

Cultural and social uses of orality and functional literacy: A narrative approach

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Lesotho's educational system and development are largely influenced by missionaries and colonisers who taught the three 'Rs' (reading, writing and numeracy skills) to the Basotho. Most of those enlightened Basotho were to carry on the duties of either educating others or as missionary workers. Some became clerks, interpreters, police officers, nurses and Sunday school teachers. This article is an account of a functionally literate Mosotho male adult learner who was herding livestock and taught himself reading and writing skills. In his narrative, Hlalefang (not his real name) compares literacy to money and a watch or a clock. He further expresses how people like him have managed to muster some basic and restructure the cognitive and oral history and archival memories, through intuitiveness. The story is based on the work of Paulo Freire where culture influences the discourse of literacy. A qualitative narrative story-telling approach was used to relate Hlalefang's lived-experiences as he navigated his ways and challenges using orality acquired through various life encounters. This inspirational cultural narrative demonstrates that culture and social uses are imperatives in functional literacy. The article challenges those in adult education, literacy, development practitioners and policy-makers to consider some aspects of culture and to be innovative in their approaches to multi-literacies.

Introduction

Lesotho is a landlocked and mountainous country completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. Studies show that 90% of the total area of Lesotho's 30 350 km is only suitable for ruminant grazing (Zvomuya 2013). Livestock management plays a critical role in the development of the mountainous areas of the country. Livestock development in the mountainous areas was predominantly mounted on the premise that the extensive range and livestock population represented by far the greatest potential asset to be developed generally. Given the scarcity of arable land and other means of economic production, the majority of Basotho depend on livestock as a source of income, with 86% depending on subsistence farming, including livestock (Setoi 2012:8). However, with the advent of the South African mining industry, Lesotho's economy came to depend heavily on South Africa, with migrant labour remittances becoming a major source of revenue for the country.

Because of its topographical landscape, the country experiences severe cold winters with the highlands and foothills experiencing snowfalls and freezing temperatures sometimes dropping below zero degrees Celsius. It is during the four winter months' period of May to August when the grass is dry and scarce in the lowlands, that livestock is driven to the uninhabited mountainous parts of the country for livestock management. The Lesotho Disaster Management Authority (DMA 2002), reported that every year at least 5–20 herd-boys die from being snow-trapped in the mountains, sometimes alone.

The Social Uses of Literacy (SOUL) research conducted in the 1990s emphasised the importance of secondary orality as a social practice in people's understanding of what they do, the values they attach to their actions, and the ideologies and practices in their everyday lives (Prinsloo & Breier 1996). One way of looking at the process is the secondary orality which refers to writing and its social function of orality (Ong 1982). This article sought to highlight the cultural influence of livestock management and development in the context of literacy – reading, numeracy and counting, and how many Basotho men have benefited using livestock as part of their residual oral literacies and social uses to develop writing and reading skills.

Based on Paulo Freire's literacy work in Latin America, the narrative relates the practical, critical and reflective knowledge where Hlalefang's beliefs and cultural practices were shaped into

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knowledge through critical reflection and indigenous knowledge systems (Freire & Macedo 2013). The article challenges literacy researchers, educators, and practitioners to recognise and acknowledge the contribution of indigenous, cultural and traditional models and views where they best promote the functionality of literacy and development of rural African societies. Literacy is power and has the ability to order social processes consciously and unconsciously socially, economically and politically. The article concludes with challenging Africans, that while literacy discourse has evolved due to social changes, the indigenised primary literacies – which refers to primary orality and indigenous and to residual orality and literacies, is an interface between spoken (social usage of literacy) or literacy.

Background

The country has ten administrative districts, and three distinct geographical and climatic regions; the lowlands, foothills, and highlands. With the mountain terrain and the effects of climate change, uncontrolled overgrazing and desertification and soil erosion, the country is experiencing a gradual decrease in livestock. The 'formal education system in Lesotho follows a 7-3-2-4 structure with seven years of primary schooling, which is divided into lower primary (Standards 1–4) and upper primary (Standards 5–7)'. The author further observes that schooling is not compulsory particularly in the highlands and foothills where the difficult terrain presents a serious challenge for the provision of infrastructure, including for education (Setoi 2012:6). In Lesotho, herders and domestic workers are classified as non-participants in literacy matters. They fail to participate in the schooling system for various reasons, like 'living in the most remote and mountainous regions of the country; culturally, herding is seen as an important domestic function and a rite of passage to adulthood and also because poverty often necessitates families hiring out herders for income generation and the mismatch between the formal school system and their needs but as their age and literacy needs are not comparable with the standard participation age'. Mohasi (2006) is cited in United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Commission Lesotho (2008:14) stating that in Lesotho, herders and domestic workers are classified as non-participants in literacy matters. It is this situation that necessitated the need to revisit this situation.

Lesotho has adopted the universal definition of literacy which says 'A person is a literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life'. A person is 'a functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development' (UNESCO Commission Lesotho 2008:26). The commission further put emphasis that all literacy programmes on functional literacy should promote the use of locally available resources for income generation purposes.

Unlike many developing countries, there is a notable demographic of higher illiteracy rate of 17% for males comparable to only 5% for females. Many studies attribute this to the cultural practice where males in the foothills and highlands herd livestock while girls attend school. The migrant labour issue also contributes to the plight of boys after herding livestock; they go to the mines leaving the women at home to run the household. This has largely been influenced by this traditional practice where males herd livestock from a very tender age, after which they leave for the mines in South Africa (Government of Lesotho 2015). Lephoto (n.d.) refers to the distance education institutions in Lesotho and observes that the student body of these institutions consists mainly of adult women who drop out from the formal institutions, with an average age of 30. However, she further notes that the distance education institution, the clientele of the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centres (LDTC) comprises herd-boys and the rural populace who need literacy and occupational skills to improve their lives. Nevertheless, Setoi's (2012) contestation of this long-lived notion about literacy and education statistics in Lesotho reveals that participation and enrolment in literacy programmes from 1997 to 2007 reflect that 70% of students were men. Setoi further shows that data from 2010 reflect that literacy enrolments have significantly declined.

For decades, the Government of Lesotho was under the impression that women have overwhelmingly outnumbered men in literacy programmes. This study, although based on the narrative of an individual man, is inclined to confirm Setoi's findings that Basotho men, in fact, have a lot to offer in terms of 'literacy or literacies' and rich orality culture.

Literature review

Literacy or illiteracy is a concept with many interpretations by different scholars. All of them agree that the concept can best be defined according to social uses and their functionality and that the literacy construct is linked to formal, non-formal and informal education domains. Different theories, models, and approaches to literacy have gained currency and the debate about which model is the best continues. This article discusses three theoretical models of literacy as they are related to and understood in the narrative of Hlalefang. Each model has its own advantages and shortfalls at personal, national and multinational levels.

The Lesotho's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET 2008) states the vision of Basotho by 2020, where the Basotho shall be a 'functionally literate society with well-grounded moral and ethical values; adequate social, scientific and technical knowledge and skills'. This denotes a society equipped with the basic (3Rs – reading, writing and counting), and functional skills among others. This article also interrogates the three philosophical models of literacy – autonomous, ideological and integrated views of functional literacy. Within the three models, the cultural and social uses of literacy become paramount as it relates to Hlalefang's narrative.

Autonomous view of literacy

Rogers, Patkar and Saraswathi (2004) and Street (2014) define the autonomous view of literacy as a model in which functional literacy as the process and content of learning to read and write relating to the preparation for work and vocational training as well as a means of increasing the productivity of the individual. It is a form of functional literacy for social use.

The autonomous or missionary view of literacy as observed by Street (2005) is a technical commodity which has to be acquired homogeneously and uniformly. This view assumes that people need and use literacy in a similar manner and for the same reasons. Lyster (1992) further observes that the autonomous viewers of literacy tend to be more economically inclined as they associate literacy with civilisation, progress, development and social mobility, and, of course, to be more functional in their environments. Street (2003:78) further observes that literacy is 'loaded with ideology and policy formulations that make it hard to do ethnographic studies [in this case, other indigenous literacy experiences] of the variety of literacies across contexts'. There are other points of view that the autonomous model is narrow minded and biased. Street (2005:417), for instance, observes that the 'autonomous' model works from the assumption that literacy in itself – autonomously – will have effects on other social and cognitive practices. It is assumed that the acquisition of literacy will in itself lead to, for example, higher cognitive skills, improved economic performance, greater equality, and so on. It is not holistic and it generalises literacy, its uses and its recipients. In the context of this article, it is therefore deduced that literacy is a heterogeneous concept because there are multiple literacies and their uses are many and varied. This article speaks to the indigenous uses and benefits of literacy applied by a person regarded or underestimated by the definition of literacy in the Lesotho context.

Ideological model of functional literacy

Literacy is an ideological concept. Cook-Gumperz (2006) asserts that literacy is not simply the neutral, technical skill of reading and writing but something which is embedded in social relations. It is fundamentally a social practice and is therefore ideologically bound, linked, interpreted and understood according to a certain ideology, social institutions, structures and relations of power in place in a given context (Street 2014).

A workplace literacy programme which is initiated to encourage workers in a particular work environment to learn, be it a new policy in the company, or a new procedure or practice, would reflect the company's ideological needs, control and benefits (Searle 2011). Literacy is therefore ideologically embedded and promotes a certain way of thinking and belief system (Freire & Macedo 2013). According to Dale and Newman (2005), literacy is a political and a developmental tool. Martin (2008) cites the importance of learning organisations in the promotion of ideological literacy.

While the authors emphasise literacy at the workplace looking at the difference between service institutions, business or private and public services, literacies differ because they follow a certain ideology embedded in their mandates and different objectives for which the organisations or institutions are formed (Roberts 2010).

Integrated model

Since 1976, the UNESCO's definition of literacy has not changed much; it has remained the same albeit its modifications and additions. Literacy is about development, and in its Strategic Planning Report (2014:36), UNESCO takes an 'integrated, holistic approach to literacy, recognising that it is acquired and developed throughout life via formal, non-formal and informal learning processes'. UNESCO recognises that:

there is a continuum of literacy levels and that the minimum level of basic skills varies with individuals' life context. Notions of what constitutes a minimum threshold of functional literacy are changing as a result of progress in science and technology. (UNESCO, 2014)

An integrated view of literacy as described by Kalua (2012) and Scull, Nolan and Raban (2013) emphasises a theory or an approach with a number of variables including literacy practices and literacy events; types of literacies and their social domains; roles and networks to provide support system; literacy as a communication tool; literacy as a cognitive thought process; values and their awareness of them and literacy in history. The integrated approach takes literacy as a social fabric. It is a holistic view. The integrated approach was postulated by Paulo Freire (as cited in Gee 2015) when he emphasised the importance of critical awareness by learners and educators alike, the so-called action-reflection method. UNESCO's (2014) plan refers to basic literacy skills, comprising reading, writing, and computing, as the foundation skills enabling people to function effectively in today's text-mediated knowledge societies and to make informed life choices.

This article focuses on the cultural aspects that are brought about by the narrative of counting livestock as a literacy tool, in other words, cultural and social uses of functional literacy.

Cultural and social uses of functional literacy

African traditional or customary education is largely acquired through informal processes. The language behaviour, and values for individuals to become effective members of their communities are learnt through tribal legends, proverbs repeated by the fireside, and are passed on orally by the elders to the young ones. Riddles, myths, idioms and folktales are repeated so that generations can know their histories and be able to relay them to the subsequent generations to come. In Lesotho, such traditional practices are upheld through traditional, customary and informal education. This rich legacy of informal processes has since evolved and been adapted to other modern informal processes or socialisation. Modern technology, multi-media, and social media have

become informal processes that have replaced many of the oral, communal ways of transmitting knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga (2006) observe that in precolonial Africa, education including literacy emphasised social responsibility; job orientation; political participation and spiritual and moral values. It is, therefore, pertinent to acknowledge that African literacy was meant for a specific purpose and use – that of creating a functionally literate person, able to fulfil moral obligations including being able to provide for themselves within their surrounding environment.

Literacy is influenced by social, cultural, economic and political dimensions in every society and, in turn, it influences how such dimensions are structured. An example provided by Breier, Taetsane and Sait (1996:55) of the taxi industry shows that literate and illiterate drivers must learn to 'navigate the way through the literacies of their profession (driving)'. These informal processes are the strategies of survival in a world of varied literacies. This means that environments have literacy potential if inhabitants in such environments are willing to learn.

In Uganda, Rogers *et al.* (2004:119) showed how agricultural production and entrepreneurship contributed to the Functional Adult Literacy programmes. The authors, however, raised concerns that 'such programmes are not based on real research into the literacy practices which are normal in the specific economic activity they advocate'. The question is why? Is it because researchers are not investigating these literacy practices or literacy practitioners are not bringing them to the attention of the policy-makers? This omission remains a challenge for countries like Lesotho. Hence, this article is adding its voice to showcase these practices and how they should be included in the economic and social data of various countries. Lesotho should follow this example of documenting these evidence-based programmes and include social and cultural uses of functional literacy in livestock management. Rogers (2006) emphasised the importance of training of literacy educators (TOLE), in the whole equation, in elevating the platform for multi-literacies.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative 'narrative story-telling' as a methodology in an effort to relate a life story of a Mosotho man who started acquiring reading, writing and numeracy as a herd-boy and continued to explore literacy and orality through cultural and social uses throughout his life. De Vos *et al.* (2011:313) observe that narratives or biographies construct the history of a life interpreted and analysed in such a way that the 'subjects speak for themselves' without necessarily representing the social and cultural work; however, the two must be brought together. Narrative approaches to the study of lives reveal the extent to which these problems have been conditioned

by empirical rather than narrative or biographical standards of truth and by a preoccupation with obtaining information at the expense of understanding expression (Sandelowski 1991:162). The focus of this article is on the importance of the social and cultural uses of literacy, and Hlalefang was selected through his conversations through story-telling with the author of this article. He happened to be known to the researcher who found some of his indigenous knowledge conversations highly educational experiences which could contribute to the indigenous knowledge system. The researcher took a special interest in writing some of his experiences. When the researcher made a decision to have Hlalefang's conversation to the next level, the researcher explained to him that he was going to write some of his conversations, and related all ethical issues to him, requesting his consent to participate. A series of unstructured open-ended questions addressing cultural and indigenous views, social uses of literacy and their influence of literacy approaches in the contemporary world were the research questions that guided the study.

The interviews were done over a period of two years with Hlalefang, a 52-year-old Mosotho man who only went to school up to Standard 4, the end of the lower primary level (Setoi 2012). In his article, Abiona (2006) also regards the use of story-telling, oral and narrative approach as a methodology and learning from indigenous education through the culture using animal kingdom. While his account was based on riddles, idioms and fairy-tales, he acknowledges the importance of oral narration as part of developing cultures and countries that have to be celebrated by researchers. The narrative analysis also applies where interviews relate not just to the life span but also to accounts relating to episodes and to their interconnectedness (Bryman & Bell 2014).

The researcher analysed Hlalefang's stories iteratively, going back and forth to verify some of his narratives. His conversations were unstructured, and sometimes where contradictions arose, the researcher was able to address questions to verify the trustworthiness of his responses. He was allowed to talk about his numerous indigenous experiences as a herd-boy, a young married man and his current welfare. The researcher selected some of these experiences that were suited to the cultural and social uses, as a focus of the research. Some conversations which were considered not relevant to the study, were not used in this article. The researcher took some notes as the conversations continued, and codes and themes were formulated according to their relevance to the study, and its theoretical framework. Themes such as livestock literacy, weather and the clock metaphor, autonomous, ideological and integrated models were some of the themes used for the study. Within a period of two years, seven interviews were held with Hlalefang, where he related to childhood experiences with livestock as a herd-boy and his self-drive in literacies with livestock and time.

The researcher prepared an ethical consent form for Hlalefang and read it to him and explained that in research, Hlalefang must consent to the processes. The ethical issues included his right to remain anonymous, confidentiality of information and the right to withdraw.

Findings and discussion

Hlalefang started his narrative by setting the background for his story. Most of the findings were reported as direct interviews by Hlalefang. But because they were conducted in Sesotho, the researcher translated them verbatim:

I used to live in the lonely mountains surrounded only by my flock of sheep, goats, cattle, horses, donkeys, mules and my guard-dogs for those four to five winter months from May to September. The whole flock sometimes was estimated at a total of 2000–3000. I did that for almost 10 years because I started at the age of 10 years. A ranch (motebo in Sesotho) extends for many kilometres with rich grass for grazing, and, despite the severe cold, I was always happy to see my animals feeding well and coming back from the ranch fat and ready to be slaughtered for cultural festivities. I was proud because I knew my boss was also happy. My neighbour on another ranch was about 8 km away; your only company is your flock of animals or passers-by who would also pass after a long period of silence, except when you talk to your animals.

'How did you count your livestock and keep a record of your estimate counts with such large numbers? How were you able to know how many cattle and sheep you have?' The response:

When you first arrive at the ranch, you must have a plan of how you [are going to] arrange your animals (flock). This includes sleeping arrangements for different types of animals. You set rules for them by arranging them accordingly. For a few days, in the beginning, that is the main task, until they know how they should assemble at the kraal (open space). Animals are like people; they are taught rules and obedience. Once the first task is done, others follow the course.

The second task is to observe how they make friends with each other and how they determine their own order. It is most likely that there will be a pattern you easily pick up on how they relate to each other. It is these sleeping patterns that will make you realise immediately when one is missing or has changed positions. Another important aspect is to know the décor [colour] of your flock. Big animals especially (cows, horses and donkeys) have colours and through that one is able to know them. Similarly, small animals (sheep, goats) also have their own marks which you can use to differentiate them from each other. Once these basic preparations are done, after maybe the first month, then you can start counting your livestock. Among all these [animals], there would also be pregnant females about to or already giving birth; the preparations include a nursing 'mothers' kraal. The stock-taking is therefore done monthly.

After every 10 counts, you take a stone and put it in a bag; you do that after every 10 counts until when you have to say 10 stones in your bag, you know you have 100 sheep. Stock-taking can take up to a week, because after sheep-counting, you have to know how many lambs there are as well. So you systematically use stones as milestones so that when the owner comes, you are

able to recall the sequencing and explanations of each stone. Sometimes you use different sizes of stones. If you were clever, before leaving home you bring along the exercise books and a pencil to jot down notes. If you had forgotten it at home, on the ranch, there are no shops where you can buy an exercise book and a pencil for notes.

Livestock literacy in use

Kalua's (2012) view of the integrated approach to literacy emphasised roles, values, thought processes and awareness, individual and social histories. The planning processes that go into Hlalefang's classroom environment of animals bear testimony to an integrated model and how integrated this level of literacy has become. An order, cultural, family and caring values are maintained as he prepares his environment. Functional literacy is not only about being able to function but is also about social order; it is also systematic and involves thought processes. A process of discovery postulated by Paulo Freire as cited in Gee (2015) used 'generative themes or words'. With livestock, herd-boys use 'generative stones' to count. Taxi drivers Breier *et al.* (1996) use observation, trial-and-error, apprenticeship, coaching from others and informal education processes.

In the context of this article, the livestock herd-boys use similar processes and mechanisms, including generative stones in their functional and integrative approach to literacy. This study posits that such literacy concepts should be taken seriously as evidence-based approaches to literacy as UNESCO (2014) suggests.

Contrary to Cardiero-Kaplan's (2002) opinion that the functional literacy approach does little to engage texts and stories critically or to engage the historical and lived contexts of [students] lives, this narrative proves that, in fact, texts and stories relate to lived contexts in primarily oral literacy.

This article argues that the literacy approaches in the context of Lesotho should be able to relate to what the culture can offer through livestock, weather and time issues, not primarily with reading, writing and counting, however, universal such factors may be. The challenges are not with learners but with appropriate interventions, such as curriculum design and development and whether educators are willing to use their learners' experiences, resources, contexts and environments. If taxi drivers and herd-boys can read, write and count using materials around their professions then literacy educators should be ready to adapt and use such experiences to take literacy to the next level with the learners (Breier *et al.* 1996). The discussion leads us to the next approach, the ideological model.

Weather and the clock 'metaphor' – cultural approach to literacy:

The best time to count the flock is when animals are sleeping because one is able to go round them without movement or

interruptions. At night when the moon is bright, one is able to do the counting very well. It is done with the use of the moonlight.

Hlalefang said he would predict weather conditions by observing and assessing the behaviour of his animals and their reaction to certain sounds, being restless or sleepless including the quietness of the night itself; sometimes his dogs' barking denoted certain weather conditions; listening to the voices of the birds in the sky; if an intruder is nearby or in the vicinity (either a wild animal or another person). These were some of the many things (literacies) that Hlalefang learnt from the rural environment. In the four month winter period, Hlalefang learnt weather patterns using the rural environment, animals, and their behaviours. Weather conditions are very important to the Basotho and livestock in winter, as stated by the Lesotho Disaster Management Authority (2002). Every year in winter, media reports are written about herd-boys killed by snow in the mountains showing that they were not aware of the weather conditions. For Hlalefang, the weather is very important and is a skill that herd-boys must learn, to avoid fatalities:

Weather and time are important aspects of livestock management. One lives by knowing when to do things. During the day, a herd-boy will tell you what the time is by observing the direction of the sun, people's shadows and the mountains.

Years after his experiences, Hlalefang was still able to tell the correct time without wearing a wristwatch or looking at a clock. This article asks the question: whose ideology is literacy benchmarking? Are we interpreting literacy according to its social and cultural uses or a universal ideology, according to the western culture? This article is not denying that illiteracy exists, but it interrogates the interpretation of illiteracy and the influence of ideology in the definition of literacy. The literacy weather model is being neglected by both the Lesotho Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and other literacy organisations including the Government of Lesotho, because they are looking at literacy as being able to read and write for universal reasons, not for what herd-boys need.

Cardiero-Kaplan (2002:375) puts it that a functionally literate person is generally considered an individual who can read and write 'well enough to understand signs, ads, newspaper headlines, fill out job applications, make shopping lists, and write [cheques]'. This is taken from the context of the modern world and therefore, the definition falls short in that it does not really consider other literacies like that of livestock counting, and or driving literacy. UNESCO's (2014) interpretation of basic literacy skills comprises reading, writing and computing, as the foundational skills enabling people to function effectively in today's text-mediated knowledge societies and to make informed life choices. 'UNESCO will, therefore, strengthen evidence-based advocacy to make a development case for investing in literacy. It will promote research to analyse aspects of literacy and its impact on education and other development agendas' (UNESCO 2014:36). This article highlights the evidence-based issues raised with regard to the cultural functional

literacy needed to manage livestock and understand weather and time.

Conclusions and recommendations

For decades, research studies agreed that in Lesotho women are more literate than men. The latest studies are reviewing this old paradigm to question some of the discourses. This study takes Setoi's (2012) arguments a step further regarding cultural and social literacy. The Basotho should wake up to the UNESCO (2014) vision and call where evidence-based advocacy in cultural and social uses of literacy should be highlighted, to rectify the misperception that Basotho men are not literate. As Basotho, we have to question literacy ideologies that we have followed for many decades and review our own meaning of literacy in relation to social and cultural uses while still embracing the universal and contemporary forms.

The literacy agenda should be brought back to the drawing board where policy-makers, researchers, literacy educators and practitioners should consider the indigenous ways of knowledge and skills embedded within the Basotho literacies and primary oral communities. The Basotho complacency about literacy issues should be counteracted with the awareness of their rich indigenous and cultural approaches to literacy. If Basotho men can teach young herd-boys to predict severe weather conditions, snow fatalities that happen every year can be avoided. This study recommends that the Lesotho DMA should work with literacy organisations like the LDTC and others to develop livestock-weather-related literacy curriculum to circumvent the loss of lives for herd-boys in the winter season in Lesotho.

This article concludes that Basotho men, particularly those in rural areas who were brought up as herd-boys, have much to offer with their indigenous knowledge and literacy skills, and this should be further researched and supported. Lesotho as a country should further revisit its own definition of literacy and broaden its scope to include the multi-literacies and experiences such as the livestock and weather and time literacies. The UNESCO's Education Strategy for 2014–2021 should be a platform used by Lesotho to document its rich cultural legacy that can contribute effectively to the indigenous knowledge trajectory in the 21st Century. This idea further stated that when we talk about literacy and/or functional literacy, we immediately are talking about reading and writing, a process which reorders cognitive processes and challenges primary oral communities and indigenous knowledge in oral communities (Ong 1982). The study adds its voice in support of a new paradigm shift that started with Setoi (2012). With new developments and demographic changes in Basotho society, the country should redefine its own conception of literacy to include and document indigenous and cultural aspects in its literacy data. The study, therefore, recommends that new literacy conceptions be devised and adopted in Lesotho. Furthermore, the rightful space and position of literacy statistics and data regarding males and their indigenous, cultural knowledge and skills

should be properly documented and further researched to bring their literacy abilities to the fore, reclaiming their identity and strength.

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