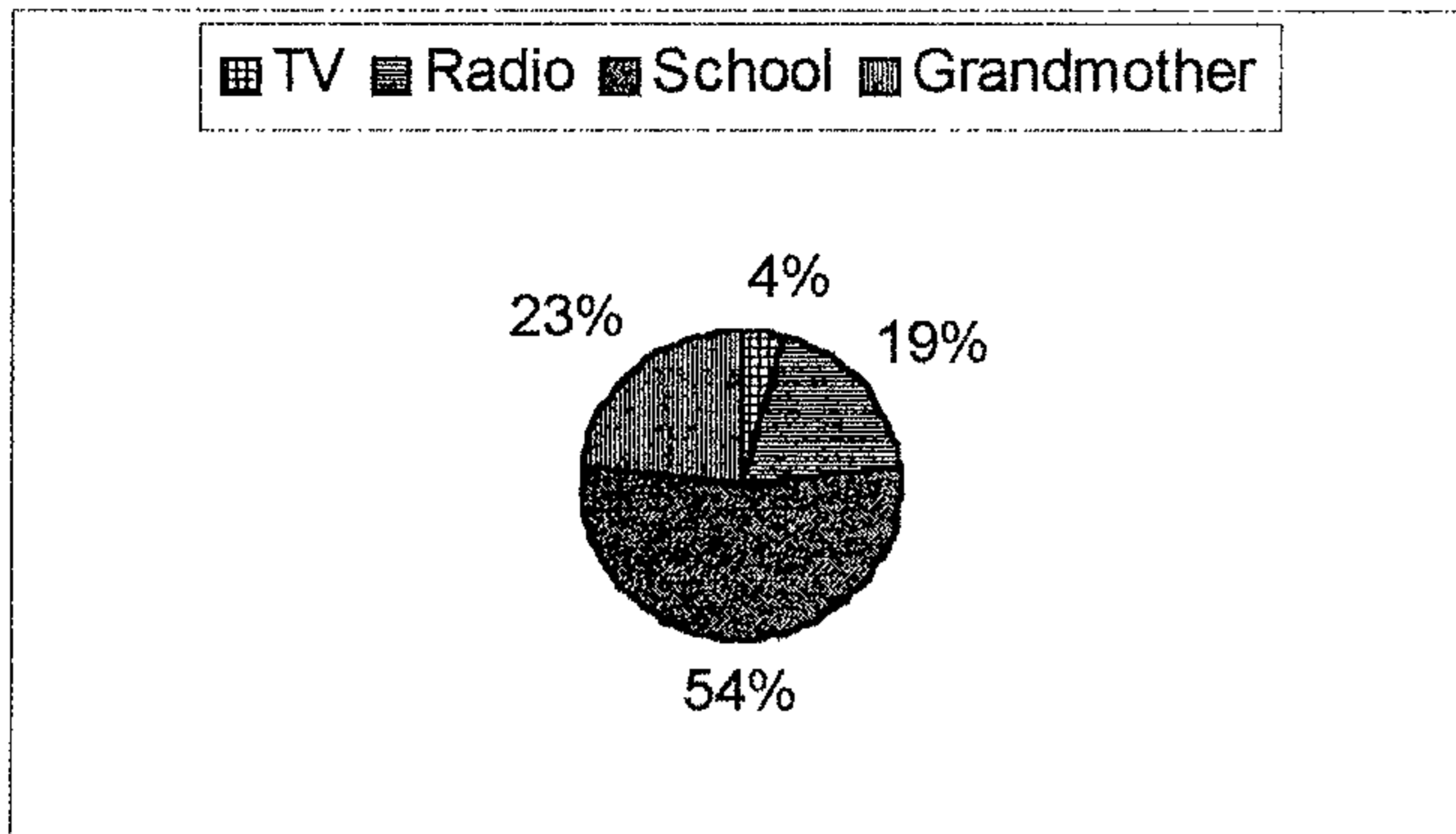
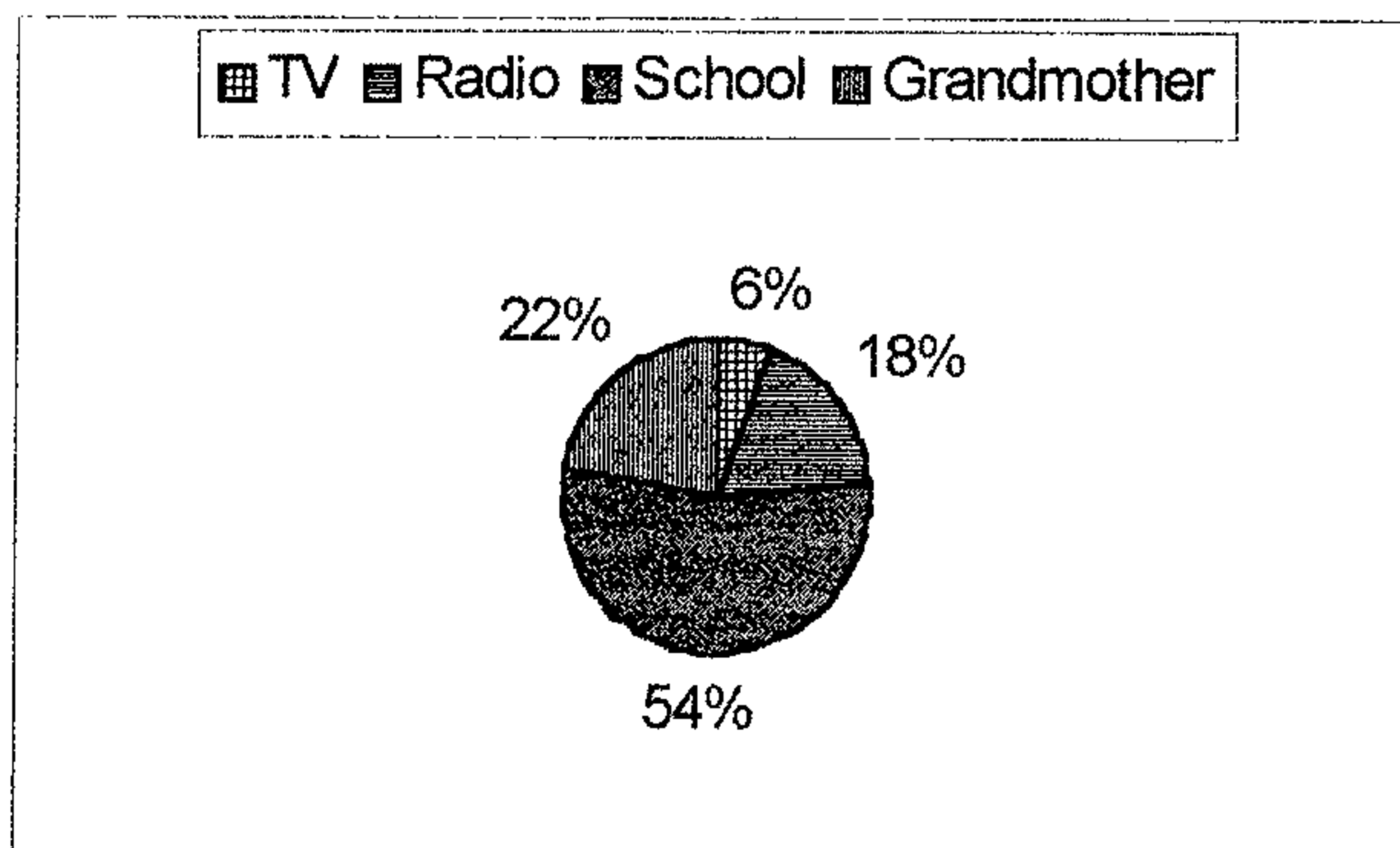


Fig. 22: Percentage of sources responsible for participants being familiar with *Maqinase*.



5.5.5 Findings.

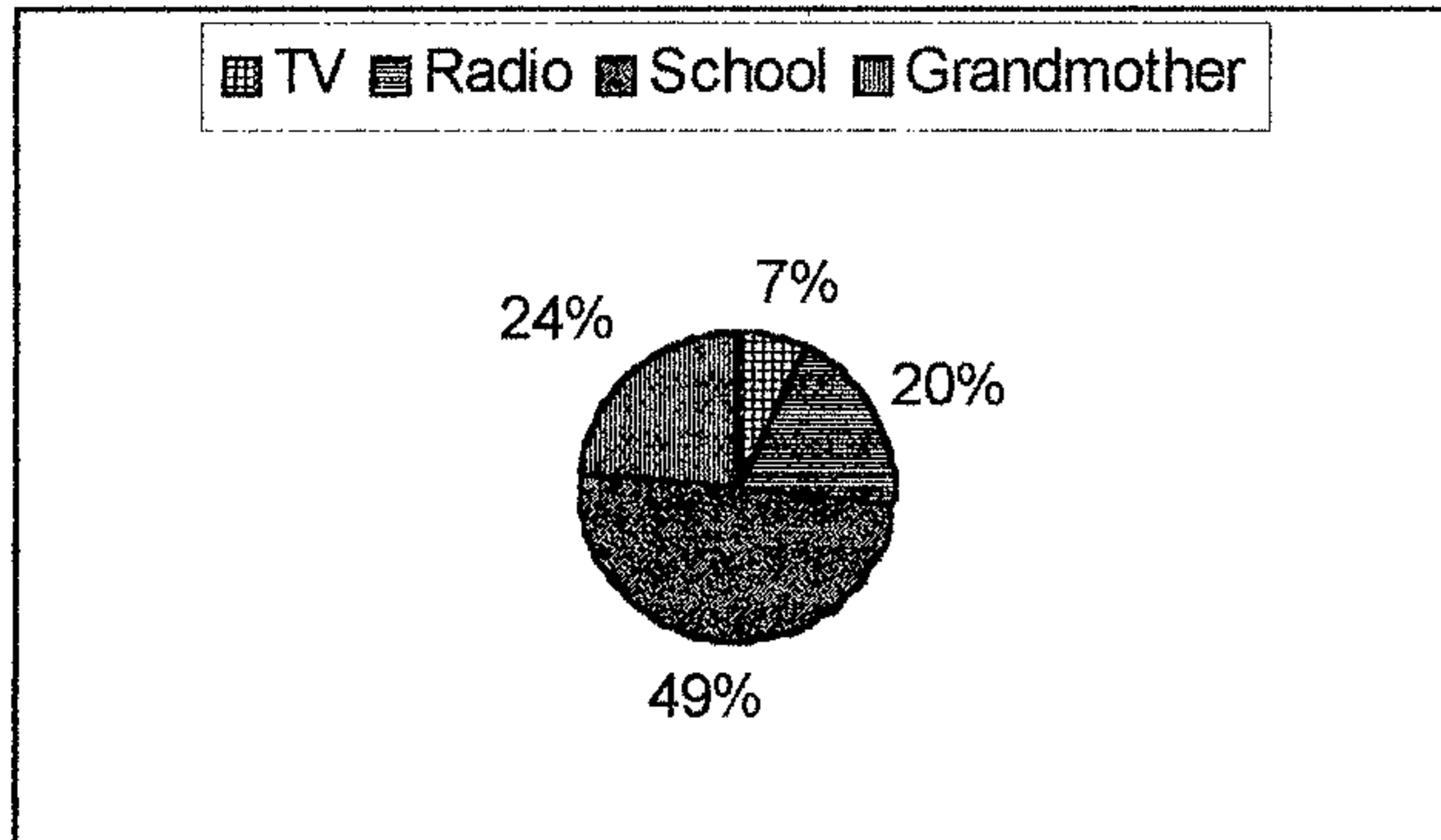


Fig. 23: The total average percentage of sources of participants being familiar with the folktales in this study.

i) **Television.**

It is apparent that the television is the weakest source of folktales for the participants of this study (Fig. 23). One reason may be that television is not available to all the participants, especially those in the rural areas. Another, even greater reason may be that folktales are usually broadcast in the morning, when all the participants of this study are occupied at school. Thirdly, children can usually choose which television programs they want to watch and, as mentioned earlier, they may opt for programs that are more colourful and full of action. A storyteller must be really outstanding to compete with all the superheroes and princesses on television!

ii) Radio.

Although a high percentage of participants have access to radios, the role played by radio as a source of folktales is relatively small (Fig. 23). It is a fact that folktales are broadcast on the radio, but yet it seems as if the children are not listening to them. There are two possible reasons for this: firstly folktales are broadcast on Saturday mornings. Children in urban areas will rather be watching television and rural children may be busy herding cattle or helping their mothers with chores. Saturday mornings are also the most likely time for competitive school sports to take place. Secondly, in households without electricity where a battery operated radio is the only link to the world, parents will usually save the battery for news broadcasts and not allow the children to listen to children's programs.

iii) Grandmothers.

The roles played by the grandmothers as folktale narrators are declining rapidly (Fig. 23). If this research had been done ten years ago, grandmothers would have been dominantly the most important source of folktales. Due to urbanisation and westernisation, grandmothers find themselves on the edge of society. Young parents do not take their parents into their home, as was the norm in the past. Most children see only their grandparents in rural areas during the holiday and may probably then choose to rather horse around, than to sit down and listen to

stories of the past. The researcher can talk from experience, because her grandparents often wanted to talk about great world wars and other past events, but we could not sit still to listen! Children listen to teachers' five days a week. They often refuse to be taught at home as well.

iv) School.

The school is the greatest source of folktales (Fig. 23). In fact the school as a source is responsible for more than twice the percentage of the closest other source, namely grandmothers. Although this result may seem surprising, it makes sense when it is considered that:

- i) schooling is available to 100% of the participants.
- ii) at school the child can not touch a button to let the teacher change into a superhero or fairy princess.
- iii) due to the new trends of afrocentrism and the African renaissance, new textbooks and syllabi focus more on the learners' own cultures.
- iv) The school has taken the role of educator and mentor over from the grandparents and parents.

During the course of this research, the researcher visited homesteads in the area of Eshowe in Kwa-Zulu Natal. These homesteads were on a rather remote hill and without electricity. The reason for this visit was to witness a traditional storytelling event. What was surprising is that, after the very elderly grandmother

had completed her repertoire, a young school going girl continued with her own narration. Her teacher, she said, told these tales. The joy and pride on her grandmother's wrinkled face were heartwarming.

Taking the above paragraphs into consideration, it is obvious that the future of the Zulu folktale lies in the hands of the schoolteacher. The whole school curriculum is changing, making it more enjoyable and usable for African learners.

Ntuli in **African Renaissance** (1999:196) states the following:

African people and people of African descent generally are participatory. In African churches, worshippers do not just visit and say Amen and depart. They respond to the words of the preacher. They urge him on! Some even intervene and testify to the truth preached by the priest. In any performance, be it a dance or musical event, there is always a call-and-response.

In the classroom, and especially during activities involving folktales, educators must give learners a chance to participate. This way the Zulu folktale will be conserved for generations to come.

5.5.6 Summary.

The school is the best conveyer of folktales, followed by grandmothers, the radio and lastly the television.

5.6 THE ROLE OF FOLKTALES IN THE LIVES OF ZULU CHILDREN.

5.6.1 The role of folktales defined.

Röhrich (1991:xxii) states the importance of folktales as follows:

Even opposing views make it clear that folktales are always models: they are didactic. The folktale offers the child models for behaviour.

Zipes (1979:ix) has his own opinion on the importance of folktales:

Folk and fairytales illuminate the way. They anticipate the millenium. They ferret out deep-rooted wishes, needs and wants and demonstrate how they all can be realized. In this regard folk and fairytales present a challenge, for within the tales lies the hope of self-transformation and a better world.

The didactic function of folktales all over the world seems to be unanimously agreed upon. Children learn about the norms and standards of their culture by means of folktales. In folktales, unworthy characters are always punished, whereas worthy characters receive some kind of reward. This concept received more attention in the previous chapters.

Folktales also have the function of being entertaining; providing children with humorous and awesome memories. Although children tend to prefer

superheroes or princesses, they are still struck when a story is told with the correct flair. Storytelling is promoted among learners and educators by giving them opportunities to compete in storytelling competitions. With the African Renaissance blooming, more and more theatres run holiday storytelling events.

Röhrich (1991:xii) remarks that:

People have almost gone so far as to claim that if folktales were omitted from pedagogic, children would invent them.

Thirdly, folktales serve as a conveyer of culture. Kamenetsky (1992:243) reveals that some critics of folktales blame the atrocities committed by the Nazi's on the folktales of the Brothers Grimm. He explains that generations of German children have grown up with the concept of superior characters that dominated the weaker, less perfect characters. The cruelty of the Nazi's towards their victims could also be related to the cruelty towards victims in the Grimm's fairytales. This opinion is however, not the opinion of the researcher, since folktales can have only a slight influence on a person, not take over his or her whole humanness.

This being a dissertation of limited volume, the influence of folktales on Zulu children is only touched on. The influence of folktales on Zulu children is a theme that deserves its own full-length study. The aim in this research was just to find out very basically what children feel the folktale (in general) should be teaching them.

5.6.2 Aim.

The aim of this instrument is to determine the role that Zulu folktales have in the lives of children

5.6.3 Hypothesis.

Children are still educated by Zulu folktales. Children were given 5 easy categories to choose from namely (Fig. 24):

Folktales teach me to:

- 1- help people
- 2- be naughty
- 3- listen to people
- 4- be good
- 5- do nothing

5.6.4 Results

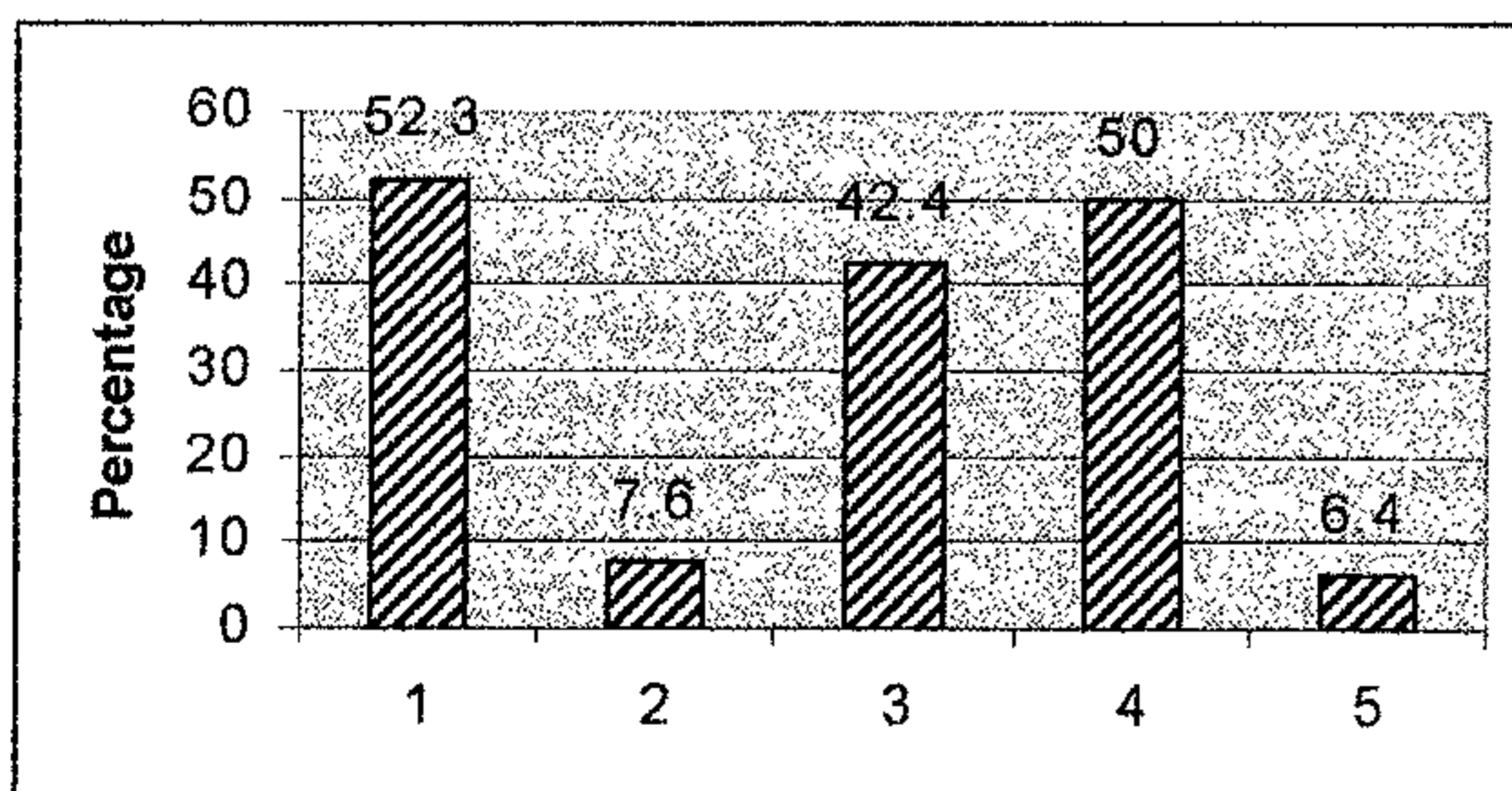


Fig. 24: Percentages of participants choosing each lesson

5.6.5 Findings.

The results of the participants reaction is in accordance with that which could be expected (Fig. 24). Except for the low percentages of 7.6% for the "be naughty" and 6.4% for the "do nothing" categories, most of the participants chose answers that would be expected. The following categories "listen to people"; "help people" and "be good" are all requirements for **ubuntu**, or humanness. It seems as if the participants (or most of them) in this research have been able to grasp the main function of the Zulu folktale; that is to promote the concept of **ubuntu**.

5.7 Conclusion.

As a result of the research it became clear that:

- i) Urbanisation and westernisation had a negative influence on the Zulu folktale.
- ii) Gender does not have a radical influence on the participants' familiarity with the Zulu folktale, although girls have a slight advantage over boys.
- iii) The school is the most important source of Zulu folktales, followed by grandmother, radio and lastly television.
- iv) The folktale is still fulfilling its functions in the lives of its modern audience.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION.

The roles that children play in the Zulu folktale were discussed in this study. Not only did this study investigate the role that children play as characters in folktales, but it also focused on the role that children play as the folktale audience.

This chapter is devoted to the conclusions that have been made in the previous chapters. The questions that have been posed in Chapter 1 will be answered. Recommendations on the promotion of the Zulu folktale will also be given.

6.2 SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS.

- i) How does the Zulu folktale portray the reality of being a parent in the Zulu society?**

Zulu folktales often employ parenthood as a theme. The initial lack in folktales is often the inability to bear children. Barrenness among real life Zulu women as well as folktale characters is a serious problem and no stone will be left unturned to rectify it.

Although there is no magical assistance for medical problems leading to barrenness in real life, folktale characters that are deserving are always assisted in miraculous ways. Deserving woman usually receive children with the intervention of the ancestors in the form of birds or animals. These babies are usually not born in the conventional way.

The importance of parenthood in the Zulu society is also stressed in folktales by the manner in which parents are rewarded or punished for their behaviour regarding their children. Prospective parents will learn from these sanctions what the correct way of parenting is.

ii) Which lessons about parenting are there to be learnt in the Zulu folktale?

The rules for motherhood and fatherhood differ significantly. One primary obligation is however shared by mothers and fathers: the physical provision for their children: food, clothes and shelter.

Mothers are there to tend to the emotional needs of their children. They are supposed to act as the go-between between their children and their husbands. Evils such as favouritism of one child and neglect of another are addressed in the Zulu folktale. Mothers that harm their children in any way are punished accordingly. The punishment for being a bad mother is usually the losing of

children. Sometimes the punishment is more severe and such a mother loses her own life. Good mothers are rewarded by obtaining happiness for themselves and their children.

Fathers are supposed to provide for their children's physical needs. They are also obliged to discipline and teach their children (especially their sons) to become good Zulus. If a father has an evil son (such as Silwane), he is held responsible and is punished accordingly. There should be no jealousy between a father and his sons. In some folktales it is told of fathers that attempt to get rid of their heirs. Such fathers are punished by death. Some folktale fathers neglect to supply their children with food. Such fathers are punished by losing their children forever. However, fathers that are good to their children and deserve their respect are rewarded. Rewards are usually to receive lobola cattle for their daughters or to have sons that make them proud.

iii) What effect do Zulu norms have on the actions and the consequences of the actions of girl characters in the Zulu folktale?

Folktale girl characters act within the framework of the Zulu society. In Chapter 3 it is discussed how girl characters that disobey the norms set by society are punished, whereas those girls who are depicted as an example of the **intombi mpela** (perfect girl) are rewarded.

iv) What are the lessons to be learned regarding girlhood.

Zulu folktales prescribe the following behaviour to girls:

Girls should be obedient, clever, demure and respectful. Laziness and failure to show respect to one's seniors are frowned upon. Girls should love and assist their siblings. Girls who become brides should respect their in-laws and obey all the taboo rules regarding marriage. Girl characters that comply with these standards are rewarded with marriage, whereas girl characters that break the rules are severely punished.

v) How does the Zulu culture reflect on the actions of boy characters in the Zulu folktale?

The importance of cattle to the Zulu people becomes clear through the frequency with which cattle and herd boys occur in Zulu folktales. Boy characters that are good herd boys are rewarded, usually by receiving some cattle. Therefore boy characters will go the extra mile to protect the cattle in their care.

The actions of boy characters are also influenced by the Zulu people's attitude towards nature. Boy characters are supposed to interact with animals in a respectful manner.

Sometimes folktales host tricksters and villains, usually boys that are the epitome of how Zulu boys should not be. These characters aim to break as many rules as they can.

vi) What is taught about boyhood in the Zulu folktale?

Traditionally Zulu boys are supposed to be hardworking, brave and respectful to their seniors and also animals. Herd boys are expected to endanger their lives in order to protect the cattle in their care. Boys that endanger their cattle are punished, whereas boys that protect their cattle successfully are rewarded.

It is also clear from the folktale that boys must obey their parents and may never touch their fathers' possessions without their permission. Boys that behave in a cowardly way will be mocked or punished, but brave boys who are willing to risk their lives by fighting monstrosities etc. will be respected and rewarded.

The Zulu folktale also aims to teach that villains and tricksters will eventually be punished for their foul actions.

vii) What is the status of the Zulu folktale today?

Zulu folktales are better known by rural children than by their urban counterparts.

This has to do with several factors, westernisation, the presence of grandmothers and education being the most influential.

It seems as if gender does not play a significant role in the knowledge that children have of folktales. Girls have slightly more knowledge of folktales than boys. This can be attributed to the fact that girls are traditionally more inclined to spend time with their grandmothers.

According to this research *Mshayandlela* is the best known Zulu folktale. *Chakijana* and *Maqinase* follow it respectively in second and third places.

viii) How do folktales reach their audience today?

The school is found to be the most important source of Zulu folktales. Reasons for this are that most children have access to schooling and that they have no other choice but to listen to folktales if the teacher wishes to present it.

Grandmothers are still telling folktales. They are the second greatest source of folktales. However, the role of the grandmother as storyteller is rapidly declining due to hindrances such as westernisation and urbanisation.

The radio is the third greatest source of folktales. Although most of the participants in this study have access to a radio, it seems as if they do not get enough opportunities to listen to the folktales that are presented.

Many of the participants in this do not have access to a television. It is a pity, because folktales are sometimes presented. The participants who, however, do have access to a television seem to prefer other programs. The television is therefore the worst source of Zulu folktales.

6.3 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Zulu folktale intends to educate and entertain the children who are it's audience. The norms and rules of society are covertly taught to the audience who is unaware that it is actually being taught. Serious life skills are brought home under the cover of amazing and humorous events. The intended lessons however are grasped at the end of each tale.

Zulu children identify with the characters in Zulu folktales. They learn that they, like their favourite characters, will be rewarded for good deeds and punished for ignorance or spitefulness that lead to the breaking of rules. Folktales are invented to cover a broad spectrum of life lessons, from how to be a good parent to how to be a good boy or girl.

The rules for being an applaudable boy and being a virtuous girl are in some ways different. Boys have to be brave and bold, girls have to be hardworking and demure. Brave, bold boys in the Zulu folktale serve as an example to boys who are its audience. Hardworking, demure folktale characters motivate girls in the audience to be the same. The folktale audience is motivated by the rewards that deserving folktale characters get. When bad folktale characters are punished for their foul deeds, it scares the audience members to the conclusion that they themselves will never be bad again.

The Zulu folktale does not play as important a role in the lives of children as it did a few years ago. Like so many other cultural events, storytelling has been declining with the increase of urbanisation and acculturation. Somehow the western way of living has become the norm, whereas any other culture drinks from the hind teat.

Children are however still exposed to folktales, though not as often as they used to be. This exposure happens mainly at school. In the past folktales were chosen as a part of the school curriculum, but sudden changes in the African languages syllabi left teachers confused and folktales untaught. The latest curriculum focuses on all the cultures that are endemic to South Africa and folktales from all cultures are promoted as part of the heritage.

It is a pity that the rat race that people have created for themselves has pushed traditional family life to the side. Grandmothers who always formed as much part of a household as the furniture, are now replaced by television sets and crèches. In households where grannies are still present (and televisions still absent), they are still entertaining the children with folktales.

Modern media such as the radio and the television is becoming more important as an educational tool. With the popularisation of the so-called African Renaissance, the electronic media's programming and scope have started to become more heritage friendly. Storytelling is employed in several children's programs, yet it seems as if the children are not listening to them. Ways have to be found to entice children to appreciate folktales more.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.

During an interview with a very traditionalistic Zulu I found that the term "coconut" was used in a very peculiar way. He explained to me that many of the Zulu children are like coconuts, that is brown on the outside, but white on the inside. Thereby he meant that although these children are Zulus, they adapted the lifestyle and culture of the white people. The following recommendations can be made in order to change the "coconuts" back to proud Zulus:

Folktales should be promoted in every possible way. Why are western tales such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White* so well known to millions of children? What do these tales have that Zulu tales lack? Zulu tales are just as intriguing as the folktales of Grimm and Anderson, but they have not been promoted with the same vigour as western tales.

6.4.1 Promotion of Zulu folktales in the school.

In Chapter 5 it became clear that the school plays a important role in the presentation of Zulu folktales. The new curriculum aims to familiarise children with aspects of cultures other than their own. Children other than Zulu children will learn about Zulu folktales. Teachers should aim to present folktales with the same flair that a grandmother would. Currently there is an annual storytelling competition in place to encourage teachers to bring some vibrancy into their classrooms. There should be more such competitions.

As part of their training, teachers should be taught how to tell folktales. They should understand that to read a folktale to the children is only successful if they are able to change their voice in an instant from that of an old woman to that of an **imbulu**. The importance of audience participation should also be grasped.

Teachers who are from cultures other than Zulu, should not be biased towards tales from their own cultures; thus teachers who have not grown up with Zulu folktales must aim to familiarise themselves with them.

6.4.2 Promotion of Zulu folktales in books.

An interesting question, to which I would like to hear the answer, is the following: Why were Zulu folktale books usually not illustrated? Except for *Jabulani and the lion*, *The story of Mzikayise* and *Uzimu-madlabantu*, none of the tales used in this study have been accompanied by illustrations. Apart from a few folktales that appear in academic books, the most tales appear in books that are aimed at children. The tales would be much more enchanting if they were illustrated. Ntuli in **African Renaissance** (1999:193) has a possible answer to why Zulu folktale books are often not illustrated:

Children from white schools were introduced to arts and culture from year one; tertiary institutions offered fine arts and history of art whereas, with the exception of the Universities of Durban-Westville and Fort Hare, other historically black institutions (HBIs) did not offer courses in fine art. Fine art was seen as a privilege and not a right.

There is however light at the end of the tunnel: more and more publishers are opting to publish Zulu folktales in the same colourful fashion as that in which the

tales of Grimm have been for decades. The ideal would be that all schools have libraries stocked with these books.

The role that Non-Governmental Organisations (N.G.O.s) can play in the promotion of folktales should not be underestimated. A few companies have already committed themselves to the African Renaissance and have sponsored folktale booklets, which are donated to schools. Other companies should be motivated to follow.

Magazines usually feature a children's page. Some magazines have chosen to dedicate this page to folktales. It is just a pity that not all children have access to magazines. Perhaps these magazines can consider donating their unsold copies to needy schools.

6.4.3 Promotion of Zulu folktales in the electronic media.

Both the television and the radio are broadcasting folktales, yet it seems as if this does not reach the children. Television and radio stations should launch investigations into the reasons why children are not reached by folktales. They may discover that folktales are not broadcast in the prime time when most children are listening or watching. Programs from abroad dominate the viewing. Children are bombarded with western super heroes and their values. If folktales are presented, they are usually not half as colourful as the latter. Broadcasters

should realise that even a professional storyteller, who is telling folktales with the necessary flair, can't compete with bright, animated programs. I would suggest that folktales be brought to life on the television. Prominent folktale characters such as Chakijana should have their own series; animated or dramatised. Folktales should also be broadcast at times when children are expected to be watching or listening, not playing sports or going to school.

6.5 CONCLUSION.

Conducting a limited study like this is often frustrating, because some doors are just slightly opened, but then closed again. It would be interesting if further studies could be done on the following topics that have been touched on in this study:

- i) Comparing Zulu folktales to the tales of Grimm, the Bible and the Greek mythology.
- ii) Investigating the use of traditional symbolism in folktales.
- iii) Determining the influence that folktales have on children's lives.

Folktales are mirrors of the society that we live in. It is of utmost importance that folktales continue to entertain and educate children, hence giving them a better understanding of **ubuntu**.

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