

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC EXPLORATION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL  
VALUE OF CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS ON A  
KALEIDOSCOPIC CULTURAL TERRAIN: A CASE OF SHONA

BY

TSITSI NYONI

SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE SUBJECT OF

LANGUAGES, LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR D.E. MUTASA

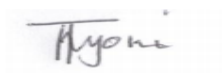
CO-SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR C.D. NTULI

JUNE 2019

## DECLARATION

Student Number 5338-128-9

I, Tsitsi Nyoni, declare that **A SOCIOLINGUISTIC EXPLORATION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS ON A KALEIDOSCOPIC CULTURAL TERRAIN: A CASE OF SHONA**, is my own work and all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



15/06/19

Signature

Date

## **DEDICATION**

To my late father, Peter Dzinoreva and mother, Agnes Nyevero Dzinoreva, who toiled day and night, to set me on the path of education, and Makanaka Nyoni, my daughter, best friend and inspiration through it all.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my Promoter Professor Davie Elias Mutasa, for his expertise, dedication thoroughness and patience in guiding me as I carried this study. Prof, you left an indelible mark for me in terms of what scholarship is all about. My co-promoter, Professor Cynthia Danisile Ntuli, your support and guidance is sincerely appreciated. I extend my sincere gratitude to UNISA Financial Aid Bureau for financial assistance without which this journey would have been a challenge. I would also like to thank my family, my husband Mika for the support, my daughter Makanaka for the push, “Mama, Check Prof’s mail”, I cherish that. My little sister, Tendai for the arduous journeys down South, to ensure my registration was on time during the first two years. I am grateful. My mother, for the prayers, they were not in vain. Aunt Muchaneta, for keeping the home fire burning, I thank you. Mrs Makezhe, for driving me around the schools, such support one can never forget. Chivhenge Emmerson, my son, for the technical expertise, words fail me. You were always a phone call away. Prof Nyota, thank you for the encouragement and support. My gratitude is also extended to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, through the Provincial Education Director, Masvingo, Mr Z.M. Chitiga for granting me permission to work in the selected schools in Masvingo district, the teachers who responded to the questionnaires and engaged in the interviews. Finally, my gratitude goes to the young learners who participated in the focus group interviews, young as they are, their contributions will forever be cherished. To you all may God continue to enlarge your territories and bless you abundantly.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study is a sociolinguistic exploration of the pedagogical value of Shona children's oral art forms on a changing cultural terrain to situate them within contemporary classroom pedagogy. Critical Discourse Analysis, Afrocentricity and Constructivism are theories that informed the analysis of the Shona children's oral art forms. The study is conducted within the qualitative paradigm as a descriptive study. Data was gathered through observations, standardised open-ended interviews, focus group interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. The study established that Shona children's oral art forms have responded positively to the changing environment in which they are performed in terms of form and content. While this is a positive development, this should be done with caution to ensure that indigenous knowledge systems that are the backbone of African societies are not abused on the global stage. The study has also affirmed that Shona children's oral art forms are useful pedagogical tools for information dissemination and knowledge creation. It is also evident from the findings that the oral art forms are an embodiment of human factor values that enhance development education. Findings from this study established that Shona children's oral art forms are reservoirs of values and norms cherished by the Shona as a people and can be reconstructed for teaching various concepts across the primary school curriculum. Evident from this study is that both teachers and learners are knowledgeable of the various traditional Shona children's oral art forms although new creations are coined to adapt to the changing environment. This shows that the traditional forms are able to withstand the challenges of globalisation, and this resilience is a positive development since it creates an opportunity for researchers to document these in their unadulterated form for posterity. Since findings from the study highlighted threats to the children's oral art forms due to the advent of technology and globalisation, there is need to act so that they are not pushed to the periphery as was the case during the colonial era. There is need for concerted efforts at packaging them and meaningful infusion of these into all aspects of children's education for visibility within the changing environment to guard against their demise in an era of globalisation which may impact negatively on the Shona culture.

## **KEY TERMS**

oral literature, oral art forms, culture, cultural values, pedagogy, pedagogical tools, globalisation, indigenous knowledge, human factor values, development education.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiv
LIST OF TABLES .....	xv
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	xvi
<b>CHAPTER 1 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	7
1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY.....	7
1.3.1 Objectives .....	7
1.3.2 Research Questions .....	8
1.4 JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE .....	8
1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS .....	9
1.6 LITERATURE OVERVIEW.....	12
1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	17
1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	20
1.8.1 Research Design.....	20
1.8.2 Population .....	20
1.8.3 Sample.....	20
1.8.4 Methods of Data Collection .....	21

1.8.4.1 The Questionnaire .....	21
1.8.4.2 Observation .....	21
1.8.4.3 The Standardized Open-Ended Interview .....	22
1.8.4.4. Focus Group Interviews .....	22
1.8.4.5 Document Analysis.....	23
1.9 SCOPE OF STUDY.....	23
1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	25
1.11 CONCLUSION.....	25
<b>CHAPTER 2.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	27
2.2 REVIEW OF RESEARCHES BY INTENATIONAL SCHOLARS ON CHILDREN’S ORAL ART FORMS .....	27
2.3 A REVIEW OF RESEARCHES BY AFRICAN SCHOLARS ON CHILDREN’S ORAL ART FORMS .....	30
2.4 A REVIEW OF RESEARCHES BY ZIMBABWEAN SCHOLARS .....	33
2.5. CONCLUSION.....	42
<b>CHAPTER 3.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	43
3.2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA).....	44
3.2.1 Approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) .....	48
3.3 AFROCENTRICITY .....	52
3.4. CONSTRUCTIVISM AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM .....	57
3.5 CONCLUSION.....	59
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>	<b>61</b>

<b>METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>61</b>
4.1. INTRODUCTION .....	61
4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM AND DESIGN .....	61
4.3 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND PROCEDURES .....	64
4.3.1 Data collection tools .....	64
4.3.1.1 The Questionnaire .....	64
4.3.1.2 Observation .....	65
4.3.1.3 The Interview .....	67
4.3.1.3.1 Focus Group Interview.....	69
4.3.1.3.2 The Standardised Open-Ended Interview .....	70
4.3.1.4 Document Analysis .....	71
4.3.2 Data collection procedure .....	71
4.4 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE.....	72
4.4.1 Population .....	72
4.4.2 Sample.....	73
4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	73
4.6 DATA ANALYSIS .....	75
4.6.1 Analytical tools .....	76
4.7 CONCLUSION.....	78
<b>CHAPTER 5.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>80</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	80
5.2 DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRES.....	80
5.2.1 Biographical data .....	81
5.2.2 Teachers perceptions of Shona children’s oral art forms.....	83
5.2.3 Teacher knowledge and use of the oral art forms and classroom practice. ....	86



5.2.4 Teachers' understanding of children's oral art forms in Shona.....	87
5.2.5 Types and examples of the oral art forms.....	89
5.2.6 Where and how often learners perform them during classroom interactions.....	92
5.2.7 Relevance to teaching.....	95
5.2.8 Curriculum areas and concepts taught.....	96
5.2.9 Language preferred for performance.....	97
5.2.10 Relevance to teaching Shona versus English oral art forms.....	99
5.2.11 Cultural values, skills and other benefits.....	101
5.2.12 Examples under given types of Shona children's oral art forms.....	103
<b>5.3 PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM INTERVIEWS.....</b>	<b>110</b>
5.3.1 Presentation of data from interviews with teachers.....	111
5.3.1.1 Interviewee 1 (An experienced ECD and infant specialist).....	111
5.3.1.2 Interviewee 2 (Junior Teacher Urban).....	115
5.3.1.3 Interviewee 3 (Junior Teacher Peri-Urban).....	116
5.3.1.4 Interviewee 4 (Infant Teacher -Peri Urban).....	118
5.3.1.5 Interviewee 5 (Junior Teacher Rural Resettlement).....	121
5.3.1.6 Interviewee 6 (Infant Teacher Rural Resettlement).....	122
5.3.1.7 Interviewee 7 (Infant Teacher Rural).....	125
5.3.1.8 Interviewee 8 (Junior Teacher Rural).....	128
<b>5.4 DATA FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS.....</b>	<b>129</b>
5.4.1 Focus group 1 (Grade 5 urban).....	130
5.4.1.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs.....	130
5.4.1.2 Responses on riddles.....	137
5.4.1.3 Responses on folktales.....	140
5.4.2 Focus group 2 (urban Grade 6).....	142
5.4.2.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs.....	142
5.4.2.2 Responses on riddles.....	146
5.4.2.3 Responses on folktales.....	147

5.4.3 Focus group 3 (infant peri-urban grade 2) .....	149
5.4.3.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs.....	149
5.4.3.2 Responses on folktales .....	151
5.4.4 Focus group 4 (peri-urban grade 6) .....	152
5.4.4.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs.....	152
5.4.4.2 Responses on riddles.....	153
5.4.4.3 Responses on folktales .....	154
5.4.5 Focus group 5 (Grade 5 Rural Resettlement) .....	155
5.4.5.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs.....	156
5.4.5.2 Responses on riddles.....	157
5.4.5.3 Responses on folktales .....	158
5.4.6 Focus group 6 (Grade 2 Rural Resettlement).....	159
5.4.6.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs.....	159
5.4.6.2 Responses on folktales .....	161
5.4.7 Focus group 7 (Grade 3 rural).....	161
5.4.7.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs.....	162
5.4.7.2 Responses on riddles.....	165
5.4.7.3 Responses on folktales .....	165
5.4.8 Focus group 8 (Grade 5 rural).....	165
5.4.8.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs.....	165
5.4.8.2 Responses on riddles.....	167
5.4.8.3 Responses on folktales .....	169
5.6 CONCLUSION.....	170
<b>CHAPTER 6.....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>172</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION .....	172
6.2 THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGING TERRAIN ON SHONA CHILDREN’S ORAL ART FORMS .....	172
6.2.1 Impact of the environment on the children’s art forms.....	172

6.2.2 Impact of language contact on Shona children’s oral art forms .....	174
6.2.3 Threats to Shona children’s oral art forms from the changing environment .....	177
6.2.4. Ways Shona children’s oral art forms can withstand challenges and curb their demise .....	178
<b>6.3 THE CONTRIBUTION SHONA CHILDREN’S ORAL ART FORMS CAN MAKE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING.....</b>	<b>179</b>
6.3.1 Paradigm shift in teaching and learning.....	180
6.3.2 Pedagogical value of the children’s oral art forms in terms of knowledge and skills .....	185
6.3.3 Shona children’s oral art forms as reservoirs of cultural values. ....	188
6.3.4 Relevance of Shona children’s oral art forms across the curriculum .....	190
<b>6.4 EFFORTS BY PRACTITIONERS TO LINK SHONA CHILDREN’S ORAL ART FORMS TO PEDAGOGY .....</b>	<b>193</b>
6.4.1 Teacher knowledge of the Shona children’s oral art forms .....	193
6.4.2 Efforts at incorporation of Shona children’s oral art forms in the classroom.....	194
<b>6.5 TEACHER ATTITUDES ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN’S ORAL ART FORMS AS PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS AS COMPARED TO THOSE PERFORMED IN ENGLISH .....</b>	<b>196</b>
6.5.1 Teacher preferences of children’s oral art according to linguistic medium.....	196
<b>6.6 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7.....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>200</b>
7.1 INTRODUCTION .....	200
7.2 SUMMARY .....	200
7.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	201

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	204
7.4.1 Recommendations for future practice .....	204
7.4.2 Recommendations for further research. ....	207
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>231</b>

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CL	Critical Linguistics
CLS	Critical Language Study
DA	Discourse Analysis
DASSAF	District Annual Science Sports Arts Festivals
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMA	Environmental Management Agency
NASSAF	National Annual Science Sports and Arts Festivals
PASSAF	Provincial Annual Science Sports and Arts Festivals
POSA	The Public Order and Security Act
SASSAF	Schools Annual Science Sports and Arts Festivals
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe School Examination Council

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 4.1 Data collection cycle (adapted from Creswell 2013:146).....	71
Figure 6.1 Learner centred teaching and learning frame work (Adapted from the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022: 41).....	181

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Questionnaire return rate .....	80
Table 5.2 Distribution of respondents by age .....	81
Table 5.3 Distribution of respondents by gender .....	81
Table 5.4 Distribution of respondents by qualification .....	82
Table 5.5 Distribution of respondents by experience .....	83
Table 5.6 Levels of agreement.....	84
Table 5.7 Teachers' understanding of children's oral forms .....	87
Table 5.8 Types and examples of the oral art forms.....	89
Table 5.9 When performed and frequency .....	93
Table 5.10 Curriculum area and concepts.....	96
Table 5.11 Preferred language of performance.....	98
Table 5.12 Relevance to teaching .....	99
Table 5.13 Cultural values .....	101
Table 5.14 Skills .....	102
Table 5.15 Other benefits.....	102
Table 5.16 Riddles .....	104
Table 5.17 Game songs.....	106
Table 5.18 Rhymes/lullabies.....	108
Table 5.19 Examples of folktales.....	109
Table 5.20 Summary of interviewees .....	110

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

APPENDIX I: PERMISSION LETTERS .....	231
APPENDIX II: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM UNISA COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE .....	244
Appendix III QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS .....	245
APPENDIX IV INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS .....	250
APPENDIX V FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS .....	251
APPENDIX VI OBSERVATION GUIDE.....	252



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The current scenario in most Zimbabwean settings where children play or are gathered formally (e.g. pre-schools and primary schools), is that English oral art forms, especially rhymes, tend to dominate the interactions. For example, in most cases the pre-scholars and primary school children are overfed with rhymes in foreign languages (these they take with them outside the classroom to their play areas) such as the following:

I am a little donkey

Galloping galloping away (Nyoni, Nyota and Zivenge, 2013)

One wonders of what relevance this is in terms of content to the norms and values of the learners' culture. Are the learners being told that it is fine to be a donkey that is associated with foolishness and stupidity? Is this not conflicting with the child's worldview where calling someone a donkey is an insult? Such a scenario results in learners missing out and running the risk of not being conversant with the wealth of experiences and knowledge that their culture can offer (Nyota and Mapara 2008).

Nyoni and Nyoni (2013) cite another example where Trovato in his article 'Ban those killer Nursery Songs' in *The Sunday Times* of April 11, 2010, points out that children's poems instil certain attitudes into the children, so they cannot be just taken lightly. He gives the example of 'Baa baa black sheep' that goes:

Baa baa black sheep have you any wool?

Yes, Sir, Yes sir, three bags full.

One for the master, one for the dame

And one for the little boy who lives down the lane.

His argument is that the use of 'master' and 'dame' in the poem inculcates in the children the spirit of subservience because once we have these modes of address, by implication we are saying there is another group of servants which comes in the form of 'the little boy who lives down the road'. Trovato raises his sentiments in independent South Africa but argues that continued recitation of rhymes that were used in schools during colonial times to perpetuate

certain attitudes is detrimental to total liberation and empowerment of the young. His argument also rings true of the Zimbabwean context referred to earlier. If such children's oral art forms such as those cited above as well as the likes of Humpty Dumpty, Polly Put the Kettle On, Little Jack Homer, Jack and Jill and Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (that the researcher herself used to recite at primary school in the 1970s), among others, still dominate the Zimbabwean nursery and primary schools what does this mean for our own Shona children? Observation has also shown that even parents are very proud of their children when they recite and are fluent in the foreign rhymes to the extent of parading and showing them off in front of relatives. They also would rather have their child enrolled at a pre-school that is well known for such rote learning. The children then regurgitate the English rhymes fluently when required to do so at gatherings such as the now very popular pre-school graduation ceremonies to the delight of parents and teachers. This begs one to ask the question: 'What is learning?' 'By ignoring our own children's oral art forms are we then not encouraging cultural subjugation where western norms and values are promoted and, in the process, cultural and economic domination become the end result as we continue to sink deeper into a quagmire that we cannot extricate ourselves from in the future? Are we not creating a dangerous situation that Asante Kete Molefi, in his presentation at the 2012 Pan African Forum in Austria entitled 'Afrocentricity, F. toward the African Renaissance: A New Africa', sums up thus? "I surmise that a people's soul is dead when it can't breathe its own air, or speak its own language, and when the air of another culture seems to smell sweeter".

One can also deduce from the above sentiments that divorcing our own children's oral art forms from their learning environment is tantamount to digging one's grave in the end, as it might give a wrong picture to the young and impressionable minds that our own indigenous knowledge systems are useless when it comes to their education. Such a scenario is really not tenable as it will result in our education system producing learners who have lost their cultural centeredness and who live in borrowed spaces (Asante, 1998). It is for this reason that the Zimbabwean curriculum from pre-school to university is being reviewed to include culture and heritage components so that learners continue to encounter eternal truths from their cultural heritage. In the end they will become aware of the importance of being rooted in their own space, history and culture (Asante, 1998). Hence this research could not have come at a better time than this where we also need to encourage infusion of indigenous knowledge into teaching-learning situations in the form of children's Shona oral art forms.

Shizha (2013:1) also argues that postcolonial education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa

should reclaim indigenous voices through curriculum reforms to correct what went wrong during the colonial era when the African ways of knowing were disrupted:

Colonial education was hegemonic and disruptive to African cultural practices, indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and ways of knowing. Prior to colonization, Africans were socialized and educated within African indigenous cultural contexts. With the advent of colonization, traditional institutions of knowledge started disappearing due to cultural repression, misrepresentations, misinterpretations and devaluation.

He raises a pertinent issue that is relevant to this study in terms of what goes on in schools in African settings such as Zimbabwe. For during the colonial era not only was the content tampered with but also the methodology, hence the need to revisit not only the question of what knowledge is disseminated but also how it is disseminated.

It was interesting in this study to find out if Shona children's oral art forms are part of any meaningful classroom interactions in the current Zimbabwean pre- and primary school set ups. If so, to what extent and for which concepts? It was also necessary to assess and establish whether the Shona children's oral art forms are not simply being used as gap fillers without any link with the learning process. If so, then it is necessary to look at ways of improving such a state of affairs.

Another gap in this research is that Shona oral art forms that have been documented such as proverbs in Hamutyinei and Plangger's (1987) *Tsumo-Shumo* and Bhebe and Viriri's (2012) *Proverbs: Palm Oil with which African Words are Eaten*, Hodza's (1984, 1983b, 1986 ) *Shona Registers Volumes 1, 2, 3* and his *Ngano Dzamatambidzanwa* (1983a), Fortune's (1980, 1982, 1983a, 1983b) *Ngano Volumes 1, 2, 3* and 4, respectively, Munjanja's *Tsumo naMadimikira* Volume 1 (1974), *Tsumo nefananidzo* (1986) and *Zvirahwe* (1987), among others, are all more inclined towards the adult community mostly for academic purposes. For example, in Hamutyinei and Plangger's *Tsumo-Shumo*, the two simply did their job as paremiographers and came out with a collection of 1 600 proverbs but scholars like George Fortune went on to analyse how Shona thought and expression comes out through proverbs as an oral art in his paper titled 'Form and Imagery in Shona Proverbs' (1975). Bhebe and Viriri (2012) undertake a similar project but also capture modern proverbs and some that show that there is a lot of lexical diversity among the Shona dialects. The researcher acknowledges though, that proverbs, idioms and idiophones are included in the Primary Shona Syllabus and exercises on these do appear in text books such as the *Nhaka yeUpenyu* series which are core texts at this level hence teachers have no choice but to teach these components as well. They

also help learners make use of these in their writing of Shona compositions hence learners appreciate their importance and can relate this to what they encounter in their real lives when these are used in day to day interactions outside the school. It is this nexus that this research also sought to establish between children's oral art forms and classroom interactions for the benefit of the learners since it appears these are largely ignored if not completely divorced from their learning.

Oral art forms in Fortune's *Ngano Volumes 1, 2 and 3* were mostly gathered for literary studies as evidence of cultural evolution, cultural diffusion and as material for sociological analysis of the societies concerned. (Fortune, 1982). He goes further to argue that they were neither meant to be literature meriting serious criticism nor enjoyment as part of children's literature. It has only been during the advent of information and communication technology where televisions have taken over the evening recreation space of the children where 'ngano' were told for entertainment and instruction that the need to document 'ngano' for reading during reading lessons within the school setting arose. However, not much has been done in this respect for Shona folktales, for among the above-mentioned collections the only one written with children in mind is *Ngano Dzamatambidzanwa* that can be found in a few primary school libraries where children can access it just as an optional reader not as a primary text. There is nothing binding therefore that guarantees it will be read. The other *Ngano Volumes* are texts for the study of oral literature for the Shona A-Level literature papers and Oral Literature courses at tertiary institutions. The effort by Hodza to put an appealing illustration of a Baboon carrying Hare on his back depicting in picture form an incident in one of the folktales in the collection seems to be a good effort meant to capture the attention of and arouse curiosity in the young children no wonder it appears to be the only *Ngano* anthology targeting primary school children. There is need for more to be done with the other oral art forms as well hence analysing them critically becomes necessary in order to make their pedagogical value more explicit.

The same applies for the Shona Register Volumes which focus on narratives to illustrate the registers of speech styles in the language in different contexts classified by Fortune under two categories, that is institutions and relationships. The narratives he groups under institutions, focus on selected aspects of Shona culture such as taboos, the place of beer at a work party, mourning and paying condolences, religion, games, hunting and laments at danger and death (Hodza, 1984:1). A close look at the narratives shows that only games are relevant as children's oral art forms, while the rest are not meant for children as they are too abstract for

them to comprehend. Apart from that, though relevant for children, the games, covered in this collection are far removed from pre- and primary school classroom situations where they could benefit the young since, they are enshrined in a collection that is used as reference for Advanced Level and tertiary students. The ones grouped under relationships exemplify a number of kinship and personal relationships in a Shona cultural setting together with the register to employ, for example among friends, with strangers, in courtship and marriage. A closer look at the content highlighted above, shows that, this is not material meant for children but targets adults out of primary school as well who can handle such higher order content. Even a library search at a few primary school libraries proved that the above-mentioned texts are not even on the library catalogues because for them they are not relevant to children at that level. Thus, on the whole, the area of Shona children's oral art forms per se remains greatly under-represented as a sub-genre and under-explored as an academic endeavour as evidenced by lack of these as readers for the learners who, when booksellers come to school, end up buying readers like Snow-white, Cinderella, Princess Sofia, among others (all foreign in terms of content, language and setting) but fail to get any on indigenous oral art forms like *Ngano* or children's rhymes in Shona. Thus, this research sought to draw attention to children's oral art forms in Shona by exploring their pedagogical value in the teaching-learning process as a way of making their role visible and situating them appropriately into current trends in pedagogy. The data gathered during this research can also be used for documenting some of the children's oral art forms in Shona to address the paucity of the literary heritage resources at this level.

Even prolific writers like Mungoshi who penned award winning classics like *Kunyarara Hakusi Kutaura?* (1983) and *Ndiko Kupindana kwaMazuva* (1975) in excellent Shona, opts to capture Shona folktales in English in his two anthologies '*Stories from a Shona Childhood*' (1989) and '*One day long ago*' (1991). Even though the two have become popular readers at primary school level, they are of limited benefit to the Shona child as a lot is lost through translation into English. It should be noted that there are certain aspects and sensibilities that are culture bound and cannot be fully captured or expressed in a foreign language. He seems not to have Shona children in mind but is appealing to a foreign audience. Also, by choosing English over Shona as a vehicle of capturing the Shona folktales, the author seems to be expressing a certain attitude, that English is better than Shona and can appeal more to a community that also still has a colonial hangover of viewing English as more prestigious than its own indigenous language. Though written in English, they are readily available in the

primary school settings where they are infused into classroom interactions for teaching concepts like reading and comprehension. Thus, they override our own Shona folktales and other children's Shona oral art forms due to lack of their documentation in a manner targeting children. It would also be very interesting to have such readers in Shona as there is evidence of such outcomes from research elsewhere. For example, a research done in Uganda by Mushenyeyez (2013) ended up with documentation of children's oral art forms in an indigenous language after he realised that in the classrooms, orality and the literary do co-exist even though, as he argues, in most African settings the area of children's oral art forms tends not to be taken seriously.

Another case in point is that raised by Akinyemi (2003) for Yoruba children's oral art forms where he also laments the lack of documentation of children's oral art forms in Yoruba save for folktales and encourages a systematic collection of these to facilitate their critical analysis or even transcription of these into other languages. He further argues that it is necessary to integrate the cultural background of the people into the formal school system since the worth of an individual cannot continue to be measured in terms of the number of certificates alone, but also on who one is in terms of norms and values that define who one is, where he/she is coming from and where he/she is going. This he views as a huge step towards the re-awakening in a people's cultural consciousness. While Akinyemi's argument focuses on integration in terms of content, this research sought to stretch this integration further in terms of Shona children's oral art forms and link them to classroom pedagogy. This can only be possible after a critical analysis of these to tease out aspects that can be linked to classroom interactions. This is another gap that this research sought to explore. There is need to critically analyse children's oral art forms in Shona, (both the contemporary and traditional forms) in terms of their form, content and images brought in, in an environment where the cultural, socio-economic, historical, political and educational terrain is ever changing and then to situate them appropriately within the educational context and pedagogy. This is in line with the post-modern pedagogy paradigm which emphasises the key aspect of local context in the teaching -learning process (Jalil, Rozhin and Katayoun, 2015) which Kumaravadivelu (2006:171) calls "situational understanding" for the development of a critical mind-set. What this implies is that situating children's Shona oral art forms in classroom interactions allows them to apply the knowledge they already possess to their learning. This is in line with the constructivists' view of learning as an active process where learners reflect upon their current and past knowledge and experiences to generate new ideas and concepts (Mohammed, 2016;

Tuckman and Monetti, 2011; Green and Gredler, 2002, Cunningham, 2001; Jonassen, 1994). According to Olajide, (2010), these children's oral art forms are also part of the children's culture which defines them, hence they can provide a conceptual basis upon which they can construct their reality.

Since children do not live in a vacuum but are part of this changing environment, their oral art forms cannot be overlooked when it comes to their education, they are bound to be coloured by what goes on around them, in the end influencing their way of thinking and behaviour. A number of variables such as Zimbabwe's pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence history, its multicultural state and the multilingual nature of its population, among others, are likely to have a great impact on the children's oral art forms, hence this needs to be explored.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Children's oral art forms in Shona tend to be considered simply as gap fillers and part of children's play in most educational settings where English ones dominate learners' daily activities. What should really be happening is that the content of Shona children's oral art forms in a Shona speaking community should take centre stage and be closely linked with the education of the pre- and primary school children and influence classroom pedagogy more than foreign ones.

## **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyse children's oral art forms in Shona in terms of their form and content, then explore their pedagogic value on a terrain that is ever changing (historically, socio-culturally, politically and economically) in the pre- and primary school set up in order to situate them in the contemporary educational context. Their form and content is critically analysed in order to explicitly show their value as pedagogical tools at pre- and primary school level.

### **1.3.1 Objectives**

The study sought to identify and analyse children's oral art forms in Shona in educational settings to:

1.3.1.1 Assess the impact of the ever-changing terrain on the form and content of children's oral art forms in Shona;

1.3.1.2 Examine what contribution the oral art forms can make in the teaching and learning of children at pre- and primary levels;

1.3.1.3 Establish if at present there is a conscious effort to link children's oral art forms in Shona with pedagogy;

1.3.1.4 Establish the various aspects which can be taught through the various oral art forms.

1.3.1.5 Evaluate the views of teachers with regards to the contribution of the oral art forms as pedagogical tools as compared to those in English;

### **1.3.2 Research Questions**

1.3.2.1 What impact does the ever- changing terrain have on Shona children's oral art forms in terms of form and content?

1.3.2.2 What is the contribution of these Shona children's oral art forms in the process of educating children at pre- and primary levels?

1.3.2.3 Is there a conscious effort being made to link the content of the oral art forms with meaningful formal instruction?

1.3.2.4 Where and for teaching which aspects are these oral art forms relevant?

1.3.2.5 What are the teachers' views towards the contribution of these oral art forms in the education process vis a vis those in English?

## **1.4 JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE**

In terms of justification this research could not have come at a more opportune time than when the Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education and that of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development are carrying out a Curriculum review aimed at infusing culture and heritage in all subjects and modules taught at primary and secondary levels and at the tertiary level respectively. This has been necessitated by the fact that some of our traditional values and beliefs seem to be disappearing due to factors such as colonialism, urbanisation, globalisation and acculturation, hence the need to make concerted efforts to promote and preserve our cultural heritage. While their focus is on content, in this research it is interesting to analyse components of our cultural heritage such as children's oral art forms then capitalise on their usefulness in the teaching of children at pre- and primary



school levels. If content on indigenous knowledge is coming in so strongly why not enrich modern day pedagogy by linking it with the rich cultural base where some of the content comes from? The Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2004:12) Section 1.3 clearly spells out this critical need:

With everyone in the world having opened to the global village and with all foreign culture forces knocking at our doorsteps, Zimbabweans need to rekindle customs, values and those of our norms that can lay a solid foundation for the resuscitation of the spirit of respect, integrity, tolerance, compassion *unhu/ubuntu* and at the same time fostering natural pride. It is important that these virtues are transmitted to our children and youths through our cultural education so as to promote national identity which will enable the nation to adopt those global values that they would have assessed to have meaning in their Zimbabwean lives.

What is simply implied here is the need to develop a whole person who is grounded in his/her culture and not easily swept away by cyclones of change that may come his/her way in the global village. The researcher believes there is no better way of achieving this, other than infusing children's oral art forms in Shona into the main curricula not only as content but also as a means of transmitting that content. In terms of significance the researcher hopes that the study might be of importance in adding new knowledge to the area of classroom pedagogy in that it seeks to show the importance of using children's oral art forms in improving cognition and conceptualisation of issues by highlighting areas of co-existence between the literary and oral forms.

There are also a number of possible outcomes from this research. A number of papers can be drawn from the data gathered relating to these oral art forms and classroom pedagogy, language contact and change. There is also a possibility of coming up with children's readers that capture some of the oral art forms as children's literature thus increasing children's literary heritage in Shona.

## **1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following terms are concepts that recur in the course of the study hence they are defined here:

**1.5.1 Sociolinguistics** – the study of language as it functions in society in relation to different social and cultural factors for example class, gender differences and bilingualism, among others; the study of the interaction between linguistic and social variables (Yule, 2010; Malmkjaer, 2010).

**1.5.2 Bilingualism / Multilingualism** - the ability to speak or use of two or more languages either by an individual or community (Crystal, 2008, Hudson, 1996, Hoffman, 1991). These terms are used interchangeably in the context of this study to refer to the ability to speak or use more than one language. This is a common phenomenon in the Zimbabwean situation where there are sixteen officially recognised languages in The Zimbabwe Constitution of 2013. It has been a result of various factors such as shifts in power, boarder changes, immigration and migration among others.

**1.5.3 Code switching** -the tendency of alternating between two or more languages or language varieties by bilingual or multilingual speakers in the context of a single conversation (Crystal, 2008). Since Zimbabwe is a multilingual speech community, this phenomenon is quite prevalent with speakers throwing in a word or two of the other language while speaking in one.

**1.5.4 Language contact** - A situation where two or more languages interact resulting in varying degrees of transfer of features from one to the other (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011). Take for example Shona has been in contact with English since the colonial era and with other languages such as Ndebele, Chewa, Nyanja, Nambya among others. Features from these languages have been transferred to Shona in many cases resulting in lots of borrowed or adopted nouns, verbs and adjectives among other parts of speech. Examples of this transference abound: *fundo* from 'ifundo'(education), 'dhonza' from 'donsa'(pull) in IsiNdebele); 'bhuku' from book, 'wacha' from wash (English) among others. In most cases transference from the other languages to Shona is phonological as the given examples show.

**1.5.5 Language change** – This is the alteration of features of a language and its use over time when speakers of different languages interact, and their languages influence each other (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011). Language change is a phenomenon that has also impacted heavily on the Shona language (Nyoni, Grand and Nyoni (2010). This has been evident in the development of the Shona language as it has undergone a lot of changes in terms of unification and harmonization of its dialects, lexicography and grammar (Chimhundu, 2005; Magwa, 2006; Mapara and Nyota, 2008).

**1.5.6 Afrocentricity**-This is an intellectual perspective that emphasises the centring of African people in the interpretation of phenomena in vital areas such as linguistics, history, sociology among others (Asante,2007; Ngara,1990; Chidi Amuta,1989). What it implies is that Africans should be able to interpret issues from their own perspective in all spheres of

life, *education included* (emphasis added) not an imposed one. What Afrocentric thought stresses is the notion that African ways of doing things, are in no way inferior to those of other cultures and should continue to be part of their definition of issues across all spheres of life.

**1.5.7 Constructivism-** Constructivism asserts that children are doers, constructors or builders of their own understandings of their world (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016;) Under constructivism, children are viewed as active agents in the learning process and thus need to be provided with the opportunity to actively participate in the learning process so that they interact and negotiate meaning through reflecting on what they already know in the context of new knowledge being learnt. (Andersen, Cardinale and Martin 2011). From a social constructivist perspective, culture and context are critical in understanding what happens in society and knowledge construction is based on that understanding (McLeod, 2010; Gredler, 1997). Since children's oral art forms are part and parcel of how they are culturally socialised, this perspective is quite relevant to this study for acknowledging that the cultural context is critical to the learning process. The children's oral art forms provide the social context that the learners bring to their learning environment. Thus, the context in which learning takes place and what children bring from the social environment are crucial for the negotiation of meaning during the teaching learning process. This has a lot of implications for pedagogy.

**1.5.8 Culture** – “Shared perceptions, attitudes and pre-dispositions that allow people to organise experience in certain ways” (Asante 1990: 9). Culture entails language which the speakers use to express and capture their experiences. This implies that whenever language is used, it is not neutral, it is loaded with the experiences, beliefs and philosophies of its users (Mazama, 2001; Nyoni, Grand and Nyoni, 2010). Many scholars have also defined culture as the way of life of a society's members, the collection of ideas and habits, which they learn and share and transmit from generation to generation (Haralambos and Holborn, 2010; Giddens, 2009). It has also been succinctly defined in terms of language, beliefs, values, norms and material objects passed from generation to generation (Henslin, 1998). It is clear from the definitions that culture is both material and non-material (Ndolerire, 2005; Furusa, 1998). Shona children's oral art forms fall in the realm of non-material culture.

**1.5.9 Kaleidoscopic terrain** – Ever changing environment (Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013). It is ever changing when one looks at the context of the Shona from pre-colonial, colonial,

independence and post-independence. Within this changing terrain are also social, political, economic and cultural variables entailed. It is how these impact on Shona children's oral art forms and how this can be intertwined with current pedagogical practices at pre- and primary school levels that is explored in the analysis of the former.

**1.5.10 Children's oral art forms** -Refers to oral art forms performed for or by children for their enjoyment (Finnegan, 2012; Chesina, 1994). These include folktales, games, riddles and rhymes, songs among others, meant to be consumed and appreciated by children. These are part of the broad category of oral literature since they are delivered by word of mouth and are common in most African cultures as various researches attest to this. Akinyemi (2003) has looked at some of these among the Yoruba (Nigeria), Banda and Morgan (2013) among the Chewa (Zambia) and Finnegan (2012) in her study of Oral Literature in Africa also captures children's oral art forms from different African countries Zimbabwe included.

**1.5.11 Games** -These are a form of play where a game partner or group is necessary so that some form of interaction is possible. Nyoni and Nyoni (2013:7) clearly distinguish these from the other children's oral art forms such as rhymes by the nature of their performance when they posit that "with games some form of drama or group involvement is a prerequisite", this is in contrast to an individual or solo performance which is possible in the former. For example, a child can recite a rhyme alone but for a hand clapping game like *'Ndakatumwa kumabheka'*, (I was sent to the bakeries) or a call and response one like *'Hwai! Hwai! huyai!'*, (Sheep! Sheep! Come!), one needs the participation of either a partner or group members to be able to proceed.

**1.5.12 Folktales** -These are fictional prose narratives which are not considered as dogma or history, they may or may not have happened (Bascom, 1965, Muponde 1999). However, they mirror the society in which they are created and can be adapted to reflect different conditions with the purpose of teaching and delighting (Nyaungwa, 2008). It is this adaptability that is of interest in this research as it fits in well to the notion of a changing terrain and how this can be capitalised on, to influence modern day pedagogy at pre- and primary school level.

## **1.6 LITERATURE OVERVIEW**

The province of oral literature is expansive and has been described through various terms among them the following: traditional literature, folkloric literature, folklore and orature, all emanating from the fact that it is delivered by word of mouth. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986)

describes it as being passed from ear to mouth, generation to generation, consisting of songs, poems, drama, proverbs, riddles, sayings and traditional narratives. Hence Nandwa and Bukenya (1983:1) define oral literature as, “Those utterances whether spoken, recited or sung whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree artistic characteristic of accurate observation, sound imagination and ingenious expression”. A more elaborate definition of the term is given by Adejumo (2009:1) thus:

Oral literature is a creative text delivered by word of mouth. It refers to heritage of imaginative verbal creations, stories, folk-beliefs, songs of preliterate societies which have evolved and passed on through the spoken word from one generation to another.

What is explicit from the above definitions is that at the core of creation and performance of any oral art is the use of language. The creations are oral by virtue of being communicated by word of mouth. Their evolving and being passed from one generation to another shows their ability to stand the test of time and survive wherever people are. However, Adejumo’s assertion that foregrounds literature at the expense of oral art and erroneously confines the latter art form to ‘inferior’ ‘pre-literate’ societies and attempts to freeze the art to a particular point in time smacks of a colonial education hangover that this study challenges. Oral art is living and evolving-it is not a thing of the past (Shitemi, 2009; Kaschula, 2001). As a living thing it has to adapt and adopt to continue to serve the concerned people. Shitemi (2009: 87) succinctly states that, “Oral literature is an art form that has stood the weather and storms of time; and ravages of the convergence and divergence of cultures, languages, lifestyles and environmental dynamism”. What this means is that oral literature has the propensity to adapt to changes and challenges that it encounters. Thus, children’s oral art forms do fit quite well into the realm of oral literature as they are also composed and performed for or by the children through the spoken word, even though they are in most cases viewed as child’s play. In this study thus, how Shona children’s oral art forms as components of oral literature respond to the ever -changing environment in which they are performed is of interest to the researcher. This is against the back-drop of researches that have been done that prove that these are an important component of the now considered important field of Indigenous Knowledge Systems that is “context localised knowledge which can be preserved, transferred or transmitted from one generation to another” (Madusise, 2010:4). Hence children’s oral art forms in Shona cannot be ignored, more so in such an ever-changing terrain where they have become fertile ground for research as part of indigenous knowledge systems viewed as useful in one way or another by researchers (Goduka, 2000; Kunnie, 2000; Madusise, 2010; Nyota and Mapara, 2008; Pikirayi, 2000).

Nandwa and Bukenya (1983) also add another dimension to oral literature when they include traditional methods of cooking, architecture, medicine, dressing, religion, art, instrumental music and dance as oral literature. This dimension that they bring in clearly shows that there are two aspects to a people's oral literature, that is what they say traditionally as in songs, narratives, proverbs, tales among others, and what they do traditionally as in weaving, pottery, dance and rituals to mention just a few. The question that arises then is that if these aspects are part of a people's culture and change with time, what then is happening to children's oral art forms in such an environment? Can this trend, if also present in children's oral art forms be ignored? If not, what can be done to capture this and see how it can be used in the various spheres of children's socio-economic, cultural, political and educational life? Considering that these are dynamic, what goes on in the area of children's oral art forms cannot be ignored since this is an important component that can contribute towards building a rich literary heritage of children's literature, an area which is meant to teach and delight while at the same time it is dynamic as it absorbs and assimilates what it encounters in the environment. It is this nature of children's literature that makes analysis of children's oral art forms in Shona interesting for purposes of capturing novel creations that are coming in, seeing how contemporary issues have coloured the traditional ones and linking these to education as a way of ensuring their visibility across the curriculum.

For purposes of this research, riddles, clapping rhyme games, call and response games, songs and folktales shall constitute Shona children's oral art forms that are focused on. Their forms are elaborated on in the chapter on extended literature review.

Many scholars have shown interest in oral literature and education in general and various children's oral art forms and education in particular. Among these scholars are international voices, scholars of African origin, among them Zimbabwean scholars as well. Asimeng-Boahen and Baffoe (2014) point out that of late culturally responsive pedagogy has become the focus of United States. discourses in public education and teacher preparation. Their main argument in summarising the focus of the various researches in this 2014 publication which they edited is that there is need for revision of existing pedagogic approaches and creation of a way of doing things that allows for the inclusion of thoughts, perspectives and practices of African traditional oral literature in the pedagogical tools of content area classrooms in North America. The editors point out that African Oral literature and its various tenets can be used as helpful teaching tools. Most of the researches in the above-mentioned publication explore how educators, curriculum planners and policy makers, among others, can utilise what they

call ‘the powerful yet untapped gem’ of African oral literature as pedagogical tools in content area classrooms to help expand educators’ repertoire of understanding beyond ‘conventional wisdom’ of their pedagogical creed. What is implied here is that there is need for education practitioners to think outside the box, move away from routine, reflect on and explore new possibilities provided by oral literature. While the focus here is to link oral literature in its totality to pedagogy in content areas, this research singles out children’s oral art forms in Shona, analyses them critically then situates them in pedagogy within the pre-and primary school context across the curriculum, not only for content areas. Also, interesting from the North American situation is that if such kinds of debates are taking centre stage elsewhere, this research can also create opportunities for such discourses in local current educational practices.

Closer to home, Banda and Morgan (2013) have done a research on ‘Folklore as an instrument of education among the Chewa people of Zambia’. They do not single out children’s oral art forms but argue that the whole genre of Chewa folklore is a valuable supplementary element in educating the young. Hence, they advocate for integration of folklore (informal learning) as practised by the community with the formal curriculum to enhance quality and maintain cultural identity. While their argument is quite plausible, it is the ‘how’ part that they do not delve into in detail. In this research then, the researcher answers that question with reference to the form and content of the analysed children’s oral art forms in Shona. In this research focus is also not on the broad field of Shona folklore as is the case with Banda and Morgan’s Chewa folklore, but only those that are considered children’s oral art forms.

In Zimbabwe, a number of scholars like Muwati, Tembo, and Mutasa, (2016); Muwati and Mutasa (2008); Nyota and Mapara (2008); Gwavaranda and Masaka (2008); Tatira (2014) among others have looked at children’s oral art forms from different angles. Muwati et al., (2016) looked at children’s songs and human factor development by juxtaposing Shona children’s songs and imported English rhymes. They concluded that as indigenous compositions, Shona rhymes serve the interests of the Shona child better since they are loaded with critical human factor values befitting the development of a total person while the foreign ones are devoid of such since they exude the ethos of a foreign culture. In the same vein, Muwati and Mutasa (2008) analyse selected Shona children’s songs in relation to philosophical perspectives on child development and establish that they express an important underlying philosophy of the Shona peoples’ life in that during performance, they reiterate

the need to make the child a subject rather than an object of life. They conclude that the child is an active participant as opposed to being a passive one, a creator rather than a consumer of what others have created.

Nyota and Mapara (2008) single out children's play songs and games to show how knowledge embedded in them is accessed as well as the contribution they make towards cognitive development and socialisation. They also argue that these songs and games provide a rich environment for sustaining children's curiosity and exploration as they play, learn virtues and values that become useful later in life. The two's analysis is based on a social-cultural context to show that these are ways of knowing. Nyota and Mapara (2008: 190) also observe that "...earlier works on Shona children's games and play songs focus on recording them or using them as primary school comprehension passages with very little analyses showing their cognitive roles". This research however, identifies in addition to songs and games, other children's oral art forms that these two do not look at, within educational settings then analyses and situates them in the area of pedagogy.

Gwavaranda and Masaka (2008) also single out riddles and analyse them from a philosophical view as important logical tools in the Shona system of traditional education. Their main focus is on the function of these in sharpening one's reasoning skill and quickness of wit. This study goes further after analysing them and the other forms and situates the findings directly into the formal education of pre-and primary scholars.

Tatira (2014) dismisses the idea of treating children's games in Shona just like any other pastime but argues that they are tools of cognition that help learners develop cognitive skills, skills of negotiation, evading potential enemies, problem solving, among other important day to day survival skills. His research however, seems to focus more on social and cognitive skills, it is inclined towards socialisation and is not in any way linked to formal education but the current study focuses on how such findings can be extended and situated into the formal education context. This is possible after a thorough analysis of the form and content of the targeted Shona children's oral art forms for their pedagogical value and identifying how this can be linked to classroom interactions.

Researches such as those cited above seem to have proven that there are other sources of and means of passing knowledge strongly grounded in a people's culture. It therefore follows that conditions of a people's existence and the real world they are living in cannot be ignored when it comes to the education of children (Akinyemi 2003). Akinyemi (2003) further points



out that, the belief that the school system is the sole custodian of the intellectual, physical, emotional, aesthetic, moral and spiritual development of children is only a myth that various researches in the area of indigenous knowledge systems such as oral art has broken by proving otherwise. What it simply means is that children cannot be fully educated outside their cultural environment. This study therefore focuses on oral art forms associated with children in Shona as a way of providing a sound cultural foundation for the theoretical knowledge that they learn in the formal education system without which their schooling will be divorced from their real-life experiences and it becomes not of much benefit more so in the era of globalisation.

## **1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Analysis of the recorded children's oral art forms is done from a sociolinguistic perspective through a thematic approach. Such questions as 'How do we view children's oral art forms in our indigenous languages as opposed to how others view them?', 'In terms of prestige what is the place and role of these children's oral art forms in classroom interactions vis a vis those from the erstwhile coloniser's language?', are addressed in order to see whether the lack of attention to them has been simply a way of cultural subjugation where the western ones are encouraged in our schools as a way of economic and cultural domination. A sociolinguistic analysis allows the researcher to explore various variables relating to Shona as a language and tease out the contribution these oral art forms have made/are making in the process of educating the young. The analysis also permits the researcher to assess the impact the ever-changing terrain has on their form and content. This is possible since sociolinguistics is basically the study of language and society, language in relation to social factors, language as it functions in society (Yule, 2010; Llamas, Mullany and Stockwell, 2007; Hudson 1996). Such an analysis takes into cognizance this interaction between linguistic and social variables. It also considers both the social and cultural contexts, especially how people with different social identities such as gender, age, race, class, use language and how this use changes in different situations, with some of the issues addressed being how features of dialects cluster together to form personal styles of speech, why people from different communities and cultures can misunderstand what is meant, said and done based on the different ways language is used (Malmkjaer, 2010; Crystal, 2008). Thus, through analysing children's oral art forms the researcher assesses whether even among children such issues arise. Further, the exploration also looks at issues of languages in contact, multilingualism, effects of diglossia among others and how they impact on these oral art forms since the world

has come to be considered as a global village then relate these to classroom pedagogy. In fact, a sociolinguistic exploration is appropriate in dealing with language-based research such as children's oral art forms which are meaningful social interactions as Punch (2005:177) succinctly states, "Language plays a central role in qualitative research since data is primarily in the form of words. Talk is the primary medium of social interaction, and language is the material from which social research is constructed".

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretical framework is also applied to the analysis of Shona children's oral art forms since it is a methodology for analysing texts in context be they oral or written (Sheyholislami, 2017; Wodak, 2013; Coupland, 1999). Shona children's oral art forms being spoken texts that are larger than a sentence, can be analysed from multiple angles that CDA allows. This is so since CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that allows for the interrogation of relationships between educational practices and social contexts (Bukhari and Xiaoyang, 2013).

The content analysis employed also takes into cognisance Afro-centric thought. According to Asante in Hudson-Weems (2007:29) this is "an intellectual perspective deriving its name from the centrality of African people and phenomena in interpretation of data. A quality of thought that is rooted in the cultural image and human interest of African people". This school of thought suits well the context of this study due to its recognition of a people's culture and foregrounding. It is its stance that no culture is superior to other cultures to the extent that it is used as the yardstick for developments in all spheres of life. One can infer that Afrocentricism is a framework on which Africans begin to re-examine and redefine their position by responding to the negative portrayal that the West has made of them for a long time. It is thus a response to the Eurocentric view that for long has posited that African societies did not have literature, systems of education and were not civilised before the encounter with Western 'light'. Since children's oral art forms are part of African indigenous knowledge systems, ideas from this school of thought cannot be ignored as an attempt to harness them to become part and parcel of modern pedagogy is made. The intention is really not to do away with Eurocentric approaches that are useful in children's learning process but as Shizha (2013:14) points out to ensure that "Pedagogy is approached from diverse perspectives that allow the pedagogical process to be culturally sensitive, accepting cultural variations that may exist within the classroom".

What comes out clearly from the above argument is that the learners' social and cultural experiences should constitute their classroom interactions. This is a call for culturally sensitive pedagogy, hence for pre-and primary school level there is no better way of achieving this other than through infusing pedagogy with children's oral art forms in Shona. By so doing the education process will instil in the learners the notion that they as Africans are centred, located, oriented and grounded (Mkabela, 2005), when they see the link between what they already know from their cultural backgrounds being meaningfully fused in their classroom interactions. By so doing, this creates room to exorcise African education systems of the colonial demon that continues to haunt them into believing Western approaches are better than indigenous ones when it comes to transmission of knowledge in the schools.

Mkabela (2005:179) also posits that any research dealing with aspects of indigenous knowledge system would benefit from taking cognisance of the Afrocentric thought since it "suggests cultural and social immersion as opposed to scientific distance as the best approach to understand African phenomena". She further points out that being familiar with the history, language, philosophy and myths of the people under study is an added advantage so that there is no misrepresentation of indigenous cultural practices which may give a wrong picture of the said indigenous cultural practices.

Indigenous knowledge as a perspective also informs this study since children's oral art forms are part of Shona indigenous knowledge systems. Thus, by drawing attention to the knowledge deeply embedded in children's oral art forms in Shona as a gate way to knowledge during the teaching- learning process, the pedagogical value of these is brought to the fore. This allows for the co-existence of modern and traditional methods in the transmission of knowledge so that we no longer have a situation where Western ways of knowledge transmission come strongly overpowering and dismissing indigenous ones (Barua 2010 cited in Shizha 2013). This is necessary because the research is carried out in a country with a colonial history where in all educational endeavours African indigenous knowledge has been openly marginalised if not totally trivialised. Generally Indigenous knowledge is viewed as knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society, local knowledge, folk knowledge, traditional knowledge or context localised knowledge that can be preserved and then transmitted from generation to generation (Sillitoe, 1998; Madusise, 2010; Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013). If it then is transmitted from generation to generation and every generation has to be educated through the formal system of education brought to Africa from the West, why not then critically analyse indigenous children's oral art forms and make them part of the

modern package of pedagogy for their benefit? This can only be possible if the extent of their value and role in current educational practices has been made conspicuous, thus this is at the centre of this analysis of children's oral art forms in Shona which is discussed with reference to the selected schools in this study.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.8.1 Research Design**

The research was conducted within the qualitative paradigm as a descriptive survey. The researcher was interested in studying children's oral art forms *in situ* as a non-participant observer. This has the advantage of allowing an insider perspective to the study as focus was on the subjective experiences of the children and teachers concerned taking into consideration the contexts in which they perform the oral art forms and the purposes thereof, what Corbin and Strauss (2008:12) call "the inner experience of participants". This approach also has various other advantages as it is "fluid, evolving and dynamic" (ibid: 13) as opposed to the more rigid and structured format of quantitative methods. The approach also gives the researcher an opportunity to work through problems *in situ* as a research instrument him/herself among other advantages (Magwa and Magwa, 2015; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Punch, 2005). The descriptive survey also has the advantage "of allowing the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way, it is flexible, allowing data to be gathered without being manipulated", among many other advantages (Chiromo, 2006:29). Hence data was gathered mostly through observation and interviews although questionnaires are used to tap for information to get a general picture on how teachers handle the co-existence of children's oral art forms and the literary forms in their pedagogy. Documents were analysed to validate some responses that teachers gave during interviews.

### **1.8.2 Population**

The population consisted of all pupils and teachers at the pre and primary schools in Masvingo District (147) from which the sample was purposively drawn.

### **1.8.3 Sample**

The sample consisted of ten percent (10%) of the 147 primary schools in Masvingo District. The Early Childhood Development Centres (pre-schools) at these primary schools

automatically fell into the sample due to the fact that they are part of the schools' structures. This level was chosen because it caters for children who are relevant in this study since it is children's oral art forms that are being studied. This group of learners was selected as they form the impressionable and vulnerable infrastructure on which any nation or people's cultural superstructure is founded. The schools were purposively sampled from four categories under which they fall: urban, peri-urban, rural and rural resettlement. This allowed the researcher to capture different trends since the environments are different. The practising teachers of different ages, genders, educational backgrounds and experience in urban, peri-urban, rural and resettlement schools selected became part of the population from which the sample for the study was chosen.

#### **1.8.4 Methods of Data Collection**

The methods discussed below were used for data gathering in order to allow for triangulation of data to ensure validity and reliability.

##### **1.8.4.1 The Questionnaire**

In this research, the questionnaire was used to complement the other modes of data gathering that were used, that is, the interview, observation and document analysis. Both closed and open-ended questions were used. The closed questions were to capture personal information on sex, qualification and experience and the teachers' perceptions on various aspects to do with Shona children's oral art forms, since this was administered to teachers only. The open-ended questions were meant to elicit data on children's oral art forms and classroom practices in relation to them. Its pros and cons are given in detail in the Chapter on methodology.

##### **1.8.4.2 Observation**

Data was gathered through observation as children went about their business of play or learning and teachers their business of teaching. The researcher simply wrote down her observations or audio recorded the recitals, rhymes, games and narratives without interfering with their activities. Some of these oral art forms were gathered in class or during break time and during teaching practice visits in both urban and rural environments. However, where the researcher felt that using a recorder would make the whole situation too formal especially with the pupils resulting in them being uncomfortable, note making was convenient and the notes were transcribed immediately after the encounter with the respondents while they were still fresh in the researcher's mind to minimize errors resulting

from faulty memory.

Bell (1999), Best and Kahn (1993) and Borg and Gall (1989) observe that while observation is not the easiest of data gathering tools, if done properly it can result in data being captured comprehensively in its natural environment especially where human interactions are involved, for example, classroom situations and play areas which were the center of observations in this study. This also requires a lot of planning; for useful data to be gathered. The observation has to be done in a planned and not a haphazard manner as Best and Kahn (1993: 223) point out “Observation as a resource technique must always be systematic, directed by a specific purpose, carefully focused and thoroughly recorded. It must be subject to usual checks for accuracy, validity and reliability’. This the researcher ensured by being on site at the most appropriate times, meticulously recording the data and transcribing it while still fresh on her mind.

In this study the researcher, being a non- participant observer, also had an observation guide that she followed. The validity and reliability of the observations was constantly checked by referring to what had been gathered through interviews with teachers and learners.

#### **1.8.4.3 The Standardized Open-Ended Interview**

The standardized open-ended interview was used to interview teachers in this study. It was chosen because of many advantages that it has over other types of interviews. Patton (2014) sums these up well when he points out that since the exact wording and sequencing of questions are determined in advance, all interviewees are asked the same basic questions. Even if new trends arise and are followed up on, at least all respondents answer the same basic questions. Magwa and Magwa (2015) also posit that the standardized open-ended interview increases comparability of responses since data are complete for each interviewee or group of interviewees, which facilitates the organization and analysis of data.

#### **1.8.4.4. Focus Group Interviews**

The focus group interviews were carried out with children. They were deemed appropriate for the many advantages that they have. Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2011) posit that as a data gathering tool, they encourage interaction between the group rather than simply a response to an adult’s question. In a group, the children get excited as they challenge each other and participate in a way that may not happen in a one -to-one or adult child interview that children may find intimidating. The language used is also toned down to the language that the

children themselves use and open-ended questions which are more appropriate are employed.

#### **1.8.4.5 Document Analysis**

Document analysis in qualitative research involves reviewing of documents to provide an interpretation in relation to a particular theme or topic (Magwa and Magwa, 2015; O’Leary, 2014). Documents analysed in this study include the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022, syllabuses, Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe, schemes of work and activity files (especially at preschool level) were analyzed as a base for further inquiry or for clarification of issues. This had the advantage that data was gathered in a non-interactive way which helped to eliminate bias from the respondents (Magwa and Magwa, 2015).

### **1.9 SCOPE OF STUDY**

The data for the research was gathered from sixteen primary schools in Masvingo District. Since each of the primary schools has an Early Childhood Development Centre (pre-school) data was also gathered from these. These represent slightly over ten percent (10%) of the population, so the sample is not considered comprehensive enough to be a true reflection of the situation concerning Shona children’s oral art forms in the whole of Zimbabwe (but for Masvingo District) although some of the insights might also apply to the rest of the country and have far-reaching implications for education. Secondly there are not many published reading materials on Shona children’s oral art forms per se, but insights are drawn from children’s oral art forms in general which are well documented in terms of history and the role they play in the development and socialisation of the young. Another area that is tapped into is the area of indigenous knowledge systems which of late has captured the attention of many researchers the world over and there are also several publications by Zimbabwean researchers in the area.

The research consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 puts the study into perspective by giving a background to the area under investigation. The objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations are spelt out. A brief overview of literature is also provided, and highlights of the theoretical framework are briefly discussed.

Chapter 2 gives an extended review of related literature. The review focuses on some researches done on children’s oral art forms. The funnel approach is employed for the review hence it starts by looking at researches by international scholars, followed by those by African scholars and finally those by Zimbabwean scholars. These scholars’ views on the role

of the children's oral art forms on the development and socialisation of the young and their contribution to education are reviewed in depth.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical frameworks upon which the analysis of the Shona children's oral art forms is based, that is, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Afrocentricity and Constructivism. CDA allows the researcher to interrogate the relationship between educational practices, that is, actual application of either ideas, beliefs or methods in social contexts. Afrocentric theory is deemed relevant for this analysis because of its thrust for centring indigenous ways of knowing within the African context, educational practices included. Constructivism is also deemed appropriate since it views learning as a collaborative and context bound activity. Hence it is prudent to link it with children's oral art forms since they provide learners with a context for such collaboration within a playful environment.

Chapter 4 focuses on the research methodology employed for the study. It gives a description of the qualitative paradigm in which the research was carried out, although part of the questionnaire is presented quantitatively and analysed qualitatively since the two paradigms are not wholly mutually exclusive. The advantages of using the descriptive survey as a research design is discussed. The data gathering methods employed for the research are also discussed; that is observation, interview, questionnaire and document analysis in an effort to show how trustworthiness can be ensured through triangulation of data gathered through these. The chapter also presents the sample, sampling procedures and issues of ethical considerations.

In Chapter 5 the data is presented and analysed. The various oral art forms gathered from the field are critically analysed taking into consideration the various sociolinguistic factors such as effects of language contact and change, multilingualism, as well as other social and linguistic variables on the form and content of these. Focus is on categories that emerge for example rhymes/game songs, folktales and riddles among others. Areas of relevance to pedagogy within the pre and primary school are looked for from the data in order to see if there is any conscious effort made to use these as pedagogical tools and to look at ways of situating these oral art forms in the context of education at pre and primary school levels.

In Chapter 6 the data presented and analysed in Chapter 5 is discussed. The focus is to situate the themes that emerge in the context of the major research questions and objectives outlined in Chapter 1.



Finally, in Chapter 7 a summary of the research findings and conclusions drawn from the study are given. Recommendations for either future practice or implementation and further research are also made.

### **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Magwa and Magwa (2015:126) posit that, ethical issues cut across the entire research process from planning, data collection, data analysis, report writing up to dissemination. Issues relating to consent, confidentiality and anonymity among others are of paramount importance. Since data gathering was done in school settings where pupils and teachers are involved, it was important to ensure that their interests and identities were protected. Where confidentiality was called for, this was guaranteed, for instance no names were required on questionnaires. Even during observation and for interviews information was recorded anonymously. Ethical clearance was also sought from the University of South Africa Ethics Committee and was granted. Thus, the researcher's visits to the sites were above board.

It is also very important to follow appropriate channels of authority when working with institutions. Thus, in this research permission was sought from the relevant ministry through the Provincial Education Directorate, Masvingo and heads of schools before the researcher could enter the sites. When leaving the sites as well, those involved were also made aware to maintain good relations.

### **1.11 CONCLUSION**

The chapter has given a background to the study for this research which presupposes that children's oral art forms in Shona tend to be side lined and are in fact largely ignored as important components of the pre-and primary scholar's educational pedagogical diet. They are not as conspicuous as the English ones especially rhymes, which begs one to wonder whether they do not have anything meaningful to contribute when it comes to the educational arena. The purpose of the study has been stated thus, to gather, analyse and situate children's oral art forms in pre-and primary school educational settings on a terrain that is ever changing, especially in the area of methodology. A brief literature over view has also been presented which shows that many researches have been done in children's oral art forms internationally, regionally and locally, however, most focused on the infusion of indigenous knowledge into the content taught but very little has been done to present these as pedagogical tools that can also be used as conveyors of knowledge at par with modern day

pedagogy and by no means inferior to the latter. The theoretical framework has also been briefly discussed within sociolinguistics since language is the basis of qualitative research. The relevance of CDA to the study has also been spelt out. Afrocentric thought also plays a pivotal role in the analysis of the children's oral art forms gathered, since it is an African way of viewing things that values indigenous knowledge and encourages analysing issues through African lenses. The research methodology has been indicated with the design falling in the qualitative paradigm since it is descriptive in nature. Data gathering tools that is questionnaires, observation, interviews and document analysis have also been highlighted. Attention to ethical considerations has been indicated and the scope of the study has been presented.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter gives an extended literature review relating to children's oral art forms. The review begins by highlighting studies by international scholars followed by those by African scholars before finally zeroing in on those done by Zimbabwean scholars as a way of situating the present study. The various studies reviewed looked at several components of what constitutes children's oral art forms among these game songs, rhymes, riddles and folktales in different contexts and for differing purposes.

#### **2.2 REVIEW OF RESEARCHES BY INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS ON CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS**

Researches on children's oral art forms have been done elsewhere in the world. Musick and Randolph (1950) studied children's rhymes from Missouri. The focus of this early work was simply to record them as they were recited by school children and simply highlighting their content with no analysis beyond that. They found out that children recited rhymes on what they disliked like school authorities and teachers, especially those who punished them severely. Some of the rhymes also denounced bad habits like stealing while others dealt with daily activities like planting crops. Implied here is the notion that children are not passive consumers of what goes around in their environment but are active creators and critics of the goings-on in the environment that they find themselves in. This is of interest to this researcher as one of the research objectives is to see how Shona children have responded to the ever-changing terrain when it comes to the oral art forms they perform.

Musick and Randolph (1950) also gathered children's oral art performances in the form of riddles, through which the children challenged each other through analogies. They also found out that some of the riddles dealt with the child's surrounding as in identifying fruits and animals as well as names of people, among other things. Their approach was simply to highlight the content of the children's oral art forms with no link to classroom interactions since these were viewed as just kids' play and had to be treated as such. No recommendations were made except their pointing out that theirs was to gather the rhymes and they would leave further comparisons on their work to those interested. In this research, though, the

intention is not to simply gather children's rhymes and end at highlighting the content embedded therein. After analysis, efforts are made to link these with formal education at pre-and primary levels.

Porter (1965) also looked at racism in children's rhymes showing that they are a serious literary genre. The rhymes he analyses looked at how some racist terms permeated school boy vocabulary during that era. This had a great impact on children's rhymes as it captured the racial relations of the day. If this was the case with children's rhymes then, the implication is that children's oral art forms do respond somehow to what goes on in the environment in which they are performed. Hence, the findings from this study are also of interest to this researcher as one of the objectives is to see how children's oral art forms in Shona respond to the changing terrain politically, economically and socio-culturally, thereafter, see how this can be capitalised on as tools for knowledge transmission within the formal education system at pre-and primary school levels.

Riddles as an oral art form have been relegated to the periphery as compared to other genres of oral art as they have been labelled childish in nature (Dundes, 1964). However, scholars like Green and Pepicello (1965)'s analysis of sight and spelling riddles shows a move towards a more serious approach to this children's oral art as they linked their study to orthography and literacy. Pepicello and Green (1978) also looked at 'Wit in Riddling' which shows the wisdom embedded in this children's oral art form which is usually viewed as kids' play in most communities. They noted that riddles exploit various linguistically relevant levels of language such as phonology, morphology or even syntax. In another study Pepicello (1980) focused on 'linguistic strategies in riddling'. This was meant to show that riddles are not merely child's play but are useful tools and ways of knowing. With such importance attached to this children's oral art form, these research findings are quite relevant to this study as they inform the analysis in the context of Shona ones in formal education.

The above scholars focused on western children's oral art forms but Ruth Finnegan, though being of foreign origin, did extensive research on oral literature in Africa in the 1970s. This was during a time when most western scholars had blindly labelled Africa a continent without literature as expressed by Burton (1865) cited in Finnegan 2012:29 thus:

The savage custom of going naked', we are told, 'has denuded the mind, and all decorum in language. Poetry there is none.... There is no metre, no rhyme, nothing that interests or soothes the feelings, or arrests the passions...

Finnegan gave this as evidence of the perception that European scholars had of Africa as a continent regarding its literature and culture. The likes of Burton above, totally denigrated Africa and its cultures by measuring it against Western standards.

However, Finnegan went on to prove that Africa indeed is a continent rich in literature. The only point of departure being that it was oral. She acknowledges in her classical publication, *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970), that there is a category of oral art for children. She clearly points out that the delimitation of what to call children's oral art forms is a contentious arena, just as what to call children's literature in written literature circles is. This arises from the fact that there are children's oral art forms that are performed by adults for children especially those still in the cradle. Even though performed by adults, the audience makes it mandatory that they be classified under children's oral art forms because the children are the consumers. However, there is also a view that, for them to be classified under children's oral art forms they should be performed by children themselves. Finnegan (2012:291) thus, puts these in two categories, that is firstly lullabies (and other songs designed for children but primarily transmitted by adults) and secondly the rhymes and songs that tend to be for a slightly older age-group and are regarded as belonging to the children themselves in their own play. Even though Finnegan looks at riddles and folktales in separate chapters from children's rhymes, she notes that riddles too are part and parcel of children's oral art forms. While from the way she defines children's oral art forms, that at times they are performed for children by adults, folktales also neatly fit into this category. In the context of this study then, children's oral art forms will include both categories since during play children themselves sometimes perform the oral art forms, while at times they are performed for them by adults. Finnegan's findings are critical for this study because she was among, if not the first to acknowledge that African children's oral art forms are not merely kids' play but are critical for the socialisation of the young. She also helped make Africans themselves realise that traditional African children's games and those performed by other children the world over have a lot of similarities hence there is no reason to despise or marginalise them. There is no reason at all to continue treating them as inferior to those of Western origin. Hence, many African scholars have taken to researching on these as a way of making them visible as an important component of indigenous knowledge systems within their communities.

A more recent study on children's indigenous games is one carried out in Queensland, Australia by Thompson, Meldrum and Sellwood (2014). They carried the study in a multicultural school set up and concluded that the games children engage in, (just like Shona

children's oral art forms in this study), are not just games but are of cultural significance. They concluded that the games help the children learn more about and connect with their culture. Although they used the games in the teaching of Physical Education, their findings are of interest to this researcher in that they dealt with children in a multicultural set up which is the case in Zimbabwean schools. They also concluded that the nature of participation in the games created opportunities for all group members to participate in a non-discriminatory and non-competitive atmosphere even though the learners were from different cultures. There seems to be some similarity with performances of Shona children's oral art forms in that cooperation and group participation is required. This study however stretches further and looks at the use of these across the curriculum instead of focusing on one subject, to see whether the findings are in sync with these researchers' findings even though the environments differ.

### **2.3 A REVIEW OF RESEARCHES BY AFRICAN SCHOLARS ON CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS**

Ntuli (2013) looks at children's oral poetry in Zulu which is a component of children's oral art forms also found in Shona. She reflects on the role of lullabies as art performance in Zulu. She classifies oral poetry into two categories, namely, lullabies (*imilozelo*) and game songs (p.14). She argues that these were not composed only to entertain and while away time but also to teach and bring people together. As an oral art form, she further points out that lulling children to sleep was not its only role but that it had other roles to play in the upbringing, socialisation and development of children. It is these other roles that Ntuli alludes to, that is also of interest to this researcher. Like Ntuli notes, if *imilozelo* as an oral art form for children is that useful in the upbringing, socialisation and development of a child, would this role not be extended to the teaching and learning of these very same children? This can only be possible by situating these in the contemporary formal education set up at pre-and primary school levels, since lullabies are also part of Shona children's games and songs (Nyota and Mapara, 2008; Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013). They are a form of poetry, which among the Shona plays an important role from the cradle to the grave, hence, Chiwome (1992: 3) describes the Shona community as "a poetic community whose poetry nurtures its members". This goes to show the importance attached to poetry, even if it is children's oral poetry. By implication then, ignoring such children's oral art forms as these and relegating them to the periphery when it comes to classroom interactions begs one to ask many questions. Therefore, there is need for a close analysis of these to infuse them into the formal education system as ways and

tools of transmitting knowledge in various curriculum areas particularly in a globalised environment that threatens the very structures of the traditional system that props it.

Nigerian scholars, Salami and Oyaremi's (2012) study looked at teachers' knowledge, use and perception of Yoruba children's oral art forms at pre- and primary school levels. They analysed songs and rhymes, riddles, tongue twisters, folktales, incantations and physical games in their quest to measure the extent to which pre- and primary school teachers find these useful and relevant to teaching and learning. They also aimed to see the extent to which these could be used to impact the social, intellectual, emotional and physical development of children in formal education set ups. Their research is of interest because it focuses on children's oral art forms in an indigenous language and their relevance to education at pre- and primary school levels just like the current research. Their aim of meaningfully infusing these within teachers' classroom repertoire also has a bearing on the present research.

Having analysed the various children's oral art forms Salami and Oyaremi (2012) concluded that they are useful to learners in various spheres. They posit that they aid development of gross and fine motor skills since they involve "energy-sapping" activities which enhance physical development (p.148). Apart from aiding physical development, they also help in socio-emotional development since in most cases a partner or group is required for the success of the performance of the oral art or game. In some, one team wins, and another loses, while in yet others one leads and others follow and so on. Thus, the children's play becomes a rich source of experiences that are critical for later life. This Salami and Oyaremi (2012:148) sum up well when they point out that such play:

...provides the rich experience children need in learning social skills; become sensitive to others' needs and values; handle exclusion and dominance; manage their emotions; learn self-control; enrich their intellect and share power, space and ideas with others.

Salami and Oyaremi further point out that children get more than socialisation into societal norms and values from the play. Other benefits include enhancement of "self" through development of attributes such as "self- expression, self -confidence, self-esteem, turn-taking, conflict resolution, leadership and followership, skills acquisition and development as well as anxiety reduction" (p.148). Finally, they conclude that the various children's oral art forms help in laying a foundation for the development of scientific and reflective thinking, character moulding and development of good morals and sound attitude. In addition to that, they argue that, they also give the learners an opportunity to develop manipulative skills that

will enable them to function effectively in the society, within the limits of each's ability. If these children's oral art forms are as important as these researchers observe, then this study becomes relevant as it seeks to analyse and situate Shona children's oral art forms within formal education. It is a way of contributing knowledge towards the relevance of children's oral art forms to modern day pedagogy as part of indigenous knowledge systems.

Another children's oral art form that has received a lot of attention from some African scholars is the riddle. Muigai wa Gachanja and Kebaya (2013) did a study on the pedagogical aspects of Abagusii riddles. While acknowledging that riddles play various functions in society in the cultural, social and historical spheres like other scholars have also acknowledged (Miruka, 1994; Gwavaranda and Masaka, 2008; Akinyemi, 2003; Nyota and Mapara, 2008; Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013) among others, their point of departure from the rest is that they focused on their pedagogical aspects. This is also of interest to this researcher since riddles are also one of the Shona children's oral art forms that is critically analysed in this study to situate them in pedagogy. Riddles as an oral art form have for long been relegated to the periphery and labelled childish in nature (Dundes 1964, Finnegan 2012). This is because their performance is meant to elicit amusement from both the participants and audience. These researchers also found this to be true among the Abagusii community who consider riddles to be light-hearted entertainment for children whom they consider the primary recipients of these as part of the games they play.

Despite the above perception of riddles, Muigai wa Gachanja and Kebaya (2013: 293) observed that riddles embody educational values and conclude that:

Riddles should be embraced as an important teaching and instructional method, since, participating in riddling is not a futile exercise but an educative one based on the pedagogical empowerment in riddles *themselves* (emphasis writer's) and the riddling process.

This argument is in line with the main thrust of the present research, which explores the pedagogical value of such children's oral art forms, to situate them in classroom interactions for the benefit of learners who are key players in these performances.

Mweli (2018:106) looked at use of indigenous stories and games as approaches to teaching within the classroom set up arguing that "since the stories and games use language, they are a gateway to understanding of whatever is taught, aid critical thinking, physical development and command of language". Mweli's (2018) focus, that of bringing these children's oral art



forms into the classroom set up is in sync with the focus of this study. This study explores ways of infusing these into classroom interactions, since many scholars argue that indigenous knowledge, especially in the form of children's games, is vital in the education of indigenous children if that education is to be fruitful to them (Mweli, 2018; Thompson et al., 2014).

## **2.4 A REVIEW OF RESEARCHES BY ZIMBABWEAN SCHOLARS**

Among the Shona like most African communities, various oral art forms provided the platform for interaction, which in turn allowed for the emergence and development of their sense of being. The popular saying by the Kenyan theologian, Mbiti (1969:109), "I am because we are and, since we are, therefore I am", sums this well. A close look at Mbiti's assertion shows that in African societies, whatever happens to the individual has a ripple effect on the whole group and vice versa. The Shona even have proverbs like '*Rume rimwe harikombi churu*' (One man cannot encircle an anthill) to clearly show that no man is an island. *Rume* is a noun of class 5 denoting hugeness but the proverb here underscores the notion that no matter how huge one is, the task remains insurmountable if one attempts to carry it out individually. One needs the support of others to accomplish the task. Fafunwa's (1982) views cited in Matsika (2012: 128), in the context of what African traditional education strives to achieve attest to this too:

...to make the individual pass from his or her status of an absolute individual to that of an integrated member of society, to make the individual lose the illusion of happiness in a state of isolation so that one may accede to true happiness by being open to others not for personal benefit but to create with everybody a new reality transcending that individual. ... will make the individual an integral part of the community distinct, but not separate from others

Thus, in traditional Shona society, children's oral art forms provided such a platform for children (Gelfand, 1979). They played a critical role not only in the socialisation of children but also provided them with the opportunity to learn and explore their environment (Nyota and Mapara, 2008). The oral art forms were also meant to sharpen the children's intellect through development of critical thinking skills (Mawere, 2012). Some games like *zvira* (riddles) required children to be fast thinkers to be able to come up with correct responses to the analogies to situations portrayed in the challenges. Others like naming game songs such as *Dudu muduri* (crush it in the mortar) also required the children to be fast thinkers to keep the pace and flow of the game by providing the name of the required object. They provided a sense of rhythm too and shaped articulation skills in children. The rhythm that accompanies

the recitation is also amusing for the children.

This shows that the oral art forms though performed playfully, have a positive impact on the children's cognitive development something that psychologists have acknowledged as Berger (2000:279) clearly points out:

If a child's learning is not aroused by his or her parents, it may be aroused- and powerfully- when the child begins to compare his or her skills with those of other children of the same age.

Some of these children's oral art forms were used to pass important information within the community. An example is the rhyme '*Mangwana dzinani?*' (Who herds them tomorrow?) (Nyoni and Nyoni 2013). This was some cattle herding duty roaster announcement rhyme that instilled into the children values of duty consciousness, responsibility and co-operation which are all part of the spirit of *ubuntu* (humanness), a core value among the Shona people (Mavhunga ,2008; Nziramasanga,1999).

Another example of children's oral art forms among the Shona, that has received a lot of attention from Zimbabwean scholars is the folktale. These were told for various reasons. Hodza (1987) points out that apart from just amusing and helping pass time pleasantly children learnt language and new words they would hear for the first time being used in the story. They would commit these to memory to repeat them when necessary. This was a good memory training exercise. This was also a good way of inculcating creativity in pupils as they would in turn experiment with their originality using the new words in new settings and different contexts. Children also gained insights into the nature of life and society through them, thus they functioned as depositories of socio-cultural knowledge. By so doing, they provided completeness of real-life experiences in various spheres of life as Muponde (1999:33) posits:

They allow children to experience vicariously the lives of other small creatures identifying with their plight and fortunes, rejoicing with them in their triumph, mourning with them in their grief, living the experience of joy and terror, power and powerlessness in the jungle alive with the lion and elephant... they provide completeness of real-life experiences in various spheres of life.

Hodza (1987) presents the following reasons for telling folktales in the Shona cultural context, among them the need to amuse and pass time pleasantly. Children also learnt language and new words they would hear for the first time in the course of the story telling

session. Another reason was memory training since children learnt to commit these to memory to repeat them as storytellers themselves during other sessions. Folktales were also used to inculcate creativity in children as they could retell the folktale in a new setting, using their own language and new words, thus allowing them in turn to experiment with their own originality. Children also gained insights into the nature of life and society through them, thus they functioned as depositories of socio-cultural knowledge, knowledge which comes in handy in real life situations.

Through the various children's oral art forms, communities ensured the continued existence of their customs, traditions and culture (Masuku and Ndawi, 2001). However, as Nakashima, Prott and Bridgewater (2000) cited in Mutema (2013) point out, the advent of formal education tends to have disrupted this as indigenous knowledge is lost as people embrace western knowledge systems as the only way of knowing. This perspective according to Shizha (2013), was brought about by the colonisers and it was disruptive of all the African indigenous cultural contexts in which Africans were educated. This he points out clearly thus, "With the advent of colonisation, traditional institutions of knowledge started disappearing due to cultural repression, misrepresentations, misinterpretations and devaluation." (p.1). Hence, his argument that there is need for reclamation of everything indigenous, that had been placed at the periphery by the colonisers, to integrate it with the formal education system. Mavhunga (2008) also makes this same call when he argues that there is need, to 'Africanize' the curriculum to liberate it from colonial bondage as well. Children's oral art forms, some of them cited above, were not spared during the onslaught against indigenous knowledge systems. Foreign ones replaced them as indoctrination took its toll through the colonial formal education system of the West. Hence of late, many Zimbabwean scholars have researched on various children's oral art forms as a way of bringing them to the centre of Shona people's way of life. These studies are reviewed in the ensuing section.

Mawere (2012) did a research on Shona children's games in South-Eastern Zimbabwe. His main argument being that African children's games are at the risk of disappearing under globalisation. Hence, there is the need for them to be revived and appreciated. His study, he points out, is a result of an observation that, earlier works on children's oral art forms have been mainly recorded as comprehension passages in Shona text books. Examples include Ngwaru's *Gore reChipiri*, Matindike's *Nhaka Youpenyu* and Hodza's *Ugo hwaMadzinza aVaShona*. Just capturing the games with no in-depth analysis of the various roles of the games to the African child's development shows the lack of seriousness that they are treated

with. Mawere argues that there is a need to have a detailed analysis of these children's oral art forms to understand their role in cognitive, moral and social development of the African child. This is necessary because studies by psychologists like Piaget, Vygotsky and others focused on children's games and play from a western not African perspective. Thus, in the preface to his book Mawere (2012: xiv) succinctly sums up his objectives for the study:

- (i) to make a humble attempt to restore, reconstruct, and carry into the future this treasury (traditional children's games and play) of the past;
- (ii) to justify the necessity of rethinking and restoring some indigenous knowledge system genres for both present and future generations;
- (iii) to assert that African traditional games are, after all, not inferior to western games but equal in value and purpose.

It is this clarion call that Mawere (2012) makes, not only to Zimbabweans whose children's games were under his study, but all Africans and the world beyond to be involved in the revival of the previously relegated and marginalised African creativity for present and future generations that makes this research a worthwhile endeavour. This researcher views her study as a way of responding to such calls being made. By trying to find ways of linking children's oral art forms to classroom interactions at pre- and primary school level, the aim is to bring previously marginalised indigenous ways of knowing to the centre of the Shona child's daily classroom diet. It is a way of centring African ways of knowing, removing them from the periphery where they have been for long placed since colonial times and ensuring that they do not become extinct in the face of raging globalisation. It is also an effort at negating what Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) calls the lack of congruency that existed between colonial education and African reality; that resulted in the creation of people abstracted from their reality, through undermining of their integrity and culture. It is the link with methodology sought in this study that makes it different from Mawere's.

Mawere describes the games, draws and emphasises their educational values to the Shona child and the society at large, an analysis that is quite relevant to the current study, but he does not explore how these children's games can be used as pedagogical tools within contemporary educational set ups. He also looks at a myriad of games among them activities like *kuteya mbeva* (trapping mice), physical games like *tsimba* (wrestling), *horikoty* (club throwing) *nhanzva* or *mutserendende* (rock sliding), *ngunzi/ mombe-mombe* (bull fighting), action games like *nhodo* (jacks) *tsoro* (draughts) that help increase creativity, accuracy and

development of motor skills to mention just a few. This researcher focuses only on those that are performed as oral compositions like game songs, rhymes, folktales and riddles although some might be accompanied by action or activity at times.

Nyota and Mapara (2008) single out songs from Shona traditional children's games and play and posit that they are an indigenous way of knowing. They argue that these are heavily laden with knowledge and further explore how it can be accessed. While they acknowledge that songs as a children's oral art form, can be useful items as methods and tools of teaching and learning, they however, do not explore how these can be used as pedagogical tools regarding subjects that constitute the pre -and primary school curriculum. They clearly spell out that their major focus in that research was to show through their analysis the contribution of these games and play songs towards the cognitive development and socialisation of the young. This they argue is possible as the virtues embedded therein are later carried into adult life by the children. These virtues include commitment, unity of purpose, healthy competition, leadership among others (Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013; Mavhunga, 2008; Nziramasanga, 1999). The present study though cognisant of Nyota and Mapara's view on the development and socialisation of children, focuses mainly on how these can contribute towards ways of disseminating knowledge in different subjects within the formal school set up. This study is also not limited to songs and games as a component of children's oral art forms but also other children's oral art forms such as folktales and riddles. The intention is to analyse them and situate them within the pre- and primary school set up, conspicuously indicating areas and aspects for which they can be used for knowledge transmission. The purpose is to shun the idea of them being viewed as informal ways of socialising the young but to validate that they are indeed effective tools for transmission of knowledge. Nyota and Mapara's analysis is hinged on insights from developmental psychology and indigenous knowledge systems which this research also deems important, but in this study, the analysis is more from a sociolinguistic and Afro -centric perspective where centring these as tools for information dissemination is of paramount importance. Another point of departure with these researchers is that for purposes of this study, the children's oral art forms are gathered within the pre- and primary school set up covering urban, peri urban, rural and rural resettlement. This is meant to provide different contemporary settings as opposed to picking them from the researcher's own background which is the case with the former. Nyota and Mapara (2008:190), point out that their data for analysis included games that they, as young people were involved in:

As scholars who were socialised in a cultural environment where these games

and play songs contributed immensely to the socialisation of the young, the present authors have the urge to share their experiences and contribute to knowledge in this area.

Their approach is thus, more historical or diachronic than contemporary or synchronic, whereas, for this study, gathering these within the school set up allows this researcher to capture novel and temporal creations and new trends within children's oral art forms in Shona since they are being done within an ever-changing environment. While the former researchers' main aim is to contribute knowledge to indigenous knowledge systems, the present research goes further to link this indigenous knowledge to methodology.

Muwati, Tembo and Mutasa (2016) look at Shona children's songs and human factor development. This they do through juxtaposing these songs with English nursery rhymes to "unravel the contesting human factor values and epistemological codes and modes of socialisation" (p.55). They posit that the songs are cultural texts that express the ethos and culture of a people. This view is also raised by Nyoni and Nyoni (2013) who point out that children's oral art forms are not neutral and should not be treated lightly as they are heavily loaded in terms of content, which may inculcate values, knowledge and skills, whether positive or negative that have a great impact on the children's future as citizens. If this is the case then, there is need to situate Shona children's oral art forms conspicuously in this highly contested territory, the formal education set up to ensure impartation of the norms, values and mores of Shona culture. Such an approach to knowledge dissemination would help make Shona indigenous systems relevant to Shona children's education.

Muwati et al. (2016) further argue that continued recital of foreign nursery rhymes such as English ones is a way of solidifying European dominance. This view the present researcher agrees with, as such behaviour may continue to alienate children from their own cultural values as they continue to sink deeper and deeper into the quagmire of foreign ones. This divorces them from that which makes them 'a unique people' which in the end "confuses rather than groom culture conscious citizens who express confidence in their heritage," (Muwati et al. p.55). Having confidence in one's identity is quite central in Afrocentric thought, a school of thought within which they anchor their discussion just as analysis of children's oral art forms in this study is also done. Afrocentric thought emphasises the need for African centeredness in all spheres of the African people's life, education included. It challenges western hegemony in various spheres of the African people's life including children's socialisation. Nowadays most of this socialisation takes place within the formal

school set up. This is due to the changing terrain that has disrupted the extended family set up within which it used to take place. Hence, this research intends to find ways of countering this hegemony through an in-depth analysis of Shona children's oral art forms, then situate them conspicuously in pedagogy for the benefit of the learners. Thus, instead of solidifying foreign or alien human factor values, those values that we as Zimbabweans hold dear will constantly be reinforced into the learners. Knowledge will not only be disseminated along foreign lines, but also through indigenous tools that learners can identify with and see to be of benefit to them as citizens and their communities. This helps negate an earlier situation that Adjibolosoo (1993) cited in Chivaura and Mararike (1998:11) points out:

From the colonial era to today, Africans have tried many plans, policies, programmes and projects aimed at economic growth and development. Educational policies and programmes have, therefore, focused on acquisition of knowledge and skills, to the neglect of critical human qualities. African countries have produced intellectual elites who possess knowledge and skills which they are unable to use to deal with Africa's social, economic, political and cultural problems.

Adjibolosoo (1993) argues that all these problems arise from failure by those who promulgate these policies to take into consideration the importance of the human factor. Adjibolosoo (1993) cited in Chivaura and Mararike (1998:11) defines human factor as "the spectrum of personality characteristics and other dimensions of human factor performance that enable social, economic and political institutions to function and remain functional over time." He strongly argues that if African countries continue to train and educate their citizens without helping them acquire these necessary human qualities or characteristics, it will be difficult for them to succeed in any form of development; since for any development to succeed it should be human centred. This argument is quite relevant for this study. Analysing the various Shona children's oral art forms helps the researcher tease out these qualities or characteristics embedded therein. When these are then linked to formal education, they will constitute for the learners what Meckien (2013), in his article 'Cultural Memory: the link between the past, present and future', calls 'cultural memory' defined thus "objectified and institutionalised memories that can be stored, transferred and re-incorporated throughout generations." This cultural memory plays an important role in the formation of either individual or collective identity. It helps keep the learners grounded no matter what changes they encounter in an ever-changing environment. This, from the Afrocentric perspective is critical to one being centred in one's identity, in this case one's African-ness. The current study thus, is in line with this need to centre African ways of knowing within the formal primary education set up to 'catch them young', in the end helping produce a total person.

Mutema (2013) looked at Shona traditional children's games and concluded that these children's oral art forms may be facing possible extinction as they are threatened by several factors among them the formal education system and the advent of technology. This is so, even though, research has shown that they are important tools for development of children's memory, promotion of language and skills development among various other important roles (Matsika, 2012; Mawere, 2012; Sifuna, 2008). If there is evidence then, that even the formal education system has become a possible threat to these Shona children's oral art forms, this research is quite relevant so as not to let this continue unchecked. It intends to establish how Shona children's oral art forms can be used as pedagogical tools within the formal education set up across the curriculum since children nowadays spend most of their time at school. Even though, Mutema posits that technological advancement has adversely affected these children's oral art forms, this research sought to find out how these children's oral art forms have encompassed this technological advancement and how this can be capitalised on within pedagogical circles at pre-and primary school level. This is so because change is inevitable, especially considering that most indigenous knowledge systems are orally transmitted hence they are susceptible to change (Mostert and Kaschula, 2010; Kaschula, 2001; Soni, 2007). What remains then is to embrace and take advantage of that change where possible.

Makaudze (2013), also points out this threat to children's oral art forms with regards to '*ngano*' (folktales). He points out that *ngano* has been condemned to an art of the past with no relevance to today's experiences by being regarded as "a less serious form of literature which does not warrant serious consideration," (p.52). This is so, although he concluded in his findings that *ngano* remains a valuable way of exposing and interpreting reality against challenges posed by modernity within the global village. Makaudze's view that *ngano* as an oral art form for children is still relevant today and should not be relegated to a bygone era is an important stance in this study. By implication it indicates that these oral art forms can also encompass changes brought about by modernity in the era of globalisation. They can still be very influential in other areas when it comes to pedagogy (Nyaungwa, 2008). Thus, this research also focuses on establishing if teachers are aware of this strong underlying nature of folktales and other children's oral art forms in Shona, then see whether they capitalise on it during the teaching and learning process at pre-and primary school level.

In another research done in pre-and primary schools just like the current research, Mapara (2014), found out that the telling of folktales by both teachers and students remains a major part of the curriculum, but he does not explore their pedagogical role. In this research, then,



the researcher looks at whether the schools are just a platform for the recitation of these for entertainment. The study also focuses on establishing whether any pedagogical activities follow such sessions. The exploration also assesses whether folktales and other children's oral art forms are used to develop any skills or enhance understanding of concepts across the curriculum at pre- and primary school level. If so, the intention is to establish in which areas this is done. If not, then map the way forward to ensure Shona children's oral art forms become an important pedagogical tool in the classroom set up at pre-and primary school levels.

Makina's (2009) study is more in line with the purpose of this study, as she links children's oral art forms to classroom interactions. She specifically looks at children's game songs as a teaching tool in the language classroom. It is her contention that, in a learning teaching situation, game songs are "an important resource and a vital didactic tool" (p.49). This is also of interest to the present researcher, although, this study is concerned with, not just game songs within the teaching learning context but also that of other children's oral art forms such as riddles and folktales.

Makina further argues that there are several didactic aspects that one can extract from game songs as an oral art for children, depending on what the teacher's objectives for the lesson are. She puts the aspects into three categories namely "knowledge, skills and values" (p.53). She explains that knowledge refers to the actual content related to a learning area be it language structures, mathematical or scientific concepts among others. Makina by implication is pointing to the fact that game songs can be relevant to teaching and learning not only for languages but other areas even though she does not explore these in her study. Her main area of concern is the language classroom. However, this study goes beyond the language classroom and explores their pedagogical value across the curriculum at pre-and primary school levels.

Another didactic aspect that Makina explores is skills. These relate to what the learners acquire because of participating in the group activity. Examples include cooperation, collaboration, and leadership, among others. The third didactic aspect embedded in game songs as an oral art for children is the transmission of various cultural values. The young learn to appreciate their culture as they engage in the oral art forms. These skills and values fit well into the spectrum that Muwati et al. (2016) call human factor values as they embody the African concept of Ubuntu, a key tenet of Afrocentric thought which encourages

cooperation and discourages individualism. This is in line with Ocitti's (1973) philosophical foundations of African indigenous education namely preparationism which has to do with enabling children to fulfil socially defined responsibilities, secondly, functionalism, which is preparation of young to be productive in their communities, thirdly, communalism, which encourages them to be aware of belonging to the community and finally, perennialism and holisticism, where they are guided to know that learning does not end. That it is a lifelong process where they continue to learn within the community that is full of practical lessons. Great reservoirs of knowledge exist in the form of adults and elders endowed with wisdom and different skills within the community being the teachers. Sources being various indigenous knowledge systems among them children's oral art forms. The didactic aspects that Makina discusses and the foundations of indigenous African education are critical in the analysis of the various Shona children's oral art forms for this study since they constitute critical learner exit packages that learners are expected to acquire through their education in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022.

## **2.5. CONCLUSION**

The reviewed researches have shown that merging Shona children's oral art forms with the formal education system has become a necessity not a luxury. This is for purposes of grounding the young learners within their culture, while they remain able to navigate the ever-changing global world. For by continuing to marginalise these oral art forms for children, we are by extension undermining the Shona traditional culture. If this continues unchecked, it may have far reaching effects for indigenous knowledge systems since it may result in the extinction of children's traditional games as has already happened with many other African indigenous knowledge systems. Such a situation, literature reviewed shows results in total obliteration of indigenous cultures. It is the education sector's burden then, to prevent such a calamity by embracing indigenous knowledge systems such as children's oral art forms. This ensures that these youngsters do not become victims of globalisation which tends to empower Western cultures at the expense of African cultures in the name of developing the countries. Thus, it becomes necessary for teachers to make children's oral art forms part of their classroom repertoire as one way of squaring up to such challenges. It is the how part that makes this research quite relevant as it explores through the analysis of the Shona children's oral art forms, the possibility of linking children's oral art forms in Shona to classroom practice across the curriculum at pre- and primary levels.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the theoretical frameworks upon which the analysis of the identified children's oral art forms in Shona is based is presented. These are Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Afrocentric thought and Constructivism. Since the study is from a sociolinguistic perspective, several variables relating to the relationship between language and society are discussed. Some of these variables are clearly enunciated in Crystal's (2008: 440) definition of sociolinguistics as a study concerned with the interrelationships between language and society thus:

A branch of linguistics which studies all aspects of the relationship between language and society including matters such as the linguistic identity of social groups, social attitudes to language, the patterns and needs of national language use, social varieties and the social basis of multilingualism among others.

An exploration of children's oral art forms on a changing terrain situates them in sociolinguistics since these oral art forms are performed within society and through language, in this case Shona. Thus, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretical frame work becomes relevant for such an analysis since it is a methodology for analysing texts in context, be they oral or written. According to Jaworski and Coupland (1999: 1-3), simply put CDA is concerned with analysis of "anything beyond the sentence, language in use and a broader range of social practices that include non-linguistic and non-specific instances of language." Thus, children's oral art forms being texts larger than a sentence can be analysed from a critical discourse analysis perspective. This does not only allow for insights into the structure of language but of the society in which the children use the language as they perform the oral art forms. Since language issues also have to do with ideologies and attitudes, ideas from the Afrocentric school of thought are highlighted. These are relevant since the children's oral art forms were gathered in an African setting, Zimbabwe, and these can best be understood through an Afrocentric lense. Afrocentric principles help contextualise the need for going back to the centre through use of culturally sensitive pedagogy at pre- and primary school level. This is then linked to the constructivist school of thought, as propounded by Vygotsky (1978), since it also encourages understanding of learners' previous knowledge and relating it to their learning activities. It emphasises the need to use learners' experiences to guide their

learning activities; not only in terms of content but also how the content is learnt. Social constructivism also emphasises that learning is intertwined with the context in which it takes place (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Jonassen, 1994; Jonassen, 1991). Hence this theory is relevant for this study as a link for the analysed children's oral art forms to classroom practices across the curriculum. These frameworks are discussed in detail below.

### **3.2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)**

CDA is said to have stemmed from Critical Linguistics (CL) in the 1970s as a joint effort by a group of linguists and literary theorists from the University of Anglia basing their approach on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (Kress and Hodge, 1993). Halliday (1985) posits that language performs three functions namely; ideational, interpersonal and textual. Fowler (1991) and Fairclough (1995b) explain the three functions quite clearly. They posit that the ideational function has to do with how the speakers use language to make representations of their experiences of the world and its phenomena while the interpersonal function relates to the notion that speakers do not only talk about things but always talk to and with others. As they talk, they also insert their own attitudes and judgements about the subject under conversation. This helps in creating a relationship between the interlocutors. The textual function, they argue, enables the composition of texts that are understood by listeners and allows for the connection of discourse to the co-text and context. Co-text has to do with texts used together with other texts while context means information without the text that the speaker or reader is aware of, for example genre, situation, knowledge about the world (be it cultural, religious, political and economic among others.). Fowler and Hodge (1979:189) point out that, for CL practitioners, "language is an integral part of the social process". Bell and Garret (1998:7) posit that it is from this development that CDA evolved as "various views were blended to come up with a common perspective inclusive of various discourse approaches rather instead of one school of thought". Instead of being considered as a single theory, CDA can be understood and discussed as an approach that colligates a concoction of approaches whose main intention is to understand social life better through analysing language (Van Leeuwen, 2006; Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Language in this case is taken in its broadest sense to cover face-to-face talk, paralinguistic features, symbols, images or documents. The following definitions of CDA attest to this. Sheyholislami (2017:1) presents Van Dijk's (1998) definition of CDA thus:

a field that is concerned with studying and analysing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance inequality and bias. It examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts.

Fairclough (1993:135) also defines CDA as:

Discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor of security power and hegemony.

Many more definitions of CDA have been proffered, all pointing to the conclusion that as an approach CDA is not “interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodical approach” (Wodak, 2013:2). It is this dimension, of being problem oriented and multi-disciplinary in nature that differentiates CDA from Discourse Analysis (DA). Thus, its relevance to this study cannot be over emphasised as it is a useful tool in educational research “to investigate the relationships between teaching, learning and curriculum, school and community role as well as ideologies and power and their impacts on the classroom process and teaching and learning activity.” (Bukhari and Xiaoyang, 2013: 16).

Another aspect that sets apart CDA from other forms of discourse analysis is the ‘critical’ element. Fairclough (1995a:9) explains it thus, “Critical implies showing connections and causes that are hidden; it implies intervention, for example providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change”. Showing such connections is not only necessary, but important, because these are generally not obvious for those involved. Thus, in the context of this study it is necessary to make conspicuous the pedagogical value of children’s oral art forms so that their relevance in education can be appreciated.

Even though CDA has its roots in various disciplines which emphasise different levels of analysis, they have several common dimensions as summed up by Van Dijk (2007) and Wodak and Meyer (2009):

- A focus on the intricate properties that occur in natural *language use* by native language users (instead of a study of theoretical language systems and made-up examples)

- An interest on *larger units than isolated words and sentences* and, hence, new basic units of analysis: texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts, or communicative events
- the enlargement of linguistics over and above sentence grammar towards a study of action and interaction
- the extension to *non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects* of interaction and communication: gestures, images, film, the internet, and multimedia
- a focus on dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies
- the study of the functions of (social, cultural, situational and cognitive) *contexts of language use*
- an analysis of a vast number of *phenomena of text grammar and language use*: coherence, anaphora, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, interaction turn-taking, signs, politeness, argumentation, rhetoric, mental models, and many of the aspects of text and discourse.

Basing on the above definitions of CDA, and the common dimensions of discourse studies, this study shows the power and other relations that are hidden in children's oral art forms as discourses to come up with results that are relevant and can be practically implemented. The Shona children's oral art forms were analysed to make explicit their pedagogical value and then situated in the formal education set up as tools for knowledge dissemination. This in a way makes them conspicuous thus, breaking the hegemony that only Western ways of knowledge dissemination are relevant to formal education as evidenced by continued recital of these foreign rhymes at pre- and primary school levels in Zimbabwean schools.

The fact that CDA also touches on other linguistic factors that include culture, society and ideology was of interest to this study as this covers the aspect of the changing terrain in which the Shona children's oral art forms analysed are performed. These extra-linguistic factors have a huge bearing on analysis of the Shona children's oral art forms. This is so due to the strong and permeating connections, in sociolinguistics, between language and society. It was deemed necessary to critically examine how this comes out from the children's oral art forms since they are performed through language in a society. It was also considered important to see how this relationship could be meaningfully linked to how the children learn at pre-and primary school levels. As for ideology, where education is concerned, it cannot be ignored. Hicks (2017) points out that all activities are guided by certain values and beliefs. One can then draw from the position above that education, being a form of human interaction, can also never be neutral or without value. It is always supported by certain norms and principles and -these constitute a certain ideology. Meighan and Harber's (2017:212) definition of ideology clearly enunciates this:

...a broad interlocked set of ideas and beliefs about the world, held by a group of people that they demonstrate in both behaviour and conversation to various audiences. These systems of belief are usually seen as “the way things are” by the groups holding them, and they become taken-for-granted ways of making sense of the world.

Thus, Farooq (2012) cannot be wrong in pointing out that education systems reflect and are shaped by ideologies which help in framing the aims and methods of its dissemination. This calls for the need to critically analyse discourse in pedagogy as it deals with these methods of knowledge dissemination. This is so, because, if Western modes of knowledge dissemination continue to dominate classroom practices across the curriculum, the notion that they are the only ways remains, thus, helping sustain the supremacy of western ways of knowing and interpreting reality. This becomes a social evil that needs to be addressed or even gotten rid of completely a move that is in line with CDA in which the ‘critical’ implies that any analysis should bring about change in society as opposed to simply understanding or explaining phenomena and leaving it at that (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Thus, in this study, the Shona children’s oral art forms are analysed to influence and bring about change in pedagogy at pre- and primary school levels.

Language as a communicative tool plays an important role here since it is used to represent the world in terms of ideas and concepts and expression of the said values (Alaghbary, Alazzany and Al-Nakeeb, 2015). This goes to show that other than giving and getting information there are many things that it allows to be done. Gee (2014:4) posits that language allows its users to do things. This simply put means, saying things in a language has the consequent result of doing and being those things. Thus, as children perform or recite the oral art forms through language, they are influenced to assume certain behaviours and characteristics vicariously akin to Bandura’s Social Learning. Therefore, a critical analysis of Shona children’s oral art forms helps bring to the fore the ideological views embedded therein since these also have a bearing on how the learners interpret the world and who they become.

Zimbabwe also inherited a colonial legacy in terms of formal education, which destroyed the African concept of education and its pedagogical tools. Zimbabwe’s formal education system has largely remained conservative (until recently when content has been revisited through the recently introduced New Curriculum) not only in terms of content, but also in as far as pedagogy is concerned by neglecting indigenous pedagogical practices (Mahundi, 2015; Mavhunga, 2008). This clearly shows that education is a contested territory where power

relations can impinge on what children learn and how they learn it. Thus, analysing the children's oral art forms from the perspective of CDA allows for a critical evaluation of ideological issues as reflected through the children's oral art forms to come up with pedagogical implications for future practice.

### **3.2.1 Approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

There are many approaches to CDA some of which are briefly discussed. One of the most well-known CDA practitioners, Teun van Dijk is the main proponent of the Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA). Wodak (2013) describes it as a socio-psychological approach to CDA and a theory that engages frameworks of systematising events or experiences that are unique to a particular society. Wodak situates it in the tradition of social representation theory which is a triad system involving discourse, cognition and society. The theory of social representation posits that social actors involved in discourse use their individual experiences and strategies underpinned by collective frames of perceptions called social representations. These socially shared perceptions are critical in forming the connection or bond between the social system and the individual's way of thinking and how the individual adapts and behaves in similar ways as per societal expectation which is necessary for co-operation and effective relationship formation (Wodak, 2009). The emphasis is on the importance of shared ideas that function as standards for members of the said societies (Wodak, 2009). It is interesting in the analysis of Shona children's oral art forms, to explore and tease out social norms embedded therein to see how these relate to or can influence classroom practices at pre- and primary school levels across the curriculum.

On the same matter, Moscovici (1982: 122) explains the notion of social representations as "a bulk of concepts, opinions, attitudes, evaluations, images and explanations which result from daily life and are sustained by communication." It is through this system of values, ideas and practices that order is established and enables individuals to rationalise the world. The system, according to Purkhardt (1993: 3) also "facilitates communication among members of a group by providing a code to enable them to name and classify the various aspects of their world and their history, be it individual or group history". It becomes clear from this argument that understanding the world, that is making sense of it, is greatly influenced by collective frames of perceptions. The role of a social and cultural context wherever discourse is involved becomes explicit in this approach. Hence, in this study, the context in which the children's oral art forms are performed is critical in their analysis.



The Discourse Historical Method, also known as Discourse Sociolinguistics, is another approach to CDA whose main proponents are Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl. It is explained as a sociolinguistics which focuses on the study of text in context and the realisation that both text and context as equally important factors in analysing discourse (Wodak, 2009). It is an approach that can be used in contexts such as the media, hospitals and schools as it attempts to integrate all available background information in a systematic manner in its analysis and interpretation of spoken or written texts (Bukhari and Xiaoyang, 2013). The critical role of language is also well pronounced in this approach. It is argued from this perspective that language in use reflects social processes and how those involved communicate (Wodak and Ludwig, 1999). The two authors further point out that use of language always reflects power dynamics and ideologies in a particular society. They further posit that, discourse is always historical, being connected inextricably and related to other communicative events happening at the same time or which have happened before. Implied here is the notion that whenever there is change in the environment, it has some impact on language. Thus, in the context of this study, the above ideas were quite relevant in the analysis of the Shona children's oral art forms. These are cross-cutting issues within the changing terrain in which the children's oral art forms are performed. Their form and content is likely to borrow from the historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts in which they are performed. This, literary scholars like Julia Kristeva and Gerard Genette call intertextuality (Raj, 2015; Martin, 2011; Mirenayat and Soofastaei, 2015). Intertextuality is premised on the notion that texts are not independent but borrow from other texts that have been created before them (Simandan, 2010). Thus, an analysis of children's oral art forms in Shona cannot be divorced from notions of power, ideology and culture (norms and values being a central aspect of culture) which they are likely to interact with.

The third aspect that discourse requires is interpretation by the interlocutors. This, according to Wodak and Ludwig (1999) depends on the interlocutors' background knowledge, information and positions. Implied under interpretation is the fact that, there is nothing called the right interpretation, we can only talk of a plausible one. This means that the process of understanding or constructing meaning is not fixed. It is also not only active, but continuous. By implication what comes out clearly then is that, if meaning and construction of meaning is dynamic, then there is need to continuously look at ways of knowledge dissemination to cater for the dynamic nature of knowledge creation. This, the current study does since it questions the notion of modern pedagogy being viewed as the only way of doing things in education

circles and calls for the need to look the other side, that is the indigenous knowledge systems way.

Norman Fairclough is well known for his Critical Language Study (CLS) and Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA). Fairclough's Critical Language Study (CLS) is an earlier approach in CDA. This approach focuses on language to raise awareness on exploitative social relations embedded therein (Fairclough, 1989). As argued by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999:113), the premise is that through discourse analysis, it should be made clear that "the semiotic and linguistic features of interaction are systematically connected with what is going on socially, and what is going on socially is indeed going on partly or wholly semiotically or linguistically". The view that language is a "social act", as put forth by Halliday, continues to be reinforced here as generally put forth by CDA theorists (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1989, 1982; Fowler, 1991; Hodge and Kress, 1993). Hence in this approach, as posited by Fairclough (1989), when analysing any interaction focus should be on the text, discourse practice and socio-cultural practice. For example, the children's oral art form (be it a rhyme, riddle or a folktale) constitutes the text, how it is produced and consumed becomes the discourse practice (in this case children's play) while the cultural institutions which give rise to the interaction is the socio-cultural practice (in this case Shona indigenous knowledge systems).

The Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) approach to CDA, as propounded by Fairclough, is grounded in the Marxian Tradition. It is concerned with social conflict and attempts to identify how discourses reflect Marxian type power differentials in society (Wodak, 2009). The approach is grounded on the idea that all activities are semiotic. Implied here is the notion that human activities are dialectically linked social engagements. This relationship is succinctly explained by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) cited in Keller (2013: 24-25) thus:

...social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures but it also shapes them.

In the context of this study then, as the children perform the oral art forms, such a relationship is inevitable as some values embedded therein may influence their behaviour, while at the same time the children can also reconstruct the art forms as they inter-text them with what goes on within their environment. Children's oral art forms also become part of such practices since they are performed as habitual activities, are common, relevant and

shared by the community, in the end they help the children, as members of the said community to identify with it. Apart from being an important form of identity they help structure the lives of community members. If such practices then, help bring a balance within a community, in this study, it was critical to tease them out from the children's oral art forms to see how they can be infused with modern day classroom interactions for the benefit of the learners.

The Social Actors Approach (SAA), pioneered by Theo-Van Leeuwen is hinged on the premise that social actors indefinitely form and reproduce the social structure through language (Wodak, 2009). Thus, in the context of this study an eclectic approach on ideas from the above CDA theorists was applied in the analysis of the selected children's oral art forms since they have common principles that can be drawn from them. These principles drawn from studies by various CDA practitioners are summed up below:

1. The representation of the world is done through the social practice of language.
2. Discourse/language use does not solely represent and signify practices relating to the communal or collective nature of society but also encompasses issues such as how power is exercised or used to influence certain positions, issues of inequality, inequity, unfairness among other social practices.
3. The meaning of texts is derived from the dialectical relationship between texts and the social subjects, for instance, writers and readers who constantly operate at different and various levels of choice, access to texts and ways of interpretation.
4. Linguistic features and structures are intentional whether or not by conscious or unconscious choice, thus, are not arbitrary.
5. Discourse is critical in producing, reproducing and exercising power relations.
6. All speakers and writers operate from specific discursive practices originating in special interests and aims which involve inclusions and exclusions.
7. The historicity of discourse emanates from its acquisition of meaning from specific social, cultural and ideological contexts, and time and space.
8. CDA constitutes the interpretation and explanation of texts. (Bukhari and Xiaoyang, 2013; Keller, 2013).

The above principles show that CDA's focus is studying language in social situations or contexts. It goes beyond focusing on single sentences or isolated speech acts as has been the tradition in linguistics studies (Stubbs, 1983). Thus, the social situations or contexts in which children perform the various Shona oral art forms are at the core of their analysis in this study, they cannot be ignored.

Gee (2014) posits that in CDA, context includes the actual physical setting in which a communication takes place and everything in it; paralinguistic features of interlocutors such as body movement, gestures, eye gazes, among others. Previous conversations, interactions and actions by the speakers involved and any shared knowledge they have, such as cultural knowledge also constitute context. What becomes clear from Gees' description of context is that, it is both something that is already there and something that can be created during the interaction process. This conception of context in CDA is very relevant and was deemed appropriate in analysing the Shona children's oral art forms since they are performed within the realms of such contexts.

It also becomes clear from the principles of CDA that, the 'critical' in CDA as an approach, is defined by Rogers (2004:4) as an attempt to "describe, interpret and explain the form and function of language", where form consists of grammar, morphology, semantics, syntax and pragmatics while function has to do with how people use language in different situations to achieve an outcome. Another aspect of CDA is that it tackles social problems and strives to find solutions to them by scrutinising co-occurring social, economic, political events among others. Implied here is the notion that such an analysis helps to situate problems within a particular context and analyses how written or spoken communication functions to construct and is also formed by such issues with reference to past events. This is possible since CDA is meant to provide higher awareness of our own secret intentions and those of others covered in texts with the intention to solve concrete problems (Wodak 2009). It can be concluded here that CDA is an action-oriented approach which as argued by Rogers (2004:6) emphasises that, "discourses are always socially, politically, racially and economically loaded". Thus, being discourses, children's oral art forms are loaded socially, politically, racially and economically; hence a critical analysis such as the current one helps unpack the various issues embedded therein.

### **3.3 AFROCENTRICITY**

Afrocentricity or Afrocentric thought as a paradigm was deemed important in the analysis of

the children's oral art forms in Shona. It provides a context for teasing out norms, values and ethos valued in Shona culture which can then act as a spring board for pre-and primary school pedagogy since it emphasises the need for one to be the agent in the construction of reality or what constitutes knowledge. This is in line with constructivism which also puts the learner at the centre of the learning process as an active constructor of what constitutes knowledge and meaning (Ganga and Maphalala,2016; Olusegun, 2015; Tuckman and Monetti, 2011; Kriz, 2010).

Afrocentric thought then referred to as Afrocentrism, has its roots in the Negritude Movement pioneered by the Senegalese Leopold Senghor, Aime Cesaire, Jean Rabemananjara and Leon Damas (idealists), while Cheik Anta Diop, Alioune Diop and Pathe Diagne (realists) supported the movement through writings and publishing. The Negritude Movement challenged those who viewed Africa as a continent with neither culture, self-defining art nor any artistic tradition. It rose from the desire to protect and defend the African legacy as legitimate and not junior to other world traditions. It was in fact the vanguard of resistance to white supremacy or hegemony. According to James cited in Asante (2013: 30), it was during the era when "Africans had not only been robbed of material resources but also of sense of place, knowledge and information" Afrocentricity shares with Negritude the promotion of African agency. Afrocentric thought as posited by (Nyoni, 2011:13) is premised on the view that:

as a people, Africans have their ways of doing things and the fact that they are different from those of Europeans or any other peoples does not in any way make them inferior.

In Africa, in addition to the scholars cited above, the likes of Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chidi Amuta, Okot p'Bitek among others subscribe to the Afrocentric school of thought. Currently the most prominent voice in Afrocentric thought is the American, Molefi Kete Asante who has written widely on Afrocentricity as attested by the following publications credited to his name: *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, *The Afrocentric Idea*, *Afrocentricity* and *Facing South: An African Orientation to Knowledge*, among others. His main thrust is to challenge the continuation of Eurocentric dominance of defining things from their point of view disregarding the way other people define reality, going to the extent of imposing their own cultural reality as if it were universal. Just like during the era of the Negritude Movement, Afrocentricity began to question the place of the African in all discourses, be they religious, philosophical, economic, political and even educational as shall

be discussed later (Asante, 2013, 2008, 2007, 2003, 2000, 1993).

Asante makes a distinction between Afrocentrism and Afrocentricity which is discussed here. Asante argues that Afrocentrism can be treated as a broad cultural movement while Afrocentricity is a theory that emphasises the need to perceive Africans as active actors rather than spectators of their own historical insurgence and whatever changes related to it (Asante, 2013; 2008; 2003). He argues that as a philosophy or world view, Afrocentricity gives Africans a chance to better understand and critically interpret issues affecting their communities in all spheres of life, education included (Asante, 2003). In this research however, ideas from both Afrocentrism and Afrocentricity are referred to as Afrocentric thought since in both cases emphasis is on the subject position of Africans, their agency as the fundamental point of reference in the analysis of social and cultural situations involving their experiences, in all spheres of life such as history, the literary, economic, philosophical or educational aspects that construct the reality of their own contexts. As philosophies they both resist any forms of marginalisation of African peoples, places African culture at the centre of inquiry and promotes the subject position of African people rather than objects in all spheres of life (Chawane, 2016; Chike, 2015; Molefi, 2003). This school of thought further argues that African people should see themselves as the centre of all African experiences not as an appendage of other races in the world. This, Asante (2013:11-12), argues is necessary for progress:

It becomes necessary to accept the subject position of Africans within the context of historical realities if progress is to be made in interpretation, analysis, synthesis or construction. ...need for a more self-defining and self-determining attitude in all spheres of life among Africans.

Hence, if education is viewed as a tool for progress, there is need to have a relook not only at the content but also the pedagogy. Also implied here, is the view that better understanding and progress in any sphere of life comes from within not without. The Afrocentric view values the role and place of African descended people in constructing their own reality in all spheres of life not that imposed by outsiders such as Euro-centrists. Its aim is to challenge every system that has enhanced its own position by degrading the African world view, denying that there is an African humanity and totally ignoring whatever contribution Africans ever made in the process of civilisation including their ways of knowledge transmission (Asante, 2000). In fact, Afrocentric thought aims to challenge this complete degradation if not rejection of African reality. Asante captures the critical issues of this paradigm in

Hudson-Weems (2007) when he sums up the distinguishing features of Afrocentric thought quite succinctly as follows:

- i) an earnest regard of the African people's world view as reflected through various cultural practices such as symbols and rituals among others;
- ii) an obligation or commitment to ensuring, through investigation, the subject role of Africans in all spheres of life with consequences for questions of sex, gender and class (*these are important sociolinguistic variables*);
- iii) it validates African cultural principles as historically justifiable in the context of art, music, education, science and literature;
- iv) a celebration of centeredness and agency and a dedication to improvement of language to do away with derogatory discourse not only about Africans but other people;
- v) an urgent need to revise what has been recorded about Africans and re-presenting it from the perspective of the African people themselves.

Education, as mentioned earlier on, is also targeted in Afrocentric thought as highlighted above. Woodson (1933), writing on the state of education of Africans in the United States then, points out that the damage instituted on African Heritage ensues from the education of African people which alienated them from their own culture and traditions yet attached them on the fringes of European culture. The African then became a cultureless being, roaming on the edges of a foreign culture and belonging to none. This argument is also raised by Mazama (2001) who points out that as African people; we have a problem in that we often obliviously appropriate the Western worldview and view-point and their specialist conceptual frameworks without question. This inability to pause and seriously interrogate and confront such ideas whose roots are in foreign cultural ethos results in this relegation to the periphery in all aspects of life, education included. Such passivity remains the main ingredient of Western hegemony even in educational set ups where pedagogy is concerned. Hence, if education is viewed as a tool for progress, there is also need to have a relook not only at its content but also the pedagogy. If ignored, in the end, it leads to a situation where according to Asante Molefi people become, "spectators of a show that defines them from without instead of from within" (Mazama, 2001:387). This, Afrocentric thought does not allow, as it is firmly grounded in the belief that everything concerning African people's perception be approached

from the African centre (Asante, 2013; 2000; 1990; Mazama, 2001). Afrocentrism is against the idea of defining African ideas through foreign lenses.

Another point to note from the argument by Woodson (1933), is that, although focus was on Africans in the United States, this, rings true of what was happening to Africans everywhere, where education and its transmission was defined from the Western perspective as if it were the only source of knowledge. The tools of its dissemination were also Eurocentric. Thus, instead of making it meaningful to the recipients by taking into cognisance their historical experiences, it alienated Africans from the centre of their experiences and placed them at the periphery where they had to view things from a different perspective, in fact they had to be “carbon copies of the European except for the skin colour” (Nyoni, 2011:13). Afrocentric thought posits that education has great potential to influence the individual because it is a social endeavour driven by the need to induct the young into a particular group’s code of conduct (Asante, 2013). If then, in the case of Zimbabwean pre- and primary schools education continues to be delivered through alien modes of knowledge dissemination whose code of conduct then are the young inducted into? There is therefore, need to question not only what content is taught but also how it is taught (Shizha, 2013). This is also in line with Afrocentric thought which calls for the development of African ways of knowing and interpreting the world (Shizha, 2013; Mkabela, 2005; Mazama, 2001; Covin, 1990). Hence, the area of pedagogy becomes a highly contested arena to centre African reality. Thus, this research revisits classroom pedagogy to allow African ways of knowing to be visible within the classroom interactions. This can only be done through first locating learners within the context of their own cultural references, and later guiding them in the process of relating to other perspectives instead of alienating them from who they are all in the name of education.

The best level then to begin is at pre-and primary levels of education. Hence, what better ways of doing this other than looking at what children enjoy doing at this age- play. Children’s oral art forms provide the appropriate cultural context and relevant experience to give the child greater opportunities for learning. With the right cultural context and appropriate ways of information dissemination there is no doubt that academic performance is grounded as learners become active participants in knowledge creation. Thus, Afrocentricity as a theoretical framework is quite appropriate in the analysis of the Shona children’s oral art forms. This is so, because while Afrocentrism acknowledges western ways of knowing as useful tools for information dissemination, it challenges their hegemony. The argument is that when it comes to classroom pedagogy, these Eurocentric ways should not be



treated as universal ways of knowing and understanding reality but as one voice among others (Mazama, 2001; 2003). There is need therefore, to relocate African ways of knowing centrally in contemporary pedagogy as location is critical in the understanding of phenomena in Afrocentric theory. Asante (2009) clearly points this out by positing that to adequately understand a phenomenon it must be located first, examined and understood in relation to the conceptual frameworks of those concerned, in this case Africans. Of essence in this stance is that any serious-minded scholar or practitioner in whatever environment should ensure that Africans play the subject and not object role if total liberation is to be experienced (Tembo, 2012). Hence the need to centre our own indigenous knowledge systems, in terms of knowledge and ways of disseminating it even as early as pre and primary school level.

### **3.4. CONSTRUCTIVISM AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM**

There is a thin divide between constructivism and social constructivism in that these learning theories share the view that knowledge is borne out of active construction (Mascolo and Fischer, 2005) but social constructivism goes further to argue that learning cannot be divorced from the social context in which it is to be applied (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, for this research ideas from both were considered under constructivism since they share a lot of underlying characteristics as discussed later. The main proponents of constructivism include John Dewey (considered the founding father), Piaget, Bruner (main proponents for cognitivist constructivists) and Vygotsky (main proponent for social constructivists), among others.

Constructivism as a model of teaching and learning views the learning process as one in which the learner assumes a central role in the construction of information and making meaning out of learning material (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010; Kriz, 2010; Berk, 2007). Constructivists believe that people construct individual subjective images of objective reality by linking new information to previous knowledge; leading to the creation of subjective mental representations. What is implied here is that learners are not viewed as empty pitchers to be filled with knowledge by the all-knowing teacher but can use their previous experience as a springboard for better understanding or grasping of new knowledge through various social interactions (Andersen, Cardinale and Martin, 2011; Atherton, 2011; Brooks and Brooks, 2004). However, it should not be misconstrued regarding constructivism that the teacher never presents new information or knowledge to the learners. The teaching moment still counts but the teacher should take into cognisance the learners' previous knowledge throughout his/her interaction with them. The teacher is viewed as a facilitator,

someone who guides and directs learning. He/she creates a conducive environment for the learners to be actively involved as opposed to being passive recipients. In a constructivist set up, learners are allowed to question things and apply their natural curiosity to the world.

A typical learning environment that supports the constructivist view possesses the following characteristics as described by Jonassen (1994):

- It contains multiple images of the learners' reality thus presenting the learners an opportunity to tackle problems or difficulties encountered in the real world
- Learners are in the forefront of constructing knowledge instead of reproducing knowledge
- It fronts the use of real-life tasks in the instructional scenario.
- It uses real world settings as its source of learning instead of predetermined instructional activities that have no relationship with the learners' reality.
- It encourages critical thinking as learners reflect on experience for improvement of future performance
- It motivates learners to use both context and content as co-dependent elements in knowledge construction
- Learners are encouraged to negotiate for construction of knowledge through collaborative effort not competition. This reduces knowledge regurgitation and increases knowledge construction.

Under constructivism the teacher is not viewed as the all-knowing presenter of knowledge neither is the learner viewed as a passive recipient of knowledge. Both have central roles to play in the learning process. Reece and Walker (2003:63) sum up these roles as presented by various scholars on models of teaching and learning quite clearly when they indicate that "the teacher is a guide, a co-discoverer with the learners for whom he/she sets challenging tasks, observes how they interact, supports their activities, at times even creating dissonance through diversity and debate, then helps them to notice and reconsider if need be". Reece and Walker (2003) further posit that, the learners on the other hand focus on gaining personal understanding through interpreting and selecting ideas related to new concepts in relation to their previous experience. They construct their own reality through reviewing and integrating as they actively engage with concepts. This gives learners an active role during classroom interactions as they relate their prior knowledge to new concepts being learnt. This allows for accommodation of learners' experiences and divergent thinking within the learning

environment (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Tuckman and Monetti, 2011; Green and Gredler, 2002). Thus, by creating a classroom environment that encourages collaboration and exchange of ideas, there is promotion of social and communication skills that are important for success in the real world where learners are exposed to a variety of experiences in which they have to co-operate and navigate among the ideas of others.

The emphasis by constructivists is that learning by nature is collaborative and context bound, (both cultural and social contexts are important). The learning process becomes more than a process of information absorption but one in which learners are integrated into a knowledge community (Olusegun, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). There is no better way of doing this then, than providing such a setting through incorporating children's oral art forms into children's learning. These oral art forms are part and parcel of their cultural base and infusing them into the pedagogical scheme of their educational processes can help create a link between indigenous ways of learning and formal ones, and also helps create a cultural synthesis between traditional African values and Western oriented ones without looking down upon the former. This is quite appropriate at pre-and primary school levels where play is critical for the young impressionable minds. Rieber (1996) even argues that play has a lot of psychological and sociological value and provides powerful mediation in the learning process throughout a person's life, hence it is critical in the creation of interactive learning environments for children.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the theoretical frameworks upon which the analysis of the Shona children's oral art forms were based have been discussed. These are Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Afrocentricity and Constructivism. Principles of CDA, from various practitioners are employed in the analysis of Shona children's oral art forms. These include those from the Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA) as propounded by Teun van Dijk, Discourse Historical Method (also known as Discourse Sociolinguistic) by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reissgl, Critical Language Study (CLS) and Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) as espoused by Norman Fairclough and finally, Social Actors Approach (SAA) by Theo van Leeuwen. CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that can be used in interrogating the relationship between educational practices, that is, actual application of ideas, beliefs or methods and social contexts. This made it quite appropriate for this study that focused on analysis of children's oral art forms in Shona, to situate them as indigenous ways of teaching and learning in the

formal education set up at pre- and primary school levels. Afrocentric theory was also found to be relevant for this analysis since it allows for relocating indigenous ways of knowing in the centre of educational practices. Having teased out the norms and values from the children's oral art forms, teaching strategies can then be influenced by these as they will be removed from the periphery where they have for long been relegated to in pursuit of western ways of understanding or making sense of the world. It allows for challenging of the hegemony that has for long existed with Western ways of knowledge dissemination being considered the 'only' and 'universal' ways of knowing and interpreting the world. This allows for the development of learners who are grounded in their Africanness. Issues of ideological underpinnings embedded in the children's oral art forms can also be teased out from an African perspective through application of Afrocentric tenets. Constructivism is also deemed appropriate as children's oral art forms provide learners with an appropriate context for knowledge construction through collaboration. Its emphasis on learning as a collaborative and context bound activity makes it even more relevant as this is in line with CDA principles in emphasising context for better interpretation and understanding of the world. As the children interact through the various oral art forms (which are the texts for analysis), they become active participants in knowledge creation. These oral art forms can act as a springboard from which the teacher and the learners can launch their interpretations of the world, hence engage in meaningful knowledge construction as opposed to mere knowledge consumption.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the methodology used for this study. First, the paradigm in which the study is conducted is discussed followed by data gathering tools. The tools are the questionnaire, observation, interviews and document analysis. The researcher gives a detailed description of how these tools are used in this study.

#### 4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM AND DESIGN

The research was conducted within the qualitative paradigm. This paradigm was considered appropriate since the researcher is more interested in studying children's oral art forms *in situ* which the approach allows as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011:3):

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set interpretive material practices that make the visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations ---recordings---. This means qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

It becomes clear from the above definition that, this approach has the advantage of allowing an insider perspective, which is appropriate in this study as it focuses on the subjective experiences of the children/teachers concerned taking into consideration the contexts in which the oral art forms are performed and the purposes thereof. This is what Corbin and Strauss (2008:12) call "the inner experience of participants". This approach also has various other advantages as it is "fluid, evolving and dynamic" (ibid: 13) as opposed to the more rigid and structured format of quantitative methods. Creswell (2013: 44) captures this well when he describes it thus:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and use of interpretive theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems, addressing the meaning individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem qualitative researchers, use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting, sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of the participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem and its contribution to literature and a call to change.

From both Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) and Creswell's (2013) definitions of qualitative research, one can see a strong inclination towards the impact of qualitative research on social phenomena and human problems and its ability to bring change. Also evident in the definition is the notion that, as a process, qualitative research starts from philosophical assumptions, followed by interpretations and, the plan of action used to study problems relating to society within a given framework. Reflexivity on the part of the researcher also becomes evident since qualitative research takes cognisance of the researcher's background experiences be, they work, cultural or historical as reflection on and interpretation of the data takes place.

Characteristics of qualitative research as espoused by scholars in the field of qualitative research are also evident from the definitions. The first characteristic is that, data is collected in the field at the site where participants encounter or experience the issue or problem under study (Magwa and Magwa, 2015; Creswell 2013: 44; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Punch, 2005). The context or setting of the participants can also relate to the social, historical, political or economic situation during which the research is carried out. In the context of this study, data was gathered in the natural setting, in this case, within selected schools from both teachers and learners. Up-close information was gathered by directly observing the children at play and teachers teaching and through face-to-face interaction during interviews.

Qualitative research is also characterised by the fact that the researcher is the key instrument when it comes to data gathering. In qualitative research, the researcher examines documents, observes behaviour and interviews participants as he/she gathers data. Even if an instrument is used, it is one that the researcher designs. The researcher does not rely on or use instruments designed by other researchers (Marshall and Rossman, 2010; Hatch, 2002). Use of open-ended questions is also key in these instruments. Thus, in this study, the researcher was the key data gathering instrument as she did not have any research assistants, the questionnaire and the interview schedule used are all the researcher's creation. Most of the questions in the said instruments are also open-ended and this allowed the researcher to gather as much information as she could.

Another feature of qualitative research that is evident in this study is use of multiple methods and theoretical frameworks. The researcher gathered multiple forms of data through use of multiple data gathering tools in the form of questionnaires, interviews, observation and examination of documents instead of relying on a single mode of data gathering. Gray

(2014:692) calls this “triangulation”. This triangulation of information as a process allowed the researcher to review data from all forms to make sense of it after which it was classified under themes that continued to emerge from the different sources (Magwa and Magwa, 2015; Kumar, 2014; Creswell, 2013). This approach allowed enrichment of data and enhancement of accuracy or reliability of the study findings.

Qualitative research is also not mono-pronged when it comes to perspective. It focuses on participants’ perspectives. It is an approach that aims to learn and understand the meaning that participants hold about the issue or problem under study. It does not rely on the meaning that the researcher brings to the research or that which he/she gets from literature. This allows the researcher to accommodate multiple perspectives and diverse views on the topic. These multiple perspectives of the study participants should be reflected in the final report writing, since it is the participants’ stories that should be heard (Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2014; Kumar, 2014). Thus, qualitative research is simply meant to empower them to share these stories, to let the silenced voices be heard. In this study the researcher focused on participants’ perspectives on the issues under investigation, and these are clearly reflected during data presentation and analysis where the researcher presents the respondents’ responses verbatim.

Finally, qualitative research involves an emergent and evolving design rather than a tightly pre-figured one as is the case in quantitative methods (Blaikie, 1991; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). What is implied here is that there is room for change in all phases of the research process depending on what the researcher encounters in the field. This is not to say that changes can be made haphazardly, but that the researcher is not rigid hence when need be questions can be adjusted, forms of data collection altered, all with the intention of learning about the issue from the participants through engaging in the best practices to facilitate obtaining of the information (Patton, 2002; Bogdan and Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2013). The approach also gives the researcher an opportunity to work through problems in situ as a research instrument herself among other advantages. In this study, the flexible nature of the qualitative paradigm was very useful especially during focus group interviews with the learners and interviews with teachers. There are times when the researcher had to rephrase some questions or even change the approach when need arose to obtain required information.

The descriptive design also has the advantage of allowing the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way, it is flexible, allowing data to be gathered without being manipulated, among many other advantages (Chiromo, 2006:29).

Hence, questionnaires were used to tap for information to get a general picture of how teachers handle the co-existence of children's oral art forms with literary forms in their pedagogy although data was mostly gathered through observation and interviews. It should also be noted that some sections of the questionnaire though, are analysed quantitatively but this does not take away the main thrust of the study, its qualitative nature. Document analysis was also done to validate some responses that teachers gave during interviews.

### **4.3 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND PROCEDURES**

Data collection involves the use of appropriate ways to obtain the required information in a study. The ways used are referred to as data gathering methods, instruments or tools. For this study, the questionnaire, standardised-open-ended interview, focus group interview, observation and document analysis were employed to extract information. These are discussed below to justify why they were chosen. The procedure, which is the plan of action streamlining the activities that were carried out, is also discussed.

#### **4.3.1 Data collection tools**

As alluded to earlier in the definition of qualitative research, a variety of methods were used in data gathering through several data gathering tools. The tools used in this study are discussed below.

##### **4.3.1.1 The Questionnaire**

In this research the questionnaire was used to complement the other modes of data gathering that were used, that is, interviews (focus group and standardised open-ended), observation and document analysis. In the questionnaire the researcher uses both closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions are used to capture personal information on sex, qualification and experience, since the questionnaire was administered to teachers only. The open-ended questions were meant to elicit data on children's oral art forms and classroom practices in relation to them.

The questionnaire has its advantages as a data gathering instrument. The main advantage is that many respondents can be reached easily and in an inexpensive way (Gray, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2002; Gillham, 2007). In this study since only a few teachers were interviewed and had their lessons observed, the researcher used the questionnaire to reach more teachers at selected schools to explore their views and knowledge on the subject under



study in relation to their practice. This resulted in large amounts of data being collected in a short period of time and this enhanced the depth of information on the issue under investigation. This does not mean that the questionnaire does not have its limitations. The researcher obviously missed on some forms of information that could have been gathered in a face to face situation, such as changes of emotion and that expressed through gestures. It is also quite difficult to tell the truthfulness of responses or how much was put into them since the respondents completed it out of context and in the absence of the researcher. There is also no room for probing or asking to follow up questions as is the case with interviews. Despite this, the questionnaire was still handy as the researcher was able to follow up some of the trends and validate responses during interviews with selected participants.

#### **4.3.1.2 Observation**

Kothari and Garg (2014) describe observation as a data gathering method where the researcher gathers information through direct observation without asking from the respondents. This reduces subjective bias if the researcher observes accurately. They further posit that information observed through this method has currency, in that it does not relate to what has already happened in the past or what will happen with future generations, but to what is currently happening. Things or events are observed as they are not as they were or will be. Their argument makes observation quite relevant in this study as the researcher sought to study children's oral art forms in the current terrain to situate them in modern day pedagogy. Thus, the researcher did not rely on traditional forms of Shona children's oral art forms that she knows if these were not performed by the children or given by the teachers. She gathered and analyzed those performed by the learners including contemporary ones as performed by children. Another advantage of using the observation as a method is that it is independent of the respondents' willingness to respond, hence it is relatively less demanding of active co-operation on the part of the respondents as happens with other data gathering methods such as interviews and questionnaires (Kothari and Garg, 2014). It is also considered useful when one is dealing with young children who are usually shy as was the case in this study. However, it should be noted that this does not mean ethical principles were ignored, they were still adhered to since participants were informed that they would be observed.

Bell (1999), Best and Kahn (1993) and Borg and Gall (1989) observe that while observation is not the easiest of data, gathering tools, if done properly, it can result in data being captured comprehensively in its natural environment, especially where human interactions are

involved for example, classroom situations and play areas which were the sites for observations in this study. This also requires a lot of planning for useful data to be gathered. The observation must be done in a planned and not a haphazard manner as Best and Kahn (1993: 223) point out “Observation as a research technique must always be systematic, directed by a specific purpose, carefully focused and thoroughly recorded. It must be subject to usual checks for accuracy, validity and reliability”. What Best and Kahn here call accuracy, validity and reliability are what qualitative researchers call authenticity, trustworthiness and reflexivity of data (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008; Patton, 2002).

Although observation has its own disadvantages such as involving a lot of time and the presence of the researcher influencing outcomes at times (Kothari and Garg 2014), the method was still useful for this study where children and teachers had to be observed. The researcher gathered data through observation as children went about their business of play or learning and teachers their business of teaching. The researcher simply wrote down her observations and audio- recorded recitals of rhymes, game songs and narratives without interfering with the activities. Some of these oral art forms were gathered in class and during break time while on teaching practice visits at the selected schools in both urban and rural environments. However, where the researcher felt that using a recorder would make the whole situation too formal, especially with the pupils resulting in them being uncomfortable, note making was convenient and the notes were transcribed immediately thereafter while they were still fresh in the researcher’s mind to minimize errors resulting from faulty memory.

The researcher had an observation guide that she followed so that the observation would be done in a systematic manner. Use of an observation guide, Silverman and Marvasti (2008) argue, enhances an in-depth understanding of whatever event or phenomena is under observation. The authenticity, trustworthiness and reflexivity of the observations was constantly checked by referring to what had been gathered through interviews with teachers and learners. The researcher captured data through various means such as field notes and audio recording depending on the situation. This was necessary since memory cannot be trusted. One can think they will remember certain things only to see that with the passage of time things tend to get out of mind and important things can be lost. However, if detailed field notes are made and actual words are recorded the chances of omitting important issues will be minimal. The importance of detail in recording observation data is clear in Patton’s (2002:305) description:

Field notes then, contain the on-going data that are being collected. They consist of descriptions of what is being experienced and observed, quotations from the people observed, the observer's feelings and reactions to what is observed and field generated insights and interpretations.

What is implied here is that, the notes should capture everything the researcher believes to be of importance. Hence, such thick data cannot be remembered from the head, no wonder Bailey (2007) and Berg (2006) caution that the notes should be written up immediately after observation, that is immediately after exiting the field, while things are still fresh in the mind and the researcher still has vivid images or pictures of what transpired in the field (Gray, 2014). The researcher found this advice handy when she embarked on field work.

#### **4.3.1.3 The Interview**

Gray (2014:382) defines an interview as, “a verbal exchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to acquire information from and gain an understanding of another person, the interviewee”. An interview thus can be viewed as a platform where the interviewee(s) may be invited to talk about a wide range of issues among them their knowledge of and attitudes towards an issue, beliefs or behavior among others (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Rowley, 2012). Apart from simply noting down the respondent(s)'s oral responses, the interview allows the interviewer to also note the interviewee's body language, which may have a great contribution to the data gathered. The interview is also a useful tool for making follow-ups when questionnaires have been administered since they allow for pursuing of issues in more depth. This is done when researcher probes for more detailed responses by asking the respondent to clarify what they have said or give examples to justify their point of view when the need arises. Kothari and Garg (2014:98) also give several advantages that the interview has over other data gathering tools:

- More information and that too in greater depth can be obtained,
- Interviewer by his/her own skill can deal with unwillingness to respond from the respondents,
- There is greater flexibility under this method as the opportunity to restructure questions is always there if need be,
- Interviewer can get unconstrained responses than would be elicited through questionnaires,

- Language can be modified to the ability or educational level of the respondents and as such enhancing clarity and preventing misinterpretations concerning questions.

Even though the interview has its own limitations such as being very time consuming, being open to bias and being emotionally taxing, among others (Patton, 2002), for this study it was appropriate because it allowed the gathering of thick data required in a study of this nature. Such qualitative information helps the researcher understand why people do certain things and behave in certain ways. It helps clarify why certain things are done the way they are done. Wilcox (1988:12) puts this forth quite succinctly thus, “If we want to know how people felt, what they experienced, what they remembered, what their emotions and motives were like and the reasons for acting as they did—just ask them”. Thus, in this study two types of interviews were employed: the focus group and the standardized open-ended interview. For both interviews the interviewer was guided by an interview guide. This, as put forth by Patton (2002:343) is, “a list of questions or issues that the researcher seeks to explore during the interview”. The guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer can then ask questions, probe and make follow-ups to gain as much information as possible on the subject under investigation (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). It is for this reason and the need to make sure that the same fundamental lines of questioning are followed for each person or group interviewed, that the researcher had guides for both interviews with teachers and learners. Patton (2002) also further explains that using an interview guide helps the interviewer in several ways, among them the following:

- It ensures that the interviewer has carefully decided how best to use the limited time available in an interview situation,
- It helps the interviewer make the interviews with different people more systematic and comprehensive since he/she selects and decides on issues to be explored well in advance.
- During focus group discussions, it helps the interviewer keep the interactions focused but still giving participants room to air individual views and allow emergence of individual experiences.

From the foregoing discussion, the researcher used this tool as a way of ensuring smooth running of the interviews while at the same time maximizing the gathering of comprehensive data.

#### **4.3.1.3.1 Focus Group Interview**

The focus group interview was carried out with the learners. Gray (2014:486) defines a focus group as “essentially an organized discussion among a selected group of individuals with the aim of eliciting information about their views”, while Krueger (1994:5) defines it as “an informal assembly of target persons whose points of view are required to address a selected topic”. What is explicit from the cited definitions is that although the group is organized, the discussion is more informal in nature and is aimed at gaining a range of perspectives on respondents and situations at hand. To maintain order, the researcher moderates the discussion. It is the discussion format as opposed to a one on one situation that differentiates the focus group from other types of qualitative interviews (Beck, Trombetta and Share, 1986; Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 1996; Byers and Wilcox, 1988). The discussion format thus, creates a non-threatening atmosphere but a permissive one which allows for a wide range of views to be aired (Krueger, 1994). In the light of the above definitions, it becomes clear that a focus group is not aimed at consensus building, but obtaining a range of opinions, thus, providing an opportunity for deeper understanding of the issue under investigation. It is this accommodation of multiple views of reality, diverse opinions and perspectives that makes the focus group suitable to be used in qualitative research (Brotherson, 1994). The focus group also encourages participation from participants who may be uncomfortable being interviewed on their own.

The focus group was thus, found appropriate for the study especially with children in this case due to several advantages it has over other types of interviews when it comes to interviewing children. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) recommend group interviewing for children, arguing that it is appropriate because it encourages communication among group members as opposed to a child simply responding to an adult’s question. The result is a wider bank of data emerging from the group interacting since it allows for synergism as the children add to the views expressed by others (Stewart, Shamdasani and Rock, 2007). This occurs when the response of one respondent initiates a chain reaction of additional comments (Krueger, 1994). There are learners who may be intimidated by an adult figure, but the focus group provides security and comfort that encourages greater openness and the courage to give candid responses. Spontaneity is another advantage that a focus group has. In this set up, it is not mandatory that participants should answer every question. They only answer those questions that they want to respond to hence genuine responses are likely to be given. This helps to empower and motivate participants since they are not coerced to respond but do it

out of their own free will.

Gray (2014:2014:488-9) notes the following as limitations of focus groups:

- Some members might dominate the discussion, while others might say very little unless prompted.
- Persuading respondents to take part may also be a challenge.
- There is potential for breach of confidentiality.
- Conflict may arise, and this can divert the researcher from the purpose of the exercise.
- It can be difficult to monitor both verbal and non-verbal responses of participants at the same time.

However, for this study, the focus group was deemed appropriate since the advantages outweigh the limitations by far especially where children are concerned. The researcher conducted focus group interviews in Shona for the benefit of the learners who speak English as a Second Language. The focus group interview guide used had questions that required learners to recite or give examples of various children's oral art forms in Shona such as game songs, riddles and folktales. Others gave learners the opportunity to highlight lessons learnt from these and yet others required learners to identify learning areas in which they are generally performed or used. Two groups of ten learners, five boys and five girls were interviewed in each category to give a total of eight focus groups. Each focus group was interviewed for about 30-45 minutes.

#### **4.3.1.3.2 The Standardised Open-Ended Interview**

The standardized open-ended interview was done with teachers in this study. Patton (2002:342) describes it as an interview which, "consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each responded through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words". It was chosen because of many advantages that it has over other types of interviews. Patton (2014) points out that since the way in which the questions are expressed and arranged are decided on in advance, all interviewees are asked the same fundamental questions. Even if new trends arise and are followed up on, at least all respondents answer the same basic questions. Magwa and Magwa (2015) also posit that the standardized open-ended interview increases the chance for making responses comparable since data will be complete for each interviewee or group of interviewees, which facilitates the organization and analysis of data. Thus, to

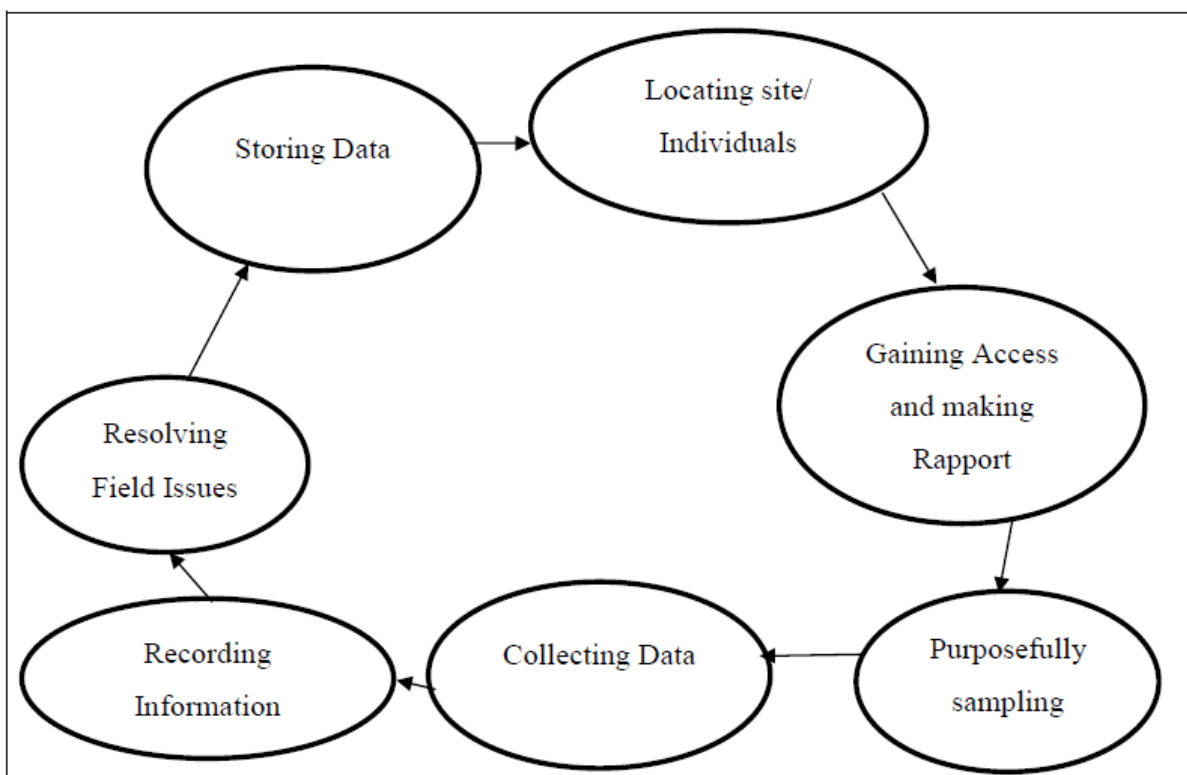
minimize variations in the questions posed, to the teachers, this type of interview was deemed appropriate for the study. Each interviewee was interviewed for between 30-45 minutes.

#### 4.3.1.4 Document Analysis

The researcher analysed the following documents: Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe, The Curriculum Frame Work for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022, schemes of work, school syllabi and activity files (especially at preschool level) were analyzed as a base for further inquiry or for clarification of issues later during interviews with teachers and learners. This had the advantage that data was gathered in a non-interactive way which helped to eliminate bias from the respondents (Magwa and Magwa, 2015).

#### 4.3.2 Data collection procedure

Data collection activities in this study followed Creswell’s (2013) data collection cycle as it was found to be relevant (Figure 4.1). The cycle streamlines activities to be carried out in a simplified manner that helps make it easy for the researcher to follow within given time frames.



**Figure 4.1 Data collection cycle** (adapted from Creswell 2013:146).

In this study, Creswell's data gathering cycle was followed in the following manner. The schools were located and purposively sampled under urban, peri-urban, rural and rural resettlement on the assumption that they could provide relevant information to enhance the understanding of the research problem relating to the pedagogical value of Shona children's oral art forms on a changing terrain. The researcher sought access to the schools from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education through the Provincial Education Director, Masvingo Province. This was done after obtaining ethical clearance by the Unisa College of Human Sciences Ethics Committee at the University of South Africa. The researcher then established rapport with the schools through their heads who act as gatekeepers for their respective schools by paying them visits and presenting the permission letters from both the Ministry and the Provincial Directorate. To build rapport participants were appraised by the researcher on why they were selected, guaranteed anonymity and told what the study was all about. Creswell (2013:154) calls this "disclosure" and posits that it helps build rapport. Once this had been done, the researcher was then able to interact with the teachers and learners involved to collect data. The researcher collected data through observations, interviews and document analysis. Information was recorded as field notes and audio recordings for transcription immediately after leaving the field. The researcher also addressed field issues pertaining to observation and interviews such as appropriateness of sites, time needed for interviews, gaining access, building trust and credibility, as discussed earlier on. Data was stored in the form of field notes, audio transcriptions and computer files.

#### **4.4 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

The population, sample and sampling technique for the study are briefly discussed below as a way of delimiting the study.

##### **4.4.1 Population**

The population in a study is the entire group of people or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Kumar,2014). This can also be referred to as the target group that has an equal chance to be involved in the study. For this study the population included all pre- and primary schools in the District of Masvingo, hence all teachers and pupils within the schools were also eligible as participants in the study.



#### **4.4.2 Sample**

The sample consisted of ten percent (10%) of the 147 primary schools in Masvingo District. Thus, sixteen (16) primary schools constituted the accessible population, that is the portion of the population to which the researcher had access. The Early Childhood Development Centres (pre- schools) at these primary schools automatically fell into the sample since they are part and parcel of the schools' structures and part of the targetted population of respondents. This level was chosen because it caters for children who are relevant in this study since it is children's oral art forms that are being studied. The schools were purposively sampled from four categories under which they fall: urban, peri-urban, rural and rural resettlement. Purposive sampling is an attribute of qualitative research which allows the researcher to carefully select cases in the sample premised on their perception of their possessing distinctive qualities being sought (Bell, 1999; Eisner,1991; Palys, 2008; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). In this study purposive sampling is appropriate since it helped build up a sample that is acceptable to the precise needs of this study, by helping to achieve representativeness and enable comparisons to be made between the specific and unique environments in which the schools are located. This allowed the researcher to capture different trends since the environments are different. The practising teachers of different ages, genders, educational backgrounds and experience in urban, peri-urban, rural and resettlement schools which had been selected became participants in this research. These were randomly selected to respond to the questionnaires and participate in interviews. For completing the questionnaires, five teachers were selected from each school making them twenty in each category to give a total of eighty teachers. For interviews, two teachers were chosen from each category, thus eight teachers were interviewed.

#### **4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In research, there is need to exercise care and be cautious that the rights of the participants are protected; hence moral principles to guide research become a prerequisite. These moral principles are referred to as research ethics, ethical considerations or ethical issues (Magwa and Magwa, 2015; Kumar, 2014; Gray, 2014; Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). These can simply be understood as sets of moral principles that guide a researcher's behaviour on how to relate with others when conducting research. (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2005). Gray (2014:68) succinctly explains that these principles are meant to ensure, "that research is conducted in a way that goes beyond merely adopting the

most appropriate methodology but, conducting research in a responsible and morally defensible way”, for whoever is conducting it. Several principles, among them beneficence, respect for human dignity and justice ground these ethical considerations. Thus, in this study the researcher ensured that these principles were adhered to through various means.

The principle of beneficence entails freedom from harm, freedom from exploitation and the risk benefit ratio (Gray, 2014; Kumar, 2014; Bless et al.,2006). In this study, there was no harm produced by participating in the study for both learners and their teachers. Participants were also not exploited in any way as they were made aware of what the study is all about before consenting to take part. The researcher also first explained to the participants clearly that they could choose not to take part or even pull-out later if they felt uncomfortable. The only probable discomfort to be viewed as a risk was interference with or adjustment of timetables for the teachers involved in interviews to accommodate the researcher. The learners also had their lunch hour adjusted to accommodate the focus group interviews. However, there were no material benefits on the part of the participants. The teachers were only likely to benefit in terms of knowledge gained during the study which they may later utilise to improve their classroom practice. Learners also benefitted in various other non-material ways. Firstly, they learnt to work with others as a team. Then, they also improved their self-esteem as they gathered courage to ask questions or perform some of the oral art forms in front of others. Their confidence was also boosted as they shared what they knew with others. Finally, the learners also gained knowledge on new oral art forms that they might not have known before participating in the study. Thus, in this study, the benefits far outweighed the risks for the participants.

Respect for human dignity as a principle of research ethics includes the right to self - determination. This principle is referred to as autonomy, where the participant is given the freedom to choose to participate or not to (Bless et.al., 2006). In this study, the researcher ensured autonomy by providing the participants with as much information as possible on their involvement in case they chose to participate. Gray (2014:75) points out that “to ensure informed consent the participants should be given sufficient and accessible information about the study to allow them to make an informed decision whether to be involved or not". In this study, the researcher fulfilled freedom of choice by making the participants aware of what the study aimed to fulfil, that they could participate or refuse to, who will access the data and how it will be used. The researcher also explained to the respondents how anonymity would be preserved since respect to privacy is a basic human right. As for learners who are minors,

even though parental consent was sought, this information was still explained to them so that they could decide for themselves if they wanted to participate or not as well. Regarding this, Fine and Sandstrom (1988) cited in (Cohen et al., 2011:79), clearly point out that:

Children should be told as much as possible, even if some of them cannot understand the full explanation. Their age should not diminish their rights, although their level of understanding must be considered in explanations that are shared with them.

Thus, in this study, the researcher gave the learners some explanation to the effect that she would be watching them at play because she is interested in their games and rhymes. This was sufficient to provide a measure of informed consent compatible with their understanding. Crow et al., (2006) also argue that, if informed consent is sought, the participants are likely to have more confidence in the research and so become more open and franker in their responses. The researcher also fully explained to the learners that they were free to withdraw from the study (especially from focus group interviews), without any repercussions, even if they and their parents might have consented before.

Deception as an ethical principle was also avoided by sticking to the time frames indicated in the participant consent form for interviews. There was no interference with the learners' learning times. Finally, justice as an ethical principle was also ensured by the researcher's non-discrimination of the participants on any basis such as gender, race, and status among others.

#### **4.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

When the researcher goes through the information, he/she has gathered and tries to give meaning to it, the process is called data analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Kothari and Garg, 2014; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The analyst dissects the data, tries to conceptualize it, developing categories from those concepts relying on different characteristics and trends so that a clear picture of what is hidden or implied comes out. Thus, by so doing the researcher has room to explore all possibilities before arriving at any interpretation or conclusion. The researcher analyses the data to generate findings that are grounded, emerge from the data and are not preconceived by the researcher. This, therefore, calls for use of various analytical tools (Patton, 2002; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2014; Magwa and Magwa, 2015).

#### 4.6.1 Analytical tools

Corbin and Strauss (2008:85) emphasize that, it is important to analyse data through various analytical tools to generate findings that have substance and contribute to knowledge development. They succinctly highlight the critical need for use of various analytical tools thus:

To generate new knowledge requires sensitivity to the multi-layers of meaning that are embedded in data. Analytic tools are heuristic devices that promote interaction between the analyst and the data, and that assist the analyst to understand possible meaning. Analytic tools are used to probe the data, stimulate conceptual thinking, increase sensitivity, provoke alternative interpretations of data and allow free flow of ideas.

They further explain that in qualitative research, data analysis is a continuous process that begins during data gathering and continue after. From the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that the tools allow the analyst to discover trends that emerge for him/her. They allow for a generation of hypotheses instead of testing preconceived ones. It also becomes clear that meaning is not fixed and neither is it a given. It comes out of interaction between the analyst and the data itself based on various variables, a process which allows for critical thinking, probing and reinterpreting from different perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Bogdan and Biklen, 2003; Blaikie, 1991). The following tools of analysis as highlighted by Corbin and Strauss (2008) played a critical role in this study as the researcher posed several questions, made comparisons, checked on various meanings of words, looked at language and emotions expressed and drew from personal experiences on the various categories that emerged from the data. These analytic tools were quite relevant for analysis of data in this study as they are in line with the theoretical frameworks upon which analysis of Shona children's oral art forms is based, that is Critical Discourse Analysis, Afrocentric thought and Constructivism. The frameworks call for critical examination of phenomena from various perspectives to come up with context relevant meaning. Gray (2014) argues that discourse analysis is another way of analysing data in qualitative studies as it seeks to show how both spoken and written language is used in social contexts. Gray (2014:622) thus posits that, "In discourse analysis, focus is on recognising the regularities in language in terms of patterns and repertoires which do not emanate from the individual but are embedded in culturally and socially constructed situations". The idea of interpreting things in situational contexts be they physical or spatial is also key in Afrocentric thought which emphasises the idea of 'centeredness', locating and analysing issues within the context of a people's own cultural reference (Asante, 1990; 2003;

2013). This construction of meaning in context is also key in constructivism where learning by nature is said to be collaborative and context bound, (both cultural and social contexts are important). Each of the analytical tools and how the researcher applied it in this study is briefly discussed below.

As a tool for analysis asking questions allowed the researcher to thoroughly scrutinise, develop tentative answers, think outside the box and familiarise with the information at hand. This created room for the researcher to get past the block of not knowing where to start and get off the ground (Lamott, 1994). In this study, various types of questions were asked of data. Corbin and Strauss (2008) give four types of questions that a researcher can ask: Firstly, they give sensitizing questions which help tune the researcher into what the data might be indicating for example, “What is going on here?” The second type they give are theoretical questions which help the researcher see processes and variations, among other things, allowing for the making of connections between concepts, for example, in this study the following questions were asked “What could happen if children’s oral art forms become part of classroom interactions?”, “How have children’s oral art forms in Shona changed overtime?” The third type of questions is what they call practical questions which provide direction for the analyst, for example in this study the following questions asked fell under this category: “Which oral art forms can be linked to pedagogy? For which concepts or areas are they relevant?” The final category is that of guiding questions which are more critical during data gathering as they guide the interviews, observations and analyses of these. A point to be noted here is that the questions may usually be open ended at the beginning of the research but later become more focused and refined as the research moves on (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Thus, in this study such guiding questions were found to be really useful as they helped keep the researcher on track, especially in cases like interviews where the respondents had so much to say and sometimes wanted to go on and on.

Making comparisons is another tool that allows the researcher to compare data for differences and similarities. This ensures a more flexible and creative approach to the analysis of the data. The researcher is also able to discover variations and general patterns that emerge from the data resulting in qualification or altering of interpretations made earlier on as making comparisons “forces the researchers to examine their own basic assumptions, their biases, perspectives and those of the participants,” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:78). Thus, making comparisons and looking at various meanings of words is another tool that was employed to look at data during analysis, especially interview data and analysis of the children’s oral art

forms that were gathered. In this study this allowed the researcher to look at various sociolinguistic variables such as code-switching, borrowing, language and gender, political innuendoes among other aspects. Also, during analysis of interview data, this helped the researcher not to rush to conclusions or to accept her own interpretation of what the interviewees had said but she had to carefully explore all possible meanings of what was being said be it through words, statements or paralinguistic features. This also gave room for brainstorming to include even far-fetched meanings which could later be discarded if found to be improbable or irrelevant to the data under scrutiny, in this case children's oral art forms.

Language also played a pivotal role during data analysis more so, in a research that is being pursued from a sociolinguistic perspective which has to do with language and society. As put forth by Corbin and Strauss (2008:82), language used, that is register, can tell a lot about a situation, for it "is often rich, very descriptive and worth paying attention to because it can provide considerable insight into the situation under study." This close look at language also provided the researcher with the opportunity to look at emotions expressed, which should not be overlooked any way, as they are part of the context and often function as cues from the participants as to the meaning of the event from their perspective.

Finally, the analyst, being a member of the Shona speaking community, from which the children's oral art forms are drawn, was also able to draw from personal experience without imposing it upon the situation, to bring up other possibilities of meaning derived from the data under analysis.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

The research methodology employed in this study has been outlined in this chapter. The research was steeped within the qualitative approach paradigm. The paradigm allows an insider perspective since data is collected at the site where the issue or problem under study is experienced. It has also been considered relevant because of several advantages it has over other paradigms such as allowing the researcher to use multiple methods and theoretical frameworks, which allows for triangulation of data. The methods of data collection, that is the questionnaire, observation, the standardised open-ended interview, focus group interviews and document analysis have been discussed. The questions, themes to be explored and participants involved determined the choice of the methods. For example, the focus group interview was deemed appropriate for learners to accommodate the numbers involved and the need for learners to perform some of the oral art forms, while, the standardised open-ended

interviews were used with teachers. The advantages and disadvantages of each of the methods have been highlighted. Creswell's (2013) data collection cycle is also discussed since it was followed during data collection. The population, sample and sampling technique have also been outlined. The researcher also outlined how she ensured that ethical issues such as beneficence, informed consent, autonomy and deception were adhered to. Data analysis tools such as posing questions, making comparisons, checking various meanings of words, critical analysis of language and emotions as well as drawing from personal experiences that were employed during data analysis, in conjunction with Critical Discourse Analysis, Afrocentric Thought and Constructivism have been discussed as well.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents, and analyses data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, observation and document analysis. Data from questionnaires and interviews is analysed just after presentation for each category. Data from observation and document analysis is also concurrently used to validate or corroborate that from the former.

#### 5.2 DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

Data from the questionnaire is presented first. The questionnaire is in three parts. Part A looks at the biographical data of the respondents. Part B looked at the teachers' perceptions on various aspects to do with Shona children's oral art forms. Part C focused on teacher knowledge and use of these children's oral art forms in their classroom practices. The questionnaire return rate is shown in the Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Questionnaire return rate**

Area	No Issued	Returned	Not Returned/Discarded	% Returned
Urban	20	20	0	100
Peri urban	20	20	0	100
Rural Resettlement	20	16	4	80
Rural	20	19	1	95
Total	80	75	5	93.75

The researcher distributed 80 questionnaires as indicated in the table above. In the urban and peri-urban there was a 100% return rate. 3 questionnaires, 1 from the rural category and 2 from the rural resettlement were incomplete since the respondents just completed Section A and B where they were required to place an X or tick. Section C was left blank, yet it was meant to elicit descriptive data on important issues pertaining to teacher knowledge and use of oral art forms and classroom practice. 2 questionnaires were not returned. Thus, the researcher ended up working with 75 completed questionnaires (93.75%) instead of the 80 initially intended. Scholars posit that questionnaire return rate varies depending on how the



questionnaire was administered. In this, case it was quite high since the researcher administered them in person, an approach which Nulty (2008) posits results in higher response rates. The percentage return rate is quite acceptable since it falls well above 80% which is considered a good response rate in research (Fincham, 2008; Fryrear, 2015).

### 5.2.1 Biographical data

The first part of the questionnaire was mainly concerned with the biographical data of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire. This was deemed necessary as it might help to give insights to the sort of people who constituted the sample. Table 5.2 shows the distribution of respondents by age.

**Table 5.2 Distribution of respondents by age**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
20-25	1	1.3%
26-30	0	0
31-35	14	18.7
36-40	10	13.3.
41+	50	66.7
Total	75	100

Table 5.2 shows that 1 (1.3%) respondent, the youngest, is between 20 and 25 years, 14 (18.7%) respondents fall within 31-35 years, 10 (13.3%) respondents are between 36 and 40 years while 50 (66.7%) of the respondents are in the 41+ category. This clearly indicates that the respondents qualify to be teachers as they are all within the acceptable age range for one to be accepted in the teaching profession, which is above 18 and below the retirement age of 65 years.

**Table 5.3 Distribution of respondents by gender**

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	27	36
Female	48	64

Table 5.3 shows that, in terms of gender 48 females (64%) and 27 males (36%) responded to the questionnaire. This may indicate that there are more female teachers than males at pre and primary school. This trend is not surprising since teaching has always been considered a profession for females due to the dynamics of child rearing. Women are believed to be endowed with loads of patience when it comes to dealing with young children hence males who join this profession, especially at pre and primary level are viewed as shrewd opportunists, (Nyoni and Nyoni, 2012). Dyanda, Makoni, Mudukuti, and Kuyayama (2005:79) carried out a study to evaluate ECD programmes in Zimbabwe and observed that,

The evaluation found strong and negative views regarding the employment of men in ECD programmes/classes. The views against employment of men in ECD were very specific.

Such hostile societal attitudes towards male teachers as Dyanda et al. (2005) found out might account for the skewed numbers of male versus female teachers at pre and primary level where females dominate. Apart from that, demographic data shows that in Zimbabwe there are more females (52%) than males (48 %) in terms of population ratio. Even though more females participated in the study, the sample is balanced in that both genders are represented.

**Table 5.4 Distribution of respondents by qualification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Diploma in Education	41	54.7
Bachelor's Degree	33	44
Master's Degree	1	1.3
Total	75	100

The results presented in Table 5.4 show respondents' qualifications which indicate that they are all trained professionals with 41 (54.7 %) of them being degree holders and 34 (45.3%) holding diplomas.

**Table 5.5 Distribution of respondents by experience**

<b>Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
0-5	0	0
6-10	26	34.7
11-15	0	0
16-20	12	16
21-25	37	49.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

In terms of experience 37 (49.3%) of the respondents have more than 20 years' experience, 12 (16%) respondents have between 10- and 19-years' experience while 26 (34.7) have less than 10 years' experience (Table 5.5). Those with less than 10 years' experience are the ones more concentrated in the rural areas (18 out of the 19) and most of them are diploma holders (15 out of the 19). Experience and level of qualification might have influenced the placement of teachers as most of those in the 41+ category are degree holders and are concentrated more in the urban and peri urban. The biographical data clearly indicates that most of the respondents are mature professionals who are experienced and qualified to teach at this level, hence, the information they gave may reflect genuinely on what is going on, on the ground. Therefore, it is information that the researcher can rely on.

The respondents also taught across all levels with 20 (26.7%) of the respondents teaching at Early Childhood Development (ECD) level, 20 (26.7 %) at Infant level and 35 (46.7%) at Junior level. The higher percentage of respondents at junior level is a result of the fact that in some rural and rural resettlement schools there are fewer classes for ECD and Infant levels but more for junior levels. More respondents thus, ended up coming from the junior level. Despite that, all levels were represented in questionnaire response.

### **5.2.2 Teachers perceptions of Shona children's oral art forms**

Section B of the questionnaire sought to find out teachers 'perceptions on various issues pertaining to Shona children's oral art forms. The levels of agreement to these from the 75

questionnaires considered are presented in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6 Levels of agreement**

Item	SA		A		D		SD		N/S	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Useful tools for teaching and learning across the curriculum	47	62.66	27	36	1	1.3	0	0	0	0
2. Should be infused in classroom interactions.	48	64	26	34.6	1	1.3	0	0	0	0
3. There is nothing beneficial for learners from Shona children's oral art forms.	1	1.3	1	1.3	34	45.3	39	52	0	0
4. Children's oral art forms are simply play and only function as gap fillers during teaching.	2	2.6	8	10.6	41	54.6	24	32	1	1.3
5. English rhymes and games are better than Shona ones.	3	4	6	8	31	41.3	34	45.3	1	1.3
6. Teachers should teach and encourage their learners to perform Shona children's oral art forms.	38	50.6	37	49.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. Shona children's oral art forms rich in cultural values.	49	65.3	26	34.6	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. Learners perform Shona rhymes and games during break.	38	50.6	35	46.6	1	1.3	0	0	1	1.3
9. Only relevant for some	7	9.3	19	25.3	21	28	24	32	4	5.3

subjects not all										
10.No longer relevant in the advent of technology	1	1.3	2	2.6	30	40	41	54.6	1	1.3

**KEY:** SA Strongly Agree, A Agree, D Disagree; SA Strongly Disagree; N/S Not Sure, f frequency; R; Respondents

From Table 5.6, above 62.66% of the respondents strongly agreed that children’s oral art forms in Shona are useful tools for teaching and learning across the curriculum, while 36% of the respondents agreed to the notion. Only 1 respondent disagreed. This shows that most of the respondents perceive Shona children’s oral art forms as useful pedagogical tools for teaching and learning. The same positive perception was also reflected on the need for teachers to infuse these children’s oral art forms in classroom interactions where 64% and 34.6 % of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the notion respectively. One respondent again disagreed. The stray 1.3 % that disagreed in both cases might be a result of ignorance of these oral art forms or merely glossing over the statement without giving it much thought.

Most of the respondents, 97.3% were against the notion that Shona children’s oral art forms have no benefits for learners. This was explicit from the 45.3% who disagreed while 52 % strongly disagreed. This shows that the teachers perceive Shona children’s oral art forms as being beneficial for the learners. This is also reflected in the respondents’ rejection of the idea that the children’s oral art forms are simply play and function as gap fillers during teaching. 54.6 disagreed and 32% strongly disagreed. However, on this notion (item 4) worrying is the quite significant percentage of respondents, 13.2% who believe that, children’s oral art forms are play and just function as gap fillers during lessons. This is so as it greatly impacts on item 6 which looks at the teachers’ role in teaching of these and encouraging learners to perform Shona children’s oral art forms. Despite this worrying trend, all the respondents 100% believed that it is the teacher’s responsibility to teach and encourage learners to perform Shona children’s oral art forms.

The same trend is also reflected on the idea that English rhymes are better than Shona ones. Even though, most of the respondents 86.6% (41.3 disagreed and 45.3 strongly disagreed), 12 % of the respondents still believed that English rhymes are better than Shona ones, 1 respondent (1.3%) was not sure. The fact that 12% of the respondents still believe English

rhymes are superior to Shona ones might have influence on rhymes that learners might be made to perform or rhymes that teachers prefer to teach their learners. This argument, among others, is explored further in the discussion of the findings.

On the issue of children learning cultural values and norms from the Shona oral art forms that they perform, there was a 100% total agreement response rate as the following responses show: 49 (65.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 26 (34.6) of the respondents agreed with the notion. Most of the respondents also agreed that they have heard learners perform these rhymes and games at school during break-time. 50.6% of the respondents strongly agreed, 46.6% agreed while one respondent disagreed, and one was not sure. This shows that children do perform these as part of their play. This the researcher also observed at some of the schools where she witnessed learners reciting rhymes and performing some games in groups at break times and lunch hour. This observation was possible since during data gathering in the schools, the researcher would spend a lot of time in the schools.

On relevance across the curriculum, 9.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and 25.3% agreed that they are only relevant for teaching some not all subjects. However, 28% disagreed and 32% strongly disagreed with that view. 5.3% were not sure. Despite these divergent views on relevance across the curriculum, most of the respondents strongly believe that even in the advent of technology these children's oral art forms are still relevant. A paltry 3.9% of the respondents believed they are no longer relevant, 1.3% indicated not sure but 94.6% of the respondents indicated that they are still relevant (40% disagreed and 54.6% strongly disagreed that they are irrelevant).

### **5.2.3 Teacher knowledge and use of the oral art forms and classroom practice.**

As indicated earlier on, Section C of the questionnaire has open ended questions that required detailed information on the teachers' knowledge of the children's oral art forms, benefits of performing them and use in classroom interactions. Data from this section of the questionnaire is presented in this section. Categories for presentation are drawn from the key aspects the respondents focused on in their responses to the questions. Where numbers are involved in the presentation, the researcher tallied similar responses item by item to come up with the number of respondents with similar views. Some of the oral art forms given as examples are analysed in the process of data presentation to tease out the various sociolinguistic tenets embedded therein.

### 5.2.4 Teachers' understanding of children's oral art forms in Shona

The first item on the open-ended Section C of the questionnaire required the respondents to express their understanding of Shona children's oral art forms. It was intended to see whether teachers were knowledgeable of these and could tease them out of the plethora of other Shona oral art forms that may not necessarily be performed for or by children. It was also meant to elicit how teachers defined children's oral art forms. Table 5.7 gives an overview of how teachers who responded to the questionnaire attempted to define children's oral art forms in Shona. These are in no order but capture what was most frequent in responses given by the respondents.

**Table 5.7 Teachers' understanding of children's oral forms**

Broad View	Respondents	%	Actual Responses by Respondents
Performances	28	37.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. These are children's performances of rhymes, game songs, folktales and riddles using Shona language.</li> <li>2. Activities that children engage in during their spare/free time.</li> <li>3. Activities that learners engage in during play.</li> </ol>
Games	24	32	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Games whereby learners learn through play using language.</li> <li>2. Games like songs, <i>ngano</i>, <i>zvira</i> and rhymes that learners do.</li> </ol>
Types	10	13.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Songs, game songs, rhymes and stories told in Shona</li> <li>2. These are rhymes, poems, riddles,</li> </ol>

			folktales and other types of child play.
Function	13	17.3	<p>1. These are games that promote children’s ability to use language, think fast and play with others.</p> <p>2. These are ways of communicating knowledge or information through songs, stories, folktales, rhymes, lullabies etc.</p> <p>3. These are ways of receiving, preserving and transmitting cultural material orally from one generation to another.</p> <p>4. Games that have to do with transmission of culture from one generation to another.</p>
Total	75	100	

The respondents defined children’s oral art forms in terms of four broad categories, that is, as performances, as games, in terms of type and function. The responses given as tabulated above indicate that the respondents do understand what these children’s oral art forms are. However, it should be noted here that some definitions were rather general. For example, not all activities that children engage in during their free time can be called oral art forms. Oral art form performances entail the use of language to express information or ideas by word of mouth from one person to another or within a group. This use of language is also explicit in the respondents’ understanding of Shona children’s oral art forms as the following definitions by some of the respondents show, “These are children’s performances of rhymes, game songs, folktales and riddles using Shona language”. Another example is, “Songs, game songs, rhymes and stories told in Shona”.

Definitions by function seem to indicate that the respondents are aware of the value of oral art forms in as far as conserving and transmitting culture is concerned. They seem to be aware that they are not simply child’s play but serve a purpose for the society in which they are performed. This is in line with what many scholars have pointed out about the various children’s oral art forms, that they are an important tool for socialisation of the young into the



roles and customs of their communities (Chivasa and Mutswanga, 2014; Leketsa, 2013; Salami and Oyaremi, 2012; Chitando, 2008; Gombe, 2006; Masuku and Ndawi, 2001). Another important aspect brought out in this broad view of children’s oral art forms is that they are also beneficial to the children who perform them: “These are games that promote children’s ability to use language, think fast and play with others”. This view posits that benefits go beyond socialisation by also imparting and developing skills that are of benefit to the learners themselves (Muwati et al. 2016; Makaudze, 2013; Makina, 2009).

### 5.2.5 Types and examples of the oral art forms

This item was open ended and gave the respondents the freedom to give the different types of Shona children’s oral art forms that they know. It also requested them to give examples under each type that they had indicated. All the examples given by the respondents are summarised in Table 5.8 under the categories that emerged from the respondents’ responses.

**Table 5.8 Types and examples of the oral art forms**

	<b>Examples</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Shona</b>	<b>Other</b>
Game songs	1. <i>Dudu muduri</i> (Crush it in the mortar) 2. <i>Zvamutsana mutsana</i> (A brawl has started) 3. <i>Uyo ndiani?</i> (Who is that one?) 4. <i>Chibata mabvi chauya</i> (The knee weakener/cramp has gripped us) 5. Amina 6. <i>Tauya kuzoona Mary</i> (We have come to see Mary)	1. Dance around together 2. I am a little tea pot 3. I am a little donkey
Rhymes	1. <i>Mwana wenyu wachema vakoma!</i> (Your child has cried sister)	1. Granny in the kitchen

		<p>2. Three fingers up</p> <p>3. Colours! Colours! Colours!</p> <p>4. Twinkle      twinkle little star</p> <p>5. Showers of rain</p>
Songs	<p>1. <i>Mwanangu Chiramwiwa</i> (My child Chiramwiwa)</p> <p>2. <i>Tumaoko tumaoko</i> (Little hands little hands)</p>	<p>1. Humpty Dumpty</p> <p>2. Polly put the kettle on</p> <p>3. Twinkle twinkle little star</p> <p>4. Ba ba black sheep</p>
Folktales	<p>1. <i>Zizi nanhengure</i> (Owl and nhengure)</p> <p>2. <i>Tsuro naGudo</i> (Hare and Baboon)</p> <p>3. <i>Murume, mukadzi neshumba</i> (Husband, wife and the lion)</p>	
Other	<p>1. nhodo (jacks)</p> <p>2. chitsvambe (debt/game of tag)</p> <p>3. mahumbwe (simulating family life)</p>	

Four types of children's oral art forms were given by the respondents. These, the researcher later realised during document analysis, are the ones that appear in the Indigenous Languages Syllabus as part of content to be taught. Hence, whether they teach these or not teachers are

aware of them. However, games like *nhodo* (jacks), *chitsvambe* (debt/game of tag) and *mahumbwe* (simulating family life) were also given as examples. Although *nhodo* is a children's game, it cannot be viewed as an oral art form per se, since it is not recited or narrated by word of mouth. There is not much use of language but more of activity. Mawere (2012:57) classifies it under "children's games that are meant to increase creativity, accuracy and motor skills". Thus, it is not an oral art form in the strictest sense of the word, but a game. The same can be said of *chitsvambe*, which is a game that teaches dodging and vigilance since one must be alert in order not to remain with the *chitsvambe*. *Mahumbwe* on the other hand, can also be considered more of a role play activity that children engage in. It teaches children the ethics of care and responsibility involved in roles played by family members in running the home in adult life. Thus, even though they are children's games, in the context of this study, they do not fit in the category of oral art forms being looked at.

Another anomaly noted on this item is that, even though it is clearly stated that oral art forms in Shona are the focus of the item, when giving examples, the respondents went on to give examples of English oral art forms as well especially under rhymes and game songs. This might be an indicator that the teachers are more used to having their learners reciting English rhymes and game songs as well. This is so because in the case of rhymes and songs for example, more examples are given for English (nine) but fewer for Shona (three), for which examples had been called. This juxtapositioning of Shona and English examples is understandable, due to the diglossic state of English and Shona in the Zimbabwean context. English has for long enjoyed a prestigious position, being the only language of education (Kadenge and Nkomo, 2011). It was only until recently when indigenous languages came into the picture mostly at infant level. However, for folktales all examples were given in Shona and not any other language. This could be an indication that they are mostly narrated in Shona.

Even in cases where we have Shona rhyme equivalents, it was funny that one would know an English one instead of the Shona one. One such example is the case of 'Showers of rain'. It goes:

Showers of rain! Showers of rain!

Shiiii! Shiiii! Shiiii!

The learners will be rubbing the palms together and this is followed by a clap.

In Shona we have *Mvura naya naya* (Come rain! Come rain!), a Shona rhyme that one thought could be given as an example even though this was not the case. It goes:

*Mvura naya-naya* (Come rain! Come rain!)

*Tidye mupunga* (So we can eat rice)

*Mvura naya-naya* (Come rain! Come rain!)

*Tidye makavhu* (So we can eat bottle gourd)

*Mvura naya-naya* ((Come rain! Come rain!)

*Tidye chibage* ((So we can eat mealies)

*Mvura naya-naya* ((Come rain! Come rain!)

*Tidye manwiwa* (So we can eat watermelons)

When one compares the content of the two rhymes, *Mvura naya naya* is more loaded with content that is relevant to the African way of life. Being a seasonal song very popular during the rainy season, it helps children broaden their knowledge of the crops that are grown in their environment, the likes of pumpkins, mealies, water melons, among others. It also instils in the children the importance of the coming of the rain season. Once the rain has fallen, people are able to plough and grow the various crops for subsistence. Even though they might have food in granaries, the coming of rain brings joy. It is an indication that fresh foods such as green mealies, *makavhu* (bottle gourd) and water melons that are not available during other seasons will be available for the children's enjoyment. Although the season comes with lots of work, the children still welcome it with joy because of the benefits thereof. Thus, they begin to build a strong work ethic and respect for labour which are important Afrocentric values (Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa, 2012; Mandova and Chingombe, 2013).

### **5.2.6 Where and how often learners perform them during classroom interactions**

The common responses from the teachers who responded to the questionnaire on the relevance of Shona children's oral art forms to their teaching are summarised in Table 5.9 under the categories where, why and how often performed.

**Table 5.9 When performed and frequency**

Where?	Respondents	%	Why?	How often?
Introduction	73	97.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.To introduce new concepts.</li> <li>2.To get the learners focused.</li> <li>3.To draw learners' attention.</li> <li>4.To link the new lesson to the previous one.</li> <li>5. To motivate learners.</li> <li>6. To enhance learners' readiness to learn.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Daily.</li> <li>2.When necessary.</li> <li>3.Sometimes.</li> </ol>
Lesson development	35	46.7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To reinforce important points.</li> <li>2. As the main content of the lesson.</li> <li>3. To keep learners alert.</li> <li>4. To give learners the opportunity to practice using language.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sometimes.</li> <li>2. When necessary.</li> </ol>

Conclusion	43	57.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To check learners' understanding.</li> <li>2. To tie up loose ends.</li> <li>3. To help learners revise what has been taught.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sometimes.</li> <li>2. When necessary.</li> </ol>
Other	10	13.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As a changeover activity when switching over to another lesson.</li> <li>2. To silence the learners when they are making noise.</li> <li>3. To keep learners occupied when busy with other things.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most of the times.</li> <li>2. Sometimes.</li> </ol>

The introduction was the most popular aspect for which 73 respondents out of the 75 (97.3%) indicated they used some of the children's oral art forms. The fact that 'daily' was the most frequent response for use under introduction shows that teachers do use the children's oral art forms as ways of introducing lessons. The reasons given for using them to introduce lessons also show that the teachers do make a conscious effort to infuse these as an introduction strategy since they are aware of why they are doing so. Worrying though is the fact that during lesson development and conclusion 'sometimes' and 'when necessary' only, feature under frequency (the percentages also went down to 46.7% and 57.3% respectively). It indicates the non-committal way teachers use these, even though there are quite plausible reasons given as to why these could be very meaningfully infused. The same trend is seen in

the reasons by the 13.3% respondents who indicated 'other' where these children's oral art forms are viewed as gap fillers. This shows that the children's oral art forms are sometimes perceived as entertaining activities in which children just play and do not really learn.

### **5.2.7 Relevance to teaching**

On this item all the respondents (100%) indicated that the various children's oral art forms are relevant to teaching. Their relevance was justified through the various reasons listed below:

- (i) They help make learning interesting/enjoyable for learners.
- (ii) They give learners the opportunity to participate more freely.
- (iii) They help in reinforcing main points of the lesson especially during lesson development and conclusion.
- (iv) They help get the learners focused especially when used during the introduction.
- (v) The repetitions in most of the game songs and rhymes help learners remember concepts taught.
- (vi) They make understanding easier.
- (vii) They help learners acquire knowledge.
- (viii) They help learners learn language by using it.
- (ix) They give learners the opportunity to interact among themselves during the lesson.
- (x) Lay a foundation for children's communication skills.

The benefits of using these oral art forms given by the teachers are in line with observations made by several theorists and psychologists among them Piaget (1962), Bruner (1961), Vygotsky (1967), Montessori (1970) and Froebel(1782-1852) among others, who are all agreed that play based learning is an effective way of promoting children's intellectual, social and emotional development (Singer, Golinkoff and Sharp, 2006). These aspects are reflected in the responses given by the respondents above. The various oral art forms are performed in a playful environment which is fertile ground for children to discover the world, in the process effectively promoting children's intellectual, social and emotional faculties (Akpan and Beard, 2016; Mawere, 2012; Nyota and Mapara, 2008). Some of the responses also indicate that the oral art forms can be used throughout the lesson from the introduction, body and conclusion, which is an ideal situation that the researcher advocates for in this study. If teachers know that this is possible, one then wonders what stops them from doing so.

Despite the respondents giving such plausible reasons to justify relevance of the children’s oral art forms to teaching and learning, a look at responses in item 3 which required them to indicate where used, why used and frequency reflects a non-committal attitude to use of these as pedagogical tools. Even during document analysis, in the schemes the oral art forms do appear quite regularly at infant level but just occasionally at junior level.

### 5.2.8 Curriculum areas and concepts taught

The teachers identified several curriculum areas where Shona children’s oral art forms can be infused. They also pointed out various concepts for which the oral art forms can be meaningfully used to teach. These are summarised in Table 5.10.

**Table 5.10 Curriculum area and concepts**

<b>Curriculum Area Indicated in Order of Most Frequent</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
Indigenous Languages/English	75	100	1. Development of listening and speaking skills. 2. Composition and comprehension 3. Vocabulary 4. Cultural values and norms 5. Poetry 6. Syllables and Word formation
Physical Education/ Visual and Performing Arts	73	97.3	1. Warm up activities 2. Dodging 3. Balancing 4. Cooling down
Maths and Science	68	90.7	1. Operations such



			as addition and subtraction 2.Sets 3.Shapes
Mass Displays	52	69.3	1. coordination 2.balancing 3.gymnastics
RME/Family Studies	48	64	1.Living together 2.Family
Heritage Studies/Social Studies	41	54.7	1. Occupations 2.Transport 3.Origin of things
Agriculture/HIV and AIDS/Home economics	5	6.7	1.Importance of agriculture 2.Types of crops 3.Pests and diseases 4.Causes and prevention of HIV and AIDS 5.Health and Nutrition

From Table 5.10, the respondents' responses clearly show that the oral art forms have relevance in all subject areas taught at pre- and primary school. One can conclude that there is a general belief that the oral art forms can be used during classroom interactions across the curriculum. However, lesson observation and document analysis (schemes), showed that at infant level, transitional activities at the beginning and ending of almost every lesson, are in the form of rhymes and game songs which means they are a daily occurrence, but as we go up to junior levels this is not so. Once in a while a game song is used as an introduction but in most cases, it is recap of the previous lesson in the form of a question and answer session.

### **5.2.9 Language preferred for performance**

Item 6 sought the language in which the respondents preferred the learners to perform the

oral art forms. The responses are summarised in Table 5.11.

**Table 5.11 Preferred language of performance**

Language	Respondents	%	Reasons
Shona	67	89.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is their mother tongue.</li> <li>2. Concepts are better understood in mother tongue.</li> <li>3. It is the language they converse in most of the times especially at home.</li> <li>4. Learners will have pride in their own language and culture.</li> <li>5. Learners become comfortable when they communicate with ease.</li> <li>6. It helps make the transition from home to school smooth.</li> <li>7. It reduces anxiety and gives learners security.</li> </ol>
English	2	2.7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most of the subjects are taught in English.</li> <li>2. They already know Shona, so they better learn the new language early.</li> <li>3. These are easy to access on the internet.</li> </ol>
Both	6	8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. So that learners grasp both languages concurrently since they are both national languages.</li> <li>2. It is better to use both, start with Shona then translate to English.</li> </ol>
Total	75	100	

Most of the respondents, 67 (89.3%) indicated that they prefer Shona as the language of performance, 6 respondents (8%) indicated that they preferred both Shona and English while 2 respondents (2.7%) preferred English. The reasons given by those who preferred Shona as the language of performance hinge on the argument that it is their mother tongue, therefore, it makes it easy for learners to understand, communicate and switch from home to school. Their reasons seem quite plausible since asking learners to do something in a language they do not understand is simply torturing them (Kioko, Ndungu, Njoroge, and Mutiga, 2014). Reasons given by those who preferred English were grounded on the argument that since English is the language of instruction for most subjects in the primary school curriculum, save for Shona, then using English rhymes that are easily accessible would make it easy when it comes to application. Respondents who advocated for both languages based their argument on the fact that both languages are national languages.

#### 5.2.10 Relevance to teaching Shona versus English oral art forms

Item 7 required the respondents to indicate the oral art forms which they found more relevant to their teaching Shona or English oral art forms (Table 5.12).

**Table 5.12 Relevance to teaching**

<b>Preferred oral art form</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
Shona	56	74.7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learners feel comfortable reciting/conversing in their mother tongue.</li> <li>2. They are culturally based.</li> <li>3. Learners already know many of them from home.</li> </ol>
English	15	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most subjects are taught in English.</li> <li>2. To ground learners into the new language.</li> <li>3. Using Shona ones would require translation to English.</li> </ol>

Both	4	5.3	1.Children already perform in both languages at play anyway
Total	75	100	

In Table 5.12 above, 56 (74.7 %) of the respondents indicated that Shona rhymes were more relevant to their teaching because learners feel comfortable conversing in their mother tongue, which makes it easier for them to grasp new content basing on their understanding in their mother tongue first (Table 5.12). Their argument is quite consistent with research findings that show that learners benefit from using their home language in early grade years as this makes it easy for them to visualise and grasp new concepts without any language barriers (UNESCO, 1953; 2008a; 2008b; Kioko, et al. 2014). The respondents also pointed out that the advantage of using Shona rhymes and game songs is that learners already know many of them from home and this acts as a bridge linking home and school. This, from Kioko et al.'s (2014) argument allows the learners to easily navigate the new environment and bridge school with experience brought from home. The environment is no longer intimidating since some aspects of what goes on at home are still experienced by the learners, thus giving them an early start in their education. The respondents also emphasised that the oral art forms are culturally based, which makes their use not only relevant but necessary since they are loaded with cultural norms and values.

Although in item 6 only 2 (2.7%) respondents indicated they would prefer performance of oral art forms by their learners to be in English, responses on item 7 on relevance to teaching saw an increase to 15 (20%) of the respondents indicating that they find English rhymes more relevant to their teaching as opposed to Shona ones. The 20% who indicated that they preferred English oral art forms justified their argument by pointing out that most subjects are taught in English. Their argument is quite genuine in that English has for long enjoyed a prestigious position in the Zimbabwean language set up, not only as the main medium of instruction, but also as a measure of educational achievement and an important qualification for higher education and employment (Kadenge and Nkomo, 2011). Thus, their assumption is that, this would help ground learners into the important language. Use of Shona ones was dismissed on the grounds that they would require translation into English, which maybe is extra work for the teachers.

### 5.2.11 Cultural values, skills and other benefits

The respondents' responses to items 8, 9 and 11 which required them to highlight cultural values and norms, skills and other benefits for learners from the various Shona children's oral art forms are summarised in Table 5.13.

**Table 5.13 Cultural values**

Category	Respondents	%	Examples
Virtues/Morals encouraged	75	100	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Unhu/Ubuntu</li> <li>2. respect</li> <li>3. cooperation/team work</li> <li>4. responsibility</li> <li>5. hard work</li> <li>6.honesty</li> <li>7.peaceful co-existence</li> <li>8.forgiveness</li> <li>9.harmonious co-existence with nature</li> </ol>
Vices/Morals discouraged.	75	100	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Cruelty</li> <li>2. jealousy</li> <li>3.selfishness</li> <li>4.covertiousness</li> <li>5. greedy</li> <li>6.violence</li> <li>7.despising/looking down upon others</li> </ol>

**Table 5.14 Skills**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Cognitive skills	75	100	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. critical thinking</li> <li>2. decision making,</li> <li>3. reasoning</li> <li>4. problem-solving</li> <li>5. analysing;</li> <li>6. quick thinking</li> <li>7. remembering previously learnt material</li> <li>8. categorising/classifying things</li> <li>9. applying material to new situations</li> </ol>
Psychomotor skills	68	90.7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. muscle coordination</li> <li>2. dodging</li> <li>3. running</li> <li>4. hand and eye coordination</li> <li>5. speaking</li> <li>6. listening</li> </ol>
Affective Skills	62	82.7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. interpersonal skills</li> <li>2. boosting self -confidence/self -esteem</li> <li>3. tolerance</li> <li>4. appreciating</li> <li>5. valuing self and others</li> <li>6. patience</li> </ol>

**Table 5.15 Other benefits**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Language based benefits	69	92	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.They aid language development.</li> <li>2. Help learners develop pride in their language and culture.</li> <li>3. Help learners learn language by using it.</li> </ol>

Character building benefits	71	94.6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teach learners to follow instructions.</li> <li>2. Teach learners to win with humility and lose with dignity.</li> <li>3. Teach learners to lead and be led.</li> <li>4. Teach learners to be team players.</li> </ol>

Table 5.13 shows that all the respondents were able to highlight cultural values from the Shona children’s oral art forms. This shows that the oral art forms have cultural significance and help connect the children to the culture of their communities (Mweli, 2018; Thompson, et al., 2014). The cultural values embedded in the various oral art forms as given by the respondents in Table 5:13 also reflect the ethos of ubuntu/ unhu that are at the core of Afrocentric thought (Leketsa, 2013; Mandova and Chingombe, 2013; Nyoni and Nyoni, 2012; Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa, 2012; Masolo, 2010; Metz and Gaie, 2010; Nziramasanga, 1999). The skills and other benefits highlighted by the respondents in Tables 5:14 and 5:15 respectively, are also in line with Bloom’s Taxonomy of educational objectives cutting across three domains in learning, that is, psychomotor for example speaking and muscle coordination; cognitive for example critical thinking, decision making, reasoning and problem-solving; and affective for example interpersonal skill, boosting self -confidence/self -esteem among others (Anderson, 2013; Anderson et al., 2000). Even though the teachers might not be aware of this, the fact that their examples fit into the taxonomy is ample evidence that the oral art forms are indeed useful tools for information dissemination. Useful life skills like building of self -esteem, language development, pride in one’s language and culture and living in harmony with nature given under other benefits do reflect that Shona children’s oral art forms are a rich repository of real-life survival skills, norms and values.

**5.2.12 Examples under given types of Shona children’s oral art forms.**

This item is closely related to question 2 in Section C of the questionnaire which required teachers to give different types of Shona children’s oral art forms, the difference being that

question 2 is open and the respondents could give as many types and examples as they knew, however, question 10 is closed in that it states the types and requires respondents to give only two examples of each. This was done in order to elicit more examples on the various types, since under item 2 some respondents gave some and not all the types. However, under this item all respondents were able to give examples even for types they had not given under their own classification in item 2. For example, some respondents who had not mentioned riddles under types of Shona children's oral art forms that they knew were still able to give examples of riddles under this guided item. This shows that the respondents have knowledge of the oral art form but might not have considered it one for children. The most common examples given are captured in the Table 5.16.

**Table 5.16 Riddles**

Type	Examples in order of most frequent	Free translation
Riddles	<p>1. <i>Ndakwira mugomo</i> <i>naMakanyadza- demo</i></p> <p>2. <i>Kuenda humbangu kudzoka</i> <i>humbangu- sasa/gonhi</i></p> <p>3. <i>Rakazvirova rikazhamba-</i> <i>jongwe</i></p> <p>4. <i>Mai vangu vanobika asi</i> <i>vanopenga-mhiripiri</i></p> <p>5. <i>Ndaenda ndiri nhereka</i> <i>ndikadzoka ndiri</i> <i>nhungamakore-chirongo</i></p> <p>6. <i>Pota neko tisangane-</i> <i>mbariro</i></p> <p>7. <i>Ndasiya Kudebu achirohwa</i> <i>hameno akapona/ Tamupota</i></p>	<p>1. I went up the hill with Makanyadza- an axe</p> <p>2. When it goes it makes a noisy rumble, and when it comes back, it also makes a noisy rumble- a door</p> <p>3. It hit itself and cried aloud- a cork</p> <p>4. My mother is a good cook but is hot tempered- pepper</p> <p>5. I went hanging by the side and returned pointing skywards- a clay pot for fetching water</p> <p>6. Go via that side then we will meet- thatching bars</p> <p>7. I left Kudebu being beaten, I am not</p>



	<i>Kazonde-sadza</i>	sure he/she will survive/We have cleared Kazonde- sadza
	8. <i>Ndakwira mugomo ndikaona guvi reropa-nhengeri/tsvanzwa</i>	8.I went up the mountain and saw a pool of blood- sourplum
	9. <i>Ndakwira ndikawana vakanyenama- matohwe</i>	9. I went up the mountain and found the ancestors grinning-snot apple
	10. <i>Nzira mbiri dzinokwirwa mugomo- maburi emhino</i>	10. Two paths that go up the mountain/Two roads that go up the mountains- nostrils

The riddles given as examples carry mostly traditional Shona images in both the challenge and response section. For example, *nhengeri/tsvanzva* (sourplum) and *matohwe* (snot apples) are wild fruits; *sadza* is the Zimbabwean staple food; *chirongo* is a traditional clay pot used for fetching water; *vadzimu* (ancestral spirits) these are at the centre of African traditional religion, Makanyadza, Kudebu and Kazonde are Shona names. Some images also have to do with the natural environment, for example *gomo* (mountain) is common in riddles (see 1, 8, 9, 10) and human body parts for example, *maburi emhino* (nostrils). The images cut across all aspects of human life and the environment. Gwavaranda and Masaka (2008:196) point this out when they posit that Shona riddles cover a range of things that include natural phenomena, the animal world, crops and other foods, the human body parts, utensils and other objects. Although, the two argue that this is evident in the responses, from examples given by the teachers, some riddles do capture these objects even in the challenge. For example, in riddles 1,8,9 and 10 the challenge is built on natural phenomena in the form of ‘*gomo*’ (mountain). Take for example riddle 8 *Ndakwira mugomo ndikaona guvi reropa-nhengeri/tsvanzwa* (I went up the mountain and saw a pool of blood- sour plum)) and 9 *Ndakwira mugomo ndikawana vadzimu vakanyenama- matohwe*. (I went up the mountain and found the ancestors grinning- snot apples) respectively. One has to have knowledge of what is found up the mountain, for example fruits or what goes on up the mountains, in order to come up with the most appropriate response. They require the respondent to reason inductively, one has “to extrapolate from experience to further conclusions”, (Govier, 2005: 292). What one already knows, that is familiar objects or situations, in this case provides

clues for what is unknown but is referred to figuratively so that the respondent can unravel the lateral referent (Gwavaranda and Masaka, 2008; Miruka, 1999; 1994). In the riddles highlighted above, both types of fruits given as responses are normally found in mountainous areas. The colour of blood, red, is another known factor, and this automatically guided the respondent to pick *nhengeni* (sour plum) as a response for riddle 8 among all fruits found up the mountain since it is the one that turns red on ripening. For riddle 9 *matohwe* (snot apples) is also picked instead of any other fruit, because they crack on ripening, hence “*nyenama*” (grin). If the ancestors are grinning, they are smiling broadly as an indication of pleasure. Even if grin is used negatively, as when one draws back their lips when in pain, the bottom line is the lips are apart exposing the teeth just like the split parts of the snot apple. When a person grins the lips are apart, just like the openings that split the *dohwe* into separate parts. Also, in African traditional religion, ancestral worshipping is usually done up the mountains, for example Matonjeni/Mabweadziva (Matopos) a well-known shrine for ancestral worship in Matebeleland South, Zimbabwe. In times of drought, people would go to the shrine to worship, once the ancestral spirits have been appeased, then all is well. So, if one finds something to eat like ripe fruit up the mountain, it is always believed the ancestors will have provided, hence *vadzimu vakanyenama*, the ancestors have smiled broadly at whoever has been luck to come across the ripe fruits.

**Table 5.17 Game songs**

Type	Example	Free translation
Game songs	1. <i>Dudu muduri</i>	1. Crush! Crush it in the mortar!
	2. <i>Dede zangara uyo mutii?</i>	2. Guess what tree is that?
	3. <i>Sarura wako</i>	3. Make your choice
	4. <i>Zai rakaora</i>	4. Rotten egg.
	5. <i>Kamutambo karipano</i>	5. A game about
	6. <i>Sipoti sipoti</i>	6. Spot! Spot!
	7. <i>Kwedu kune nyimo</i>	7. We have round nuts at our plates
	8. <i>Rurerure</i>	8. Sway! Sway!

	<i>9.Zvamutsanamutsana</i>	9. Spotting and chasing.
	<i>10.Bata musoro</i>	10. Touch the head.
	<i>11.Njiva! Njiva iwe njiva!</i>	11.Dove! Dove you dove!
	<i>12.Amina</i>	12.Amina
	<i>13.Ndakatumwa kumabheka</i>	13. I was sent to the bakeries.
	<i>14.Katsuro mugomba</i>	14. A hare in the pit.

In Table 5.17 most of the game songs given are basically Shona compositions touching on the animal world in their content for example *katsuro* (hare) in *Katsuro mugomba*, *tsuro nembwa* (hare and dog) in *Zvamutsana mutsana* (Spotting and chasing), birds as in *njiva* (dove), objects used in the home such as the pestle and mortar in *Dudu muduri*, and trees as in *Dede zangara uyo mutii?* (Guess what tree is that?). The children get knowledge and exposure on a variety of things before we even dig deeper into the values embedded in the game songs. However, three of the game songs have some foreign influence. Among them is *Sipoti Sipoti!* (Spot Spot!) phonologized from spot, (an English word meaning to identify) and reduplicated. It is a game song in the same category as *Sarura Wako* (Make your choice). Both emphasise the need to be careful when making a choice, be it of friends or partners but *Sipoti sipoti!* is more modern as it emanates from the influence of English on Shona. It is a phenomenon which is very common when languages are in contact. In a situation where two or more languages are in contact, there is a tendency for them to end up transferring some features from one to another (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011). In most cases, transference from English, (or any other languages), to Shona is phonological as is in this case.

*Amina* is another one whose title is an anglicised proper noun and deals with issues of immunisation as reflected in “*Amina kadeya---juu jekiseni*” (*Amina of the rickets --- be injected*), as in be immunised. Immunisation is a modern concept which came with Westernisation and its medicines. In traditional Shona society prevention and treatment was through traditional herbs, there were no injections. The third one is *Ndakatumwa kumabheka*

(I was sent to the tuckshops) a historically loaded rhyme. *Mabheka* (tuckshops) are the equivalent of the present-day tuckshops. These mushroomed during the era of industrialisation and urbanisation when shopping centres were established (Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013). The shopping centres were sometimes a distance away from the residential areas and business minded people took advantage of that to cater for the needs of people who did not want to travel that far to get simple daily provisions like bread and milk. Thus, they strategically established these convenient shops within the locations where people lived. Since basically bread was the main commodity stocked, they became ‘*mabheka*’ as in bakeries. Thus, even though new game songs have been coined, and have become part of the contemporary repertoire, the teachers are still aware of the traditional ones as examples given above show.

**Table 5.18 Rhymes/lullabies**

Type	Examples	Free Translation
Rhymes/Lullabies	<p>1. <i>a e i o u nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara</i></p> <p>2. <i>Mwana wachema vakoma</i></p> <p>3. <i>Ruru mwana</i></p> <p>4. <i>Mwanangu chiramwiwa</i></p> <p>5. <i>Zuva kudai</i></p> <p>6. <i>Tinocheka uswa</i></p> <p>7. <i>Madhadha mashanu</i></p> <p>8. <i>Kachembere kegudo</i></p> <p>9. <i>Potsi piri dzava tsuro</i></p> <p>10. <i>Kashiri kabva mudondo</i></p>	<p>1. a e i o u stop crying baby stop</p> <p>2. The baby has cried sister</p> <p>3. Shoo shoo baby</p> <p>4. Chiramwiwa my child</p> <p>5. The sun in this position</p> <p>6. We cut the grass</p> <p>7. Five ducks</p> <p>8. An old female baboon</p> <p>9. One two they are hares</p> <p>10. A small bird has come from the bush.</p>

The rhymes/lullabies given as examples can be put into three categories.

- Traditional Shona lullabies for quietening a crying baby: 2, 3.
- Reading and Counting rhymes: 1, 7, 9.
- The environment and wildlife: 6,8,10
- Religious rhymes 5.

The examples given in Table 5.18 show that the rhymes and lullabies, just like other aspects of the culture in which they are performed have been somehow affected by foreign influences such as formal education, take for instance example 1 in the table above, a e i o u are vowels that are combined with consonants at infant level when learners are taught reading and writing, but a rhyme *Nyarara kuchema mwana* (Stop crying baby), has been coined around them and in combination with syllables as well. Religion (example 5) *Zuva kudai* (The sun in this position) is a popular Sunday school chorus in which the children show different positions of the sun and emphasise that they will always be with Jesus. Despite the teachers still being aware of traditional rhymes, examples analysed here clearly indicate that the rhymes have been open to contemporary influences within the environment in which they are performed. For instance, instead of *Eruruweee! Nyarara mwana!* (Shoo shoo baby! Be quiet!), vowels and syllables have been inserted as in example (i). This argument was later confirmed by the teachers interviewed who indicated that creation of new or reworking already existing rhymes is a common phenomenon.

**Table 5.19 Examples of folktales**

Type	Examples	Free translation
Folktales	<p>1. <i>Tsuro nagudo</i></p> <p>2. <i>Nhangemutange yatsuro nakamba/Nhangemutange yatsuro narwaivhi</i></p> <p>3. <i>Mbira nedzimwe mhuka</i></p> <p>4. <i>Rungano rwemhuka dzesango</i></p> <p>5. <i>Kunyadza muchenjeri</i></p> <p>6. <i>Nzira hadzirwirwi</i></p>	<p>1. Hare and baboon</p> <p>2. A race between hare and tortoise/A race between hare and chameleon.</p> <p>3. Rabbit and other animals</p> <p>4. A tale of wild animals.</p> <p>5. Humbling the cunning one.</p> <p>6. Paths are not fought over.</p>

The examples of folktales given by the teachers in Table 5.19 tended to be the usual traditional forms such as hare and baboon and trickster tales among others. Example 6 is the only one that has human characters, a family on a journey that argues over which path to take. They split, with the son taking a different path only for him to end up in trouble and be rescued by a bird that informed the parents of the danger he was in. Although, most of the tales have animal characters, the fictional characters are simply metaphors for human beings (Finnegan, 2012; Gombe, 2006; Tatira, 2005). His argument is also echoed by Finnegan (2012) who posits that, folktales can be used to comment on or satirise human society and behaviour. She points out that the actions and characters of these animals do manifest human faults, vices and virtues.

### 5.3 PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM INTERVIEWS

As outlined in the methodology chapter, the researcher used two types of interviews. The standardised open-ended interview with teachers and the focus group interview with learners. The summary of interviewees is presented in the Table 5.20.

**Table 5.20 Summary of interviewees**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Description</b>
Interviewee 1	Teacher Infant –Urban
Interviewee 2	Teacher Junior- Urban
Interviewee 3	Teacher Junior- Peri-urban
Interviewee 4	Teacher Infant-Peri-urban
Interviewee 5	Teacher Junior -Rural Resettlement
Interviewee 6	Teacher Infant -Rural Resettlement
Interviewee 7	Teacher Infant –Rural
Interviewee 8	Teacher Junior-Rural
Focus Group 1	Junior Grade 5 Pupils-Urban
Focus Group 2	Junior Grade 6 Pupils- Urban

Focus Group 3	Infant Grade 2 Pupils-Peri- urban
Focus Group 4	Junior Grade 6 Pupils -Peri-urban
Focus Group 5	Junior Grade 5 Pupils -Rural resettlement
Focus Group 6	Infant Grade 2 Pupils -Rural Resettlement
Focus Group 7	Junior Grade 3 Pupils-Rural
Focus Group 8	Junior Grade 5 Pupils-Rural

### 5.3.1 Presentation of data from interviews with teachers

The researcher interviewed two teachers from each category. Thus, eight interviewees were engaged in this process. Their responses are presented under eight key themes based on the questions and how they responded to them. These are: understanding /definition of children’s oral art forms; their value/ relevance to teaching; preferred language of performance; form and content; norms, values and skills and threats to the Shona children’s oral art forms.

#### 5.3.1.1 Interviewee 1 (An experienced ECD and infant specialist)

The interviewee started by highlighting that she considered game songs, rhymes, poems and folktales as children’s oral art forms. She elaborated that they are oral because the children recite, sing or narrate them by word of mouth. She gave two examples, the game song *Chibatamabvi chauya* (The cramp has come) and a folk tale *Nhangemutange yatsuro nagudo* (The race between Hare and Baboon).

The oral art forms she indicated were the most relevant at the level which she teaches. Hence, she pointed out that she uses them daily in her interactions with the learners. Put in her own words she said, “We can’t do without them at ECD and Infant level. These are critical. If it was food, these are an important component of our daily diet”. She also pointed out that the value and relevance of these Shona children’s oral art forms to teaching and learning cannot be over emphasised as they provide the children with an opportunity to learn in a playful manner. She indicated that at pre-school and infant level, there is no better way of ensuring learning other than through play. She then pointed out that there are theorists and psychologists who have carried out studies whose findings attest to this. She gave examples

of Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, Montessori and Froebel among others and pointed out that they all believed play allows children to discover their world. The interviewee summed up on the item on relevance by pointing out that it is only through allowing learners to engage in performances of the various children's oral art forms that an atmosphere for play can be created for their benefit. Her views are in line with scholars like Fisher (2002) and Rieber (2004) who both argue for a learning environment that allows learners to investigate, explore and be part of the action. Fisher (2002) posits that since children are active learners, they need to be provided with a learning environment that offers relevant, meaningful interaction and is worthy of active involvement. Rieber (2004) describes it as a learning environment that encourages children to engage and be active participants. Their views are in tandem with Piaget's position that a child learns through hands on experience, simply put by being in the thick of things, being actively involved. This is in tandem with the constructivist view that emphasises that knowledge is not a passive activity but is actively constructed by the individual (Murphy, 1997; Crowther, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget and Inhelder, 1969).

The interviewee, however, bemoaned the attitudes she says she has observed for a long time, that some of her colleagues teaching the junior classes have labelled the oral art forms "zvinhu zvekuECD neInfant zvenoise" (Noisy ECD and Infant activities). This is what she said verbatim:

It is quite disheartening to realise that colleagues who have gone through college, still look down upon things whose importance they are aware. What then was the purpose of learning those theories at college if we continue disadvantaging learners lecturing them all the time?

She elaborated further and pointed out that this is still the perception some of the teachers have, even though, research has shown that such activities (done playfully) are critical in the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of children. They are also critical for children's personality development and afford them the opportunity to practise their linguistic, cognitive and social skills. She summed up her views on the importance of Shona children's oral art forms thus:

*Dai maticha aiziva hawo kuti vana vanobata zvinhu sei through these oral art forms, vaisamboswera vachizhaka vana pavanotadza, asi kuvaitisa izvi kuti vanzwisise uye vasakanganwa.*

(If only teachers knew how much learners grasp concepts through these oral art forms,



they wouldn't expend their energy beating learners, but would just have them perform these to enhance their understanding and memory.)

The interviewee also made her comments on the form and content of Shona children's oral art forms in the contemporary set up. She indicated that these have not been spared of the changes that are taking place within the socio-cultural, economic, political and technological spheres. She pointed out that it is not surprising to hear different versions of either a rhyme, game song or folktale from the learners. For example, she said that learners now narrate folktales that can involve Hare and Baboon going to Chicken Inn, stealing bread from a bread van as opposed to stealing from the fields or cattle kraals as is the case with traditional folktales.

The interviewee indicated that the content varies depending on the environment where the oral art is performed. She indicated that there are times when traditional oral art forms can be used as a base for teaching certain concepts, thus completely capturing new content from whatever subject is being taught. This she illustrated using *Chabatamabvi chauya*. (The cramp has come). She explained that, in a classroom environment, the game song is performed by learners holding their knees moving back and forth like someone who has developed a cramp. She indicated that apart from simply using it as a transitional activity, to spread energy amongst the learners and keep them alert, she has extended it to teaching other concepts in Maths, Environmental Science and Social Studies for example. For instance, when teaching shapes, she would have cut templates of the different shapes, lay them on the teacher's table up front, then sing *Chibatamabvi chauya* (The cramp has come) with the learners. After singing once or twice instead of *Chibatamabvi chauya* (The cramp has come), the names of the shapes would then be inserted, for example Triangle *yauya!* and learners would take turns to move back and forth picking up the correct shape from the teacher's table and taking it to their group. If a member from another group comes and takes the shape from the former group, then, the leader switches to "triangle *yaenda*". (The triangle has gone). Thus, instead of reading:

Leader: *Chibatamabvi chauya* (The cramp has come)

Chorus: *Chauya* (It has come)

Leader: *Chibatamabvi chauya* (The cramp has come)

Chorus: *Chauya* (It has come)

Leader: *Chibatamabvi chaenda* (The cramp has gone)

Chorus: *Chaenda* (It has gone)

Leader: *Chibatamabvi chaenda* (The cramp has gone)

Chorus: *Chaenda*, (It has gone)

The game song would read:

Leader: Triangle *yauya* (The triangle has come)

Chorus: *Yauya* (It has come)

Leader: Triangle *yauya* (The triangle has come)

Chorus: *Yauya* (It has come)

Leader: Triangle *yaenda* (The triangle has gone)

Chorus: *Yaenda* (It has gone)

Leader: Triangle *yaenda* (The triangle has gone)

Chorus: *Yaenda* (It has gone)

This, the learners do until each group has had the chance to pick up all shapes from the teacher's and each other's tables after which other activities on the concept like question and answer or drawing the shapes can follow. The same she indicated can be done for professions (Social Studies), Colours (English/Art), *mazita emiti/ michero* (names of trees/fruits), *mhuka nevana vadzo* (animals and their young) animals (Shona) among other concepts. Hence, she pointed out that the influence on content can be the children's own novel creations but sometimes it comes from what goes on in the classroom when the learners continue to recite that outside instead of reciting the traditional versions.

On the issue of threats to these children's oral art forms, the interviewee indicated that the advent of technology is a major threat. She pointed out that children are now more into cartoons and computer games that are easily accessible on televisions, iPad and cell phones. She gave examples of cartoon series like Sophia the First, Doctor Mustuffins, Dora the Explorer and Ben Ten. She said that it is not surprising to hear a learner narrate events from these cartoon series when asked to narrate a folktale. With such an avalanche of foreign

children's entertainment, she indicated that there is need for a conscious effort to be made to counter this through infusing Shona oral art forms in classroom interactions. Her argument concurs with Makina's (2009:56) observation that, "In the modern world, teachers are expected to design innovative activities to inspire learners to learn, while at the same time competing with a range of changing technologies".

The interviewee also emphasised that Shona children's oral art forms should be at the core of the teaching and learning process. She pointed out that from her experience, they do not only make lessons lively, enjoyable and interesting but also help make it easy for the teacher to cater for individual differences, boost learners' confidence, improve participation and concentration as well as mould individual character. She concluded by pointing out that above all, learners do not easily forget what they enjoy doing.

#### **5.3.1.2 Interviewee 2 (Junior Teacher Urban)**

The interviewee expressed his understanding of Shona children's oral art forms as oral games like rhymes, game songs/songs, riddles and folktales, that children do during their free time whether at home or school.

The interviewee's emphasis on them being done during the children's free time seems to show that for him they are leisure activities which in his view are not part of classroom interactions. It seems he perceives children's oral art forms as entertaining activities, playing where children are not really learning. Implied here is the notion that they are not part of the formal set up, although he later pointed out that they could be relevant to teaching and learning, but mostly at infant level. At junior level he indicated that what they sometimes do with learners are riddles and folktales. He indicated that with these, children perform what they know, and it is not the teacher who teaches them.

On benefits for learners, he indicated that some of the game songs require activity on the part of the children hence they help them keep fit. He pointed out that with subjects like Mass Displays coming into the primary school curriculum such game songs come in handy for an example *Zvamutsana-mutsana* (Spotting and chasing) since they help learners improve muscle coordination, as they run around dodging each other.

Responding to the value of these for the learners, he pointed out that there are a lot of benefits as these oral art forms encourage learners to interact and communicate and create a meaningful environment for learners to use language on their own. He also pointed out that

there are some cultural norms and values that can be drawn especially from folktales such as friendship, family relations, respect for elders, obedience, showing pity to others and honesty among others. Some oral art forms like riddles he indicated stretch the child's imagination and reasoning ability as he/she tries to logically eliminate inappropriate answers to a given riddle through reasoned analogy. What comes out clearly from the interviewee's response in this part is that, even though some teachers might not infuse the oral art forms in their classroom practice, they are aware of the important contribution these can make as pedagogical tools if infused in classroom interactions.

### **5.3.1.3 Interviewee 3 (Junior Teacher Peri-Urban)**

The interviewee defined oral art forms as games that children do during playtime such as *Dzamutsana mutsana* (Spotting and chasing) and games like riddles. He further pointed out that the oral implies language as the base upon which these are built and then presented by word of mouth. From the interviewee's reference to children's oral art forms as playtime activities, he is subtly dismissing them from the fore and placing them at the periphery of the teaching learning process. On relevance to teaching and learning, the interviewee also pointed out that they are relevant although there is not much time for them considering how loaded the primary school curriculum is. Skills development he pointed out is one such benefit. He used the example of *ngano* to illustrate the skills that develop when learners engage in their performance. He indicated that *ngano* helps develop learners' listening skills. When one of them narrates a folk tale, the others have to listen attentively to follow the story and be able draw lessons from the tale or answer questions on it when asked if need be. He further explained that through narrating folktales learners improve speaking skills as well as learn language in use. He also pointed out that since most of the children's oral art forms are done in groups, they instil the spirit of team work that is important in real life.

On preferred language of performance, he noted that Shona is the best since it helps link home with school. He also pointed out that it is easier for the children to express themselves freely since it is their mother language. However, he noted that learners do perform oral art forms especially rhymes and game songs in English as well. He gave the example of Express a clapping game song which he said was more like a national anthem at breaktime at his school. This the researcher also observed later at breaktime where she saw learners, especially girls in small groups performing the game. On talking to the learners informally about the game, they said that it was a new game that they had recently got to know about

hence the euphoria.

The interviewee also indicated that communication skills improve when learners do some of these game songs. He gave the example of the game *Mapere* (Hyenas) which he said helps learners develop the ethics of a good conversation since the game requires them to listen first then respond accordingly.

Leader: *Vana vana* (Children! Children!)

Response: *Mhai* (Mother)

Leader: *Huyai* (Come)

Response: *Tinotyia* (We are afraid)

Leader: *Munotyeiko?* (What are you afraid of?)

Response: *Mapere* (Hyenas)

Leader: *Mapere akapera kuenda Hwedza. Huyai henyu.* (The hyenas have all go to Hwedza you may come).

The game is in the form of a dialogue and teaches the learners that one has to give the other person a chance to finish saying what they want to say, then respond accordingly. It teaches them that there is need for order if a conversation is to flow.

Since, they run to go past the hyenas, they learn to dodge, and this helps keep them physically fit. Apart from that, the game teaches them to be vigilant, for if one is not they will be caught by the hyenas and automatically become a hyena too. The game also instils in the learners the importance of the mother figure. She is a protector who when around the children should not fear. The interviewee also further pointed out that, some of the children's oral art forms like riddles teach learners critical thinking and deductive reasoning, this is so because when the challenge is paused the response comes after the respondent has done lots of analogies to come up with the most appropriate response.

The interviewee however, bemoaned that these oral art forms are threatened left right and centre by technology which has flooded the contemporary environment in the form of iPad, cell-phones, televisions and computer games. From his perspective the school setting is the only hope for survival hence there is need for teachers to make a conscious effort to link

these to teaching and learning because as it stands this is not being done seriously. To put it in his own words:

*Tinoziva kuti zvakakosha, asi we rarely infuse them in our teaching kunyanya kwedu kujunior level. Ngano and zvirahwe we sometimes do because zviri syllabus.*

(We know that they are important, but we rarely infuse them in our teaching especially at junior level. Folktales and riddles we sometimes do because these are in the syllabus).

The view that schools can play an important role in ensuring survival of children's oral art forms is also shared by Makina (2009:54) when she posits that the classroom is an environment where children can be socialised into the African way of life through use of oral art forms such as game songs.

#### **5.3.1.4 Interviewee 4 (Infant Teacher -Peri Urban)**

The interviewee expressed oral art forms as rhymes, tongue twisters and hand clapping game songs. Examples given were *Zvandangadzidza pano* (What I have learnt here!) and *Mari yakaperera mutrain* (The money was used up on the train)

On the value and relevance to teaching and learning, she admitted that although the tendency is to sometimes use them as gap fillers these are quite relevant to teaching and learning. She pointed out that during teaching one can use them to illustrate or exemplify certain concepts. She used the two examples she had given to support her argument. She pointed out that a rhyme like *Zvandangadzidza pano!* (What I have learnt here!) is very useful when teaching body parts. The rhyme goes:

*Zvandangadzidza pano, maiwe!*

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Zvandangadzidza pano, maiwe!*

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Musoro kuti head maiwe!*

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Meso kuti eyes maiwe!*

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Zheve kuti ears maiwe!*

*Mhino kuti nose maiwe!*

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Muromo kuti* mouth maiwe!

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Huro kuti* neck maiwe!

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Mafudzi kuti* shoulders maiwe!

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Chifuva kuti* chest maiwe!

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Dumbu kuti* stomach maiwe!

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Chivuno kuti* waist maiwe!

*Zvandishamisa!*

*Mabvi kuti* knees maiwe!

*Zvandishamisa!*

(What I have learnt here makes me wonder, Oh mother!)

She pointed out that through the rhyme, learners get to learn the human body parts in both Shona and English concurrently. At infant level the children's home language is supposed to be used for instruction but as clearly highlighted in the rhyme, the children do find joy in knowing the body parts that they already know in their home language, in another language. In terms of form, code -mixing seems an effective strategy in that the learners begin with what they already know since the body parts are first given in the mother tongue, then reinforced in the new language. Thus, this allows the learners to view the parts in both languages placed side by side which may help ground the concept.

The same form of code mixing is also evident in *Mari yakaperera mutrain*. The rhyme goes:

Leader: *Mutrain! Mutrain!* (In the train! In the train!)

Chorus: *Mari yakaperera mutrain mamalo-o-o*

*Mari yakaperera mutrain* (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

Leader: *Bhazi ndorikwira nei?* (What shall I use to board the bus?)

Chorus: *Mari yakaperera mutrain mamalo-o-o*

*Mari yakaperera mutrain* (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

Leader: *Mota ndoikwira nei?* (What shall I use to board the car?)

Chorus: *Mari yakaperera mutrain mamalo-o-o*

*Mari yakaperera mutrain* (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

Leader: Lorry *ndoikwira nei?* (What shall I use to board the lorry?)

Chorus: *Mari yakaperera mutrain mamalo-o-o*

*Mari yakaperera mutrain* (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

Leader: *Ndege ndoikwira nei?* (What shall I use to board the plane?)

Chorus: *Mari yakaperera mutrain mamalo-o-o*

*Mari yakaperera mutrain* (The money was used up in the train, mother oh!)

(Loosely translated the rhyme goes: What shall I use to board the bus, car, lorry, plane etc.? All the money has been used up in the train.)

The interviewee indicated that the rhyme teaches the learners the different modes of transport in an enjoyable manner. She pointed out that sometimes they punctuate the rhyme with sounds produced by the different modes of transport. For an example *guju guju* ideophone for the train sound then they return to the chorus, *dhuruu dhuruu* ideophone for sound made by buses, cars and lorries et cetera. An analysis of this rhyme shows that three languages are at play here with 'train' in English, '*mamalo-o-o*' borrowing from Ndebele and the rest of the rhyme. At intra-word level, 'train' is prefixed by class 18 locative *mu-* making Shona the Matrix Language and English the Embedded Language since it comes in to fit into a Shona grammatical structure construction. '*Mamalo-o-o*' comes in as a tag to maintain the rhythm. The interviewee pointed out that this code-switching is inevitable since not only do learners come from different linguistic backgrounds, but also the teachers. Considering the multilingual nature of the Zimbabwean society the interviewee's argument is quite plausible.

She gave an example of how one could use *ngano* (folktales) in Family and Religious Studies to impart moral values such as importance of obedience, trustworthiness, team work, respect honesty, transparency, family values and work ethics among others. She said that this is so because in most folktales good is always rewarded and bad punished. Commenting on riddles she pointed out that, although they are not taught at infant level, for higher levels since they are sort of a quiz-like game, they challenge learners to think critically hence develop their critical thinking skills.

The interviewee indicated that the threat to Shona children's oral art forms is the advent of technology. This does not leave room for the children to play outside when they get home, where they will be glued in front of televisions, not only does this happen in urban areas but also peri urban and even rural. For where there is no electricity, solar energy is the order of the day. Satellite dishes seen by the researcher at various homesteads as she gathered data in



peri urban, rural resettlement and rural schools did bear testimony to the interviewee's observation. She also echoed Interviewee 1's sentiments when she indicated that colleagues teaching at junior levels are a big let-down as they concentrate more on teaching for examinations hence, they find giving learners a chance to engage in performances of oral art forms a waste of time.

#### **5.3.1.5 Interviewee 5 (Junior Teacher Rural Resettlement)**

The interviewee defined children's oral art forms as activities that children perform in groups usually at break time, for example *Zai rakaora* (The rotten egg) and *Zvamutsana – mutsana* (Spotting and chasing). She said that when it comes to the classroom situation, the oral art forms help motivate learners especially during lesson introduction since children like lively activities in which they participate.

She indicated that she had recently attended a workshop at which teachers were being guided on the important role these oral art forms can play during teaching and learning. She said that for her, the workshop was an eye opener as it made her realize that even at junior level they can be used in subjects like Maths, Languages, Physical Education, Mass Displays and Visual and Performing Arts among others. She said for example folktales can be used for comprehension lessons, for oral work and to enhance listening and speaking skills.

On preferred language of performance, she said that, Shona being the mother tongue is preferable since it helps ground concepts better although in practice the tendency is to mix both English and Shona forms. She elaborated further that performing in Shona helps instil pride in one's language in the learners. The oral art forms, she indicated are loaded with norms and values that are encouraged in African culture such as team work, learning leadership skills as in that one can lead and also be led by others. She also said that most of the oral art forms have rules that have to be followed thus, preparing learners for real life experiences where one does not do as he/she pleases but is governed by societal and cultural expectations. Her argument on the need for one to conform so as to belong resonates with African cultural ethos where one can never be self-sufficient in and for him or herself (Leketsa, 2013; Masolo, 2010; Metz and Gaie, 2010).

The interviewee also cited technology as a major threat to Shona children's oral art forms. She went further to proffer what she viewed as the way forward:

Due to technology that has taken the world by storm through televisions, computer

games and iPad, there is need for teachers to teach these or use them during classroom interactions to continuously remind learners of their existence otherwise they will become dormant.

While some interviewees who teach at junior level belittled rhymes and game songs as ECD activities, this interviewee held a different view as her way forward reflects. The fact that she had attended a workshop might have enlightened her to appreciate that even for senior grades the oral art forms are relevant as she summed it thus, “Children are children and they like and enjoy playing no matter what”. This view is also held by Azriel et al., (2005:9) who posit that ‘regardless of age or economic, ethnic or social background, children understand the language of play.’ Thus, depriving learners of this in their learning is something that should be avoided at all cost.

#### **5.3.1.6 Interviewee 6 (Infant Teacher Rural Resettlement)**

The interviewee defined Shona children’s oral art forms as language games that learners perform in Shona language. He gave examples as folktales, rhymes, songs and poems. He further pointed out that these are very relevant to teaching at all levels although there is a myth that it is only at infant level that they can be meaningfully infused to teaching and learning through play and playing as they learn. From her point of view these should not be limited to ECD and infant alone. Children at whatever level enjoy playing hence his argument that, as teachers:

We should infuse what we want them to learn in what they already like and enjoy doing. If a child is ill and does not want to take his/her pill, we find ways to make him/her take the medication, we put the pill in his/her porridge and as a result it is swallowed unknowingly.

The interviewee’s argument put in simple terms is that teachers should take advantage of the fact that children by nature enjoy and want to play. A view also held by Kirkland and O’Riordan (2010) who say, children by nature love learning which they see as a funny journey of exploration and excitement. He further argued that if these oral art forms were only relevant at ECD infant level, why is it that at break time in the school grounds we hear and see junior grade learners reciting hand clapping games like Express, *Unodei?* and many others? To illustrate relevance to teaching he gave the example of *Madhadha Mashanu* (Five ducks) which he later used to illustrate how content is sometimes influenced by the subject,

knowledge or concept that the teacher intends to impart to the learners.

He also pointed out that he preferred Shona as the language of performance especially at the level he teaches to prevent what he called “culture shock”, the learners already know the oral art forms in Shona from home, so performing them in their mother tongue acts as a link between home and school. It motivates the learners to like the new environment as it will not be very different from what they are used to doing. His view is in tandem with Mims (2003:1) who posits that, “Learning becomes active when students are able to connect new knowledge with their prior knowledge”. He also pointed out that those performed in Shona are rich in cultural capital since they relate to the Shona culture in most cases.

As for form, he indicated that for rhymes and game songs, these are characterised by repetitions and lots of accompanying actions, such as hand clapping, dancing, chasing and dodging among others. The content is sometimes based on the curriculum area being taught, as a teacher, one can change the content of a rhyme or game song to suit the concept being taught. He gave the example of *Madhadha Mashanu* (Five Ducks) which one can reconstruct to teach counting in Maths at different levels, depending on whether one is counting upwards or downwards. If it is upwards, then it begins with one duck and others are added on up to five. If it is counting downwards then the reverse will be implemented. The rhyme goes:

*Madhadha mashanu ari pamutsetse*

*Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara mana*

*Madhadha mana ari pamutsetse*

*Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara matatu*

*Madhadha matatu ari pamutsetse*

*Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara maviri*

*Madhadha maviri ari pamutsetse*

*Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara rimwe*

*Dhadha rimwe riri pamutsetse*

*Ndikabvisa rimwe kunosara pasina*

(Five ducks in a queue)

I remove one

Four remain...).

The interviewee said that the rhyme is very popular with pre-scholars (ECD), and at this level the rhyme is meant for learners to use language and enjoy themselves, however, at Infant Level (Grades 1 and 2), it is then used to ground the concept of subtraction. This is in line with Bruner's constructivism idea of the spiral curriculum, where information is structured in such a way that complex ideas are taught at a simplified level first, and then re-visited at more complex levels later (Bruner, 1960). The bigger the numbers involved, then code switching comes in to keep the rhythm. For example:

*Madhadha* fifteen *ari pamutsetse* (Fifteen ducks, in a queue)

*Ndikabvisa* five *panosara* ten (I remove five ten remain)

The code mixing is necessitated by the fact that numbers above ten in Shona become rather wordy and switching to English helps maintain the smooth flow of the rhyme. Although, the rhyme is usually associated with the concept of subtraction, this interviewee indicated that he has extended use of this rhyme to teaching addition as well. This in constructivism is the concept of transference where knowledge gained and found to be useful in one area can be transferred to a range of other situations (Bruner, 1960). So, instead of reducing the ducks, they are increased. In this case it is recited thus:

*Dhadha rimwe riri pamutsetse*

*Ndikaisa rimwe ava maviri*

*Madhadha* ten *ari pamutsetse*

*Ndikaisa* two *ava* twelve...

This scenario clearly shows that the teacher is not simply imparting knowledge, but instead is stretching the learners to facilitate their thinking and problem-solving skills which they can then transfer to other situations. Hence, the same rhyme can be used to teach the concept of number in Shona, in which case the English numbers are replaced by the Shona counting system: *Dhadha rimwe*, *Madhadha maviri* and continues up to the required number, say 5 or 10. (One duck, two ducks.)

As for norms, values and skills he gave specific examples. He indicated that folktales teach a

lot of norms and values of Shona culture such as responsibility integrity, honesty, respect, team work, family values, friendship and living in harmony with nature among others. Some game songs also teach quick thinking, teamwork and following rules or obeying instructions. Some game songs he indicated help learners spread their energy as they are accompanied by activities such as running, dancing, dodging or even pushing and pulling, activities which have to do with physical skills.

Responding to threats to the Shona children's oral art forms, the interviewee gave teacher attitude as the major threat to the survival of children's oral art forms. He explained that this is so, because even though the oral art forms are quite prevalent at infant level, at junior level the tendency is to ignore them totally since they are seen as a waste of time, by teachers who focus more on teaching for examinations and not for life, yet junior learners are seen performing these within school grounds during their free time, an indication that they do enjoy them. He also gave modern day technological gadgets as a threat. He advocated for a situation where the 75% local content policy for airwaves could also include more children's oral art form performances. He pointed out that one such programme aired on radio is Ignatius Mabasa's folk telling session, but the slot is not child friendly at all since it is aired mid-morning when most children are at school. Unfortunately, the respondent was not even aware that the said programme had been taken off air due to lack of sponsorship and other commitments by the *Sarungano* who had been doing it out of passion for the genre.

#### **5.3.1.7 Interviewee 7 (Infant Teacher Rural)**

She defined children's oral art forms in Shona as games that children perform as part of play, for example, *Zai rakaora* (The rotten egg), *Rure rure* (Swing swing) and folktales for example *Tsuro naGudo* (Hare and Baboon).

She pointed out that, children's oral art forms are quite relevant to teaching and learning as they help children remain motivated. She indicated that in her training as an infant specialist she was made to understand that children learn through play hence:

It is mandatory that in every lesson one teaches, there should be a play component, be it in the introduction, lesson development or conclusion. This is so because children understand the language of games. Talking down to them continuously makes them switch off.

She further explained that children's concentration span is very short, stretching it further

than it can go results in learners losing focus, hence the need for a play component which is possible through use of children's oral art forms.

On preferred language of performance, she indicated that she preferred Shona to English. She argued that the oral art forms are culture bound and language is a carrier of that culture, so having learners perform in English results in loss of the cultural capital that they would have brought from home. To illustrate the issue of culture embedded in children's oral art forms she gave the examples of English rhymes like Little Jack Horner, Humpty Dumpty and Polly put the kettle on, pointing out that one cannot expect a Shona child to understand the foreign historical and cultural background espoused in them. Out of interest the researcher had a close look at two of the examples, Little Jack Horner and Polly put the kettle on to see what the interviewee meant:

Little Jack Horner

Sat in a corner,

Eating his Christmas pie.

He put in his thumb,

And he pulled out a plum,

And said, "What a good boy am I!"

The poem has to do with a certain Jack Horner who lived at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1536. Jack Horner served the abbot of Glastonbury and was instructed to take a huge Christmas pie to the King. Inside the pie were the deeds to the Manor of Mells in Somerset. One then wonders of what relevance this is to the learner whose cultural environment does not have such traditions as monasteries and Christmas pies. Actually, for the Shona child, digging one's thumb into food is a sign of bad manners when it comes to etiquette and when celebrating Christmas (though foreign as well) pies do not feature at all as part of what can be called festive delicacies in an African context. With Polly Put the Kettle On, the focus is on the culture of tea time especially for guests which is foreign as well. In African culture guests feast on *maheu* or are welcomed with a cup of water.

The above examples strongly confirm the interviewee's argument that performing foreign oral art forms, moreso in a foreign language, in this case English, is not of much benefit to the learners as it divorces their learning from real life experiences hence their culture. It thus, saves no purpose other than simply solidifying foreign, in this case European dominance of

its cultural values that are alienating edifices that do not help the child to respond to existential challenges that he/she encounters (Muwati et al., 2016; Chitumba, 2013). Performing in Shona which is a carrier of the children's culture intertwines their learning with their socio-cultural experiences thus, making it more meaningful.

The interviewee described the form of the children's oral art forms especially rhymes and game songs as mainly being through repetitions, which enhances language development. Some are in the form of dialogues where there is a leader and respondents (sometimes referred to as chorus), for an example *Hwai Hwai* (Sheep Sheep) a dialogical game that engages learners in dodging to avoid being caught by the supposed hyenas. She also pointed out that others are also punctuated by code-mixing, for an example *Zvandangadzidza pano* (What I have learnt here) [ in which body parts are juxtaposed in both Shona and English] and *Apa pangu!* Don't touch! (This part of me! Don't touch) in which the first part is in Shona and the response is in English. She pointed out that code switching is inevitable since Shona and English are languages that have been in contact for a long time.

As for content she indicated that there is lots of influence from the contemporary environment due to lack of traditional family structures. This is what she said:

We no longer have grannies who gather children around for story telling nowadays. So, the very traditional forms of these oral art forms are being somehow COLOURED by modern images. Hare and baboon no longer still pumpkins from the fields but bread from Bakers's Inn trucks, they do not go out to look for *matamba* (monkey oranges) but oranges, apples, bananas among other exotic modern fruits. Hare, Baboon and other animals are no longer the only major characters of the tales, Sophia the First, SpongeBob and other cartoon characters have also come on board.

As for norms and values embedded therein, the interviewee pointed out that children have a lot to learn from the various Shona children's oral art forms. On the norms and values learnt she gave respect for elders and others, obedience, teamwork and family relations. She also pointed out that they become aware of vices or bad habits that are not acceptable in society like stealing, cheating, bullying and looking down among others.

Concerning threats to the children's oral art forms, she pointed out that technology is a major threat as it exposes learners to other channels of whiling up their time. Some games they play on machines do not require others, hence we are losing the team spirit and moving towards

individualistic tendencies. The social aspect of play is being lost in the process.

The second threat she bemoaned was lack of continuity in the school set up:

At ECD and Infant we work with children's oral art forms daily, they provide learners with a platform to do what they like doing, that is play. However, from Grade 3 upwards teachers compete for pass rates, so for them reciting or performing rhymes and game songs is a waste of time. Maybe, now that they have been incorporated into the Junior Syllabus in the new curriculum, we will see a change.

The interviewee's concluding statement places hope in the new curriculum's thrust that indigenous knowledge systems be part and parcel of classroom interactions. Document analysis confirmed the new development as this is reflected in some of the syllabus objectives in both the Indigenous Languages Junior [Grade 3-7] Syllabus and Indigenous Languages Infant [ECD-Grade 2] Syllabus stated thus:

Learners should be able to:

- i) Retell folktales
- ii) Identify moral lessons from folktales
- iii) Recite poems/rhymes, play games.

#### **5.3.1.8 Interviewee 8 (Junior Teacher Rural)**

The interviewee defined Shona children oral art forms as children's performances of rhymes, game songs, riddles and folktales using Shona languages. For game songs she gave the examples of Amina, a hand clapping game that she said enhances arm co-ordination, and *Muramu wangu ndokupeiko ndozvicheka?* (My sister in – law what can I give you, I will sacrifice) which she pointed out relates to sex education (one of the cross- cutting themes in the Indigenous Languages Syllabus). The later goes:

Leader: *Muramu wangu ndokupeiko ndozvicheka?* (My sister in – law what can I give you, I will sacrifice)

Chorus: *Sekerera chaunoda muramu wangu* (Smile if you accept)

A sister in law, in Shona culture is one's wife's younger sister, with whom one can joke around and use informal language that one cannot use with respected in-laws. They can even touch each other inappropriately, but that is if, and if only the *muramu* is agreeable



hence smile if it is okay by you. There is need for the brother -in -law to seek permission lest the relationship goes too far, and it can end up with one impregnating the sister -in -law if they are not careful hence the proverb ‘*Muramu inzungu yakateya gonzo*’, (A sister in law is a deadly trap). Such a game song is loaded with cultural norms and values relevant to Shona culture and if recited continuously it may help instil in learners, the notion that they have to be cautious as they engage in various relationships as culture permits to guard against such dangers. The oral art forms she indicated are quite relevant to teaching and learning since some like riddles teach deductive reasoning while folktales are a base for teaching good norms and pointing out vices for the children.

On preferred language of performance, the interviewee said that she preferred ChiShona, since it is the children’s natural way of expression, more so in a rural setting where children have limited exposure to English. She said it gives the learners a sense of being; instead of emphasizing use of a foreign language that carries with it alien cultural values.

The interviewee also noted that apart from just the content, the performance itself is a source of norms and values that are valued in Shona culture. The learners need an audience for example when performing *ngano*. They need others to be able to play and recite game songs. They also need other participants and competitors when it comes to riddling. Thus, teamwork, respect for others and accepting that they can either win or lose are values that are vicariously learnt by the children as they play. These come in handy later on in life.

A major threat to the Shona children’s oral art forms, the interviewee pointed out is cultural invasion, due to technology. She indicated that there is need to put these into a bank for example volumes of folktales, rhymes and game songs, riddles need to be compiled. These can then be important points of reference for teachers to incorporate them into their practice. She also pointed out that in a rural set- up like hers she could not talk of discs, but these could be useful in an urban environment.

#### **5.4 DATA FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS**

The focus groups were randomly selected from the four categories represented by the purposively selected schools, that is urban, peri-urban, rural resettlement and rural. Two groups were selected from each category. The groups comprised ten learners each, five boys and five girls. The researcher though, ensured that the learners came from the same class for easy interaction where there was need for group performances. She also randomly selected

the groups across all grade levels. Codes were used to identify individual learner responses during focus group interviews for example:

FG1L1: Focus Group 1 Learner 1

FG2L5: Focus Group 2 Learner 5

FG8L3: Focus Group 8 Learner 3

#### **5.4.1 Focus group 1 (Grade 5 urban)**

The focus group comprised 10-11-year-old learners from an urban primary school. The learners in this group were able to give examples and answer questions on all types of Shona children's oral art forms. Their responses under each type are presented below.

##### **5.4.1.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs**

When asked to recite any Shona rhyme or game song they knew, the group remained quiet for some time. The interviewer then asked them to recite any that they knew even if it was not a Shona one. They immediately began to compete on which one to recite from the many English ones they know among them Broken Telephone, Mr Macaroni, East/West and *Amashenishenisheni*. They finally settled for Broken Telephone a hand clapping game where after the singing and hand clapping the children began to whisper into each other's ears. When they get to the last person, they would ask everyone in reverse what they have heard and then compare it with what the first person has whispered then see where the telephone got broken. The rules of the game song include no repeating of what is whispered and no use of vulgar language.

The researcher then asked them what they learnt from Broken Telephone. The following responses were given by individual learners:

FG1L1: *Tinodzidza kusashandisa* vulgar language. (We learn not to use vulgar language).

FG1L5: *Tinodzidza kuterera zvokuti chero tava muclass tinonzwa zvinhu kechihwani kwete kuswera uchiti "Mati chii mudzidzisi"?* (We learn good listening so that even in class when the teacher is teaching, you hear things the first time around not to continuously ask the teacher, what did you say sir/madam?).

FG1L6: *Tinodzidza kuti zvinhu zvekunzwa nevamwe zvinogona kunge zvisisiri izvo chaizvo zvakataurwa.* (We learn that sometimes what we hear from others might not be the correct version of what has been said).

After they had relaxed answering questions on rhymes/game songs of their choice (though in English) the researcher then probed for Shona ones upon which she got the following examples:

*Chimodho chandidzipa pahuro* (I have been choked by cornmeal bread)

Leader: *Chimodho chandidzipa pahuro* (I have been choked by cornmeal bread)

Chorus: *Iya iya hoo* (Aye aye hoo)

All: *Dzipa pahuro! Dzipa pahuro dzii!* x2

(The first two lines are repeated twice, and so is the part by all.)

This rhyme, the learners indicated they composed on their own. The researcher though realised that the tune was from an old English rhyme ‘Up was I on my father’s farm’. Asking learners if they had ever heard the English version the learners indicated that they had not. The learners indicated that the rhyme taught them among other things good table manners such as eating slowly and not talking with food in one’s mouth. For by not doing so, one might choke on their food which is quite dangerous. Thus, as they repeatedly recite the rhyme it serves as a warning to gluttons and helps instil good table etiquette. Closely looking at the rhyme, in terms of content, the choice of *chimodho* choking someone is quite loaded. *Chimodho* is home-made cornmeal bread. It used to be associated with people in rural areas where there are no bakeries and the women prepare this in three-legged pots using corn flour or mealie-meal mixed with a little flour. Compared with bread made in bakeries, many urban dwellers find it unpalatable. However, due to economic hardships prevalent in Zimbabwe, buying bread daily is a luxury that most families cannot afford be it in urban or rural areas hence heavy reliance on *chimodho* by both the rural and urban dwellers, especially, those in the low-income bracket. Thus, one is not choked by delicacies such as rice, chicken and chips. but *chimodho* because this is what most families can afford, and it can be *chimodho* and tea for breakfast, *chimodho* and tea for lunch and only at supper can *sadza* and some relish be afforded. The fact that children have coined a rhyme around it, indicates that they are not oblivious to the economic hardships that their families and

communities are going through. It can also be a clear sign that they are tired of it and one day it might choke them resulting in death. Instead of it, as food, improving their health, it really has become a threat which can lead to their demise if it chokes them.

The rhyme is in the form of a song in which repetitions abound. The repetitions give rhythm to the rhyme while at the same time emphasising what has become a danger to children's health both in the literal and metaphorical sense respectively. Literally if one is not careful while eating, they can choke on the food. Metaphorically, if one continuously feeds on one type of food, it becomes a threat to their health in that for one to be healthy, a balanced diet is required. Hence, continuously having *chimodho* is not in the best of one's health.

On what they learnt from the rhyme, individual learners from the group gave the following responses:

FG1L5: *Tinofanira kudzikama pakudya chikafu, ukadya chikafu uchikachura unodzipwa.* (We should be composed when eating food, if you each food greedily you may choke).

FG1L4: *Tinodzidza tsika dzakanaka pakudya.* (We learn good table manners).

FG1L7: *Tinodzidza kuti chingwa chokuzvibikira kumba chinonzi chimodho.* (We learn that home-made bread is called chimodho).

FG1L3: *Tinopractiser kushandisa nyaudzosingwi.* (We practise how to use ideophones).

The learners' responses show that even as they perform the game song, it is not all about playing and enjoying, vicariously the learners benefit from it in several other ways as reflected from the responses above.

Another Shona example given by the learners is *Sarura wako* (Make your choice). This is a traditional Shona game song that has been recited since time immemorial. The learners recited it thus:

Leader: *Sarura wako!* (Make your choice!)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Wangu mutsvuku* (Mine is light skinned)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Wangu murefu* (Mine is tall)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Ane bvudzi dema* (She/He has black hair)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Haagari pasi* (She/He does not sit on the floor)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Sofa chete* (Sofa only)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Haadyi sadza* (Does not eat sadza)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Rice chete* (Rice only)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Ane moyochena* (Is kind- hearted)

Chorus: *Kadeya-deya nendoro chena* (Take your time! The one with a patch of white hair).

Leader: *Ndimutore here?* (Can I choose him/her?)

Chorus: *Tora hako mwanasikana/komana* (You can choose that one daughter/son)

Leader: *Handei darli* (Let's go darling).

At this point, the one who has made the choice takes the partner who then next leads the game.

The traditional version of *Sarura wako* (Make your choice) mainly focused on the physical appearance as evidenced by use of adjectives like *mutema*, *mutsvuku*, *murefu*, *mutete*, *mukobvu* among others (Mawere, 2012). However, in the one recited by the learners in this group, the children went beyond the physical appearance and touched on qualities that make one virtuous like being kind-hearted (*mwoyochena*) and likes and dislikes like eating sadza and chicken only and not sitting on the floor but only on the sofa. At the end of one's

recitation, the leader also seeks for the group's approval on whether he/she has made the right choice hence the question: "*Ndimutore here?*" (Can I take him/her?) and the group's response if it approves, "*Tora hako mwanasikana/komana*", (You can take her/him my daughter/son). Seeking group approval is one aspect that is in line with the 'we' Afrocentric ethos. One does not live in a vacuum but becomes who they are because of other people, hence Mbiti's (1969: 108-109) argument succinctly captures this:

Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say I am because we are; and since we are; therefore I am.

In African culture, an individual can never be considered self-sufficient, one needs to be accepted by others to belong, there is need for a connection between the individual and the community for one's sense of self to be worth (Leketsa, 2013; Masolo, 2010; Mertz and Gaie, 2010). Allowing someone to make a wrong or poor choice will not only impact negatively on them alone, but also their family and the community at large. Hence, it becomes every member of the community's responsibility to ensure that where possible, every member turns out well. Hence, the need for approval from the group is crucial in a game song like *Sarura wako* (Make your choice).

On asking the learners what they learnt from the game song, the vocal and confident FG1L5's response can be used to sum up the most important lesson drawn from the game song in line with Shona cultural values. She indicated that apart from helping them learn how to choose good friends, the game was more important when it comes to making life choices as in choosing marriage partners in future:

*Tinodzidza kuti kana uchishara make good choices. Kunyanya paya patinosvika pastage yekuroorwa, hatizongonjoberi usina kutarisa maqualities omunhu. Zvakare kwete kungogumira pakunaka chimiro chete asiwo mwoyo wakanaka, kuti ane chikoro here nezvimwewo.*

(We learn that when making a choice, we should make good choices. Especially when we get to the stage where we want to get married, you won't just pick blindly without considering a person's qualities. You also do not just end at looking at one's beauty but things like kind-heartedness, education and other things).

The level of maturity shown by this learner's argument is quite inspiring. In a world that is

bedevilled by evils such as child abuse (a cross-cutting theme in the new curriculum) and love for material things, this learner is likely not to be taken advantage of. She is enlightened to an extent that material things do not matter to her at all. Whoever would want to lure her with such is likely to get the shock of their life since this child has been socialised to look beyond that. Her argument is also in line with Nyoni and Nyoni's (2013:238) position in their analysis of *Sarura Wako*:

Apart from considering physical qualities or features (outward beauty), the young are encouraged this early to look at virtues of *ubuntu* or humanness such as kindness, cleanliness, responsibility and so forth, what one can call inner beauty.

This idea of considering qualities other than outward beauty, is encouraged to guard against picking bad apples hence the Shona have this encapsulated in proverbs like '*Guyu kutsvukira kunze, mukati rina masvosve*, (A fig may be enticingly ripe, yet it is full of ants within). These qualities are in line with Afrocentric tenets of what makes one a true African. It is not all about external beauty, but whether one has what it takes to be considered '*munhu*' (a person), and that is '*ubuntu/unhu*' (humaness). This is evidenced by exuding qualities like social responsibility, trustworthiness, humility, love, justice, peace, self-reliance, hard work, honesty, perseverance, a cooperative spirit, solidarity, hospitality, devotion to family and the welfare of the community, integrity and other ethical values. (Leketsa, 2013; Mandova and Chingombe, 2013; Nziramasanga, 1999; Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013).

FG1L3 had this to say: *Tinodzidzawo kushandisa mazwi akanaka kutsanangura vamwe nekutsvagawo zvakanaka zvinoita vamwe*. (We also learn to use good words to describe others and acknowledge good things others do).

Looking for good in others leads to peaceful co-existence in communities, a value that helps build some connection between the individual and the community. This, from an Afrocentric perspective is a necessity for the moulding of an individual's social identity and personality. This is so because the existence of others is a necessary component of the development of the self (Masolo, 2010; Metz and Gaie, 2010). Asked on why they have gone on to talk about one not sitting on the floor but only on a sofa, there was consensus among the group that it inspired them to aim for a better life style as opposed to just the ordinary. Even when it comes to food, they also indicated that one should aim at having the best hence the mentioning of chicken, a delicacy in most African set ups.

The views given by the learners on *Sarura Wako* indicate that though still very young, the learners are aware of what is expected in traditional Shona culture that people marry after a courtship period in which one looks for a partner of integrity. Marrying someone one knows fully well is regarded highly among the Shona hence coining of the proverb '*Rooranai vematongo*' (Marry from the neighbourhood). The game song also gives the children the opportunity to express their own conceptualisation of beauty (Muwati and Mutasa, 2008). From a young age they become conscious of the fact that beauty is relative, hence the axiom beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

FG1L10 indicated that, while anyone can join in playing the game, usually wayward members remain unchosen. This was the learner's response verbatim:

*Pakusarudzwa vane tsika dzakashata sokutuka vamwe, kubira vamwe muclass kana kutaura vulgar language, hapana anovashara kusvika mutambo wapera. Kana pari pabreak sairini inongorira pasina avatora. Kana munhu akada zvake anoita sefani kumusarudza, asi pakuti Ndimutore here? vamwe vese vanoti "Siya zvako mwanasikana/komana.*

(On making choices those who have bad habits such as scolding others, stealing other people's things in class or use vulgar language are not chosen until the game is over. If it's break time, the siren goes while they have not been chosen. If someone jokingly chooses then, when time for group approval comes everyone will say leave that one my daughter/son).

The learners in this group were all agreed that this has helped reign in some class mates who would want to be wayward for fear that they might be shunned by their class mates when playing such games. Thus, to fit in, one must toe the line. Nyoni and Nyoni (2013:238) also observe that:

In a way therefore, the game has a behaviour regulatory function. Since every child will strive to be likeable and therefore choosable and avoid the embarrassment of being left unchosen at the end of the game.

Hodza (1984) posits that through *Sarura Wako*, children learn virtues of *ubuntu* such as importance of blood relations and adhering to societal norms. In Shona culture, one does not marry a blood relative, neither can one marry a member of the same sex, this is considered



taboo. This decency is embedded in this game song as one is usually expected to choose a partner of the opposite sex and one, they are not related to either, (Mawere, 2012).

#### 5.4.1.2 Responses on riddles

The learners had no problems giving examples of riddles. Examples of interest among the many given include the following:

i) *Ndamenya 8 ndikawana vana vaviri* (I cracked 8 and found two babies)- *nzungu* (groundnuts)

ii) *Ndakwira mugomo na 7* (I went up the mountain with 7)- *demo* (an axe)

iii) *Spinini Spanana Spiwe* (nonsensical)- *rusero uchipepeteta*

iv) *MaSibanda gwadama tiise mwana* - (Mother Sibanda kneel so that we put down the baby)- *pfihwa nepoto* (cooking stand and pot).

v) *Zigomana rinofunga risina uropi* (The big boy who thinks without a brain)-computer

vi) *Gomana rino kunguruka risina ura* (The big boy who rolls but does not have intestines) - *mota* (a car).

(vi) *Sei uchichemedza vamwe nhai Febby?* (Febby why do you make others cry?)- *mhiripiri* (pepper).

While learners also gave the traditional types of riddles the above ones caught the researcher's eye in that, they capture a number of modern images in either the challenge/question or response. For an example riddles (i) and (ii) relate to education. We see this by reference to the modern world of Mathematics in the question where numbers 8 and 7 have become part of the riddle body respectively, even though traditional images of groundnuts and axe constitute the responses. They are based on the Mathematical concept of number.

Riddles (iii) and (iv) contain modern names in the challenge as opposed to the traditional Shona ones as in *Chiramwiwa naChiipe vanorwira umambo* (Chiramwiwa and Chiipe who are fighting for the kingship) –*tsoka* (feet). *Spiwe* and *MaSibanda* are Ndebele proper nouns that are used within wholly Shona constructions in the riddle challenge. Although, *Febby* is a Latin baby name which means pagan god) in the Zimbabwean context it is considered an

English name because it is associated with English. One can see three languages, Shona, Ndebele and English, at play here due to the multilingual nature of the Zimbabwean sociolinguistic landscape in which the children perform the riddles. These are languages in contact, hence it is not uncommon to see them being code switched. Closely looking at riddles (iv) and (vii) one can also read through gender stereotypes embedded in these two riddles. *MaSibanda* is a teknonym used with reference to female members of the Lion totem in Ndebele, hence it is the women who are expected to kneel to show respect. It is also the female folk who are expected to look after children. Thus, in the riddle *MaSibanda gwadama tiise mwana* (*MaSibanda* kneel down so that we put the baby on your back) the child rearing role of the female folk is reflected. It is also not one person helping put the baby on *MaSibanda*'s back as seen from use of the subject prefix /ti-/ (we), which is the plural form of first person singular subject prefix /ndi-/. What is implied here is the cooperative effort required to raise a child in African culture, it is not supposed to be an individual effort, but a communal one. On the other hand, *MaSibanda* also acts as a reminder of one's family history. In Ndebele culture even if a woman is married, into her husband's family, addressing her as *MaSibanda*, *MaMoyo*, *MaNgwenya*, *MaDhlovu*, and so on works to the advantage of the female folk as they are always reminded that they still remain members of their families of birth. It is a form of personal identity. Therefore, riddling is not all about critical thinking skills but also instilling values and norms of the society in which one is a member. They do connect the children with the cultures and beliefs of their communities (Mweli, 2018; Thompson et al., 2014; Salami and Oyaremi, 2012).

In riddle (vii) Febby is also asked why she makes others cry. This emanates from the general belief that women are trouble cause; hence they can do things that can make others unhappy. *Spiwe* is also romped into riddle (iii)'s challenge to balance the rhythmic sound started by use of *spinini* and *spanana*.

Riddle (vi) and (vii) refer to the contemporary world of technology in terms of the responses. They fall under the category of what are called What am I? riddles. These are riddles in which one must identify what is implied by the riddle which is tricky, the tricky part coming from a play on words. In this case the children must identify what is being described by the riddle by critically looking at the environment (physical, technological etc.) making analogies and finally coming up with what is implied in the challenge. Such an activity helps sharpen the children's mind and thought process.

The coming in of new images from the children's immediate environment and other resources in the social surrounding into children's riddling repertoire is actually a strength this oral art has. Muigai Wa Gachanja and Kebaya (2013) posit that by employing resources that capture various technological, social and political developments in their linguistic codification, riddles reflect the developments that a community has built up over time. Thus, the process helps the children learn various developments in their society as they capture these figuratively through language. An interesting point to note is that, these riddles are not just a game, their figurative language from a critical discourse analysis perspective, is loaded with different types of values. Fairclough (1989: 110-112) puts these values into three categories that is "experiential, relational and expressive values". Experiential values relate to one's experiences within the natural or social world, relational values have to do with the relationship between the interlocutors and expressive values have to do with one's own evaluation of how the text or discourse relates to reality. This is quite evident from the analysis of the examples of riddles given by the learners above as they reflect knowledge of what is based on experience, social relationships and need to evaluate the situation in the context of reality.

The learners also articulated the benefits of riddling quite well one such benefit being development of critical thinking skills.

FG1L2: *Tinodzidza kufunga zvakadzama* (We learn to think critically).

The learner gave *Sei uchichemedza vamwe nhai Febby?* (Why do you make others cry Febby? -*mhiripiri* (pepper) as an example. He indicated that there is need for one to ponder, to come up with the image of something that brings tears to the eyes. Due to its bitterness, pepper does exactly that no wonder it is equated to a woman who causes trouble and makes others cry. Another group member had this to say:

FG1L2: *Zvirahwe zvinotidzidzisa kukasira kufunga nokuti haumirirwi kusvika wazowana answer unopiwa nguva yakafanira. Ukanonoka tinokiya.* (Riddles teach us fast thinking because we do not wait for a very long time for someone to come up with a response. If you are too slow, we lock.)

The observations made by learners on benefits of riddling concur with those by Wa Gachanja and Kebaya (2013) on pedagogical values of Abagusii riddles and those by Gelfand (1979) on Shona riddles, that they impart knowledge, improve memory and reasoning ability as well

as help the young learn social values of their society.

Observing the learners perform riddles confirmed that they indeed teach fast thinking because one does not have the whole day to come up with the correct response. Response period is timed and the use of “*kiye*” (locked) indicates that your time is up, you have been timed out, and one would not want to be timed out without giving a response. However, the fact that the children give each other time to think, when one can say, “Let me think”, is an important aspect of African psychology in that in real life, important decisions are not hurriedly made, one has to give it full consideration to come to what is viewed as the right decision (Nyota and Mapara, 2008; Herskovits, 1961).

The learners also indicated that riddles teach them patience, giving others a chance and following rule:

FG1L5: *Tinodzidza kuti tinofanira kudzidza kuita zvinhu yava turn yedu nekudzidza kupa vamwe chance.* (We must learn to do things when it’s our turn and learn to give others a chance).

FG1L6: *Zvirahwe zvinotidzidzisa kutevedzera mitemo* (Riddles teach us to follow rules).

Patience, following rules and giving others the opportunity to participate are some of the virtues valued in African culture. Patience and following rules are evident in that if one just budes in with a riddle when it is not their turn, they lose a point because *vanenge vapisira* (they will have broken a rule). As for following rules learners from this group were agreed that learning to follow rules is important because this is required of them both at school, at home and in life. Their argument does make sense since one does not do as they please in life. Thus, there are authorities like the police, chiefs, elders and pastors within the community and prefects at schools, among others to ensure rules are adhered to.

#### **5.4.1.3 Responses on folktales**

The learners gave several examples of folktales that they know. Among them the famous Hare and Baboon tales such as *Tsuro naGudo vachibikana* (Hare and baboon cooking each other), *Tsuro naGudo vachinoba mukaka* (Hare Baboon stealing milk), among others. On the benefits of folktales, the learners gave several lessons learnt from folktales summarised by the researcher here. They indicated that folktales teach good morals like living in harmony

with others. Here, the tale of Hare and Baboon who went to steal milk was used to illustrate that stealing is bad, no wonder Baboon was caught and beaten. Another lesson learnt according to learners is not to look down upon others. One learner gave the example of the Race in the forest between Hare and Tortoise. Hare looked down upon tortoise calling him slow. Hare showed off and even had the audacity to take a nap when he was well ahead of tortoise. While he was sleeping tortoise overtook him and won the race/crown. The learner ended the folktale by spelling out the lesson thus:

FG1L 5: *Tinodzidza kuti vanhu vasashora munhu neappearance kana weakness yake.*  
Do not judge a book by its cover. Understand *zviri mumunhu nokuti rimwe zuva unozonyadziswa sezvakaita Tsuru.*

(We learn that people should not look down upon someone due to their appearance or weakness. Do not judge a book by its cover. Understand what is within the individual or else one day you will be embarrassed like Hare.)

The learner's point of view on lessons learnt tallies with Gombe's (2006) position on lessons from folktales cited by Chivasa and Mutswanga (2014:164) thus:

In these folktales, small animals and those that were often looked down upon ended up at the top of the ladder. The objective was to teach youngsters not to be caught in the trap of despising without knowing that fortunes one day favour the despised and neglected. They taught that every person regardless of status or size, should be accorded his/her respect.

The learners also pointed out that folktales teach many cultural norms such as team work. The tale of *Tsuru nedzimwe mhuka* (Hare and other animals), during a drought, digging a well together to get drinking water was given as an example. Hare refused to cooperate hence he was not allowed to drink from the well. Even when he tricked the other animals that were guarding the well to get water, when he was caught and he was punished. The learners also pointed out that folktales teach relationships such as with family and friends. In relation to their learning they pointed out that folktales do help them in several ways among them the following that the researcher sums up:

- Development of listening skills
- Learning language structures such as proverbs, idioms, ideophones, metaphors and similes.

- The narration of the folktale itself also helps improve the speaking skill as they use language.
- Improvement of composition writing

Thus, from the learners' point of view, there is a lot to learn and benefit from the various Shona oral art forms that they engage in. It is quite interesting to note that the young learners are aware of such important benefits emanating from what some adults want to just dismiss as child's play.

#### **5.4.2 Focus group 2 (urban Grade 6)**

The focus group comprised 11 - 12-year-old learners from an urban primary school and gave examples of the different Shona children's oral art forms. Their responses under each type are presented below.

##### **5.4.2.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs**

The learners started by stating that they mostly do game songs during their free time while riddles and folktales they do in class with their teacher. As for rhymes they pointed out that they rarely do them since they are now seniors. Game songs like hand clapping songs the learners also indicated that they perform them on their own during their free time at school. To quote one of the learners' response (to which the other members of the group agreed from their facial expressions and paralinguistic features such as nodding of heads):

FG2L3: *Ungaonekwa uchaita zvaana Colours! Colours! kana Madhadha mashanu munhu weGrade Six? NdezvemaECD izvo. Takazvisiya isu. Tava vanhu vakuru.*

(Does it make sense for someone in Grade 6 to be seen reciting rhymes like Colours! Colours! and *Madhadha mashanu* [Five Ducks]? That is for ECDs. We no longer do that. We are grown-ups.)

The learners were sincere in indicating that they only did riddles and folktales in class with their teacher as analysis of syllabi and schemes confirmed this. The *Indigenous Languages Junior (Grade 3-7) Syllabus* focuses on riddles and folktales for this level, while the *Indigenous Languages Infant (Early Childhood Development -Grade 2) Syllabus* focuses on rhymes, game songs and folktales for the level. The teachers' schemes also confirmed this as they were silent on this, for junior classes.

For a performance of their choice, the group chose to perform Pinocchio first, followed by *Zai rakaora*, (The rotten egg) then *Tarisai pasi* (Look down) and finally *Kana vanhu vangu* (If my people). Pinocchio and *Kana vanhu vangu* are hand clapping games. With Pinocchio for an example, the learners recited the letters to spell it as in P-I-NO double C-H-I-O. It's Pinocchio-ooo. This English game song they pointed out taught them spelling. Next, they performed *Kana vanhu vangu* a hand clapping game song that the children have drawn from Mai Charamba's hit song of the same title. The video of the song usually played on gospel shows on television has young children clapping to its rhythm. The fact that the children have drawn a hand-clapping game song from it, shows that the children are not oblivious to the goings on in the Music and Religious circles. The song is based on 2 Chronicles 7: 14 which reads:

If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land (King James Version).

The religious thread is also seen in another rhyme recited by the group *Tarisai pasi!* (Look down) It goes as follows:

*Tarisai pasi!* (Look down!)

*Shumba inoruma!* (The lion/beast bites!)

*Tarisai mudenga!* (Look up to the heavens!)

*Mwari vanodonha!* (God will come down!)

The rhyme though done playfully is loaded in terms of religious content. It encourages that people focus more on heavenly and not earthly things. For God is in heaven. Even though the learners do not know the verse, it is an intertextual reference with Revelations 13 where Satan referred to as the beast, was thrown to earth as punishment for rebelling against God. So, the beast can only be overcome by God himself. Hence, when you look down and see the lion look up to heaven and God will intervene. By repeating such rhymes, the children end up believing in nothing else but the Supreme Being who can conquer the dangerous beast. Children get some form of indoctrination in expected and suitable behaviour patterns of their communities.

The two game songs recited by the learners show the influence of religion, in this case

Christianity, on the children's oral art forms. This is so because Zimbabwe is mostly a Christian nation with about 70% of its population practising Christianity (ZimStat, 2017). Hence there is a high probability that most of the students might have a Christian background.

This group also indicated that they do compose some of these on their own although the compositions might be influenced by what they will have heard others do. They gave "Express" an English hand clapping game as an example. Although its base form is English, (an English naming game the equivalent to *Dudu muduri* in Shona), they indicated that they have infused many other concepts in their recitation for example times tables, shapes (Maths) prepositions, plural nouns (English), colours, trees, among other things. Interesting for the researcher was the fact that the learners indicated that they had completely reconstructed the rhyme in Shona renaming it *Unodei?* On why they had done that, the learners indicated that they did that for two reasons:

FG2L6: *Takazviitira kudzokorora zvatinenge tadzidza kuShona zvinenge zvichinetsa vamwe vedu.*

(We did it to revise what we will have learnt in Shona that others find difficult to master).

FG2L9: *Takazviitira kuti vamwe vedu vanonetseka kudoma zvinhu neChirungu vagone kuitawo game racho.*

(We did that to accommodate others who find it difficult to name things in English to play the game too).

Examples of language structures in Shona which they had realised their mates had challenges with included *nyaudzosingwi* (ideophones), *mhuka nevana vadzo* (animals and their young), Shona names of trees and fruits among others. The second reason, that of accommodating their friends clearly shows that the learners have cultivated a culture of team spirit, an important African value encapsulated in *ubuntu*, as evidenced by wanting to accommodate all. This is a strength that indigenous games have in that they promote inclusivity and encourage active engagement (Thompson et al., 2014; Mweli, 2018). It is a sign that they are more for cooperation as opposed to competition. The game song in Shona is presented below:

All: *Taura!* (Express)

All: *Unodei?* (You like what?)



Starter: *Ndotanga* (I start)

Starter: *Nyauzosingwi* (Ideophones)

Next: *Ndo-o* (Ideophone)

All: *Kusviba* (to be dark/black)

Next: *Piriviri* (Ideophone)

All: *Kutsvuka* (to be red)

Next: *Tande* (Ideophone)

All: *Kuenda* (to go)

Starter: *Zvakwana* (That's enough)

The game continues until they get to the starter who then says, "That's enough" and another person chooses something else to name. During play whoever fails to name what has been requested is out.

The learners indicated that the game songs such as the above help them in a variety of ways:

FG2L4: *Zvinotibatsira kurelaxer tadzidza* four periods *dzose* before break.

(It helps us relax after learning for four periods before break).

FG2L1: *Zvinotibatsira kureviser zvatinenge tadzidza kuti tisazvikanganwa*

(It helps us not to forget what we will have learnt as we revise through playing the game songs repeatedly).

FG2L7: *Zvinotibatsira kuumba ushamwari* (It helps us build friendships).

In addition to helping them, revise content learnt, strengthen friendship, one respondent from this group indicated that some of the game songs help them keep fit and perfect skills especially for new subjects introduced in the new curriculum:

FG2L3: *Tave kuiita manew* subjects like Mass displays, *saka tinofanira kugara tiri fit uye flexible. Zvino mamwe magames iwawa anoita kuti tigare tiri fit miviri yedu ivewo flexible. Sokuti, kana tichiita Zvamutsana mutsana tsuro nembwa. Tinomhanya*

*nekunzvenga zvobva zvaita kuti tigare tiri fit. Pa*Visual and Performing Arts  
*panotodawo shasha dzokuimba saka zvinotibatsira chaizvo*

(We are now doing new subjects like Mass Displays, so we have to be fit and flexible. So, some of these games help us develop flexibility and keep us fit. For example, when performing *Zvamutsana mutsana tsuro nembwa* (Spotting and chasing each other). We run, and dodge and it keeps us fit. Visual and Performing Arts requires singing experts, so it helps us).

The fact that the learner was able to link the game songs to new subjects in the new curriculum like Mass Displays and Visual and Performing Arts on his own, is a clear indication that if a conscious effort is made by teachers, more benefits can be reaped. Leaving things to chance, where the oral art forms are just a coincidence during teaching is short changing the learners who could benefit more, since responses from learners on game songs and rhymes show that learners do not only enjoy performing these but are also aware of the benefits embedded therein.

#### **5.4.2.2 Responses on riddles**

The following were given as examples of riddles from this group:

(i) *Ndinongova maburi asi mvura ndinochengeta*-sponge (I am all holes, but I retain water-sponge)

(ii) *Ndapanga hama yedu iri pedo pedo -gotsi*. (I miss my relative who very close- back of the head/rumors/occiput).

(iii) *Zimunda rababa iguru-denga* (My father's field is big-The sky).

(iv) *Jira rababa vangu risingaperi kupetwa-denga*. (My father's blanket that cannot be folded-The sky).

(v) *John wadonha akasiya heti mumuti-tsvubvu* (John fell and left his hat up the tree- smelly-berry finger leaf).

The examples given by this group also touched on body parts, natural phenomena and fruits. The researcher however found example number (i) quite unique as it shows a lot of creativity on the part of the children: *Ndinongova maburi asi mvura ndinochengeta*-sponge (I am all holes, but I retain water- sponge). A sponge is used for bathing and is made from material

with small holes like those of a mosquito net that is if it is a manufactured. It can also be home grown in the garden, and is stuffy with small holes, when dry it also absorbs water just like the manufactured one. It is its absorbency of water, despite having holes, that has made it subject for riddling. A hole is supposed to let water pass through, but surprisingly, the sponge retains the water. The back of the head is something that others can only describe for a person. No one has ever seen their own occiput. Even if one tries to use a mirror, the position continues to shift leaving one still wondering what it is like. Hence, the back of the head is so close, but one can never see it on their own (riddle ii). A natural phenomenon that intrigues the children is the sky, no one knows where it begins, neither does anyone know where it ends. An object the children know to be wide is a blanket, but still it can be folded. However, the sky is ever stretched; thus, it is likened to a father's blanket that has never been folded or a father's big field (riddles (iii) and (iv)). Wild fruits also come in (riddle 5). The smelly-berry finger leaf is personified and named John. When this fruit falls the children have observed that the top part that holds it to the branch remains stuck on the branch, while the ripe fruit falls to the ground. Thus, since it is on top of the fruit, the children have intelligently made an analogy with a hat that is worn on a person's head and remains intact unless the person has fallen, or the wind has swept it off. John is also a common English name that has been incorporated into the learners' riddling repertoire.

#### **5.4.2.3 Responses on folktales**

They indicated that folktales like riddles they do in class with the teachers unlike game songs and rhymes which they do during breaktime, at lunch or after school. Examples given included the usual Hare and Baboon tales such as *Tsuro naGudo*, cooking each other, stealing and going to look for wild fruits among others. Two examples that struck the researcher from this group were *Rungano rwaJongwe naShumba* (The tale of Cork and Lion) and *Rungano rweMurume muZambiya* (The tale of a Zambian man).

In the tale of Lion and Cork, Lion was King of the jungle simply dictated that no animal was allowed to cry /produce a sound except for him. Hare was sent to pass the message to all animals who concurred due to fear of Lion, but Cork refused to oblige. This angered Lion who dared Cork to a fight. On the day of the fight, Lion was accompanied by Hare and Cork by Dog. Upon seeing Dog, Hare who was in front of Lion took off at lightning speed and Lion followed suit, he thought Hare had seen that Cork was dangerous, yet Hare was running away from his enemy Dog. The decree was reversed, and the animals were allowed to cry as

they wished which came as a surprise to them. When later, they heard what Cork had done, he became their hero. Up to this day, animals cry as they wish.

The following were given as lessons learnt from the tale:

FG2L3: *Tinodzidza kuva neushingi kwete kungonyarara kana pane zvatisingadi* (We learn to be courageous, not just keeping quiet when something does not please us).

FG2L10: *Tinodzidza kuti hatifaniri kuitira vamwe utsinye* (We learn that we should not be cruel to others).

FG2L5: *Tinodzidza kuti zvakakosha kugara murunyararo* (We learn that it is important to live in peace).

The learners drew important cultural values from the tale, that is courage, harmonious living and showing kindness to others, however, a closer look at the folktale shows that it can be used to teach cross-cutting themes such as human rights education where issues of democracy, freedom of expression (i.e. freeing of the air waves), freedom to campaign. Issues like political tolerance and not intimidating others can also be discussed based on the tale. This issue of rights is quite thorny the world over and Zimbabwe is no exception as evidenced by reactions to the enactment of Acts such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) in 2002. This caused a furore within the media fraternity in particular and the Zimbabwean populace in general, when it was felt the acts were against democratic principles. This resulted in the repealing of POSA in 2018. In its place the Maintenance of Peace and Order Bill was put in place. Through folktales like the above, the young can be made aware of their rights as citizens in a subtle way.

In the tale of a Zambian man, there was a man of Zambian origin who came to Zimbabwe to seek employment. After getting a job, he decided to get married. He married a Zimbabwean woman and they had five children. Later on, the man decided to go back to his homeland, but the wife did not want to. He told the wife that he would go with his children. The wife cried a lot and was inconsolable but there was nothing she could do. A friend told her to go to court so that the issue could be resolved. At the courts the issue was looked into and it was agreed that since the children were young, they would remain with the mother and the father could visit or take them for holidays until they were 18 years. After that, they could decide whether they wanted to go to Zambia where their father was or remain in Zimbabwe with their mother. The

conflict was thus resolved, and both husband and wife were happy with the arrangement.

On what they learnt from this tale, the learners gave the following:

FG2L4: *Tinodzidza kuti rooranai vematongo.*

(We learn that people should marry those from their homeland)

FG2L6: *Tinodzidza kuti matare anobatsira kugadzirisa zvinenge zvanetsa nekukosha kwekutonga zvinofadza vanhu vese.*

(We learn that the courts are helpful when conflict arises and the importance of fairness in handling issues).

FG2L3: *Kana munhu akaroorwa/kuroorwa nemunhu wekune imwe nyika anofanira kuzobvuma kuenda naye kunyika yake kana ava kuda kudzokera.*

(If one marries a foreigner, they should be willing to go to his/her homeland if ever he/she decides to do so).

A close look at the learners' responses on lessons learnt, shows that the tale deals with a number of cross-cutting themes such as mixed marriages, issues of citizenship, tolerance between locals and foreigners, role of the courts in dispute settlement and the issue of the legal age of majority among others.

### **5.4.3 Focus group 3 (infant peri-urban grade 2)**

This group comprised of 6-year-old infant learners from a peri-urban primary school. It was only able to perform and answer questions on game songs, rhymes and folktales but none on riddles. This is understandable since these are not part of the Infant Syllabus. The researcher confirmed this through analysis of the two indigenous languages syllabi. Riddles are only introduced from Grade 3 upwards. At infant level the focus is on rhymes, game songs and folktales. Their responses are presented below.

#### **5.4.3.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs**

The learners recited *Nyarara kuchema mwana*, (Stop crying baby) *Bata musoro* (Touch the head), *Madhadha mashanu* (Five ducks) and *Dudu muduri* (Crush it in the mortar) when asked to recite their favourite ones. The learners also recited two English rhymes, Colours! Colours! Colours! and Showers of rain. This did not surprise the researcher since the teachers

had also given these as examples in the questionnaire responses.

*Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara* (Stop crying baby) which they recited first will be analysed here since the others have been dealt with elsewhere. It goes as follows:

*Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara nyarara*

*a-a-a Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara*

*e-e-e Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara*

*i-i-i Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara*

*o-o-o-Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara*

*u-u-u- Nyarara kuchema mwana nyarara*

(Free translation: After reciting each vowel, it is followed by the chorus Stop crying baby, stop crying).

After reciting the lullaby with vowels, they to reciting it with syllables like /ma-, me-, mi-, mo-, mu-/ among other various syllables. The dragging that accompanies each vowel or syllable gives rhythm to the recitation which is pleasing to the children's ears. Thus, while pretending to lull the baby, the concept being taught is further grounded in a playful manner.

On where they perform them more the children unanimously indicated that they perform these more at school with their classmates. On where they learnt the rhymes and game songs the following responses were given:

FG3L2: *Vana madam ndivo vanotidzidzisa. Pamwe vanotibvunza atinoziva.*

(Our teachers teach us. Sometimes they ask us those that we know).

FG3L9; *Tinotevedzera vamwe.* (We imitate others).

The learners' responses here show that at infant level teachers do make a conscious effort to teach rhymes and game songs, which in turn they continue to imitate among each other.

On why they performed the game songs/rhymes the learners gave the following responses:

FG3L1: *Tinonakidzwa tichitamba nevamwe.* (We enjoy ourselves playing with others).

FG3L5: *Tinodzidza ma a e i o u* (We learn a e i o u-s [meaning we learn vowels and syllables]).

FG3L2: *Tinoziva mazita edu, emiti nemhuka kunyanya patinoita Dudu muduri* (Crush it in the mortar).

(We get to know each other's names, names of trees and names of animals especially when reciting *Dudu muduri*, [Crush it in the mortar])

Despite their age, the learners were able to give quite meaningful lessons learnt from the game songs and rhymes they know.

#### 5.4.3.2 Responses on folktales

The learners just gave tales about Hare and Baboon, among them *Tsuro naGudo vachibikana* (Hare and Baboon boiling each other), *Tsuro naGudo vachiba chingwa mumota yeBakers' Inn* (Hare and Baboon stealing bread from a Bakers' Inn truck). The tale about Hare and Baboon stealing bread seems to be quite common as it was also narrated by a Grade 5 pupil in Focus Group 5.

Due to their age they failed to give moral lessons in general but drew them from the two tales narrated by their classmates:

FG3L10: *Tinodzidza kuti kuba kwakashata*. (We learn that stealing is bad).

FG3L8: *Tinodzidza kutamba nevamwe zvakakanaka*. (We learn to play well with others).

F3GL6: *Tinodzidza kuti kuiitira vamwe utsinye kwakashata sezvakaita tsuro kubika shamwari yake akaibva akadya nyama ndokutora bhonzo rake kuita pito*

(We learn that and being cruel to them is bad like what Tsuro did when he cooked his friend Gudo until he was done, ate the meat and even took a bone to blow as a whistle).

FG3L9 *Tinodzidza kuti kubirira vamwe kwakashata* (We learn that cheating others is bad).

The learners said that they learnt that stealing is bad; to play well with others and not cheat them and not to be cruel to others like *Tsuro* who cooked *Gudo* until he was done, ate the

meat and even took a bone to blow as a whistle. The lessons drawn by the young learners do show that, despite their age they can already tell good from bad behaviour. What this shows is that the earlier the learners are exposed consciously to these oral art forms the better for instilling of moral values and cultural norms of their society.

#### **5.4.4 Focus group 4 (peri-urban grade 6)**

The focus group comprised 11-12-year-old learners from a peri urban primary school. The learners in this group were able to give examples and answer questions on all types of Shona children's oral art forms. Their responses under each type are presented below.

##### **5.4.4.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs**

When asked to perform rhymes or game songs of their choice, the learners straight away recited Express and Broken telephone which are in English. The researcher had to probe them to perform Shona ones upon which they recited a Shona version of Express, 'Unodei?' and *Sarura wako* (Make your choice). These two have been analysed elsewhere so the researcher just captured the learners' responses from the discussion that followed the recitations. On asking them where they got the Shona version of Express, they indicated that it was just out of interest that they had tried it out in Shona upon which they realised it was more interesting and fun since more of their friends were able to join in. One of the learners put it forth quite succinctly thus:

FG4L7: *Zviri nyore kukurumidza kufunga nokudoma zvinhu neShona. Chirungu chinonetsa saka vamwe vanokurumidza kudzva moramba muchingotangazve. Manje kana chiri ChiShonaka, munombochovha makawanda zvichitonakidza.*

(It's easier to think and identify things fast in Shona. English is difficult, so others fall out early and you continue to break off and start again. However, if it is in ChiShona, you go for a long time as a large group without breaking and that is interesting.).

Such a view shows that the learners believe in the principle of the more the merrier. There is no selfishness in such a stance. Thus, the group comes first and not the individual as advocated for in Afrocentric thought through the principle of *ubuntu/unhu* (humaneness). This view is at the epicentre of African culture where no man is an island, one can never be self-sufficient in the truest sense of the word but needs others since the self is located in the context of others, who help mould that individual's social identity and personality (Leketsa,



2013; Masolo,2010; Metz and Gaie, 2010; Nussbaum, 2003).

Even though the group decided to recite the game song in Shona, when it came to naming things, both English and Shona would be used. For example, when the leader chose '*mazita emota*' (names of cars) the names were all given in English. For names of rivers they also went beyond the borders as names like Mississippi and Nile were also proffered among others. As for *Sarura Wako* (Make your choice), it was recited in similar fashion to Focus Group 1's performance.

On benefits of performing the game songs, the learners pointed out that all games have rules, so engaging in them helps them learn to follow rules. They also acknowledged that the game songs make them knowledgeable, instil team work, teach them to make good choices, think fast and critically as well as teaching them to be patient and give others a chance. One learner had this to say:

FG4L5: *Mamwe anotipa mutauro watinozoshandisa mukunyora rondedzero sokuti yokutsanangura munhu sezvatinoita muna Sarura Wako* (Make your Choice).

(Some of these teach us language that we can use in writing compositions, for an example describing a person like we do in Make your choice)

This shows that there is more in it for the learners than just play and enjoyment. If the children, on their own, are aware of such important knowledge, then if teachers put in more effort by guiding them to this, more aspects across the curriculum could certainly be taught through the various oral art forms.

#### **5.4.4.2 Responses on riddles**

(i) *Mai ndebvu baba ndebvu –mbudzi* (The mother has a beard and the father has a beard-goats).

(ii) *Zigomana rinokunguruka risina ura- motokari* (The big boy who rolls without intestines).

(iii) *Vakandishaiwa muhakata-AIDS* (They failed to find me through divining bones-AIDS).

(iv) *Gomana rinofunga risina uropi- Kombiyuta* (The big boy who thinks without brains- a computer).

Riddle (i) falls in the usual traditional forms and relates to family life and the animal world.

Riddles (ii), (iii) and (iv) show a lot of new creations in as far as the responses are concerned. They relate to modern innovations such as cars and computers (ii) and (iv) respectively and in (iii) the scourge or pandemic has also been incorporated. Computers are now taught from primary level right from infant level hence what learners observe and think about them tend to be reflected in riddles such as (iv). Riddle (iii) shows that having HIV and AIDS as part of the primary school curriculum is paying dividends. If learners can make their own analogies to reflect that traditional diviners (n'angas who use divining bones) cannot diagnose HIV and AIDS, then the teaching of HIV and AIDS as a cross cutting theme at pre and primary school levels is bearing fruits. The young grow up enlightened that they cannot have certain diseases treated through African Traditional Religion means. The alternative would certainly be modern medicines, which leads one to go to hospitals or clinics and deal with those in the medical fraternity and rightly so.

On benefits of having riddling sessions the learners also indicated that they help them to become critical thinkers, be knowledgeable about things in their environment and learn team work, benefits that had also been pointed out in Focus Groups 1 and 2. However, there was a new benefit given by one learner in this group:

FG4L3: *Zvimwe zvirahwe zvinofadza saka zvinotisekesa.* (Some riddles are funny and make us laugh).

From the examples of riddles given in this group and in other groups, some were funny indeed and drew laughter from the participants. For example, riddle (i) above where both the mother and the father are said to have beards. The learners found it very funny because to them it is rare for a mother to have a beard.

#### **5.4.4.3 Responses on folktales**

While the learners gave examples of a number of the usual Hare and Baboon tales, *Mujawo waTsuru naKamba* (The race between Hare and Tortoise) where Hare is defeated due to pride and looking down upon Tortoise, *Rungano rwaChimusoro* (The tale of Chimusoro), who fell from *muhacha* (hissing tree) and died and *Rungano rwemukomana akanhonga mari* (The tale of a boy who picked some money). *Rungano rwemukomana akanhonga mari* (The tale of a boy who picked some money) caught the researcher's interest due to its uniqueness. The boy had been advised by his parents not to pick things just thrown away or lost by people he did not know but when he found a 10kg roller meal bag packed with notes he could not resist it.

He took the money home and hid it in his bedroom only to find out later that it had turned into a *kadhodhamudhara* (goblin) which caused havoc for the family. A prophet had to be called to exorcise for the family and it was burnt. Peace prevailed in the home again. The boy was cautioned never to do it again.

The content of this tale shows a lot of influence from the world of wonders by prophets (the go back to sender, spiritual spectacles, and gospel of prosperity type), the get rich quick syndrome that results in people seeking wealth through dubious means such as using goblins. Then when they have problems, they throw these away using money and the gullible fall for the trap thinking they have been lucky, only to end up taking over the problems of the original owner.

The learners gave the following as lessons learnt from the narrated folktales and from folktales in general, that were similar to those given by members from other groups, that is obedience, not to look down upon others, humility and not to be greedy. The values mentioned by the learners are among those cherished in African culture (Idang, 2015; Mandova and Chingombe 2013; Nziramasanga, 1999). However, the group added two novel ones drawn from the second folk tale narrated by one group member:

FG4L1: *Tinofanira kusangononga zvinhu zvisiri zvedu.*

(We learn that we should be wary of picking things that do not belong to us).

FG4L7: *Tinodzidza kuti kana waita problem kunamata kunobatsira* (We learn that if you have a problem prayer helps).

These two emanate from the content of the tale that has a religious bias, both African traditional religion and Christianity. African traditional religion has some aspects that thrive on fear of the unknown hinged on dos and don'ts as enshrined in taboos and fear of angering the ancestral spirits (Tatira, 2000). Thus, just picking things whose origin one does not know, may end one in trouble as is the case with the boy in the tale who ends up with a goblin. Christianity is also hinged on faith in the power of prayer that is viewed as the panacea to all problems; hence the family is only able to be assisted out of the quagmire it finds itself in through prayer.

#### **5.4.5 Focus group 5 (Grade 5 Rural Resettlement)**

The focus group comprised 10-11-year-old learners from a rural resettlement primary school

and learners in this group were able to give examples on all types of Shona children's oral art forms. Their responses under each type are presented below.

#### 5.4.5.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs

Having indicated that they mostly perform these at school during breaktime at home they would be busy with other chores. The group started by performing the hand clapping game *Bhubhucha* which they said they just saw and heard others performing and copied. The game song is another body naming performance, but this time done by juniors who perform it in a more complicated manner as compared to performances by those at infant level. In this recitation a number of actions are done within one move before returning to the chorus. It goes as follows:

*Bhubhucha* x 4

Touch your head,

touch your waist,

turn around

*Bhubhucha*. The term *bhubhucha* is a combination of Shona onomatopoeic ideophones capturing the sound that comes from the manner in which the clapping is done. *Bhubhucha* also gives a rhythmic movement that makes the clapping and actions performed interesting. Code switching is also evident as English is used for instructions that follow *bhubhucha*. These learners can give more details in English as opposed to the one-word switches observed at infant level. At Grade 5 level they are older and have had more exposure learning and using English. However, the common denominator is that code-switching is prevalent in children's Shona oral art forms due to Shona and English being languages in contact in all aspects of the Zimbabwean societies, education included. When probed for wholly Shona performances, the learners recited *Sarura wako* (Make your choice) and *Dudu muduri* (Crush it in the mortar) recitations that were also recited by other groups. They also performed a farming game song:

*Kurima musana wondirwadza.*

*Pakudya ndomera manhenga.*

(Working causes me back ache but when it comes to eating, I grow feathers).

They accompany the singing with actions of someone working in the fields with a hoe. The growing of feathers is metaphoric for being active and lively when it comes to eating by someone who feigns being ill when it is time to do the work. Going beyond the surface meaning of the game the song shows that it encourages hard work. No matter how painful the task is, one should endure the pain if they are to enjoy the fruits. One cannot enjoy the fruits of what they have not worked for. Even the Bible, in 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 10 does categorically state that, “--- if a man will not work, he shall not eat”. Thus, the game teaches learners to cherish hard work, abhor laziness and idleness. It encourages respect for the dignity of labour, a key tenet in Afrocentric thought.

On benefits of performing the game songs, the learners pointed out that: some of the game songs teach them to make good choices; some inspire them to aim higher in life; others help them relax; yet others teach them coordination and help them keep fit, while above all they help them work as a team. These benefits had also come out from other focus groups.

#### **5.4.5.2 Responses on riddles**

The learners were able to give many examples of riddles including some that had been given by other groups. However, of interest to the researcher were the following,

(i) *Nicodhimo nemhuri yake- mwedzi nenyeredzi* (Nicodemus and his family-The moon and the stars).

(ii) *Vane gumi nevaviri- vadzidzi vaJesu* (The twelve- Jesus’s disciples).

(iii) *Chikomana chokwedu chino pfeka mabhurugwa 10-10-* cabbage (Our own boy who puts on ten pairs of trousers)

Riddle (i) and (ii) show intertextuality with the Bible, for they refer to well-known texts in the New Testament. Riddle (i) refers to the story of Nicodemus the Pharisee, a member of the Jewish council (John 3 v 1-21), who went to Jesus in the middle of the night to enquire on how he could be born again. Seeing that the moon and the stars appear during the night, they are likened to Nicodemus who secretly went to seek counsel with Jesus at night. This shows how religion has also been incorporated into children’s riddling repertoires. Riddle (ii) is based on the number of Jesus’ disciples. They were twelve, which is *gumi nembiri* in the Shona counting system. When referring to people, for concordial agreement it becomes *gumi nevaviri* hence *vane gumi nevaviri* (the twelve). This is not surprising because, even though

there are other religions followed in Zimbabwe, it is basically considered a Christian nation because of the numbers that subscribe to Christianity. Therefore, such a religion cannot escape from the keen observation of children since they are part and parcel of that community. Riddle (iii) is also interesting in both the question and response. The question uses the mathematical concept of number ten (10) and clothing to make an analogy that guides learners to the response that is a cabbage. The layers of a cabbage are likened to someone who is putting on ten pairs of trousers. The wearing of shorts or trousers one on top of the other is a common trend among the contemporary youths. It is called “*kubhujura*” which loosely translated means that even if the one on top falls, it will just drop onto one’s feet and the inside one will take its place. The same can be seen when one is peeling off cabbage leaves, they are heaped one on top of the other, so as one removes the top leaf, another one is revealed.

The learners indicated that riddles sharpen their critical thinking skills, help them think fast, expose to them knowledge of things in their environment and make them use language in an interesting manner.

#### **5.4.5.3 Responses on folktales**

The learners narrated and gave examples of many Hare and Baboon tales. *Tsuro naGudo vachibikana* (Hare and Baboon cooking each other), *Tsuro naGudo vachiba mukaka* (Hare and Baboon stealing milk), *Tsuro naGudo vachitsvaga matamba* (Hare and Baboon looking for monkey oranges) and *Tsuro naGudo vachiba manhanga* (Hare and Baboon stealing pumpkins). One learner however, recited the tale of *Tsuro naGudo vachiba chingwa* (Hare and Baboon stealing bread from Baker’s Inn truck. *Tsuro* escaped but *Gudo* was caught by the police and sent to prison.

It is not surprising to hear the learner talking about bread and a Baker’s Inn truck. Until recently, the Baker’s Inn trucks have been delivering bread all over Zimbabwe, including rural areas, so it is something that could have triggered the creativity in this learner’s folktale narration. If bread has to be stolen, then it has to be from the delivery truck. Culprits, thieves included are punished by the police, hence for him it makes sense that Baboon, the culprit in this tale should also suffer the same fate. What the learner does here, is what constructivists advocate for, bringing real life experiences into the classroom, which is key in promoting learning (Holford and Portnoy, 2017; Mims, 2003; Murphy, 1997).

On moral lessons learnt from folktales in general the learners gave morals similar to those learners in other focus groups gave, that is, respect, friendship, family relationships, obedience, honesty, responsibility and team work. However, one learner outlined bad habits that should be discouraged in an interesting manner:

FG6L8: *Kune vamwe vedu vasingadi kutaurirwa zvakaipa zvavo zvavanoita sekuti umbavha, kunyeba, kubirira vamwe, kushora vamwe kana kuvhaira, vanoshatirwa asi kana zvikabuda nemungano vanongoona vega kuti zvatinoita zvakashata. Vanogona kutoguma vazvirega.*

(There are some of us who do not want to be told about the bad things that we do like stealing, lying, cheating others, despising others or showing off, they get angry. However, if this comes out through folktales, they will just see for themselves that what they do is bad. They might end up stopping it).

Surely for a simple rural Grade 5 pupil to be able to articulate such an important issue shows the highest level of critical thinking which can cascade into real life practice. Hence, if a learner can do this on his/her own, what more when there is a conscious effort on the part of a mature adult, the teacher, to guide and direct such construction of knowledge? This is what constructivism advocates for, that learners should be involved in knowledge construction with the teacher guiding and channelling such energy positively (Akpan, and Board, 2016; Duke, Harper, and Johnson, 2013; Rueben, 1999; Murphy, 1997; Jonassen, 1994).

#### **5.4.6 Focus group 6 (Grade 2 Rural Sesettlement)**

This group comprised 6-year-old infant learners from a rural resettlement primary school. The group, just like focus group 3 and was only able to perform and answer questions on game songs, rhymes and folktales but none on riddles. This is understandable since these are not part of the Infant Syllabus as mentioned earlier under focus group 3. Their responses are presented below.

##### **5.4.6.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs**

The learners recited Colours! Colours! Family, who are we? Broken telephone, *Madhadha mashanu* (Five ducks) and *Bata musoro* (Touch the head). The striking thing is that some of the examples of rhymes given were similar to those given by learners of the same level in the peri-urban category (Focus Group 2) and by infant teachers interviewed in the urban

category. This seems to reflect that the rhymes are not setting specific as they are recited across the different environments. The likes of *Madhadha mashanu* (Five ducks) and *Bata musoro* (Touch the head) seem to be common rhymes/game songs across the divide at infant level. Even the three English ones recited by this group are also common rhymes at infant level as observed during the study. *Bata musoro* (Touch the head) will be analysed here since *Madhadha mashanu* (Five ducks) has been analysed earlier in the presentation. *Bata musoro* (Touch the head) goes:

Leader: *Bata musoro* (Touch the head)

Response: *Uyu* (Here it is)

Leader: *Mumwe wacho* (The other one)

Response: *Hapana* (There is none)

The game song goes on with the children naming and touching all the body parts mentioned. If there is only one body part when it is asked for, the respondents will respond “There is none”. If there is a second one, they continue responding “Here it is”. Just as is the case with *Zvandadzidza pano* (What I have learnt here), the children get to know their body parts. However, in Touch your head, they do not only get to know the parts, but also become aware of how many they have in terms of number, one head, two eyes, two ears, one neck, one mouth, two heads, legs and so on. An analysis of the Indigenous Languages Infant Syllabus shows that Human body parts are a topic that the learners have to be taught (under the topic *Ruzivo pamusoro pomunhu* [Knowledge about a human being]), hence, through a rhyme such as this one, learners get to learn the parts and know how many they have in a playful way.

On what they learnt from the two Shona rhymes/game songs that they recited, only two responses were given:

FG6L1: *Madhadha mashanu inotidzidzisa kuverenga.*

(Five ducks teaches us how to count)

FG6L7: *Bata musoro inoita kuti tizive nhengo dzemiviri yedu.*

(Touch your head teaches us our body parts)



Young as they are, the children were still able to draw lessons from the rhymes/game songs on their own. This shows that they are not simply regurgitating them as recitations for play but do benefit as they interact with them to come up with meaning.

#### **5.4.6.2 Responses on folktales**

Examples of Hare and Baboon tales also dominated examples given by this group of learners. A new example that had not been narrated was the tale of *Rungano rwemabiko aGudo* (The tale of Baboon's party). Baboon throws his party up a tree, this time beating Hare at his own game. Hare could not join the party because he cannot climb up trees like Baboon. So, he had to watch Baboon and his mates enjoy themselves up there while he was grounded. This time around Baboon had got him. The group was unanimous in that Hare got what he deserved. Their response showed that all along they had not been pleased with the manner Hare always treated Baboon, like fooling him, tricking him and getting him into trouble as reflected in the other Hare and Baboon tales.

On lessons learnt from the folktales, the learners said:

FG6L4: *Tinodzidza kushara shamwari dzakanaka* (We learn to choose good friends).

FG6L8: *Tinodzidza kuti vanhu vemumhuri ndibaba, mai, bhudhi nasisi.* (We learn about family members like father, mother, brother and sister).

FG6L2: *Tinodzidza kuti kuba kwakashata* (We learn that stealing is bad).

FG6L10: *Tinodzidza kuti kukara kwakashata* (We learn that being greedy is bad).

Though lessons learnt appear simplistic, they are also at the core of African cultural values and it is pleasing that, young as they are the infant learners were still able to bring them out, which means they did benefit something from the folktales in that they learnt that, stealing is bad, not to be cruel, not to be greedy, to choose good friends and that they learnt about family members like father, mother, brother and sister.

#### **5.4.7 Focus group 7 (Grade 3 rural)**

The focus group comprised 6-7-year-old learners from a rural primary school. The learners in this group were able to give examples and answer questions on rhymes, game songs and folktales. They were not able to respond to questions on riddles. Their responses under each type are presented below.

#### 5.4.7.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs

The learners started by reciting *Zvandangzidza Pano!* (What I have learnt here!), *Tinocheka Uswa* (We cut grass), *Apa pangu* (This part of me) and *Madhadha mashanu* (Five ducks). *Tinocheka uswa* (We cut the grass) and *Apa pangu* (This part of me) will be analysed here since *Madhadha mashanu* (Five ducks) and *Zvandangzidza pano* (What I have learnt here!) have been analysed elsewhere in this presentation. The rhyme *Tinocheka uswa* (We cut the grass) goes as follows:

*Tinocheka, tinocheka uswa!* (We cut the grass, we cut the grass!),

*Tinocheka, tinocheka uswa!* (We cut the grass, we cut the grass!)

*Zuva rakadai! Zuva rakadai!* (When the sun is this up! When the sun is this up!)

*Tichiti nyeu nyeu nyeu!* (We go cut, cut, cut!)

*Tichiti nyeu nyeu nyeu!* (We go cut, cut, cut!)

*Yuwi musana! Yuwi musana!* (Oh, my back! Oh, my back!)

*Musapisa musapisa uswa!* (Do not burn, do not burn the grass)

*Musapisa musapisa uswa!* (Do not burn, do not burn the grass)

*Chero Zuva rakadai! Zuva rakadai!* (Even if the sun is this up! The sun is this up!)

*Muchiti pise pise pise!* (You just burn! burn! burn!)

*Muchiti pise pise pise!* (You just burn! burn! burn!)

*Mhuka dzotsva! Mhuka dzotsva!* (Animals are burnt! Animals are burnt!)

The rhyme is accompanied by action with the children imitating the cutting of grass as they recite it. The rhyme focuses on environmental issues. The grass is cut in broad day light, so it is not a crime. It is cut for a purpose since it is used for various things in the home like thatching and mulching in gardens among others. The ideophone 'nyeu' indicates to cut with a sharp object, in this case a sickle, here it is repeated to give a pictorial image of how grass is cut. One does not cut once and rise but about three times before putting down the morsel of grass. It also shows that it is not easy to work in the heat, bent over for that matter, hence the

cry, “*Yuwi musana! Yuwi musana!*” (“Oh, my back! Oh, my back!”). What is criminal is burning the grass, for by doing so wildlife and their habitats are destroyed. Use of the of the ideophone ‘*pise*’ (burn) triplicated also indicates some carelessness, just wanton destruction, on the part of whoever is burning the grass. Such behaviour is punishable by law, hence in Zimbabwe we have the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), responsible for dealing with such culprits. From grass the rhyme can be extended to other environmental issues such as deforestation, soil erosion and litter among others.

The learners indicated that their infant teacher taught them this rhyme. On asking them what they learnt from the rhyme/game song, the following lessons were given by individual learners from this group:

FG7L6: *Hatifaniri kupisa uswa nokuti hwakakosha.* (We should not burn grass because it is important).

FG7L9: *Hatifaniri kupisa uswa nokuti munogara mhuka* (We should not burn grass because it is animal shelter).

FG7L4: *Zvakaipa kupisa uswa hwekupfuririsa dzimba.* (It is bad to burn grass that we need for thatching huts).

It is evident from the lessons given by the learners that, at such a tender age, they are already conscious of environmental management issues and the need to live in harmony with nature. Such knowledge makes the learners aware of the negative impact of wanton destruction of the natural environment which in the end may have a negative impact not only on the environment and animal habitats but also man himself. Based on selected folktales Tatira’s (2005: 41) observation emphasises this, “...man is reminded that he depends on his environment and in order to survive and develop, he should take care of his environment. If he is careless with his environment, he will certainly perish”.

The rhyme *Apa pangu!* (This part of me), just like *Tinocheka uswa* (We cut the grass), is sung in unison by the children accompanied by action. It goes:

*Apa pangu* don’t touch x2 (This part of me! Don’t touch!)

Don’t! Don’t! Don’t touch!

*Usabata!* Don’t touch! (Don’t touch! Don’t touch)

The learners indicated that they were taught the rhyme by members of the police who came to talk to them at school. On what she talked to them about they pointed out that she told them

not to allow anyone to touch them on the parts she was telling them to touch on themselves. From their actions the researcher noticed that they were touching only their private parts. On checking with the teacher, the policemen and women were members of The Victim Friendly Unit from the Zimbabwe Republic Police, who came to talk to learners at the school on matters of child abuse. The fact that the learners recited the rhyme without being triggered to do so shows that they had mastered it and it has become part of their recitation repertoire, not only that, but also a reflection that they benefitted from learning that rhyme. This became crystal clear when the researcher asked them what they learnt from the rhyme and the following were given as lessons learnt by individual learners from the group:

FG7L2: *Tinodzidza kuti takakosha, hatifaniri kurega vanhu vachitibata miviri yedu.* (We learn that we are important and should not let anyone touch us on our bodies).

FG7L6: *Tinofanira kuudza vabereki vedu, vadzidzisi kana mumwe munhu mukuru kana pane atibata padon't touch.* (We should tell our parents, teachers or an adult person if ever anyone touches us on the parts we say don't touch).

FG7L5: *Tikaona munhu achibata shamwari yedu, tinoudza vana ticha, kana vabereki vedu kana mapurisa.* (When we see someone touching our friend, we should tell our teachers, parents or tell the police).

FG7L1: *Hatifaniri kutaura kana kujairirana nevanhu vatisingazivi.* (We should not talk or be friendly to strangers).

FG7L10: *Chero vari daddy vako, hama yako, ticha kana muvakidzani akubata murevere.* (Even if it is your father, relative, teacher or neighbour who touches you, report them).

Surely, for such lessons to come from Grade 3 pupils is a sign of the power such oral art forms have to instil knowledge, raise self-awareness and boost self-esteem within the learners. Also, if they could remember so vividly what was taught to them by police officers, whose appearance was a once off occasion with the learners, what more if such use of various Shona oral art forms were to be the order of the day for the learners?

The rhymes are loaded with repetitions that are characteristic of most children's rhymes. The repetitions help reinforce important issues, thus, making it easier for the learners to remember important information. Also, in terms of content, the two rhymes touch on two cross-cutting themes that are also emphasised in the New Curriculum Frame Work, that is environmental

issues and child abuse (Indigenous Languages Infant Syllabus 2015-2022; Indigenous Languages Junior Syllabus 2015-2022). The code-switching evident in the rhyme *Apa pangu* (This part of me) is a common practice in most Zimbabwean primary schools, since even the Education Policy encourages use of the mother tongue alongside English especially during such formative years. In a multilingual set up like the Zimbabwean one, where the languages concerned are in contact, code mixing is inevitable (Sure and Webb, 2000).

#### **5.4.7.2 Responses on riddles**

This group like the two infant groups interviewed indicated that they did not know any riddles. This was very unusual since it is at this level that riddles should be introduced according to the *Indigenous Languages Junior (Grade 3- 7) Syllabus 2015-2022*. At Grade 3 level riddling is a new concept to be introduced since at infant level focus is on rhymes and folktales. What this might imply is that some concepts stated in the syllabus may be ignored if the teacher lacks interest in them, which might be the case here where data was gathered towards end of the year but still learners were not aware of a concept that should have been introduced to then at this level where they are being weaned off from infant level.

#### **5.4.7.3 Responses on folktales**

The learners gave examples of the usual Hare and Baboon tales, where the ever-cunning Hare, always tricks baboon and lends him in trouble. The lessons highlighted by this group were in line with those that came out from the other groups. Individual learners' responses are summarised here since they have been presented under other groups. The learners indicated that they learn the following: to play with others well, not to fool others, not to cheat, to be good friends and to be honest. For this level, the lessons learnt show that the learners do benefit a lot from narrating or listening to folktales being narrated since the lessons they gave reflect African values and norms.

#### **5.4.8 Focus group 8 (Grade 5 rural)**

The focus group comprised 10-11-year-old learners from a rural primary school. The learners in this group were able to give examples and answer questions on all types of Shona children's oral art forms. Their responses under each type are presented below.

##### **5.4.8.1 Responses on rhymes and game songs**

The group recited the game songs *Zvamutsana mutsana* (Spotting and Chasing), *Dudu*

*muduri!* (Crush it in the mortar!), *Vana venyu waitamba neshuga* (Your children were playing with sugar) and *Pane chandada* (There is something I like). *Vana venyu waitamba neshuga* (Your children were playing with sugar) and *Pane chandada* (There is something I like) will be analysed below since they are new creations by the children. *Vana venyu* goes:

Leader: *Vana venyu waitamba* (Your children were playing!)

Chorus: *Heyahe waitamba neshuga* (Aye! Aye! They played with sugar).

All: I can *kurunga mapoto! Kurunga mapoto! Kurunga mapoto! Newe!* (I can stir the pots! Stir the pots! Stir the pots with you!)

Chorus: *Heyahe waitamba neshuga.* (Aye! Aye! They played with sugar).

When they all sing, I can stir the pots, the leader dances in front of the person they have chosen from the circle, who in turn takes over as the leader. What is played with changes depending on what the leader chooses. Hence, they can sing about what is found in the environment like fruits, animals, grass, cars et cetera. However, if the leader chooses to play with something considered dangerous or bad, the one invited to take over declines, until after the leader has chosen what is acceptable.

In *Pane chandada* (There is something I like) the children sit in a circle unlike in *Vaitamba neshuga* where they stand in a circle in readiness to dance. Then the leader moves around singing:

Leader: *Pane chandada* (There is something I like)

Chorus: *Pane chandada* (There is something I like)

Leader: *Nditore chandada* (Can I take what I like?)

Chorus: *Tora chawada* (Take what you like)

Leader: *Simuka unditevere* (Rise and follow me)

Just like *Sarura Wako* (Make your choice), both game songs have to do with making choices. Seeking group approval is also evident in *Pane chandada* since the leader asks if he/she can take what he/she likes. The group can either say go ahead as in '*Tora chawada*' or say '*Kwete chawada*' (No to what you like), if they disapprove. However, even though group approval is sought, the onus still remains with the individual. Whoever remains unchosen, is the

proverbial ‘bad apple’. It is clear from this analysis that these game songs instil in the learners lifelong values for survival, like freedom of choice, the need to be a team player, making the right choices without rushing, behaving well so as to be acceptable by others among other virtues.

On benefits from the game songs the learners pointed out that these provide them with the opportunity to share knowledge and information on different things in life, some help them stay physically fit especially where they run or dance around, teach them how to use language among other things. One learner succinctly put it thus,

FG8L6: *Magames aya anotibatsira zvakawanda chaizvo. Anoitai kuti tifaritichiwirirana neshamwari dzedu. Tinodzidzawo kunyatsa kuterera zvinozotibatsira chero muchikoro. Tinotodzidzawo kungwarira pazvinhu nekushandisa mutauro zvakakanaka.*

(These games help us in many ways. They give us joy as we play together with our friends. We learn to listen attentively, and this will help us even in class. We also learn how to use language properly).

The level of reflection by this learner shows an awareness of the value embedded in the oral art forms by the learners that should challenge education practitioners to think twice about the pedagogical role Shona children’s oral art forms play in enriching classroom interactions for the benefit of learners.

#### **5.4.8.2 Responses on riddles**

The learners gave many examples of riddles but brought in another angle to riddling by giving story riddles which are in the form of a puzzle. Riddles (i) and (ii) below exemplify these,

(i) *Shoko iri mumuti wemaorange unoitai sei kuti uwane maorange- Unotema tsoko netutombo tudiki, iyo yokutema nemaorange* (A monkey is up an orange tree. What do you do to get the oranges? - throw small stones/ at the monkey and it will throw the oranges at you.

(ii) *Pane bere, mamera, nembudzi zvaunoda kuyambuka nazvo rwizi? Unoitai sei? –Unotora mbudzi nechimera woenda nazvo mhiri, wonosiya chimera ikoko wodzoka nembudzi, wouya woisiya kudivi rine bere woenda nebere kune chimera [bere haridyi chimera], wodzokera mhiri kumbudzi wonoiyambutsa.*

**(Puzzle:** There is a hyena, a goat and rapoko that you have to take across the river. How do you do it?

**Response:** The tricky part in the puzzle is that goats eat rapoko, so you cannot leave the two together, the same goes for the hyena, it cannot be left with the goat because it will eat it. So, one has to carry the bag of rapoko and the goat across first, leave the rapoko across and bring back the goat to where the hyena is, leave the goat on that side and take the hyena across to the rapoko (it does not eat it) then go back to the other side and bring the goat over). The way the response is arrived at shows a high degree of sharpening of the mind and thought processes, in the process developing the learners' cognitive skills.

(iii) *Danga rababa vangu haripfuuri mombe 32-mazino mumuromo* (My father's kraal only accommodates 32 cattle- human teeth in the mouth). The analogy is built upon mathematical and scientific knowledge (Maths and Science). The mathematical concept of number and scientific knowledge, that no matter what a human being can only have 32 teeth are combined to create a tricky situation to challenge others' critical thinking skills. The riddle just like others discussed earlier on emanates from the modern world of education. Whatever the children learn about seems to impact on the various oral art forms they perform in Shona. One learner from this group gave a response that points to a number of benefits from riddling thus,

FG8L3: *Zvirahwe zvinoda kufunga sitereki kuti ududzire zvakanaka. Zvinoita futi kuti tizive zvinhu zvakananda muupenyu nekugona kutevedzera mutemo.*

(Riddles require critical thinking for one to respond correctly. They also help us get to know many things in life and teach us the importance of following rules.

A new benefit that comes from this learner's response is the aspect of knowledge broadening. This is so because solutions to riddles require the children to be good observers of their environment, acquire as much knowledge as is possible, knowledge which becomes handy when the need to respond to riddles through analogies arises. Riddling is also not a do as you please performance but is guided by rules that have to be adhered to if one is not to be penalised, hence the learner's positing that they teach them to follow rules.



### 5.4.8.3 Responses on folktales

Even though the learners also gave many examples of folktales, the two to be discussed here were found to be unique since they tend to have a modern flavour in terms of characters and content. The first tale is about *Tsuro naGudo vachinotsvaga vasikana* (Hare and Baboon courting girls). The girls are given modern names. Hare's girlfriend is called Rosemary and Baboon's is called Tafadzwa. One day Baboon is caught red handed trying to cheat on Tsuro to win Rose's heart. They quarrel, and it almost ends their friendship.

The second tale is one about Tarisai and Farisai who were orphans. Tarisai was cruel but Farisai was kind. They had one blanket and Tarisai hatched an evil plan to make Farisai suffer. She said that they should each use the blanket at separate times. She chose to use the blanket during the night, that is when it is cold, which meant Farisai could only use the blanket during the day, and that is when it is hot, and the blanket is not necessary. There was also an orange tree at their homestead and when the oranges ripened Tarisai said they should share the tree as well. She quickly chose the top part, the one with fruits and gave Farisai the bottom part. Farisai was not happy with that arrangement and decided to get back at Tarisai to teach her a lesson. One day, towards end of day, she soaked the blanket in water under the pretext of washing it. When night fell, the blanket was still wet, so Tarisai also spent the night in the cold. Early the following morning Farisai went to the orange tree and shook it, all the ripe oranges fell to the ground and now belonged to her. This meant Tarisai would have nothing to eat for the whole day. This made her realise her mistakes and she apologised to her sibling. From then, she changed and became a very pleasant person.

A close look at the two tales narrated as examples shows that they are influenced by contemporary happenings of society such as cheating, child headed families and abuse. In the Hare and Baboon tale, issues of crimes of passion arising from such cases abound in the media while the issues of orphan-hood, child headed families and abuse (especially of the orphans even by their own blood relatives), have become a common phenomenon. It seems the children are not oblivious to all these happenings, their ability to observe should not be underestimated, hence the emergence of these issues in the folktales they create. Organisations like Childline, Save the Children and the police Victim Friendly Unit among others, deal with such issues in Zimbabwe, an indication that they are rampant.

On moral lessons learnt from the recited folktales and others in general individual learners' responses summarised here are a clear indication that learners are not just passive consumers

or narrators of folktales but actively interact critically with their content. Lessons learnt given by the learners attest to that,

FG8L1: *Tinodzidza kuti munhu anofanira kuitira vamwe zvaanzodawo kuitirwa iye.*

(We learn that one should treat others the way they want to be treated too).

FG8L5: *Tinodzidza kuti munhu haafaniri kungozvifunga iye chete kusvika pakuitira vamwe utsinye.* (We learn that one should not be selfish and cruel to others).

FG8L7: *Tinodzidza kuti tinofanira kuregerera vanotitadzira isuwo kana tatadzira vamwe tokumbira ruregerero.*

(We learn that we should forgive those who wrong us and ask for forgiveness when we have wronged others).

FG8L10: *Tinodzidza kuti tinofanira kuvimbika nguva dzose kwete kuchita vamwe.*

(We learn that we should always be honest and not cheat others).

If learners can identify such important moral lessons from folktales on their own as is the case above, then there is a possibility of more benefits for them if they are guided accordingly. This is evidence that the oral art forms can provide room for creation of a learning environment that engages the learner more in knowledge creation, thus creating a new paradigm for teaching and learning (Rueben,1999). This is also in line with the dictates of the new curriculum that the Zimbabwean education system should be heritage based both in terms of content and pedagogy.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the data gathered through the various data gathering modes has been presented. Data from questionnaires and interviews with teachers shows that they are aware of the various types of Shona children's oral art forms from the manner in which they defined them and the examples they gave. Data from focus group interviews with learners and observation showed that the changing terrain has had a great impact on Shona children's oral art forms in terms of form and content as evidenced by new images incorporated from education, intertextuality with religion and code mixing of Shona and English during performances. It has also emerged from the data that at infant level, teachers make a more conscious effort to infuse the oral art forms into their classroom interactions while at junior level a rather casual approach prevails even though teachers agreed that the oral art forms are

relevant to teaching and learning in the questionnaire. This was also evident from analysis of schemes at both levels where for the former every concept schemed for has a play component in which learners at least perform a rhyme, game song or listen to or narrate a story or folktale, while this was rare for the latter. Most of the junior teachers interviewed also confirmed this by continuously referring to these oral art forms as ‘infant activities’. This is despite the fact that both infant and junior learners were seen performing game songs at breaktime to show that they enjoy doing it. Also, apparent from the analysed data is the view that English rhymes and game songs continue to be part and parcel of the learners’ recitations, they are a competing force as evidenced by the fact that during focus group interviews all except for one group, started by reciting an English rhyme or game song when asked to perform one of their choice. The teachers were also of the view that both Shona and English rhymes are beneficial for the learners although most believed Shona ones contribute more in the education of the learners since Shona is the children’s mother tongue and it is a carrier of their culture. The data also showed that the oral art forms do have a lot to contribute in the teaching and learning process. The data presented and analysed in this chapter is discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses research findings from the data presented and analysed in Chapter 5. The discussion though guided by the themes that emerged, attempts to address the research questions that sought to find out the following key issues:

- (i) The impact of the changing terrain on Shona children's oral art forms in terms of form and content;
- (ii) The contribution that the Shona children's oral art forms can make to teaching and learning at pre and primary school level;
- (iii) Establish if currently there is a conscious effort by practitioners to link these to pedagogy;
- (iv) Identify the various aspects that can be taught through oral art forms; and
- (v) Evaluate teachers' attitudes on the contribution of Shona children's oral art forms as pedagogical tools as compared to those performed in English.

#### 6.2 THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGING TERRAIN ON SHONA CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS

The impact of the changing terrain on Shona children's oral art forms encompasses the impact from the environment, language contact, threats and ways to withstand challenges and curb their demise.

##### 6.2.1 Impact of the environment on the children's art forms

The findings from questionnaires and interviews show that the environment in which Shona children's oral art forms are performed impacts on them in terms of both form and content. A look at examples of riddles given by the teachers in response to the questionnaire show that as adults, they mostly gave examples of traditional types of riddles that touch on the animal world, the natural environment, traditional tools and objects among others (Gwavaranda and Masaka, 2008; Miruka, 1999; 1994). However, a look at examples given by the learners clearly show their keen observation of the contemporary world as they showed influence from technology, education, religion and contemporary issues such as child abuse and human rights among others. Game songs and rhymes also show the same trend. The game song *Apa pangu!* Don't touch (This part of me! Don't touch), is a case in point. The game song makes

children aware of issues of child sexual abuse as they touch parts of their bodies that they should never allow anyone to touch their private parts. What this means is that children conscientised about child abuse through such performances are likely to fare much better when they encounter such challenges in real life. These issues that have become part of the children's performances are cross-cutting themes that the current new curriculum framework emphasises should be dealt with across the curriculum at pre and primary levels as presented in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022; Indigenous Languages Infant [Early Childhood Development Grade 2] Syllabus 2015 – 2022 and Indigenous Languages Junior [Grade 3] Syllabus 2015 – 2022, thus,

- Sexuality, HIV and AIDS
- Environmental Issues
- Child rights and responsibilities
- Human rights and responsibilities
- Child protection
- Gender
- Collaboration
- Enterprise

The fact that cross-cutting themes from the up-dated curriculum from which syllabi are drawn are evident from the Shona children's oral art forms is a clear indication that the oral art forms need to become part and parcel of the teachers' classroom practices. For example, from folktales narrated by the learners like the Tale of Lion and Cork, the Tale of a Zambian Man, *Rungano rwemukomana akanhongwa mari* (The tale of a boy who picked some money) and that of the orphans Tarisai and Taurai, a number of the above cross-cutting themes like human rights, child protection and care, democracy, the environment, conflict management and resolution, sexuality and gender among others are covered. Some riddles analysed also touch on HIV and AIDS, technology, education and environmental issues. Studies by some African scholars attest to the view that by encompassing changes brought about by modernity in an era of globalisation in the social, political, economic and religious spheres, Shona children's oral art forms are not only value laden but also purveyors of new knowledge (Nyota and Mapara, 2008; Tatira, 2005; Osemeobo, 1994).

The same trend is also evident in game songs and rhymes, where the learners were able to draw lessons that are in sync with the various cross cutting issues considered important in the new curriculum. Interesting to note is the fact that the new images come from the learners' experiences in relation to what goes on and what they see in the physical environment, how

their society is organised and how it operates. Such a development in terms of the changes in content is more welcome as opposed to simply having children exposed to foreign ones which are divorced from the children's lived experiences (Muwati, et al., 2016). For example, in the riddle *Gomana rinofunga risina uropi* (The big boy who thinks without brains) the analogy refers to the computer, a new development that children at pre and primary school have encountered through the introduction of Computers as a subject in the reviewed primary school curriculum. Another example is *Vakandishaiwa muhakata* (They failed to identify me through divining bones) which refers to the HIV virus, emanates from the introduction of HIV and AIDS as a subject as well. Issues such as human rights and child protection that are reflected from the folktales cited earlier on reflect what goes on in the teaching of Human Rights Education a component of Heritage Studies. Such dynamism shows how the changing terrain impacts positively on the Shona children's oral art forms. Evident from the new images being incorporated into the children's linguistic repertoire is the fact that the children are keen observers who are conscious of the goings on in their environment. Engaging in indigenous forms of play through the various children's oral art forms immerses the children into the cultural experiences of their society as posited by Muwati et al., (2016:63) through analysing Shona children's songs, "Children are socialised into a scheme in which they become active participants who are conscious of their duties and responsibilities". Therefore, the coming in of new images into the Shona children's oral art forms should be viewed as a welcome development since it shows how the children have become active participants in knowledge creation rather than being consumers of knowledge created for them. The images show the children's awareness of important knowledge about survival skills in real life as in issues to do with disease and rights. The new images are also evidence that no area of life is beyond the scope of these Shona children's oral art forms (Chivasa and Mutswanga, 2014; Tatira, 2005).

### **6.2.2 Impact of language contact on Shona children's oral art forms**

Data presented shows that the issue of languages in contact also impacts greatly on the Shona children's oral art forms. English, Shona and Ndebele have for long been the three national languages of Zimbabwe, hence there is lots of code-switching and borrowing among these languages in the children's oral art forms such as rhymes, game songs and riddles as the data presented in Chapter 4 shows. This is a common trend in a bilingual or multilingual landscape like Zimbabwe, where several languages are in contact. The code-switching is at all levels that linguists have described, that is at tag, intra-word, intra-sentential or inter-

sentential levels (Kahari, 2014; Romaine, 1995; Poplack, 1988). An examples of intra- word switching is in the game song *Mari yakaperera mutrain*, where the prefix *mu-* is attached to train an English noun. Intra- sentential switching is evident in *Zvandangadzidza pano* (What I have learnt here) where we find Shona and English used within the same sentence as in *Musoro kuti head*. In the game song *Apa pangu!* Don't touch! inter-sentential switching is evident in that; a Shona sentence is followed by an English one. This trend is common in spite of the environment where the learners are located, that is urban, peri-urban, rural resettlement and rural. A case in point is that of a Grade 6 rural resettlement learner in Focus Group 6 who while narrating *Rungano rwambuya neshumba* (The tale of a granny and the lion), she would code switch from Shona to English here and there. For example, when she got to the part where the old woman was pleading with lion not to eat her, she switched as follows:

*Shumba akati, "Nhasi ndokudya. Ndanga ndafa nenzara". Mbuya vaya vakati kuna Shumba, "Dai wakangwara warega kundidya nhasi ndichingova mabhonzoro. Rega ndimboenda kuvana vangu vanondifeeder, kana ndodzoka wozondidya ndava netufat fat". Iyi yaiva plan yekuti vasadyiwa. (Lion said, "Today I am going to eat you. I am very hungry". The granny said to Lion, "If you were clever, you wouldn't eat me today because I am all bones. Let me visit my children first so that they feed me. On my way back, you can eat me when I am a bit fat. This was a plan for her not to be eaten").*

What it implies is that code switching is a very common phenomenon with pre and primary school children as it is evident in all the oral art forms be it rhymes, game songs, riddles or folktales. As put forth by Myers-Scotton (2005), code switching is sometimes driven by several sociolinguistic factors, which is the case in this study. At ECD and infant level, the young children's fascination with the new language, English in this case, seems to be the driving force for code switching. For teachers, as pointed out by Interviewee 1 and confirmed by other teacher interviewees during interviews, they use code switching purposefully with Shona children's oral art forms that is to emphasise, clarify and reinforce concepts or to simply keep the rhythm in a rhyme. A case in point is *Zvandangadzidza pano!* (What I have learnt here), where when teaching learners names of body parts in English, the teacher uses code-switching purposefully by naming the part in the source language (Shona) which the learner knows first, then names it in the target language (English) which is new to the learner next. Malmkjaer (2010) points this out in her argument on reasons for code switching, that it

occurs when a speaker wants to emphasise a point, clarify issues or reinforce concepts. However, with learners at junior level it is both out of need and the need to show how much they have mastered the new language and how far they can stretch it to other aspects of their life. Code switching for need and bonding was also evident from the learners during focus group interviews. For example, with the game song *Unodei?* (Express), a naming game, for names of cars and other technological gadgets where Shona equivalents are not available, the learners just switched to English and back to Shona with ease:

Chorus: *Unodei?* (You like what?)

Leader: *Mazita. Emota* (Names of cars)

Respondent 1: *Ndotanga. Mazda* (I start. Mazda)

Respondent 2: Toyota

Respondent 3: FunCarGo

Respondent 4: Benz

Leader: *Zvakwana* (That's enough)

This is so because names of cars are only in English hence the switches occur. The same also occurs where there are no cultural equivalents; a speaker can just switch to present the culturally bound idea or concept in the relevant language and back. For example, in the above cited game song, for names of trees it was all Shona for indigenous trees but when it came to exotic trees code-mixing crept in for culturally bound foreign trees:

Respondent 1: *Muorange*

Respondent 2: *Mubanana*

Respondent 3: *Muapple*

Respondent 4: *Mumulberry*

Malmkjaer (2010) states that this is a common practice in a situation where there is specialisation of function for languages, such as the diglossic situation obtaining within Zimbabwe's multilingual set up. In such a scenario, during conversation one switches from one language to the other due to need and back without disturbing the flow of the conversation in any way. Thus, it is not surprising for learners to do so since English is the language of instruction in the Zimbabwean school set up. What becomes clear from the above



discussion is that, whether consciously or unconsciously done, code switching does serve a purpose in the context of Shona children's oral art forms.

Borrowing between and among the languages is also common as evidenced by some compositions by learners like *Amashenishenisheni* a word formation game in which the learners use the Ndebele -Shona construction as a chorus for English word formation. *Ama-* is Ndebele plural prefix combined with an adopted Shona construction from the English suffixes -tion and -sion as in addition, revision, admission among other words that end in that manner. The chorus, *shenisheni* is a phonologized Shona construction of the English suffixes, although the words spelt are English constructions. Thus, whether the constructions sound nonsensical or not, for the learners they do serve a purpose. It is a game they play and enjoy but at the same time use to stretch their understanding of certain concepts as evidenced by the word formation practice, they use it for. Thus, knowledge on use of language as in vocabulary and spellings accrues and listening skills improve over time as the children play (Muigai Wa Gachanja, 2013; Salami and Oyaremi, 2012; Makina, 2009).

### **6.2.3 Threats to Shona children's oral art forms from the changing environment**

Another aspect in the changing terrain that teacher respondents indicated has had an impact on Shona children's oral art forms is the advent of technology. Technology has not only influenced the form and content as seen in the examples discussed earlier on, it has greatly affected these in terms of performance. This is a result of the many technological gadgets that have taken the world by storm leaving very little if not no time for the children to engage in the oral art forms outside the school set up. Most of the respondents argued that this may lead to the demise of these oral art forms if nothing is done to make them visible and relevant to the young learners' life, most of which is now spent at school. Kirkland and O'Riordan (2010) share the same sentiments as those raised by the teachers on technology as a deadly threat to the future of children's oral art forms. Kirkland and O'Riordan (2010) posit that in this highly advanced world of technology, where there are a lot of competing forces from outside, in the form of mushrooming computer games that are readily available, teachers need to think outside the box to create an animated learning environment that engages learners in a challenging and interesting manner lest they switch off totally if the learning environment keeps them inactive. Their argument is quite valid, considering that not all learners are intrinsically motivated to learn, there are others who need some motivation to do so. Thus,

the various children's oral art forms, just like other games, can create that interest in learning, even if it is not naturally there, since by nature children enjoy playing (Race, 2007).

To confirm that the world of technology is indeed a threat as stated by the teachers, not only are cartoons like Sophia the First, Doctor Mustuffins, Dora the Explorer, Ben Ten, Tom and Jerry among others a daily diet for children on television, they are also available on discs almost for nothing at a dollar for three. These have become so popular with children to the extent that vendors make a killing selling them with parents buying them in sets for their children. There are also channels dedicated to cartoons like Nickelodeon, Disney Junior, Jim Jam and Boomerang among others, which the learners themselves identified during focus group interviews. This confirms Mutema's (2013) findings that technological advancements in the form of televisions, computers, the internet among others consume most of the children's time, which in an African set up they could have spent participating in activities that enculturate them into their societies. She even points out that most of these modern-day activities can be done individually as opposed to traditional activities that require a team or group for its performance. The group nature of the activities actually serves a purpose, it instils into the learners African ethos, human factor values, like team work, cooperation, peaceful co-existence, conflict resolution, sharing and a sense of belonging to name but a few (Muwati et al., 2016; Nyota and Mapara, 2008; Masolo, 2010; 2004; 2003). Such values cannot be instilled through watching programmes that promote foreign values like those highlighted above, to the detriment of indigenous ones. Being individualist as most are, they alienate the children from their culture and continue to make them sink in a quagmire of individualist tendencies that they cannot extricate themselves from in adult life. It alienates them from their African ethos since Afrocentricity encourages cooperation and values collective existence rather than individualism, (Salami and Oyaremi, 2012; Makina, 2009; Schiele, 1996). Hence, infusing Shona children's oral art forms into the young children's classroom interactions can help make them conspicuous and relevant in and to what they engage in during their primary school learning journey, in the process entrenching them to promote good child development (Siamonga, 2017; Muigai Wa Gachanja and Kebaya, 2013).

#### **6.2.4. Ways Shona children's oral art forms can withstand challenges and curb their demise**

Most teacher respondents gave several ideas on the way forward. Some of the teacher respondents advocated for packaging of the various oral art forms either as anthologies,

booklets or discs as a way forward. The respondents argued that the anthologies will function as reference books for teachers who might not have adequate content in terms of the very traditional forms of the various Shona children's oral art forms. With such reference books, teachers can then play around with what is on record to suit the situation at hand. Implied here is the idea that the school set up is the way to go for the survival of the children's oral art forms. The booklets will be for the learners' reading for pleasure especially with folktales, just like the English *Sunrise* readers that are in sets from 1 to 20 to cater for the different levels and age groups. The respondents' idea of discs is hinged on the need to capitalise on technology that has taken the world by storm. Capitalising on technological advancements discs and other media is something that scholars like Mapara (2014), Mutema (2013) and Makaudze (2013) also advocate for when they posit that animation in the form of cartoons for some of these Shona children's oral art forms like folktales and game songs can help promote and keep this form of indigenous knowledge system vibrant in a society that is ever-changing. If discs on cartoons and whole channels are already popular with young children, then having such modes with Shona children's oral art forms may also make it easier to engage the children since they already enjoy doing so though through a foreign medium.

During interviews teacher respondents also indicated that there was need to take advantage of the 75% local content on the air waves and use media such as television and radio to expose learners to the various Shona children's oral art forms by airing scheduled programmes on these specifically aimed at children. One such programme aired on radio was Mabasa's *Sarungano* where the story-teller narrated folktales live on Star FM on Thursdays between 9.30 -10.00 am. The timing though was not child friendly, as this happened when the intended audience is at school. Also, looking at the time allocation, just 30 minutes, once a week is a mockery when considering the importance of folktales which are a bedrock of cultural values. The programme has since been discontinued due to lack of sponsorship and other commitments on the part of the storyteller. Revival and support for such meaningful innovations as pointed out by the respondents is of essence if the oral art forms are to reach the intended audience.

### **6.3 THE CONTRIBUTION SHONA CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS CAN MAKE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING**

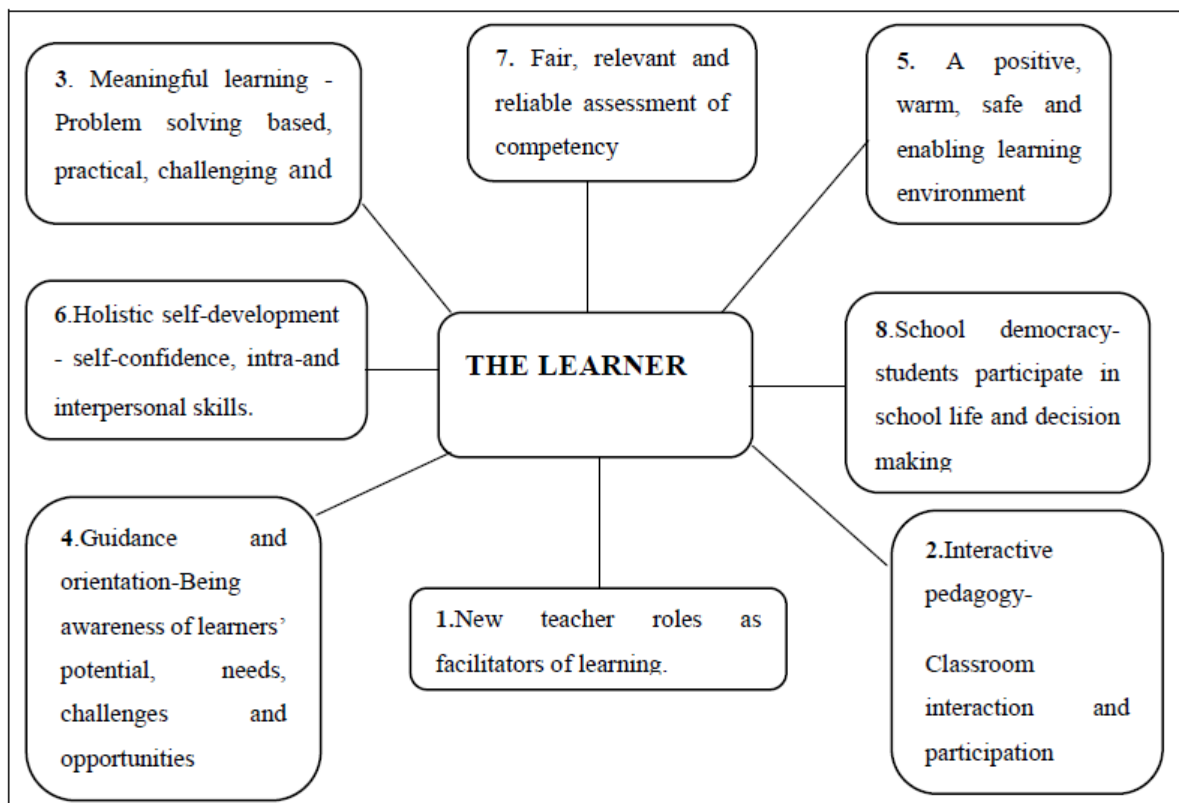
The contribution of Shona children's oral art forms to teaching and learning is discussed with reference to influencing pedagogy, knowledge creation, skills development and entrenchment

of cultural values.

### **6.3.1 Paradigm shift in teaching and learning**

The research findings show that Shona children's oral art forms can contribute to a new paradigm in teaching and learning at pre and primary school level. This emanates from the participatory nature of children's oral art forms. This may help teachers move away from basing their teaching primarily on rigid teaching practices (Mann, 2001) and move towards a learner-centred learning environment, by shifting their perception of teaching as a process of transferring information to that of knowledge creation (Olusegun, 2015; Ruben, 2007; 1999), where learners are involved in knowledge construction and the teacher acts as a facilitator in the process (Fernando and Marikar, 2017; Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Jonassen, 1994; 1991). Observation of learners performing the various oral art forms at play and during focus group interviews confirmed a critical aspect necessary for empowering the child in various aspects of life, that of allowing him/her to take the lead. This was evident in game songs where turn-taking which provided each member with the opportunity to be in charge at one time was the norm. It was also the case with riddles, where even though children performed as groups each group had the chance to take the lead. Narration of folktales was even more empowering as individually the performer had to engage the whole group. The Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022: 41) also advocates for such a paradigm shift in teaching and learning methods by stating that the process should target at engaging learners in addressing real-life problems in a context where facilitators and learners connect in a knowledge creating community. The focus of such a community, it is further explained, is knowledge generation and not just information delivery. What this means is that, such a community promotes an environment where facilitators move away from treating learners as empty vessels ready to be filled with information but co-creators of knowledge (Olusegun, 2015; Ruben, 2007; 1999).

Centring of the learner in the form of networked learning is what modern-day pedagogy advocates for. A diagrammatic representation of such context- networked learning can help us see the place of children's oral art forms in such a scheme of things (Figure 6.1).



**Figure 6.1 Learner centred teaching and learning frame work** (Adapted from the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022: 41).

The diagrammatic representation of the learner centred teaching and learning Figure 6.1 above succinctly shows areas where Shona children’s oral art forms can meaningfully contribute towards not only its development, but also its sustenance. The call for new teacher roles and interactive pedagogy is in line with constructivism. In a constructivist set up both the teacher and learners are actively involved in knowledge creation, although the teacher as the more knowledgeable guides and moderates so that the engagement is meaningful (Ganga and Maphalala, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Jonassen, 1994). Thus, as data presented has shown, allowing learners to engage in oral art forms that they already know or are taught to them by the teacher will help teachers to move away from the jug and mug approach to teaching and learning. As pointed out by Rueben (1999), instead of viewing teaching in terms of information transfer from the knowledgeable teacher to passive learners, the teacher will begin to view learners as capable beings already endowed with potential to learn, by capitalising on their past experience and building upon it as he/she introduces new concepts which in constructivism is called scaffolding (Mohammed, 2016; Tuckman and Monetti, 2011; Green and Gredler, 2002, Jonassen, 1994). The infusion of the Shona children’s oral art

forms in classroom interactions is quite noble in an era where indigenous knowledge systems are considered important in all facets of an individual's life (Madusise, 2010; Goduka, 2000; Kunnie, 2000; Pikirayi, 2000), more so in education where the need for culturally responsive, culturally sensitive pedagogy has become a necessity and not a luxury (Asimeng-Boahen and Baffoe, 2014; Shizha, 2013). This is where Shona children's oral art forms come in since they promote interaction between the teacher and the learners, among the learners themselves and between the learners and the environments. Such a dialectical approach facilitates active learning as pointed out by Tuckman and Monetti (2011). By allowing learners to be actively involved in classroom activities, there is likely to be more interaction between the teacher and learners, among the learners themselves and improved participation from the learners. From a constructive perspective this creates positive interdependence in an environment where all learners' efforts are supported (Snowman, McCowan and Biehler, 2009; Tuckman and Monetti, 2011). This also helps instil the ethos of African culture in that cooperative learning boosts team work and valuing of group members contributions for the good of the group which in turn fulfils the needs of individual group members. Snowman, McCowan and Biehler (2009:401) put this neatly thus, "What is beneficial for other students in the group is beneficial for the individual and vice versa". This is in line with the African moral outlook where the presence of others is necessary for one's meaningful existence and community rather than self-determination as important aspects of personhood (Leketsa, 2013; Metz and Gaie, 2010; Nussbaum, 2003).

Data presented from interviews with teachers and responses from the questionnaire shows that critical thinking, fast thinking and having fun are some of the benefits for learners in terms of skills learnt from engaging in the oral art forms. If meaningful learning then is defined in terms of problem solving, practical application, challenging tasks and having fun as shown in Figure 6.1 above, then Shona children's oral art forms fit into the scheme of learner centred practice neatly since they are an embodiment of all these benefits. In this study, observing learners engage in oral art forms like game songs during their free time and during focus group interviews, showed that learners like and enjoy engaging in them. Hence capitalising on what learners enjoy doing as advocated for by some interviewees would create a conducive teaching and learning environment in which learners actively participate. They are already used to activity at play, so failure to maintain the activity they are already used to is detrimental to their learning. Kirkland and O'Riordan's (2010) are also of the same view and they point this out when they argue that children need a stimulating learning environment

since they are used to greater pace and interactivity in life in general. It is natural that they will need excitement and interactivity not passivity to support their learning. Such excitement and interactivity this study has shown, the various Shona children's oral art forms can provide as they place the learners at the centre of action.

The argument presented above goes hand in hand with what the new indigenous language syllabi for infant and junior levels emphasise under methodology as observed during analysis of the syllabus. The syllabi recommend use of Communicative Approaches and encourages teachers to ensure and try as much as possible to make all activities and methods participatory and learner centred (Indigenous Languages Infant [Early Childhood Development Grade 2] Syllabus 2015–2022/Indigenous Languages Junior [Grade 3-7] Syllabus 2015–2022). This recommendation is made in all syllabi for all subjects across the primary school curriculum. Such an environment, this study has shown, Shona children's oral art forms can help create within the primary schools. In the process, helping teachers move away from traditional modes of information dissemination that do not place the learners centrally in the learning process. Ruben (1999:502-503), states several limitations of traditional teaching-and-learning paradigms where: "the teacher is seen as a source of all knowledge, where learning is associated with only what goes on in the classrooms and from books, learning is viewed as gaining knowledge through what the teacher intends and is normally meant for examination purposes among other limitations". Thus, from these limitations, the researcher draws implications for practice that could be possible through a conscious use of Shona children's oral art forms as effective and engaging learning tools for children, not simply teaching them as content:

(i) Learning should not be confined to the four walls of the classroom, but also on what goes on outside. Thus, if children enjoy playing outside the classroom, why not bring in that aspect into the formal process, across all levels at pre and primary school for the learners' benefit?

(ii) Knowing is not enough, but using the knowledge and skills acquired meaningfully. This, learners proved during focus group interviews when they illustrated how they apply what they do in game songs to revise or reinforce what they will have learnt in different subject areas.

(iii) Teaching and learning is not all about knowledge transmission from an expert. It also has to do with what goes on outside the classroom socially and collaboratively. The collaborative nature of Shona children's oral art forms encourages active learning that involves the learner

to explore for their own and others' benefit. Shona children's oral art forms permit this since learners have to cooperate for the success of the narration, recitation or performance.

(iv) Learning is also not all about what the teacher intends, but it is also important to accommodate diversity in learning out-comes, activities, and promote creativity. The children's oral art forms as data presented has shown, promote this nature of learning as they allow learners to accommodate each other's talents, be creative and build self- confidence among other benefits.

(v) Learning should also promote active life- long learning and acquisition of critical skills necessary for survival in the real world. Acquisition of such skills is at the core of benefits embedded in the various children's oral art forms analysed in this study. Respondents were also able to tease out many of these which can be summed under cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills.

(vi) Knowledge transfer should acknowledge that the cognitive, behavioural and affective domains are intertwined. Knowledge transfer, through the children's oral art forms does accommodate the twining implied here as they help create an effective, stimulating and engaging learning environment (Race, 2007; Biggs, 2003; Mann, 2001). The children's oral art forms do so since they encourage participation from the learners as they engage in authentic activities and create knowledge from new information based on what they already know and enjoy doing. Such an environment is one that constructivism advocates for (Tuckman and Monetti, 2011; Alesandrini and Larson, 2002).

(iv) The learning environment should not be too predictable, it should be receptive of change, challenging and interesting. As evident, from the learners' performances during focus group interviews, the oral art forms are not fixed, learners can perform these in a manner that they desire. The teachers also showed this when they indicated that they can reconstruct an oral art form to suit their situation. This fluidity in the manner in which the oral art forms are performed or used shows their ability to contribute to the creation of learning environments that are non- predictable, changing to suit prevailing conditions and interesting. Mapara (2014) in his study of the Shona folktale, (one of the oral art forms also looked at in this study), notes that it is only the environment within which performances occur that has changed to match the changing terrain in terms of time, modern influences and the politics of the day, otherwise the oral art has shown resilience in the face of many threats in the advent of globalisation. Hence, this also applies to the various Shona children's oral art forms looked



at in this study, they are not dying but adapting to the changing environment in all facets of life. It is this propensity to change embedded in the Shona children's oral art forms that should be capitalised on to create realistic, challenging and unpredictable learning environments for the learners' benefit.

These assumptions do make sense when considering what some learners said during focus group interviews. The learners gave several benefits of engaging in game songs and riddling such as, development of critical thinking; learning things from the environment; fast thinking and revision of what they learn in class among others. The benefits highlighted point to the notion that through Shona children's oral art forms, apart from enjoying playing with others, learners do engage in knowledge creation as they apply what they already know to new concepts that they will have learnt. For example, the extension of mathematical knowledge to riddling is a sign of the learners' activity in knowledge construction as advocated for in constructivism. Examples from riddles like *Ndakwira mugomo na7 ndikadzoka na7-demo* (I went up the hill at 7 and returned at 7- axe) and *Ndamenya 8 ndikawana vana vaviri-nzungu* attest to that. Science and technology has also been incorporated into children's riddling repertoire as in *Takazoigona mheni -magetsi* (We finally got it, lightning-electricity) *Gomana rinofunga risina uropi-kombiyuta* (The big boy who thinks without brains-computer), *Vakandishaiwa muhakata-utachiwana/ mukondombera* (They failed to identify me through divining bones- HIV/AIDS). A number of folktales that learners narrated during focus group interviews also reflect how this oral art has been coloured by contemporary issues in terms of content and images. The tale of Lion and Cork, where the former imposes a rule that seems unfair to all the other animals and its being challenged by the later, for example touched on issues such as oppression and lack of democracy and how these can be challenged resulting in peaceful resolution of conflict. These issues speak to the political dispensations of contemporary society to which the young minds are not oblivious. These examples are ample evidence that if meaningfully infused into classroom pedagogy, Shona children's oral art can be effective tools for information dissemination, knowledge creation and character building.

### **6.3.2 Pedagogical value of the children's oral art forms in terms of knowledge and skills**

Infusion of children's oral art forms into classroom practice can go beyond being simply tools for information dissemination but also knowledge creation, and development of skills that contribute to that type of education that produces individuals, who can contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities, socially, economically and politically.

Ofori-Amoah (1998:41) calls this “development education” whose aims Muwati et al. (2016:57), sum up thus:

- It aims to provide adequate knowledge for those who imbibe it to identify problems and be able to find solutions to them.
- It also targets at making individuals aware of the values that define them as useful members of their communities.
- It also focuses on equipping the individual with practical abilities and skills to act, that is marry theory and practice for the benefit of their communities.

The data from interviews with teachers and focus group interviews with learners highlighted that the following as skills that are developed through performance of the various Shona children’s oral art forms; critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal, analysis, communication, as well as physical skills like coordination. The skills are in line with those advocated for in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022:18) stated thus:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Leadership skills
- Communication skills
- Self-management skills.

These skills which are defined as learner exit profiles, are embedded in the various Shona children’s oral art forms as discussed above. Thus, it is evident from the analysed Shona children’s oral art forms that they can act as a catalyst in the process of development education. The analysis shows that, the oral art forms challenge, train memory, develop critical and fast thinking skills, encourage team work, leadership skills, inter-personal skills such as negotiation and relating to other, boost self-confidence among a plethora of other human factor attributes required for moulding a child who possesses characteristics acceptable by his or her society. Such a person fits well by being able to function meaningfully in his or her society (Mudzanire and Nyota, 2016; Mararike, 2012; Menkit, 2004).

Other life skills from Shona children’s oral art forms presented in the data have to do with personality development within the affective domain, that is, interpersonal skills, boosting self -confidence or self -esteem, tolerance, appreciating and valuing self and others. In Figure 6.1 where the learner is at the centre of learning and teaching, these benefits are reflected through development of self-confidence, intra and interpersonal skills. This clearly shows

relevance of Shona children's oral art forms in that respect since they also instil such values in the learners. The fruits of holistic development are likely to lead learners to participate actively in school democracy as they will become confident enough to participate in all aspects of school life and decision making. Why so? This is because once African ethos and values of African culture as espoused in Afrocentric thought like cooperation, team work, winning with humility, losing with dignity, leading and accepting to be led as well, following rules and peaceful conflict resolution among others have been instilled in the learners, it becomes easy for them to be part of not only the school community but that of the community at large. If these skills as reflected from the data presented are deeply embedded in the various Shona children's oral art forms, it becomes really necessary to make these part and parcel of classroom routines to ensure their entrenchment within the learners.

Teacher respondents also indicated that accommodation of diversity and catering for individual differences are important aspects that children's oral art forms in Shona help promote. This, from the learner-centred teaching and learning, Figure 6. is covered under guidance and orientation where the teacher has to be aware of his/her learners' learning potential, their needs, challenges and possible opportunities available for learners. The teacher can do this by reconstructing some of these oral art forms to suit the needs of his/her learners as illustrations by Interviewees 1 and 6 clearly show. This is also done after a fair and relevant assessment of those needs. From the discussion above it becomes clear that if a conscious effort is made at infusing these children's oral art forms, the philosophy underpinning the new Zimbabwean education curriculum can be fulfilled in the long term.

The study has also shown the empowering nature of the children's oral art forms. This, they do by placing the child in the subject position, confirming what Muwati and Mutasa (2008: 2) established through analysis of children's songs thus, "An analysis of the songs affirms the understanding that indigenous strategies on child development and human factor engineering orbit around the subject position of the child. To be in subject position is to have the ability to name, define, create and direct processes". This clearly shows that the oral art forms provide the learners with the opportunity to use the various skills for knowledge creation and application. From observing the children perform most of the oral art forms, it is clear that they become active participants, as opposed to passive recipients of what has been created for them by adults. This active position of the learner is strongly emphasised in constructivism since it is considered necessary for the development of life-long learning skills (Verenikina, 2008). The same is viewed as centring from an Afrocentric perspective where being the actor

and not the object is crucial for defining one's being, in all spheres of life, education included (Tembo, 2012; Asante, 2008; 2007; 2003; Mazama, 2003).

### **6.3.3 Shona children's oral art forms as reservoirs of cultural values.**

The findings also established that both teacher and learner respondents concurred that Shona children's oral art forms are an embodiment of cultural values. The values that they highlighted include the following; unhu/ubuntu, responsibility, respect for others, self-respect and respect for work, team work, cooperation, spirit of togetherness, accountability, co-existing with others, hard work, winning with humility, losing with dignity, tolerance, discipline, helping the needy and vulnerable and independence. The findings here confirm that, through Shona children's oral art forms, "values that are celebrated in Shona culture are taught to the children", (Muwati et al., 2016: 61). The same argument is put forth by Mweli (2018:106) who posits that such indigenous performances "...connect the children with the cultures, values and belief systems of their communities". It becomes quite clear that such values cannot be inculcated through foreign recitations which in terms of cultural capital and memory are empty. Muwati et al., 2016) actually posit that continuously exposing children to foreign recitations in whatever form, instead of centring them in their culture pushes them to the periphery by planting foreign cultural memories. The children are made to admire foreign norms and values while abandoning and hating their own. Thus, in terms of human factor content and attributes the children are ill-equipped to function effectively in their communities due to a weakened cultural grounding (Muwati, et al., 2016; Adjibolosoo, 1993).

The responses are also in line with principles and values guiding the new curriculum in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022 p.5; p.19) among them respect, embracing diversity, *ubuntu/unhu/vumunhu*, equity and fairness, gender sensitivity, peaceful resolution of conflict, employment of sound judgement and principles at critical moments, integrity, conviction and commitment to do what is right. A juxtaposition of the values from the respondents and those from the curriculum framework shows clearly that the oral art forms are a necessary component in the pre and primary school curriculum if the Zimbabwean education system is to achieve its vision as stated in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022:19):

The education system also seeks to nurture caring individuals who meaningfully contribute to the betterment of both the community and nation. The individuals should

be well rounded, respectful, tolerant of others, honest, self-disciplined, responsible, self-reliant and hardworking.

The vision as stated above, reflects human factor values that are evident in the various Shona children's oral art forms analysed as observed and given by both teacher and learner respondents. The same values are also highlighted by Muwati et al., (2016:57) from their analysis of Shona children's songs (referred to as game songs in this study), "Shona children's songs are an expression of human factor values such as making good choices, being a responsible participant in the community, transparency, patriotism and commitment to one's place and people, among others". The values highlighted here and those enunciated in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022), as well as those drawn from analysis of the various children's oral art forms, are important African values advocated for in Afrocentric thought (Asante, 2013; 2008; 2003; Leketsa, 2013; Mandova and Chingombe, 2013; Nyoni and Nyoni, 2012; Muzvidziwa and Muzvidziwa, 2012; Masolo, 2010; Metz and Gaie, 2010). Thus, if the new curriculum is meant to be heritage based, the more these children's oral art forms, need to be seriously considered not only as content to be taught but also as a means of disseminating that content. Mutema (2013) also stresses that, if what is valued as eternal truths by a community is to be effectively passed on to younger generations, this should be done while children are still young. This socialisation of the young into suitable norms, values and societal expectations is also the intention of the new curriculum. The updated curriculum has embraced various children's oral art forms in the form of is songs/rhymes, game songs, riddles and folktales, to ensure the continued existence of traditional customs, traditions, and culture. Thus, from data presented on cultural values and norms, there is enough evidence that Shona children's oral art forms are one aspect of indigenous knowledge systems that can ensure that meaningful transmission of cultural values from one generation to another. Once they have become part of the content and pedagogy at pre and primary school levels, the risk of them becoming extinct in the face of rapidly changing natural environments and fast-paced economic, social and cultural changes due to globalisation and technology can be curbed. Siamonga (2017), Mapara, (2014) and Makina (2009) all concur that the school set up is the best platform for ensuring survival of these Shona children's oral art forms since outside the school the chances of children gathering to perform these have become very rare due to other competing factors. The entrenchment of these children's oral art forms within classroom interactions may in the end enhance the development of what in Afrocentric thought is called a total person, who is prepared to fulfil socially defined responsibilities, is productive in the community, is aware

that he/she belongs to a community, cooperates and is aware that learning is a life-long process (Ocitti, 1973; Muwati et al., 2016; Leketsa, 2013; Mandova and Chingombe, 2013). Such an individual is in fact, centred and not at the periphery of what defines an African (Asante, 2013, 2007; Chitumba, 2013). These values are in line with the philosophy underpinning the national curriculum, as outlined in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022:13), that is, “*Unhu/Ubuntu/Vumunhu* which epitomises universal human inter-dependence, solidarity, humanness and sense of community common in African societies”. Thus, this infusion of Shona children’s oral art forms with modern day pedagogy is necessary because traditionally, among the Shona, the extended family set up provided a natural arena for learning and development of such values within the family and community through the various children’s oral art forms such as rhymes, games and folktales among others. However, due to the changing terrain, children today have little opportunity to interact in this way within the family hence the need to instil these values within the formal school set up where they now spend most of their time (Siamonga, 2017; Mapara, 2014; Makina, 2009).

#### **6.3.4 Relevance of Shona children’s oral art forms across the curriculum**

Responses by teachers in the questionnaire clearly show that they are positive that Shona children’s oral art forms have relevance in all subject areas taught at pre- and primary school, that is if a conscious effort is made to infuse them in all classroom interactions and use them as pedagogical tools for information dissemination. The fact that all the respondents (100%) were positive that the children’s oral art forms are relevant to teaching and learning, is an indication that even for those who might have treated them as children’s play, when challenged to look at these critically, were able to realise the important role and contribution these can make to teaching and learning in terms of promoting children’s intellectual, social and emotional development. Their responses reflect that, since they pointed out that oral art forms help get learners focused, make learning interesting and enjoyable, make understanding easier, provide learners with the opportunity to mix freely, help learners acquire knowledge, master language and lay a foundation for children’s communication skills. The respondents also indicated that the oral art forms can be used during the lesson delivery, be it in the introduction, lesson development or conclusion. Thus, looking at the various parts of a lesson highlighted here, elements of a good lesson come to mind. A good lesson is one which gets learners focused, leads to improved student progress, one in which learners just have a good experience, enjoy, make progress and achieve (Coe, Aloisi, Higgins

and Major, 2014). Linking this to aspects raised on relevance to teaching and learning, one can clearly see that through the children's oral art forms, one can engage learners and capture their interest by involving them in something that they already enjoy doing. There is no better way of coming up with an environment that fits into the definition of a conducive learning environment presented above, one that conveys a sense of curiosity and a sense of focus on what is to follow, keeping learners alert through lesson development and refocusing them in conclusion. The example used by Interviewee 1 using *Chibatamabvi chauya* (The cramp has come) and one by the learners in Focus Group 2, during focus group interviews, *Unodei?* (Express) where various concepts were infused into the game songs during lesson development and revision respectively, attest to the contribution these oral art forms can make to teaching and learning. That is, if a conscious effort is made as is the case in two examples cited here. Teachers like Interviewee 1 can become focal persons when need to enlighten others on how to use oral art forms as pedagogical tools for information dissemination in the primary school set up across all levels arises. In the case of *Unodei?* (Express), the learners' indication that they revise through performing some of the oral art forms also show how the performances go beyond mere play but challenge the learners' cognitive abilities as they infuse challenging tasks in their performances. Such learners can also be called in to demonstrate how it is done when need be.

The teacher respondents' ability to identify concepts for which Shona children's oral art forms can be relevant in their teaching across the curriculum also shows that if an effort is made, these can be meaningfully infused into classroom interactions alongside modern day pedagogy. Concepts that can be taught using the oral art forms were identified for all the subject clusters taught at pre and primary school levels, that is Indigenous Languages and English, Physical Education, Visual and Performing Arts, Maths and Science, Mass Displays, Religious and Moral Education and Family Studies, Heritage and Social Studies, Agriculture, Home Economics and HIV and AIDS. What is conspicuous here is that it is possible if the practitioners accept change and begin to look positively at Shona indigenous knowledge systems. Shizha (2006) advocates for such a stance so as to awaken Africans in general and Zimbabweans in particular, from the colonial hangover of trivialising, marginalising and viewing indigenous knowledge as invalid and irrelevant to the contemporary life of its owners and creators. This requires teachers who are empowered to become in Gomba's (2018) view, transformational leaders and agents of change who can combine indigenous tools of information dissemination with the existing foreign ones to come up with hybrid

approaches to teaching and learning that make learning meaningful and relevant to the learners' real-life experiences, but fun and enjoyable at the same time. Teachers who look for alternative ways of doing things in the classroom set up and do not remain transfixed in modes of doing things of the colonial past, continuing to worship foreign methods of information dissemination as if they are the only way of teaching. It becomes crystal clear that through Shona children's oral art forms, it is possible to move away from Western constructs and frames of knowledge and imbibe our own indigenous forms and constructs of knowledge and ways of doing things (Gomba, 2018; Shizha, 2013, 2006; Asante, 2003).

A look at the benefits from children's oral art forms highlighted from interviews with teachers and learners in this study, does show that there is nothing primitive or backward about the knowledge that is socially constructed as learners dialogue through the various Shona oral art forms. The interaction is in fact, an important aspect of the process of knowledge creation as advocated for in constructivism. That is what the learning process entails. Lauzon (1999) cited by Shizha (2006:22) neatly puts this forth:

Learning is a process of social interaction that takes place within a framework of participation, whereby the learner acquires skills, tools, knowledge, beliefs and values to actively participate in the community.

Implied here is what Shizha (2006: 22) encourages when he posits that, "In order to acquire knowledge, a learner must become directly and actively involved or socially participate in a community". This takes us back to the diagrammatic representation of a learner centred approach to teaching and learning (Figure 6.1) advocated for in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022), where learning should be context networked through methods of teaching and learning that allow the teacher and the learners to connect in a learning community, as they focus on knowledge generation and not information delivery. Evident from this study then, is the contribution Shona children's oral art forms can make in helping create such a community for the betterment of pedagogy to enhance learner benefits during teaching and learning.

A paradigm of teaching and learning that values the learner as one discussed earlier, creates an opportunity to cater for individual differences which is another contribution that the teacher respondents pointed out to be a benefit from children's oral art forms. This is quite a strong argument for relevance of the Shona children's oral art forms to teaching and learning. Learners are endowed differently; they are unique individuals in terms of ability, motivation, social maturity, cognitive and affective development, potential needs and interest among



other things. This calls upon the teacher to vary learning activities and desist from relying solely on direct instruction because some learners may feel excluded from learning based primarily on such non-flexible ways of information dissemination (Mann, 2001). Thus, varied as the oral art forms are, they provide the teacher with multiple paths to present content for the learners. This is so due to their adaptability which gives teachers room to reconstruct them to suit the concept or curriculum area being taught (Mapara, 2014; Makina, 2009). This allows for the creation of an effective and engaging environment for learners (Biggs 2003). They also give the learners an opportunity to be at the centre of the learning process, since as methods, they are interesting, entertaining and not complicated for learners to follow (Mutasa et al., 2008). This helps take on board the learners' different learning styles, depending on the oral art being performed. By their nature, the oral art forms also require cooperation and collaboration which are approaches that engage learners in knowledge creation and critical thinking (Tuckman and Monetti, 2011; Green and Gredler, 2002), and at the same time instil into the learners, values and norms that are cherished in Shona culture, such as team work and interpersonal skills like relating to others, leading and being led among others (Muwati et al., 2016; Nyoni and Nyoni, 2013; Nyota and Mapara, 2008).

#### **6.4 EFFORTS BY PRACTITIONERS TO LINK SHONA CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS TO PEDAGOGY**

Efforts at infusion are discussed here vis a vis teacher knowledge of the different types of Shona children's oral art forms if they are to be able to infuse them in their classroom repertoires. This is against the background that research elsewhere has established that in order for teachers to be effective, they need to have both adequate content knowledge [that is knowledge of what they teach] and pedagogical knowledge [how to teach it] (Odumos, Olisama and Areelu, 2018; Olowoyeye, Abioye and Alonge, 2014; Wayne and Youngs, 2003). Implied here is the notion that there is an intrinsic relationship between the teacher's knowledge of the subject and how he or she teaches it and students' performance. Without content knowledge Olowoyeye et al., (2014:127-128) cannot be wrong to argue that, "In truth if a teacher is not enlightened in his/her subject, then any hope of effectiveness goes right out of the window".

##### **6.4.1 Teacher knowledge of the Shona children's oral art forms**

Findings on teacher knowledge of the various Shona children's oral art forms indicate that teachers are knowledgeable about the various types of these as they were able to give

examples of traditional rhymes, game songs, riddles and folktales. Having such knowledge is quite sobering in that it is the critical link required for infusion of the oral art forms into classroom practice. Salami and Oyaremi (2012) concur with this view, by positing that if teachers are knowledgeable, such knowledge will become a base for making sound decisions for providing adequate opportunities for learners to engage in the indigenous forms of play. This in turn promotes education that is relevant to needs of the society in which the children operate (Makina, 2009; Shizha, 2013; Gomba, 2018).

#### **6.4.2 Efforts at incorporation of Shona children's oral art forms in the classroom**

Findings on this issue presented in Chapter 4, show that a conscious effort at infusing Shona children's oral art forms in classroom interactions at pre and primary school levels is more pronounced at ECD to infant levels. This is evident from the interviews where Interviewees 1, 4, 6 and 7 who are infant specialists indicated that Shona children's oral art forms like rhymes, game songs and folktales are part of their daily diet as they interact with learners. The fact that it is a requirement to have a play component during every lesson basing on theories of play makes it mandatory for them to infuse the children's oral art forms as part of their pedagogical tools in collaboration with other modern modes of information dissemination. Interviewees 1 and 6 were even able to illustrate how they used some of these oral art forms to teach concepts like shapes and mathematical operations like addition and subtraction respectively. Observation also confirmed this as transitional activities at infant level, that is, before and after the lesson were in the form of either a rhyme or game song. Infant learners who constituted Focus groups 3 and 6 also confirmed that teachers at this level make a conscious effort to infuse the oral art forms when they pointed out that their teachers taught them some of the rhymes and game songs that they performed. This observation is in stark contrast to Salami and Oyaremi's (2012) findings in the Nigerian pre and primary school set up where they observed that infusion of indigenous children's play is in fact more pronounced at junior as opposed to infant level. This they pointed could be due to the fact that indigenous child's play is included in the curriculum designed for the junior level and not for pre-scholars. From the Nigerian experience referred to here, there is hope that the Zimbabwean situation may also change since Shona children's indigenous play in the form of rhymes, game songs, riddles and folktales among others are now part of the content to be taught in Indigenous Language syllabi in the pre and primary school curriculum.

As observed in this study though, at junior level there seems not to be such a well-coordinated effort to infuse the oral art forms into daily classroom interactions. This is in spite of the fact that junior learners enjoy these and still perform them on their own outside the classroom. Though once in a while one would observe a game song being used to introduce a lesson during observation and in documents such as schemes, teachers at this level tend to believe that the oral art forms are more suitable at infant level. Some teacher respondents who teach at junior level confirmed this during interviews when they indicated that they are aware of the benefits embedded in the oral art forms, but when it comes to teaching, they focus more on examinable things. What these teachers seem not to be aware of is the fact that, the learners themselves actually revise important concepts through these oral art forms which the teachers view as play which wastes their time. A learner in Focus Group 2 actually pointed this out with reference to the game song *Unodei?* which she indicated helps them revise concepts so that they do not forget especially those they find difficult to comprehend during teaching and learning. What these teachers seem not to be aware of is the need for continuity, one of the principles guiding the new paradigm shift in the Zimbabwean education system. Instead of treating the oral art forms as being relevant at infant level, they should in fact build on what has been sown at that level to boost performance at the higher level. As defined in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022:15), “Continuity refers to the developmental sequencing of learning experiences in ways that allow learners to build on previous experiences taking into account mental development”. Thus, instead of dropping or cutting the oral art forms off totally or coincidentally bumping into them during teaching and learning, there is need to build on them for the benefit of learners who seem to be well aware of the benefits of performing these as data from focus group interviews has shown. Building upon prior knowledge is a critical component of constructivism in that it emphasises the need to organise concepts in a spiral manner so that the learner builds upon what has been learnt before to make sense out of the new concept (Olusegun, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1966). Thus, if the oral art forms are useful as pedagogical tools for information dissemination at infant level, there is no reason why they should all of a sudden become irrelevant at junior level, what is required is a conscious effort to infuse them in teaching and learning repertoires on the part of the practitioners.

An observation made on the differences in attitude towards infusing of these children’s oral art forms between teachers at junior level and their counterparts at infant level seems to be a

question of attitude. There is a tendency to look down upon indigenous knowledge systems as backward, and any changes in syllabuses or education to reflect an African, worse still Zimbabwean experience in terms of content or pedagogy faces a lot of resistance and opposition, especially from those steeped in the colonial mentality of viewing Western education and its pedagogy as the best (Gomba, 2018; Shizha, 2013). It is because of such attitudes that there is need to, instil the right values and attitudes in the learners while still young, in order to remove that mentality from the future generation's minds.

However, even though most junior teachers in this study dismissed children's oral art forms as infant activities that are a waste of time when it comes to junior level, from the discussion with Interviewee 5, it was clear that their lack of motivation might be due to lack of practical knowhow as to how to do it. This interviewee who had attended a workshop pointed out that the workshop had been an eye-opener for her as it made her realise how relevant and helpful such indigenous knowledge was to making learning more interesting for learners.

## **6.5 TEACHER ATTITUDES ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS AS PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS AS COMPARED TO THOSE PERFORMED IN ENGLISH**

Even though there were a number of English oral art forms among examples given by teachers and performed by learners for rhymes and game songs, when it came to preferred linguistic medium Shona was the preferred one.

### **6.5.1 Teacher preferences of children's oral art according to linguistic medium**

Most teacher respondents (74.7%), indicated that children's oral art forms performed in Shona are better pedagogical tools for teaching and learning as opposed to those performed in English. The reasons the respondents gave include making learners comfortable and free to interact in their mother tongue, being culturally based and being part of the learners' background knowledge shows that they are aware of the advantage the Shona oral art forms have over English ones if used as pedagogical tools for teaching and learning. If teachers regard oral art forms performed in Shona so highly, then the easier it becomes for them when required to use them as pedagogical tools as required by the updated curriculum. What is required is a change in mindset on the part of the practitioners as advocated for by Gomba (2018) and Shizha (2013). There is need to acknowledge that indigenous ways of teaching and learning are not inferior to Western ones but can also be used to generate knowledge that

will free and empower learners. Kershaw (1992) cited in Mazama (2001:388) calls such knowledge “emancipatory knowledge”. A sizeable percentage of the respondents (20%), were for English, and what this simply shows is that English rhymes will continue to be performed alongside Shona ones, not as the better ones, but just as another form of children’s activities since English is the language of instruction from Grade 4 upwards as stated in the Zimbabwe Education Act. However, as long as those performed in Shona are in the majority, the learners will continue to be immersed in the cultural values of their Shona culture and remain grounded in their culture even in the face of cultural onslaughts from foreign ones in the face of technology and globalisation. This is in line with Gandhi’s insightful observation on globalisation:

I don’t want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet (cited in Mohan, 2011: 227).

Emphasis here is that no matter what, one should remain rooted in one’s culture, there should be no room for one to reject his/her rich cultural heritage, hence the need to immerse learners in oral art forms that entrench their own cultural values instead of having them regurgitate foreign ones that might be relevant for the thirty-minute lesson only but are not of any benefit in as far as grounding or centring learners for life is possible. Thus, in the context of education foreign methods of information dissemination and knowledge creation are welcome, however, from Gandhi’s point of view, these should not totally displace indigenous ones. Hence the clarion call for their infusion into classroom interactions through indigenous knowledge systems such as Shona children’s oral art forms across the curriculum at pre and primary school level to catch the young impressionable learners young.

It was also established in this study that, despite the fact that teachers have a high regard for oral art forms performed in Shona, during focus group interviews with the learners, evidence was to the contrary. When asked to recite game songs or rhymes of their choice, 7 out of 8 groups had English examples as their first choice. The researcher had to request for Shona examples which the learners then switched to with easy though. This might be evidence that they are used to performing English ones hence these quickly came to mind. However, when it came to folktales and riddles the use of Shona was just automatic, an indication that these are likely to be always performed in the mother tongue. Thus, even if currently the use of English rhymes and game songs is also prevalent within the primary school set up, what is positive about the whole scenario is that, since teachers are aware of the knowledge, values

and skills embedded in the Shona ones, with the positive attitude they indicated towards Shona ones, the platform for the battle for implementation is set. Another sobering thought is that the teachers are still aware of the very traditional oral art forms which they can reconstruct and adapt to suit the situation at hand, if a conscious effort is made to infuse them into their classroom repertoires as pedagogical tools for information dissemination. This is important because the very traditional oral art forms are an embodiment of knowledge and eternal truths that are the foundation of Shona culture and should be guarded jealously in an environment where new values can be easily adopted. This was the vision the then Minister of Education Sports and Culture, A. S. Chigwedere, way back in 2004 had in creating the Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe. He pointed this out in the preamble to the said policy thus:

Some of our traditions, values and beliefs seem to be disappearing owing to various factors, which include colonialism, urbanization, globalization and acculturation. The need to promote and preserve our cultural heritage has become more important in the face of the above factors. Concerted efforts have to be put in place to preserve this cultural heritage for posterity and to maintain it as a unique part of the world's cultural heritage (Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe 2004:1).

Hence it is hoped that through infusion of Shona children's oral art forms into the Zimbabwean education system both as content and pedagogical tools, a contribution towards promotion and preservation of this cultural heritage can be made.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

The discussion has shown that the changing environment in its totality, that is the natural and built, technological, social, as in political, economic, cultural, educational, historical and religious and moral, in which Shona children's oral art forms are performed highly influences them in terms of form, content and language. This is evidenced by the contemporary cross-cutting themes and linguistic styles that have become part and parcel of the children's repertoires as they perform the various oral art forms. However, it is pleasing to note that the new images incorporated by the children reflect the changing environment in which the learners perform them, they are not far-fetched foreign ones. It is also evident from the discussion that the various Shona children's oral art forms are fertile ground for varied learning processes. This is so because the oral art forms are loaded with opportunities for learners to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which prepare them to act in a responsible manner within their communities as they tackle real life problems. It has been established in this discussion that Shona children's oral art forms are relevant to teaching and learning across the curriculum at pre and primary school levels. The discussion has shown that Shona

children's oral art forms are a rich repository of Shona cultural values and norms meant for the development of a total person. One who is knowledgeable, skilled and rooted in one's culture and is aware of what is expected of him or her by his or her community in terms of duties and responsibilities. The discussion has also shown the place of Shona children's oral art forms within Zimbabwe's Education framework with emphasis on the role they can play and contribution they can make *vis a vis* the philosophy upon which the Zimbabwean education is hinged on. Varying degrees of efforts by practitioners to infuse these into their classroom interactions have also been discussed and these reflected a skewed positive effort at infant level as opposed to a non-committal stance by teachers at junior level. This is in spite of the fact that both sets of practitioners showed a high level of knowledge on the value and benefits embedded in these. Threats to the oral art forms in the form of technological advancement and globalisation have been highlighted with possible ways of curbing these proffered in order to promote and preserve our cultural heritage. The next chapter presents a summary of the research findings, conclusions and proffers practical recommendations for either implementation or further research.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The main focus of the study was to identify and analyse Shona children's oral art forms for their pedagogical value within an ever-changing environment in the pre and primary school set up, with the intention to situate them as pedagogical tools for teaching and learning in the Zimbabwean primary education set up. This is against the backdrop that the new curriculum frame work for Primary and Secondary Education's thrust is to make the Zimbabwean education heritage based. Thus, this chapter concludes the research and presents a summary and conclusions from the research findings drawn from the data presented and analysed with focus on the research objectives. The chapter also makes recommendations for future practice and research. The conclusions are hinged on an in-depth analysis of data gathered through questionnaires, observation, interviews and document analysis.

#### **7.2 SUMMARY**

Seven chapters constitute the study including this concluding chapter. The introductory Chapter One gives the background to the study which highlights the need to bring Shona children's oral art forms to the fore in the education of children, instead of leaving them at the periphery and continuously feeding them on a diet of alien ones.

In this chapter, the problem is stated. An overview of literature to be reviewed is also given where Shona children's oral art forms are contextualised in the broad genre of oral literature. A brief synopsis of research methodology and ethical considerations is also presented, and key terms are defined. Finally, the chapter gives the scope of the study.

In Chapter Two an extended literature review is presented through a funnel approach that stretches from studies carried by international scholars' way back on children's oral art forms, then studies by African scholars and finally those by Zimbabwean scholars. The review reflected that most of the researchers focused on a single oral art form at a time and also did not focus on linking them to modern day pedagogy.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical frameworks on which the analysis of Shona children's oral art forms is hinged, that is Critical Discourse Analysis, Afrocentricity and Constructivism.



The research methodology is the focus of Chapter Four where the main paradigm, that is qualitative is presented and its choice justified. The data collection tools are also discussed and situated in the context of the study with their pros and cons spelt out. The chapter also outlines the data collection procedure, population sample and sampling procedure. The data gathered through the various modes is presented and analysed in Chapter Five followed by its discussion in Chapter Six.

### **7.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The study has confirmed that Shona children's oral art forms are coloured in terms of form and content by the changing environment in which they are performed. The children's performances are heavily influenced by images to do with education, religion, technology, politics of the day and contemporary social issues like HIV and AIDS, sex education, child abuse and children's rights. This is across the divide in terms of setting since this was evident in all sites where data was gathered, that is, urban, peri-urban, rural resettlement and rural.

The study has established that children's oral art forms in Shona are relevant to education at pre and primary school levels since they do not only inculcate social norms and values, but also the spirit of inquiry and creativity through exploration of the environment in its complete form, that is natural and built, technological and social (social here means the economic, political, cultural, historical, moral and aesthetic components of a people's way of life).

The findings also revealed that Shona children's oral art forms are an embodiment of critical human factor values for development education since they help create a total person who can contribute meaningfully, identify problems and proffer possible solutions to the challenges of an ever- changing environment. As symbolic representations of cultural expression of the society in which they are performed, they are also critical tools for cultural education since they connect the children with norms, values and belief systems held by their communities.

It has also become evidently clear from this study that the various Shona children's oral art forms can be employed to achieve the aims of Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 and even go beyond. Some of the aims entail the following:

- i) Motivating learners to cherish their Zimbabwean identity, value their heritage, history and cultural traditions and prepare them for participatory citizenship.
- ii) Fostering life-long learning in line with emerging opportunities and challenges of the knowledge society (Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework pp.5-7).

The aims point to the need for fostering and developing of human quality values and skills for survival. These, this study has shown the various Shona children's oral art forms are a rich repository of.

The study has also confirmed findings by other scholars who have researched in the area targeting the various children's oral art forms, that the children's oral art forms are not simply play but an embodiment of cultural norms and values cherished by the Shona as a people as defined through ubuntu/vumunhu/unhu, a philosophy underpinning the Zimbabwean education system as espoused in the Curriculum Frame Work for Education 2015-2022. The values include the spirit of oneness, mutual social responsibility, trust, respect, peaceful co-existence with others and nature, caring, unselfishness, hard work, humility, team work, winning with humility, losing with dignity, leading and accepting to be led as well, following rules and peaceful conflict resolution among others. Thus, Shona children's oral art forms cannot be treated as mere child's play, since as intangible heritage they are a powerful vehicle for the inculcation of values, norms and attitudes that strongly impact not only on the children's own future life but that of their community as well. Such values once entrenched may also help the learners in later life to remain centred culturally wherever they are despite the challenges of globalisation. In this context it becomes clear from this study that Shona children's oral art forms as components of Shona oral literature, are instruments of cultural education that embody cultural values, philosophy and beliefs of the Shona as a people necessary for centring the Shona child in his culture in an environment that is ever- changing.

The study has further confirmed that Shona children's oral art forms are not only an embodiment and purveyor of human factor values that define Shona culture in line with the broad African culture that defines an African, but also tools for knowledge creation and dissemination. They provide children with a rich social platform to explore their environment in its totality in the process enhancing their social, cognitive and physical development. This is so because as they engage in performance of the various oral art forms, they understand their social world, develop cognitive skills, language included, and they rid the board of surplus energy.

The findings also established that traditional Shona children's oral art forms can be reconstructed and used to teach various concepts across the primary school curriculum. However, this is more consciously done at infant level as opposed to its being sparsely done at junior level. This is despite the fact that children at junior level themselves still enjoy

performing them and even use some of the Shona oral art forms like game songs to revise concepts taught to them by the very same teachers who tend to trivialise these as child's play. On a positive note, since the study also established that teachers are knowledgeable of traditional Shona children's oral art forms, there is need for concerted efforts to be made so that they embrace the oral art forms meaningfully during classroom practice. Having them as topics in the syllabi is not enough if there is no follow up to ensure that the oral art forms are taught.

The study has also established that in a multilingual environment like the Zimbabwean one, Shona children's oral art forms have been coloured through borrowings from the various languages in contact. This however, should not be viewed negatively since it has not affected benefits of these performances to the learners. In fact, it has given the learners an opportunity to capture new images within the changing contemporary and multicultural environment.

The investigation has also revealed that in a multicultural society, Shona children's oral art forms act as bridges for community connections as children do not only learn about their own culture, but that of others since the performances of these is non-discriminatory but inclusive. The result is a deep sense of appreciation of cultural diversity and peaceful co-existence which are important life skills for adult life.

The findings also show that the nature of performance and participation of Shona children's oral art forms not only empowers the children with knowledge of the various art forms but also fosters an understanding of their cultural significance. This in a way instils a strong sense of sharing and group participation since everyone is allowed to participate in a non-competitive atmosphere which fosters co-operation rather than competition.

Through analysis of key documents, such as The Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe, The Curriculum Frame Work for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 and various syllabi, it is evident from this study that infusion of indigenous knowledge in the form of Shona children's oral art forms into the education system is no longer a luxury but a necessity. This has to be mandatory if the Ministry's vision of the successful implementation of a heritage-based education system is to be fulfilled.

The findings of this study indicate that there are threats to these children's oral art forms, so there is need for efforts to be made to ensure their survival in the face of such. This is despite, observations that they can withstand challenges of the changing terrain due to globalisation and its technological advances. Things cannot be left to chance; concerted efforts should be

made to make them visible and continue to respond to the environment positively and not be swallowed which may impact negatively on the Shona culture.

The investigation established that teachers are knowledgeable of the various Shona children's oral art forms which is a positive step when it comes to infusion of these into classroom practice. What is required are practical activities that may help them as practitioners make use of this knowledge that they already have to create a synthesis between traditional and modern pedagogies.

## **7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the data gathered and analysed, and conclusions drawn in this study, recommendations can be made for the Ministry, practitioners, curriculum planners and future research. This is meant to ensure meaningful implementation of policies intended in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 regarding infusion of indigenous knowledge systems in all aspects of practice across the curriculum at pre and primary school levels to make the education system heritage based.

### **7.4.1 Recommendations for future practice**

1. There is need for massive sensitization through media, seminars and workshops to be held at school, cluster, and district, provincial and even national level to educate teachers on the various Shona children's oral art forms and how to link these to pedagogy across the primary school curriculum. This requires funding and support from the government through the parent Ministry.
2. The Ministry can also collaborate with stakeholders and package the various unadulterated Shona children's oral art forms and new creations in the form of anthologies, booklets, audios and videos to ensure that they are not swept off totally by the globalization wave. This will make these readily available for the intended beneficiaries. Discs can then be played and watched on television sets be it at home or schools.
3. The idea of radio lessons can be reintroduced at pre and primary school levels and *Sarunganos* (story-tellers) can be engaged to narrate folktales for learners of different grades at scheduled times weekly. In this era of technology, a disc can even be played

on television and learners can actually see the story-teller performing so that they see the paralinguistic expressions that make the folktale even more interesting. In the same vein, story-tellers can be invited to schools on days when schools hold their variety shows on civics days to perform for the learners and highlight lessons from their tales. This approach of bringing in resource persons is a good way of boosting school-community relations.

4. There is need for schools to organise riddling and folk tale narration competitions at school, cluster, district, provincial and national levels as a way of motivating both teachers and learners to take teaching and learning of these seriously. Funding for these competitions can be mobilised through partnership with sponsors in the same way it is done with national quiz and public speaking competitions. By engaging in such competitions, the children are vicariously enculturated into the norms and values of their society.
5. The Ministry is already engaging primary schools in Schools Annual Science Sports and Arts Festivals (SASSAF), District Annual Science Sports and Arts Festivals (DASSAF), Provincial Annual Science Sports and Arts Festivals (PASSAF) and National Annual Science Sports and Arts Festivals (NASSAF), where children compete in various activities among them quiz, music, mass displays, drama and traditional dance among others. The Ministry can capitalise on this and add slots for riddling, game songs and folktale narration sessions as well so that these are taken aboard in all areas of the children school activities.
6. When engaging in these with learners, teachers' roles as facilitators should not be domineering but subtle so that they do not interfere with the nature of play intended in the games. The teachers should also not just leave the performances at play level but should create meaningful tasks so that apart from simply enjoying the play nature of the oral art forms they see other benefits of engaging in them. For example, having the best performers do it at assemblies for the whole school would challenge others to want to perform too. After the performances the teacher or even the learners themselves can highlight the benefits of their performance. For example, if one has narrated a folktale, he or she can highlight lessons learnt for the benefit of others.

7. In situations where teachers reconstruct the oral art as in the case of examples given by some teachers during interviews, there is need to have the performances or recitations in the original traditional form of the oral art first. This is so that the learners are grounded in the traditional form before it can then be stretched to other areas within the curriculum. Such a scenario will help learners realise the relevance of what goes on within their culture to their education.
8. The teaching of Shona children's oral art forms and their use in the education system should not be left to chance but should be an imperative. The oral art forms should be embraced as important teaching and instructional methods through integration of these into teaching and learning.
9. Tertiary institutions that train teachers should support the Ministry's vision by designing modules in pedagogics that focus on indigenous knowledge systems as pedagogical tools for information dissemination. Lecturers can focus on the theory part then students can be tasked to create portfolios where they can either produce readers or compilations of rhymes, riddles or game songs as part of their practical. By so doing the teachers in the making get empowered and they in turn can empower their learners.
10. There is need for the Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC) to ensure that there are items based on the various Shona children's oral art forms in the Grade 7 national examination papers as a way of making sure teachers take these seriously in their in their teaching. For example, in Paper 2 where a number of passages are set for comprehension some of these can be in the form of rhymes, game songs or folktales. Questions set on them could then focus on lessons learnt or cultural values that can be drawn from the texts, benefits of reciting or engaging in the rhyme or game song among others instead of the usual comprehension type questions. Under language, some questions can also focus on riddles since they are figuratively constructed using language.
11. Teachers should create platforms through social media where vibrant discussions on the various children's oral art forms can take place. For the learners, platforms like Ruzivo Digital that are already in use for all primary level subjects can be used. Tasks

and responses to these on Shona children's oral art forms can also be posted and children can work on them independently just as they are already doing with the said subjects.

12. The Ministry should collaborate with producers of television programmes to flight programmes that are based on the various indigenous children's oral art forms since children nowadays spend most of their time watching televisions.
13. The Curriculum Development Unit should also spearhead material production on these aspects of indigenous knowledge systems in the same manner they did with the series *There is room at the top* which were produced to empower the girl child and raise awareness amongst all learners on gender issues when gender became topical in Zimbabwe.

#### **7.4.2 Recommendations for further research.**

1. Researchers should do more than just pick a few children's oral art forms for analysis and leave it at that. There is need to gather Shona children's oral art forms both traditional and contemporary and compile anthologies, readers and monographs that can be read by the learners themselves. Teachers can also use the anthologies as reference texts to get examples for use during teaching. They can then reconstruct or adapt these to suit the situation.
2. In the era of the Education 5.0 model for education, as an innovation, researchers should also video or audio record some of the children's oral art forms for example, game songs so that they can be accessible to the intended audience in the form of discs just like the foreign cartoons that have flooded the Zimbabwean market. These can be patented and sold with funds being injected back for further research and promotion of indigenous knowledge systems. The researchers can also take advantage of technology and post some of the live performances of the Shona children's oral art forms on YouTube. Children already watch foreign cartoons on YouTube anyway, so posting the oral art forms on this platform can help make these accessible to them.
4. Researchers should create a platform on social media where issues to do with Shona children's oral art forms can be discussed. Traditional as well as new creations that they come across can also be posted so that they are taken aboard across the divide.

5. The researchers should create a website where they post live performances of the children's oral art forms so that they can be accessed. This will benefit the children in that those who are out of touch with the traditional oral art forms can access these while the new compositions can also be broadcast. This can be done as there are a lot of these sites for English rhymes on the internet.
6. Researchers should establish a journal for publication of researches carried out in the area of Indigenous children's oral art forms so that such researches do not end up gathering dust in shelves without reaching the intended beneficiaries. This will allow for cross pollination of ideas on this important component of Shona cultural heritage.



## REFERENCES

Adejumo, A. 2009. Technologizing Oral Texts: Achieving Yoruba Oral Literature through Technological Media. *LUMINA*, Vol 20, No 2, pp.1-16.

Adjibolosoo, S. The Human Factor in Development. *The Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives*, XII (4) pp.139-149.

Akpan, J.P. and Board, L. A. 2016. Using constructivist Teaching Strategies to Enhance Academic Outcomes of students with Special Needs. *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 4 (2), pp. 392-398.

Alaghbary, G.S., Alazzary, M. and Al-Nakeeb, O. 2015. 'Linguistic Approaches to Ideology: Review of Work Between 1979 and 2010'. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*. Volume 4 Number 5 p.1-10.

Alesandrini, K and Larson, L. 2002. Teachers bridge to constructivism. *Clearing-House*. 75, 118-121.

Andersen, J., Cardinale, M. and Martin, N. 2011. Constructivism in the classroom. Available at: [www.slideshare.net/mlegan31/constructivism-in-the-classroom](http://www.slideshare.net/mlegan31/constructivism-in-the-classroom). [Accessed 5/9/16].

Anderson, L.W. 2013. *A Taxonomy for Learning; Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Anderson, L.W and Krathwohl, D.R., Airasian, P.W., Cruikshank, K.A., Mayer, R.E. and Pintrich, P.R. 2000. *A Taxonomy for Learning; Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Appiah, A. and Gates, H.L. 2005. *Africana: An Encyclopaedia of the African and African American Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Asante, M.K. 1990. *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*. New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Atherton, J.S. 2011. Learning and Teaching: Constructivism in Learning. Available at: <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/constructivism.htm>. [ Accessed 18/11/17]

Asante, M.K. 1990. *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*. New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Asante, M.K. 1993. *Malcolm X as Cultural Hero and Other Afrocentric Essays*. New Jersey:

Africa World Press.

Asante, M.K. 1998. *The Afrocentric Idea*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Asante, M.K. 2000. Afrocentricity and History: Mediating the meaning of culture in western society, *Souls Volume 2 Issue 3* p.50-62 DOI 10.1080/10999940009362225.

Asante, M.K. 2003. *Afrocentricity*. Chicago: African American Images.

Asante, M.K. 2003. *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*. Philadelphia: African American Images.

Asante, M.K. 2007. Afrocentricity and Transformation: Understanding A Movement in Hudson-Weems, *Contemporary Africana Theory, Thought and Action*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

Asante, M.K. 2008. *An Afrocentric Manifesto*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Asante, M.K. 2009. Afrocentricity. Available at: [www.asante.net/articles/1/afrocentricity/](http://www.asante.net/articles/1/afrocentricity/) [Accessed 9/11/17]

Asante, M.K. 2012. [Afrocentricity, F. Toward the African Renaissance: A New Africa](http://www.panafa.net/blog/?201209). Available at: [www.panafa.net/blog/?201209](http://www.panafa.net/blog/?201209) [Accessed: 22/02/16].

Asante, M.K. 2013. *Facing South: An African Orientation to Knowledge*. Philadelphia: Institute for Afrocentric Studies

Asimeng-Boahen, L. and Baffoe, M. 2014. (eds) *African Traditional and Oral Literature as Pedagogical Tools in Content Area Classroom: K12* U.S.A: Information Age Publishing, INC. Available at: [www.infoagepub.com](http://www.infoagepub.com) [Accessed 20/02/16].

Azriel, J., Erthal, M. and Starr, E. 2005. Answers, Questions, and Deceptions: What Is the Role of Games in Business Education. *Journal of Education for Business*. Volume 81 Number 1 pp. 9-13.

Bailey, C.A. 2007. *A Guide to Field Research*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Banda, D. and Morgan, J.W. 2013. Folklore as an instrument of education among the Chewa people of Zambia in *Springer +Business Media*: Dordrecht [Available at: [www.researchgate.net/.../257658141](http://www.researchgate.net/.../257658141)] [Accessed 20/02/16].

- Beck, L. C, Trombetta, W. L. and Share, S. 1986 Using focus group sessions before decisions are made. *North Carolina Medical Journal* Number 47 Volume 2 p73-74.
- Bell, J. 1999. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. Michigan: Open University Press.
- Bell, J. 1999. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. Michigan: Open University Press.
- Berg, B.L. 2006. *Qualitative Research for Social Sciences*. Needham Heights: Allyn Bacon.
- Berger, K.S. 2000. *The Developing Person: Through Childhood*. New York: Worth Publishers.
- Berk, L.E. 2007. *Development throughout the lifespan*. Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon
- Best, J.W. and Kahn, V.J. 1993. *Research in Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bhebe, N. and Viriri, A. 2012. *Shona Proverbs: Palm Oil with Which African Words Are Eaten*. Gweru: Booklove.
- Bialystok, E. 2001. *Bilingualism in Development Language, Literacy and Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Biggs, J. 2003. *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Blaikie, N.W.H. 1991. A Critique of the Use of Triangulation in Social Research, in *Quality and Quantity* Volume 25 p115-136.
- Bless, C.; Higson-Smith, C. and Kagee, A.2006. *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective*. Cape Town: Juta and Co. Ltd.
- Blumberg, B., Cooper, R. and Schindler, P.S. 2005. *Business Research Methods*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K.2003. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Borg, W.R., and Gall, M.D. 1989. *Educational Research*. New York: Longman.

- Brooks, J., and Brooks, M. 2004. In search of understanding: The case for constructivist classrooms. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Brotherson, M. J. 1994. Interactive Focus Group Interviewing: A Qualitative Research in Early Intervention, *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education Volume 14 Issue 1*, pp101-118.
- Bruner, J. 1960. *The Process of Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. 1961. The Act of Discovery. *Harvard Educational Review*, 31, pp.21-32.
- Bruner, J. 1966. *Towards a Theory of Instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bukhari, N. H.S. and Xiaoyang, W. 2013. Critical Discourse Analysis in Educational Research. *IOSR Journal of Research and Method in Education Volume 3 Issue 1* p.9-17.
- Byers, P.Y. and Wilcox, J.R. *Focus Groups: An Alternative Method of Data in Communication Research*. New Orleans: ERIC.
- Chawane, M. 2016. The Development of Afrocentricity: A Historical Survey. *Yesterday and Today No 16*, pp.78-99.
- Chesina, C. 1994. *Oral Literature of the Kalenjin*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Chidi Amuta. 1989. *The Theory of African Literature: Implications for Practical Criticism*. London: Z.E.D. Books.
- Chike, FR.M. 2015. *The Critical Concept of Afrocentricism in Nigerian Literature*. Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English University of Exeter.
- Chiromo A.S. 2006. *A Research Methods and Statistics in Education: Student's Guide*. Gweru: Beta Print.
- Chitando, A. 2008. *Imagining a Peaceful Society: a vision of children's literature in post conflict Zimbabwe*. Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute.
- Chitumba, W. 2013. University Education for Personhood Through Ubuntu Philosophy. *Journal of Philosophy of Education Vol 43: 2*, pp. 1268-1276.

- Chivasa, N. and Mutswanga, P. 2014. An Examination of the Role of Folktales in Promoting Peace-building among Modern Communities in Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE) Volume 1 Issue 11*, pp. 161-169.
- Chouliaraki, L. and Fairclough, N. 1999. *Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University.
- Coe, U. R., Aloisi, C., Higgins, S. and Major, L. E. 2014. What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research. Available at: <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Makes-Great-Teaching-REPORT.pdf>. Accessed 17/4/19.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. 2011. *Research Methods in Education*. London: Routledge.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. 2008. *Basics of Qualitative Research 3e*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Covin, D. 1990. Afrocentricity in 'O Movement Negro Unificado' in Abari, A.S. (ed.) 1990 *Journal of Black Studies Volume 21 Number 2*. p.126-144.
- Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Creswell, J.W and Plano Clark, V.L. 2011. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Method Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Crow. G., Wiles, R., Heath, S. and Charles, V. 2006. Research ethics and data quality: The implications for informed consent. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology Volume 9 Number 2* p83-95.
- Crowther, D.T. 1997 Editorial Electronic, Journal of Science Education. <http://imr.edu/homepage./jcannon/ejse/ejsevzn 2 ed.html>. [accessed on 22/1/19]
- Crystal, D. 2008. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe. 2004. Harare: Ministry of Education Sport and Culture.
- Cummins, J. 2000. *Language, Power and Pedagogy*. Clevedon: Language Matters.
- Cunningham, F.M. 2001. Reflecting Teaching Practice in Adult ESL Settings. ERIC Digest,

1-7.

Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022. Harare: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. 2011. Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. p.1-43. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S.2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Donald, D, Lazarus, S. and Lolwana, P. 2010. *Educational Psychology in Social Context: Ecosystem Application in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Duke, B., Harper, G., and Johnson, M. 2013. Connectivism as a digital age learning theory. *The International HETL Review Special Issue*, 4-13. New York: The International HETL Association.

Eisner, E. W. 1991. *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*. New York: Macmillan.

Fairclough, N. 1989. *Language and Power*. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman

Fairclough, N. 2012. Critical Discourse Analysis: Advances in Engineering Technology. *International Journal of Scientific Research*sp.451-487

Falade, A.D. 2013. Oral Tradition in Africa: Poetry as a Means of Preserving Cultural Heritage and Engendering Social Change among the Yoruba Available at: [www.academia.edu/7782824/oraltradition](http://www.academia.edu/7782824/oraltradition) [Accessed 29/06/15].

Farooq, U. 2012. Ideological Foundation of Education. Available at: [www.studentnotes.com/social-sciences/education/334-ideological-foundation-of-education-](http://www.studentnotes.com/social-sciences/education/334-ideological-foundation-of-education-) [Accessed on 18/11/17]

- Fernando, S. and Marikar, F. 2017. Constructivist Teaching/Learning Theory and Participatory Methods. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching, Vol 6, No 1*, pp. 110-122.
- Fincham, J.E. 2008. Response Rates and Responsiveness for Surveys, Standards and the Journal. *Am J Pharm Educ Volume 72(2)*: 43.
- Fine, A.G. and Sandstrom, K.L. 1988. Knowing Children: Participant Observation with Minors. *Qualitative Research Methods*. Newbury Park: SAGE.
- Finnegan, R. 2012. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
- Fisher, K. 2002. *Schools as "prisons of learning" or, as "pedagogy of architectural encounters": A manifesto for critical psychsocial spatiality of learning*. Bedford Park: Flinders University of South Australia.
- Fortune, G. 1980. *Ngano Volume 1*. Harare: Mercury Press.
- Fortune, G. 1982. *Ngano Volume 2*. Harare: Mercury Press.
- Fortune, G. 1983a. *Ngano Volume 3*. Harare: Mercury Press.
- Fortune, G. 1983b. *Ngano Volume 4*. Harare: Mercury Press.
- Frey, C. and Griffith, J. 1987. *The Literary Heritage of Childhood: An Appraisal of Children's Classics in the Western Tradition*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R. and Hyams, N. 2011. *An Introduction to Language*. London: Wadsworth.
- Fryrear, A. 2015. What's A Good Survey Response Rate? Available at <https://www.surveygizmo.com/resources/blog/survey-response-rates/> Accessed on 21/01/2019.
- Furusa, M. 1998. The Human Factor and the African Intellectual in Chivaura, V.G and Mararike, C.G. *The Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.
- Ganga, E. and Maphalala, M. 2016. Contributions of Constructivism to Teaching and Learning in M. C. Maphalala (Ed) *Teaching and Learning Strategies in South Africa*.p.43-55. London: Cengage Learning EMEA.

- Gee, J.P. 2004. Discourse Analysis: What makes it critical? in Rogers, R. *An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis in Education*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gee, J.P. 2014. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. London: Routledge.
- Giddens, A. 2009. *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gillham, B. 2007. *Developing a Questionnaire*. London: Continuum.
- Goduka, I. 2000. Indigenous Ways of Knowing: Affirming a Legacy, in Chiwome, E.M., Mguni, Z. and Furusa, M. *Indigenous Knowledge and Technology in African and Diasporan Communities*. Harare: Southern African Association for Culture and Development Studies, pp.134-145.
- Gomba, C. 2018. Post-colonial theory in Zimbabwe's Education System: Headmasters' Views. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education, Volume 7 Number 1*, pp.77-88.
- Gombe, J. M. 2006. *Tsika dzaVaShona*. Harare: College Press.
- Govier, T. 2005. *A Practical Study of Argument*. 6th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ). 2007. *The Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe*. Harare: Government Printers.
- Gray, D.E. 2014. *Doing Research in the Real World*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Gredler, M.E.1997. *Learning and Instruction: Theory into practice*. New Jersey: Prentice - Hall
- Gwavaranda, E.T. and Masaka, D. 2008. Shona reasoning skills in Zimbabwe: The importance of riddles. *The Journal of PAN-African Studies, Vol.2 Number 5*, pp.193-208.
- Halliday, M.A.K. 1985 *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Anorld.
- Hamutyinei, M.A. and Plangger, A.B. 1987. *Tsumo-Shumo: Shona Proverbial Lore and Wisdom*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, O. and Makuva, N. 2014. Hunhu: In Search of an Indigenous Philosophy for the Zimbabwean Education System?. *Journal of Indigenous Social Development Volume 3 Number 1* pp.1-15.



Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. 2010. *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. London: Hasper Collins.

Hatch, J. 2002. *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Henslin, J. M. 1998. *Essentials of Sociology: A Down- to-Earth Approach*. London: Allyn and Bacon.

Herskovits, M. 1961. The Study of African Oral Art in *The Journal of American Folklore* Volume 74 Number 294, pp.451-456.

Heyns, C. and Stefiszyn, K. 2008. *Human Rights, Peace and Justice in Africa: A Reader*.

Mutare: Africa University

Hicks, D.W. 2017. Education and Ideology Available at: [www.teaching4abetterworld.co.uk/ideology.html](http://www.teaching4abetterworld.co.uk/ideology.html) [Accessed on 14/11/17]

Hodge, R. and Kress, G. 1993. *Language as Ideology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition London: Routledge.

Hodza, A.C. 1983a. *NganodzaMatambidzanwa*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Hodza, A.C. 1983b. *Shona Registers Volume 2*. Harare: Mercury Press.

Hodza, A.C. 1984. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) *Shona Registers Volume 1*. Harare: Prestige Books.

Hodza, A.C. 1986. *Shona Registers Volume 3*. Harare: Mercury Press.

Hodza, A.C. 1987. *Shona Folktales*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Holford, M. & Portnoy, L. 2017. *Children Should Be Playing More Games in the Classroom: Here is why*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/children-should-be-playing-more-games-in-the-classroom-her-s-why/> [Accessed 27/02/19/]

Huck, C.S, Hepler, S.I. and Hickman, J. 1989. *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*. New Jersey: Harcourt Jovanovich College Publishers.

Hudson, R.A. 1996. *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hudson-Weems, C. 2004. *Africana Womanist Literary Theory*. Asmara: Africa World Press.

Hudson-Weems, C. 2007 (ed.) *Contemporary Africana Theory, Thought and Action: A Guide to Africana Studies*. Asmara: Africa World Press, pp. 29-41.

Hunt, P. 1994. *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hyun, E. 1998. *Making sense of developmentally and culturally appropriate practice (DCAP) in Early Childhood Education*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

Idang, G.E. 2015. African Culture and Values. *Phronimon Volume 16 Number 2*. Pretoria: SciELO

*Indigenous Languages Infant [Early Childhood Development -Grade 2] Syllabus* Harare: CDU Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

*Indigenous Languages Junior [Grade 3-7] Syllabus* Harare: CDU Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

Jalil, F., Rozhin, G. and Katayoun, P.2015. The relationship between post-modern pedagogy and teacher reflection: A case of Iranian EFL Teachers. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research* Volume 2 Issue 4: 305-321

Jaworski, A. and Coupland, N. 1991. *The Discourse Reader*. London: Routledge

Jonassen, D. 1991. Evaluating Constructivist Learning in *Educational Technology Volume 36 Number 9* p. 28-33.

Jonassen, D.H. 1994. Thinking Technology: Towards a Constructivist Design Model. *Educational Technology Volume 34 Number 4* p.34-37.

Kadenge, M. and Nkomo, D. 2011. The Politics of English Language in Zimbabwe. *Language Matters* 42:2, pp248-263.

Kahari, L. 2014. Language Texting Patterns and Factors of Language Choice in Text Messaging of University of Zimbabwe Shona -English Bilinguals. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol 4 No 1* pp. 156-163.

Kaschula, R.H. 2001. *Oral Literature in Contemporary Contexts: Orality and Globalisation*. South Africa: New African Books.

Keller, R. 2013. *Doing Discourse Research: An Introduction for Social Scientists*. London:

Sage

King, K. and Mackey, A. 2007. *The Bilingual Edge: Why, When, and How to teach your child a Second Language*. New York: Collins.

King James Version, *The Holy Bible*, 1999. New York: American Bible Society

Kioko, A.N., Ndungu, R.W., Njoroge, M.C. and Mutiga, J. 2014. Mother tongue and education in Africa: Publicising the reality. *Multilingual Education Volume 4 Number 18* <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13616-014-0018-x>. [Accessed on 22/1/19]

Kothari, C.R. 2008. *Research Methodology*. New Age International Publishers.

Kothari, C.R. and Garg, G. 2014. *Research Methodology*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.

Kress, G. 1990. Critical discourse analysis. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. Vol.11. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.3-9, 11-13.

Kress, G. and Hodge, R. 1993. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. *Language as Ideology*. London: Routledge.

Kriz, W.C. 2010. A Systemic-Constructivist Approach to Facilitaion and Debriefing of Similations and Games. *Simulation and Gaming 41(5)* pp.663-680.

Krueger, R.A. 1994. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Kumar, R. 2014. *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Kumaravadivelu, B. 2006. *Understanding language teaching: From method to post method*. London: Routledge.

Kunnie, J. 2000. Developing Indigenous Knowledge and Technology in Africa and Diasporan Communities in Chiwome, E.M., Mguni, Z. and Furusa, M. *Indigenous Knowledge and Technology in African and Diasporan Communities* Harare: Southern African Association for Culture and Development Studies, pp 33-44.

Kvale, S.and Brinkmann, S. 2009. *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

- Lamott, A. 1994. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Chicago: Pantheon Books.
- Leketsa, M. 2013. Educating for Ubuntu/Botho: Lessons from Basotho Indigenous Education. *Open Journal of Philosophy Volume 3. Number 2*, pp.337-344.
- Llamas, C., Mullany, L. and Stockell, P. 2007. *The Routledge Companion to Linguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Madusise, S. 2010. Exploring the Potential of Using Basket and Mat Weaving in the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics. *Occasional Paper No. 64*. Cape Town: CASAS.
- Magwa, S. and Magwa, W. 2015. *A Guide to Conducting Research: A Student Handbook*. Singapore: Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.
- Mahundi, P. 2015. A Comparative Evaluation of Technical and Vocational Education in Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe: A Case of Manicaland Province. *Journal of Innovative Research and Development Volume 4 Issue 1* p.230-236.
- Makaudze, G. 2013. It still makes sense! *Shona ngano* (folktale) and the contemporary Zimbabwean socio-economic and cultural set up. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability Volume 2*, pp 521-529.
- Makina, B.2009. Rhythm, rhyme and songfulness: The role of Shona children's game songs in education. *Muziki 6: 1*, pp49-57.
- Malmkjaer, K. 2010. *The Routledge Linguistics Encyclopaedia*. London: Routledge.
- Mandova, E.and Chingombe, A. 2013. The Shona Proverb as an Expression of Unhu/Ubuntu. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development, Vol 2 No 1* pp100-107.
- Mann, S. J.2001. Alternative Perspectives on the Student Experience: alienation and engagement. *Studies in Higher Education, Volume 26 Issue 1*, pp.7-19.
- Mararike, C.G. 2012. Developing the whole person: Education based on concepts from culture. In Muwati, I., Mguni, Z., Gwekwerere, T. and Magosvongwe, R.(eds), *Re-discoursing African womanhood in search for sustainable Renaissance*. Harare: College Press. pp.8-16.

- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B.2010. *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Martin, E.2011. Introduction to Intertextuality. *Comparatist* 35, pp.148-151.
- Mascolo, M. F. and Fischer K. W. 2005. "Constructivist Theories." In *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Child Development*, edited by B. Hopkins, R. G. Barr, G. Michel, and P. Rochat, p.49–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mascovici, S. 1982. 'The coming era of representation' in J. P. Codol and J. P. Leyens (eds.) *Cognitive Analysis of Social Behaviour*. p.115-150. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Masolo, D. A. 2010. *elf and community in a changing world*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Masuku, J. and Ndawi, O. 2001. Incorporating local folklore into the school curriculum in Southern Africa. *Education as Change* 5(1), pp.85-103.
- Mawere, M. 2012. *The Struggle of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in an Age of Globalisation: A Case of Children's Games in South-Eastern Zimbabwe*. Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG.
- Mazama, A. 2001. The Afrocentric Paradigm: Contours and Definitions. *Journal of Black Studies* Volume 31 Number 4 p.387-405. London: SAGE
- Mazama, A. 2003. *The Afrocentric Paradigm*. Tenton: Africa World Press
- Mbiti, J.S.1990. *African Religions and Philosophy*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Mbiti, J.S. 1969. *African Religions and Philosophy*. New York: Doubleday.
- McLeod, S.2010. When Learning met memory. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology* Volume 64 Number 4 p.227-240
- Meckien, R. 2013. Cultural Memory: the link between past, present and future. At [www.iea.usp.br/en/news/cultural-memory-the-link-between-past-present-and-future/](http://www.iea.usp.br/en/news/cultural-memory-the-link-between-past-present-and-future/) (Accessed 1 August 2017).
- Meighan, R. and Harber, C. 2007. *Sociology of Education*. London: Continuum.
- Metz, T. 2009. The Final Ends of Higher Education in Light of an African Moral Theory.

*Journal of Philosophy of Education Vol 43: 2*, pp. 179-201.

Metz, T., and Gaie, J. B. R. 2010. The African ethic of Ubuntu/Botho: Implications for research on morality. *Journal of Moral Education*, 39, 273-290. doi:10.1080/03057240.2010.497609

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Mims, C. 2003. Authentic Learning: A Practical Introduction and Guide for Implementation. *Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal* 6 (1) pp.1-3.

Mirenayat, S.A. and Soofastaei, E. 2015. Gerard Genette and the Categorisation of Textual Transcendence. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences Vol 6 No 5* pp.533-536.

Mkabela, Q. 2005. Using the Afrocentric Method in Researching Indigenous African Culture. *The Qualitative Report* Volume 10 Number 1 pp178-189.

Mirambo, I. 2010. Oral Literature of the Sukuma, pp.113-122. Available at: <https://www.folklore.ee/vol26/mirambo.pdf> . Accessed 28/5/19.

Mohammed, Y. M. D. 2016. *The Constructivist Theory of Learning*. Cyberjaya: Multimedia University.

Mohan, K.2011. Cultural values and globalisation: India's dilemma. *Current Sociology Volume 59 Number 2*, pp.214-228.

Montessori, M.1970. *The Child in the Family*. The Clio Montessori Series Volume 8.

Moscovici, S. 1982. The coming era of social representations. In J.P. Codol and J.P. Leyens (eds.). *Cognitive approaches to social behaviour*. The Hague: Nijhoff.

Mosert, A. and Kaschula, R.H. 2010. The Role of Copyright, Copyleft and Open Source in Advancing Accessibility of Oral Literature. *Southern Africa Journal of Folklore Studies, Vol 20 (1)*, pp.64-84.

Mungoshi, C. 1975. *Ndiko Kupindana kwaMazuva*. Gwelo: Mambo Press

Mungoshi, C. 1983. *Kunyarara Hakusi Kutaura?* Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House

Mungoshi, C. 1989. *Stories from Shona Childhood*. Harare: Baobab Books.

- Mungoshi, C. 1991. *One Day Long Ago*. Harare: Baobab Books.
- Munjanja, A. 1974. *Tsumonamadimikira Volume 1*. Harare: Longman.
- Munjanja, A. 1986. *Tsumonefananidzo*. Harare: Longman.
- Munjanja, A. 1987. *Zvirahwe*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Muponde, R. 1999. *Children's Literature*. Harare: ZOU.
- Murphy, E. 1997. Constructivism: From philosophy to Practice. Eric. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED/> [Accessed: 22/2/2019].
- Mushenyyez, A. 2013. *Oral Literature for Children: Rethinking Orality, Literacy, Performance and Documentation Practices*. (Vol 154). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Mutasa, D.E., Nyota, S. and Mapara, J. 2008. Ngano: Teaching Environmental Education using Shona folktales. *The Journal of Pan African Studies Vol 2 No 3*, pp.33-54.
- Muwati, I., Tembo, C. and Mutasa, D.E. 2016. Children's Songs and Human Factor Development: A Comparative Analysis of Children's Songs and Imported English Nursery Rhymes. *South African Journal of African Languages NO 36 Volume 1* pp.56-66.
- Muwati, I. and Mutasa, D.E. 2008. An analysis of Selected Shona Children's Songs: Philosophical Perspectives on Child Development. *Muzik 5(1)* pp.1-10.
- Muzvidziwa, I. and Muzvidziwa, V.N.2012. Hunhu (Ubuntu) and Discipline in Africa. *Journal of Dharma Volume 37 Number 1*, pp.27-42.
- Mweli, P. 2018. Indigenous Stories and Games as Approaches to Teaching within the Classroom, in I. Eloff and Steward, E. *Understanding Psychology Part 3*. pp 94-101. Cape Town: Juta.
- Myers-Scotton, C. 2005. Uniform structure: Looking Beyond the surface in explaining codeswitching. *Rivista Linguistica Volume 17 Issue 1* pp. 15-34.
- Nandwa, J. and Bukenya, A. 1983. *African Oral Literature for Schools*. Nairobi: Longman.
- Ndyanda, C., Makoni R.D., Mudukuti, A. and Kuyayama, A. 2005. *Evaluation of National ECD Programme*. New York: UNICEF.

- Ndolerire, O. K. 2005. Language culture and development in *Educamate: Faculty of Education Journal KYU Vol No1*, Makerere University.
- Ngara, E. 1990. *Art and Ideology in the African Novel. A Study of the Influence of Marxism on African Writing*. London: Heinemann.
- Ngugi waThiongo. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind*. Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Nulty, D.D. 2008. Assessment and Evaluation. *Higher Education Volume 33 No 3* pp.301-314.
- Nussbaum, B. 2003. Ubuntu Reflections of a South African on our common humanity. *Reflections 4* pp.21-26.
- Nyaungwa, O. 2008. *Folktale Influence on the Shona Novel*. M.A Dissertation. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Nyoni, M .2011. *Literary Criticism in an African Context: A Compendium*. Saarburucken: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Nyoni, T, Nyota, S. and Zivenge, W. 2013. *Tsika naMagariro eVaShona muNhetembo ne Nzinyo*. Pretoria: Simbaguru Publisher.
- Nyoni, T. & Nyoni, M. 2013. The Form and Content of Children's Poetry and Games on a Kaleidoscopic Cultural Terrain. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* Volume 3 Number 2, pp. 233-243.
- Nyoni, T.and Nyoni, M. 2012. Gender de-stereotyping in early childhood development or shrewd opportunism? A case of male students at Masvingo Teachers' College, Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Education Administration and Policy Studies* Vol. 4(9), pp. 181-187.
- Nyoni, T.and Nyoni, M. 2010. The Culture Hut Concept: A CASE OF Danda and Chimedza Schools in Zaka District. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, Volume 12 No 1*, pp.146-159.
- Nyota, S. and Mapara, J. 2008. Shona Traditional Children's Games and Play: Indigenous Ways of Knowing. *Journal of PAN-African Studies*, Vol.2 Number 4, June: 189-200
- Nziramasanga, C. 1999. *Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training*. Harare: Government Printers.



- Odumos, M.O., Olisama, O.V. and Areelu, F. 2018. Teachers' Content and Pedagogical Knowledge on Students' Performance in Algebra. *International Journal of Education and Research Vol 6 No 3* pp.83-94.
- Okumba, M.S. 1994. *Encounter with Oral Literature*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Olajide, S.B. 2010. Folklore and Culture as Literacy Resources for National Emancipation. *International Education Studies Volume 3 Number 2*. pp 200-2005.
- O'Leary, Z. 2014. *The essential guide to doing your research project* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Olowoyeye, C, Abioye, C. and Alonge, S. 2014. Impact of Teachers' Subject Mastery and Questioning Behaviour on Students' Performance in English Language in Selected Schools in Ikere Metropolis. *Research and Humanities Vol 4 No 14*. pp.127 -131.
- Olusegun, B. S. 2015. Constructivism Learning Theory: A Paradigm for Teaching and Learning. *Journal of Research and Method in Education*. Volume 5 Issue 6 pp. 66-70.
- Osemeobo, G.J. 1994. The role of folklore in environmental conservation: Evidence from Edo State Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and World Ecology, Volume 1 Number 1*, pp.48-55.
- Palys, T. 2008. Purposive Sampling in L.M. Given (Ed) *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research* p.697-698. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Patton, M.Q.1980. *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills CA: SAGE.
- Patton, M.Q. 2002. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Patton, M.Q. 2014. *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Pepicello, W.J. and Green, T.A.1978. *The Language of Riddles: New Perspective*. Columbus: Ohio State University.
- Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. 1969. *The Psychology of the Child*. New York: NY Basic Books.
- Piaget, J. 1962. *Play, Dreams and Imitation*. New York: W.W. Norton co.

- Pikirayi, I. 2000 The Contribution of the Indigenous Technological Base in the Transformation of African Communities in the Zimbabwean Plateau During the First and Second Millennium AD IN Chiwome, E.M., Mguni, Z. and Furusa, M. *Indigenous Knowledge and Technology in African and Diasporan Communities* Harare: Southern African Association for Culture and Development Studies pp 45-49
- Poplack, S. 1988. Contrasting Patterns of Code Switching in Two Communities, in Heller, M. (Ed) *Code Switching: Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Berlin: Mount de Gruyter.
- Punch, K.F. 2005. *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Purkhardt, S.C. 1993. *Transforming Social Representations: A Social Psychology of Common Sense and Science*. London: Psychology Press.
- Race, P. 2007. *The Lecturer's Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Assessment, Learning and Teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Raj, P.P.E. 2015. Interrogating Julia Kristeva's Concept of Intertextuality. *Ars Artium*, pp.77-78.
- Reece, I. and Walker, S. 2003. *Teaching, Training and Learning: A Practical Guide Incorporating FENTO Standards*. Sunderland: Business Education Publishers Ltd
- Rieber, L.P. 1996. Seriously considering play: Designing interactive learning environments based on blending of micro worlds, simulations and games. *Educational Technology Volume 44 Number 2* p.43-58
- Rieber, L.P. 2004. Microworlds in D.H. Jonassen (ed), *Handbook of Research on educational communications and technology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, pp.583-604). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rowley, J. 2012. Conducting Research Interviews. *Management Research Review Volume 35 Issue 3/4* p.260-271.
- Rudman, M.K. 1984. *Children's Literature: An Issues Approach*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) New York: Longman.

Rueben, B.D. 1999. Simulations, Games, and Experience-Based Learning, The Quest for a New Paradigm for Teaching and Learning *Simulation and Gaming Vol 30 No 4* pp.498-505.

Salami, I.A. and Oyeremi, M.K. 2012. Teachers' knowledge, use, and perception of the relevance of Yoruba indigenous child's play to pre-primary and primary schools in Nigeria. *Education Research Journal 2(5)*, pp.146-155.

Samkange, W. and Samkange, C. 2013. Philosophies and Perspectives in Education: Examining their Roles and Relevance in Education. *Greener Journal of Educational Research, Volume 3 Number 10* p454-461.

Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2012 *Research Methods for Business Students*. London: Prentice Hall.

Sayre, S. 2001 *Qualitative Methods for Marketplace Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Sheyholislami, J. 2017 Critical Discourse Analysis. At <http://www.carleton.ca/jsheyhol/cda.htm>.

Shitemi, N. 2009. Discourse on Semiotic and Functional Perspective of Narratology. *The Journal of Pan African Studies Vol2, No 8*, pp.78-108.

Shizha, E. 2013. Reclaiming our voices: The problem with post-colonial theory in Sub-Saharan African school curriculum. *Journal of Indigenous Social Development Volume 2 Number 1*, pp.1-18.

Shizha, E. 2006. Legitimizing indigenous knowledge in Zimbabwe: A theoretical analysis of post-colonial and school knowledge and its cultural knowledge. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education Volume 1 Number 1*, pp.20-35.

Sifina, D.N. 2008. Wither African Indigenous Knowledge? The Case of Primary Knowledge in Africa From Colonialism to Globalisation. *Trans Nr 17*.

Sillitoe, P. 1998. What, know natives? Local knowledge in development. *Social Anthropology Volume 6(2)* pp.203-220.

Silverman, D. and Marvasti, A. 2008. *Qualitative Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Simandan, V.M. 2010. 'An Introduction to Intertextuality'. Available at:

[www.simandan.com/?=1650](http://www.simandan.com/?=1650) [Accessed 23/09/13]

Singer, D.G., Golinkoff, M.R. and Sharp, H.R. 2006. *Play = Learning: How Play Motivates Children's Cognitive and Social Emotional Growth*. USA: Oxford University Press.

Snowman, J., McCown, R.R. and Biehler, R.F. 2009. *Psychology Applied to Teaching*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Soni, K. 2007. *Indigenous Knowledge and Importance*. Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management.

Stewart, D.W., Shamdasani, P.N. and Rock, D.W. 2007. *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Stubbs, M. 1983. *Discourse Analysis: The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Sure, K. and Webb, V. 2000. Languages in Competition in V. Webb and K. Sure (eds) *African Voices*, pp286-311. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tatira, L.2005. Shona Folktales: Towards a Developmental Interpretation. *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies*, Vol 15 (1) pp.34-43.

Tatira, L. 2014. Traditional Games of Shona Children. *Journal of Pan-African Studies* Volume 7 Issue 4: pp.156-174.

Tembo, C. 2012. *Post-Independence Shona Poetry, The Quest and Struggle for Total Liberation*. Doctor of Literature and Philosophy Thesis. Department of African Languages: University of South Africa.

Thompson, M.D., Meldrum, K. and Sellwood, J. 2014. "... it is not just a game". Connecting with Culture through Traditional Indigenous Games. *American Journal of Educational Research*, Vol 2, No 11, pp.1015-1022.

Umar, F. 2012. *Ideological foundations of education*. Available at: [www.studylecturenotes.com/social-sciences/education/344-ideological-foundation-of-education](http://www.studylecturenotes.com/social-sciences/education/344-ideological-foundation-of-education). [Accessed: 14/11/17]

UNESCO 1953. The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education. *Monographs on Foundations of Education* NO 8. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO 2008a. *Mother Tongue Matters: Local Language as a Key to Effective Learning*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO 2008b. *Mother Tongue Instruction in Early Childhood Education: A Selected Bibliography*. Paris: UNESCO.

Van Dijk, T. 2007. Comments on Context and Conversation. In Fairclough, N., Cortese, G. and Ardizzone, P. (eds) *Discourse and Contemporary Social Change*. Bern: Peter Lang. pp. 281-316.

Vaughn, S., Schumm, J.M. and Sinagub, J. 1996. *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Verenikina, I. 2008. Scaffolding and learning: its role in nurturing new learners, in Kell, P., Vialle, W., Konza, D. and Vogl, G. (eds) *Learning and the learner: exploring learning for new times*. Sydney: University of Wollongong. pp.161-180.

Vygotsky, L.S. 1978. *Mind in Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. 1967. Play and Its Role in the Mental Development of the Child. *Soviet Psychology Vol.5*, pp.6-18.

Wayne, A.J. and Youngs, P. 2003. Teacher Characteristics and Achievement Gains: A Review. *Review of Educational Research Vol 73 No 1*, pp 89-122.

Wodak, R. 2009. Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory and Methodology in R. Wodak and M. Meyers (eds.) *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis* p.1-33. London: SAGE

Wodak, R. 2013. *Critical Discourse Analysis Volume 1: Concepts, History, Theory*. London: SAGE.

Wodak, R. and Ludwig, Ch. (eds.) 1999. *Challenges in a Changing World: Issues in Critical Discourse Analysis*. Vienna: Passagenverlag.

ZimStat 2017. *Inter Censal Demography Survey Report*. Harare: Government Printers.

## **WEBSITES**

<https://www.everydayfamily.com.baby-names/name/Febby/>

<https://goodriddlesnow.com/whai-am-i-riddles/>

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I: PERMISSION LETTERS

### A) Researcher's Letter Ministry-Provincial Education Director

CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS 0053



Robert Mugabe School of Education and Culture  
Department of Teacher Development  
P. O. Box 1235  
Great Zimbabwe University  
**MASVINGO**  
Tel: +263 39 263328

Off Great Zimbabwe Road  
**MASVINGO, ZIMBABWE**  
email-information @gzu.ac.zw

---

### GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

---

20 July 2017

The Provincial Education Director  
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.  
Box 89  
Masvingo

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO GATHER DATA IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN MASVINGO DISTRICT**

I, Tsitsi Nyoni (STD NO:53381289) am doing research with Mutasa, D.E. a Professor, in the Department of African Languages towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. I am conducting a study entitled '*A Sociolinguistic Exploration of the Pedagogical Value of Children's Oral Art Forms on a Kaleidoscopic Terrain: A Case of Shona*'. The study is in fulfilment of my doctoral thesis as required by the College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa (UNISA).

The aim of the study is to analyze children's oral art forms in Shona and explore their pedagogical value of on a changing terrain. This information could help improve teaching and learning at pre- and primary school level by linking pedagogy to indigenous knowledge. It seeks to show the importance of using children's oral art forms in improving cognition and conceptualization of concepts across the curriculum at primary school level.

There are no potential risks that are likely to be encountered by the participants taking part in this research.

I write to request for permission to gather data in selected pre- and primary schools in Masvingo District namely:

- 1.Urban: Runyararo Primary School  
Vurombo Primary School  
Victoria Junior Primary



Robert Mugabe School of Education and Culture  
Department of Teacher Development  
P. O. Box 1235  
Great Zimbabwe University  
**MASVINGO**  
Tel: +263 39 263328

Off Great Zimbabwe Road  
**MASVINGO, ZIMBABWE**  
email-information @gzu.ac.zw

---

## GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

---

Don Bosco Primary School

2. Peri-urban: Coronation Primary School  
Nyanda Primary School  
Sikato Primary School  
Gwengavi Primary School

3. Rural: Danda Primary School  
Masvingise Primary School  
Mundondo Primary School  
Chimedza Primary School.

4. Rural Resettlement: Hwendedzo Primary School  
Badza Primary School  
Zishumbe Primary School  
Beza Primary School

These schools have been selected because they fall within the four settings selected for this research. That is urban, peri- urban, rural and rural resettlement.

I hope my request will be considered.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Tsitsi Nyoni'.

Tsitsi Nyoni  
Principal Researcher



## B) Provincial Education Director (Masvingo)'s Letter to Permanent Secretary

All communications should be addressed to  
"The Provincial Education Director for Primary and  
Secondary Education"  
Telephone: 263589/264331  
Fax: 039-263261



Ref: C/440/1

Ministry of Primary and Secondary  
Education  
P.O. Box 89  
Masvingo

10 September 2018.

The Secretary  
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

Attention: Director Policy Planning Research and Statistics

**RE: SEEKING PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT AN EDUCATIONAL  
RESEARCH AT RUNYARARO, VUROMBO, VICTORIA JUNIOR, DON BOSCO,  
CORONATION, NYANDA, SIKATO, GWENGAVI, DANDA, MASVINGISE,  
MUNDONDO, CHINEDZA, HWENDEDO, BADZA, ZISHUMBE AND BEZA  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS: MASVINGO DISTRICT.**

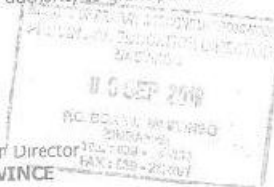
The above matter refers.

Tsitsi Nyoni, a lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University is seeking permission to  
carry out research at the above mentioned schools in Masvingo District on,

**"A SOCIOLINGUISTIC EXPLORATION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF  
CHILDREN'S ORAL ART FORMS ON A KALEIDOSCPIC TERRAIN: A  
CASE OF SHONA."**

This is in fulfillment of her PhD Studies with the University of South Africa.  
Attached please find the applicant's letter, research instruments and a copy of  
the student's I.D. The application is supported since it meets the minimum  
requirements. Your authority to grant permission is therefore sought.

  
Z. M. Chitiga  
Provincial Education Director  
MASVINGO PROVINCE



### C) Permission Letter from Permanent Secretary

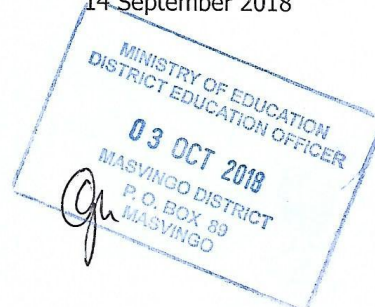
All communications should be addressed to  
"The Secretary for Primary & Secondary  
Education  
Telephone: 732006  
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"  
Fax:794505



**REFERENCE:** C/426/3/Masvingo  
Ministry of Primary and  
Secondary Education  
P.O Box CY 121  
Causeway  
**HARARE**

14 September 2018

Tsitsi Nyoni  
Great Zimbabwe University  
Robert Mugabe School of Education  
Department of Teacher Development  
P O Box 1235  
Masvingo



Re: **PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE: MASVINGO DISTRICT: RUNYARARO; VUROMBO; VICTORIA JUNIOR; DON BOSCO; CORONATION; NYANDA; SIKATO; GWENGAVI; DANDA; MASVINGISE; MUNDONDO; CHIMEDZA; HWENDEZDO; BADZA; ZISHUMBE AND BEZA PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

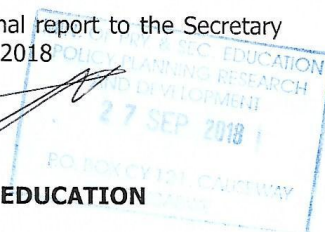
Reference is made to your application to carry out a research at the above mentioned schools in Masvingo Province on the title:

**"A SOCIOLINGUISTIC EXPLORATION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF CHILDREN'S ORAL ARTS FORMS ON A KALEIDOSCOPIIC TERRAIN: A CASE OF SHONA"**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Masvingo Province who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the school. Where students are involved, parental consent is required.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education by December 2018

Dr. S. J. Utete-Masango  
**SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**  
Cc: P.E.D - Masvingo Province



## D) Permission Letter to School Heads from Provincial Education Director

*ALL communications should be addressed to "The Provincial Education Director for Primary and Secondary Education"*  
**Telephone: 263585/264331**  
**Fax: 039-263261**



Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education  
P. O Box 89  
Masvingo

03 October 2018

Tsitsi Nyoni  
Great Zimbabwe University  
Robert Mugabe School of Education  
Department of Teacher Development  
P. O. Box 1235  
Masvingo

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE: MASVINGO DISTRICT: RUNYARARO; VUROMBO; VICTORIA JUNIOR; DON BOSCO; CORONATION; NYANDA; SIKATO; GWENGAVI; DANDA; MASVINGISE; MUNDONDO; CHIMEDZA; HWENDEZDO; BADZA; ZISHUMBE AND BEZA PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

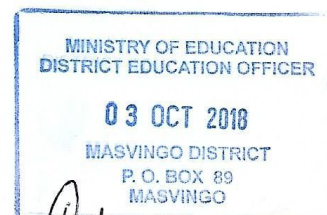
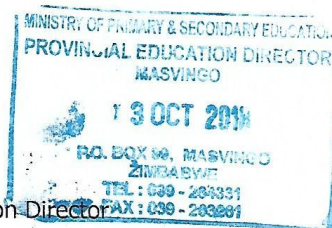
Reference is made to your application to carry out a research at the above mentioned schools in Masvingo District on the research title:

**"A SOCIOLINGUISTIC EXPLORATION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF CHILDREN'S ORAL ARTS FORMS ON A KALEIDOSCOPIIC TERRAIN: A CASE OF SHONA."**

Please be advised that the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education has granted permission to carry out your research.

You are also advised to liaise with the District Schools Inspector who is responsible for the schools which are part of the sample for your research.

  
Z/ M. Chitiga  
Provincial Education Director  
**MASVINGO PROVINCE**



## **E) Participant Consent Letter**

**CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS 0053**

Title: A Sociolinguistic Exploration of the Pedagogical Value of Children's Oral Art Forms on a Kaleidoscopic Terrain: A Case of Shona

### **Dear Prospective Participant**

My name is Tsitsi Nyoni (STD NO:53381289) and I am doing research with Mutasa, D.E. a Professor, in the Department of African Languages towards a PhD at the University of South Africa.

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could help improve teaching and learning at pre-, and primary school levels by linking pedagogy to indigenous knowledge. It will help in adding new knowledge to the area of classroom pedagogy in that it seeks to show the importance of using children's oral art forms in improving cognition and conceptualization of issues by highlighting areas of co-existence between the literary and oral forms. There is also a possibility of coming up with children's readers that capture some of the oral art forms as children's literature thus increasing children's literary heritage in Shona.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are being chosen to participate in this study because you teach pupils at the level that the research targets. Having sought permission from the Ministry to work within sixteen purposively sampled schools, I was then given permission by the Heads of the schools to choose the grades and teachers I wanted to work with in the study. Thus, your school being among these, you were then randomly selected from your school, by being a teacher of the level the study is interested in. Hence you also became a possible participant.

### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

In this study, you will be required to fill in a questionnaire which will take you about 15-20 minutes. At some point during the study, you will also be interviewed. The interview will take approximately between 30-45 minutes. The interview will be audio taped for later transcription by the researcher. The questions will focus mainly on Shona children's oral art

forms and their importance to teaching and learning at pre-and primary school level. Some questions will require examples of these and illustrations of which aspects they are relevant for teaching and learning across the curriculum at pre-, and primary school.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason that is if you have not filled in a questionnaire, but if you have filled in a questionnaire you will not be able to withdraw once you have submitted it since you might be required for an interview as a follow up.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There are potential benefits for you as a practitioner if you take part in this research. Firstly, you will gain insights into how children's oral art forms can be used as a springboard for teaching and learning at pre- and primary school level. If you already were infusing these into your teaching, then your participation will broaden and enrich your practice as we tease out various issues pertaining to their pedagogical value at pre- and primary school level. Another benefit is that you can also learn of new children's oral art forms that may be of benefit to your teaching. It might also trigger interest in you to explore further other aspects of children's oral art forms as potential tools for teaching and learning.

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

There are no negative consequences for you if you participate in this research. The only inconvenience that you may encounter is adjustment of your timetable (if need be) to accommodate the researcher's interview schedule.

### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Confidentiality will be ensured through recording of data anonymously during interviews. Your name will not be recorded anywhere. Codes will be used in the categorization of data hence no names will be used in the final research report or in any publications or presentations emanating from this study.

However, where data gathered in this research has been used for publication of journal articles or papers to be presented at conferences, privacy will still be maintained in the same manner as was during the research and research write up process.

### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

The researcher will store hard copies of your answers for a period of five years in a locked cupboard in her home library for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. If any information must be destroyed, then hard copies will be burnt, and electronic copies will be permanently deleted.

### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

No payment or reward is offered, financial or otherwise as no costs will be incurred by you the participant since you will not be required to travel but will be interviewed on site (at your school).

### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of The College of Human Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact: Tsitsi Nyoni at +263 773 904 765; Email: [tsinyoni@gmail.com](mailto:tsinyoni@gmail.com).

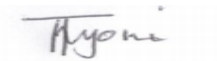
Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact researcher's promoter Professor Davie, E. Mutasa +27 72 076 0843; Email: mutasde@unisa.ac.za

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Davie, E. Mutasa +27 72 076 0843; Email: mutasde@unisa.ac.za

Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson of the <insert name of the committee, the name of the research ethics chairperson and contact details here, including email, internal phone number and fax number>

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



Tsitsi Nyoni

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname..... (please print)

Researcher's signature..... Date.....



## **F) Request for Permission from A Parent/Legal Guardian and Child Assent Form**

**CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS 0053**

**Principal Investigator:** Nyoni Tsitsi

**Topic of study:** A Sociolinguistic Exploration of the Pedagogical Value of Children's Oral Art Forms on a Kaleidoscopic Terrain: A Case of Shona

**Dear Parent/legal guardian**

I am conducting a study which explores the pedagogic value of children's oral art forms on a changing terrain. The data will be gathered from selected schools in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe. The study is in fulfilment of my doctoral thesis as required by the College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa (UNISA). I wish to work alongside teachers and learners to be able to gather the oral art forms whose pedagogical value at pre-and primary school levels is to be explored. As your child/dependent is a minor, you as a parent/legal guardian, are kindly requested to provide permission for your child to participate in this research.

I would like to conduct a focus group interview with your child and others (about 45 minutes). I don't intend to disturb lessons. The audio-recorded focus group interview will be conducted at the school during lunch. Participation in this study is voluntary and the participants can withdraw from the research at any time at no cost. All issues of confidentiality will be adhered to. The data gathered in this study will be used only for research purposes. Anonymity will be guaranteed as the identity of your child will not be disclosed. The research will comply with the research ethics as approved by the University of South Africa.

For more details please contact: Tsitsi Nyoni at +263 773 904 765; Email: [tsinyoni@gmail.com](mailto:tsinyoni@gmail.com) or the researcher's promoter Professor Davie, E. Mutasa +27 72 076 0843; Email: [mutasde@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mutasde@unisa.ac.za)

**Parent/guardian's confirmation and signature**

If you would like your child to take part in this research, please sign below as a way of giving consent.

Name of the learner  
(pseudonym).....Grade:.....

Signature of Parent/guardian: ..... Date: .....

Signature of Investigator: ..... Date: .....

### **Child Assent Form**

**CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS OO53**

**Person carrying out the study:** Tsitsi Nyoni

#### **Reason for the study**

I am a student with UNISA doing a study. The reason for the study is to check the importance of the games you play and songs/ rhymes you recite to your learning. You will also be asked questions on the role of riddles and folktales in your learning. In the end, the study will show the value of these to your learning.

#### **Method**

You will be grouped with others in your Grade and the person carrying out this study will ask you to answer questions for about 45 minutes. No one else will know about your names and answers you give to the questions.

#### **Possible risks and discomforts**

Nothing bad will happen if you take part in this study. However, some of you may not like having their lunch disturbed. So, you will be allowed to have your lunch during the first fifteen minutes after which we will start our interview. Other learners may give negative comments about your answers during the interview, however, the person carrying out this study will make it a point that comments that may harm you or a group to which you belong are not given.

#### **Benefits to learners**

As a learner, you will enjoy taking part in this study which is designed to make you talk about the various oral art forms that you know. By taking part in this study, you will gain the courage to answer questions. You will also have the opportunity to recite some rhymes and

game songs with others among other children's oral art forms that we will talk about. Besides that, the study will help you respect the views of others and co-operate with them. In addition, you will benefit later when the results of this study are used to help your teachers teach you better and make your learning enjoyable.

**The role of the parent/legal guardians**

Your parent/guardian has been asked on your behalf by the person carrying out this study to allow you to take part. You are free to pull out of the study anytime even if your parent/guardian has allowed you to take part. Your parent/legal guardian will receive a copy of the signed assent form. After reading this form carefully, talk to your parent/guardian about this study. Tell your parent/guardian if you want to take part in the study or not. This should be done before you sign that you have freely chosen to take part in this study.

**Invitation to ask questions and choice to take part in the study**

I kindly invite you to take part in this study. If you are willing to take part in the study, you can show by signing this form in the spaces given below. You are free to ask questions about things that are not clear to you in this study.

**Contact details**

For more details please contact: Tsitsi Nyoni at +263 773 904 765; Email: [tsinyoni@gmail.com](mailto:tsinyoni@gmail.com) or the researcher's promoter Professor Davie, E. Mutasa +27720760843; Email: [mutasde@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mutasde@unisa.ac.za)

**Assent to take part in the study**


I have read and understood what the study is about. I therefore agree to take part freely in this study.

Signature of the learner: .....

Date: .....

Signature of the person carrying out this study:      Date: .....

## APPENDIX II: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM UNISA COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE



**COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

02 November 2018

Dear Nyoni Tsitsi

**Decision:**  
Ethics Approval from 02 November  
2018 to 01 November 2021

NHREC Registration # : Rec-240818-052  
CREC Reference # : 2018-CHS-0053  
Name Nyoni Tsitsi  
Student # : 53381289

**Researcher(s):** Nyoni Tsitsi

**Supervisor(s)** Prof D.E Mutasa  
Department of African Languages,  
UNISA


Prof. C. D. Ntuli  
African Languages,  
UNISA

A Sociolinguistic Exploration of the Pedagogical Value of Children's Oral Art Forms on a Kaleidoscopic Terrain: A Case of Shona.

**Qualification:** PHD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The medium *risk application* was reviewed **and expedited** by the Chair of College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee on the 05 November 2018 in compliance with the Unisa

  
University of South Africa  
Pretter Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Johannesburg  
PO Box 392, UNISA, 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za

## Appendix III QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS 0053

My name is Tsitsi Nyoni (STD NO: 53381289), a PhD student with the University of South Africa. I am carrying out research on the topic, 'A Sociolinguistic Exploration of the Pedagogical Value of Children's Oral Art Forms on a Kaleidoscopic Terrain: A Case of Shona.' Hence, I kindly ask you to fill in this questionnaire. Your contribution will be treated with the strictest confidence and all information will be used for research purposes only. The study will make no reference to participants' names. The study will observe high standards of ethical conduct. Your right to privacy in the study will be protected. Your participation is voluntary since you had the opportunity to sign the consent form.

Thank you for your contributions.

### SECTION A

Indicate (X) the box that represents the correct information about yourself.

#### 1. Age

20 – 25

26 – 30

31 – 35

36 – 40

41+

#### 2. Sex

Male

Female

#### 3. Qualifications

'O' level

'A' level

Certificate in Education

Diploma in Education

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Other  
Specify.....  
.....

**4. Teaching Experience**

0 – 5

6 – 10

11- 15

16 – 20

21 – 25

**5. State Level/Grade Taught:** .....

**SECTION B**

**Key**

**SA Strongly Agreed**

**A Agree**

**D Disagree**

**SD Strongly Disagree**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NOT SURE</b>
1.Children's oral art forms in Shona are useful tools for teaching and learning across the curriculum at pre-, and primary levels.					
2. Teachers should infuse children's oral art forms in their classroom interactions.					
3. There is nothing beneficial for learners					

from Shona children's oral art forms.					
4. Children's oral art forms are simply play and only function as gap fillers during teaching.					
5. English rhymes and games are better than Shona ones.					
6. Teachers should teach and encourage their learners to perform Shona children's oral art forms.					
7. There are a lot of cultural values and norms that learners get from performing Shona children's oral art forms.					
8. I have heard learners perform Shona rhymes and games during break.					
9. These children's oral art forms are only relevant for some subjects not all					
10. Shona children's oral art forms are no longer relevant in the advent of technology					

**SECTION C**

1. What is your understanding of children's oral art forms in Shona?

-----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----

2. Give the different types that you know and give examples of each.

-----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----

3. Indicate where and how often you have your learners perform them during your classroom interactions.

-----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----

4. Are these Shona children's oral art forms of any relevance to your teaching? Indicate where and when?-----

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

5. Indicate the curriculum areas or concepts for which you find them relevant-----

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

6. List in order of preference the language you would rather have your learners perform these. Why?-----

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

7. Which do you find more relevant to your teaching, Shona or English oral art forms? Why?-----

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

8. Write down the cultural values that you know are embedded in Shona children's oral art forms.-----

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----



-----  
-----  
9. Write skills that learners gain from performing the oral art forms.-----

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

10. Give two examples of each of the following:

a) riddles -----  
-----  
-----

b) game songs-----  
-----

c) folktales (titles only)  
-----  
-----

d) rhymes/lullabies-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

11. Note down any other benefits of children's oral art forms for pre- and primary school learners.-----

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

Thank you.

## **APPENDIX IV INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

### **CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS 0053**

- 1) What is your understanding of children's oral art forms in Shona? Can you give examples?
- 2) How often do your learners perform these, where and when?
- 3) Do you see any importance in these children's performances?
- 4) Are they of any relevance to your teaching? If so for which curriculum areas?
- 5) Which children's oral art forms do you find more useful; those performed in Shona or those performed in other languages such as English?
- 6) In which language, would you rather have the learners perform these oral art forms?
- 7) Can you comment on the children's oral art forms in terms of form and content in relation to the contemporary set up?
- 8) Are there any cultural norms and values that you see in these children's oral art forms?
- 9) Do you see any threats to these children's oral art forms?
- 10) Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding Shona children's oral art forms?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## **APPENDIX V FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS**

**CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS 0053**

- 1) Can you recite any Shona game-songs and rhymes that you know?
- 2) Are there any songs that you have composed yourselves? Give examples.
- 3) Where do you play those games more, at home or school? Why?
- 4) Choose the most interesting game for you and tell us why that is the case?
- 5) Do you know the game of riddling and any Shona riddles? Give examples
- 6) What do you learn from the riddles you play?
- 7) Do you do story-telling at times? Can you tell me what you have learnt from them?
- 8) Do you think these children's oral art forms help you in life? How?
- 9) Do your teachers ask you to do any of the above during your learning?
- 10) For which subjects, do you normally have those games?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## APPENDIX VI OBSERVATION GUIDE

CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS 0053

ASPECT	COMMENTS
Type of oral art form	
Language of performance	
Manner of performance	
Images/Themes in content	
Teacher/Learner initiated	