Literacy Behaviours Which Pre-schoolers Exhibit in Selected Households of Lusaka

BY

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UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

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MARY-GRACE MUSONDA

A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

2011
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I, MARY-GRACE MUSONDA, declare that this dissertation:

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(b) has not previously been submitted for the degree at this or any other University; and

(c) does not incorporate any published work or materials from another dissertation.

Signed:.................................................. ..............................

Date:.................................................. ..............................
**APPROVAL**

This dissertation of **MARY-GRACE MUSONDA** is approved as fulfilling the requirement for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning by the University of Zambia.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

**CSO**  Central Statistical Office
**LCMSR**  Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report
**L1**  First Language
**MOE**  Ministry of Education
**NAEYC**  National Association for the Education of Young Children
**NBTL**  New Breakthrough to Literacy
**NOMA**  Norwegian Masters
**SES**  Social Economic Status
**UNESCO**  United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
**USA**  United States of America
ABSTRACT

This work sought to establish the literacy behaviours which pre-schoolers in selected households of Lusaka’s Bauleni, Kalikiliki and Woodlands Extension exhibited. The study had a sample size of 21 pre-schoolers and 15 care-givers. The population from which this sample was drawn from was all the pre-schoolers and all care-givers in the three areas.

This study was considered necessary due to the current grade one curriculum which considers or portrays first graders as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. This theory that children are tabular rasa (blank sheet) or the tap and bucket theory has been disputed by many psychologists and emergent literacy theorists such as Marie Clay.

The study chose a purposive sample of 21 (11 girls and 10 boys). These children had not yet enrolled in any formal school and had never been to school. The participants were drawn from three neighbourhoods of Lusaka, two in high-density areas and one low-density area. In addition, the researcher interviewed 15 female care-givers, comprising parents and guardians. The study employed qualitative and quantitative research methods that included semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, document study and testing.

The duration for the field work was six months and involved several hours of observations and interviews. Each interview transcript was coded into major and minor thematic categories covering broad and specific areas guided by the research question.

This study established that the teaching of directionality in reading and writing to first graders does not go in tandem with the emergent literacy theory, which postulates that children are emergent readers and writers, not in the conventional sense, from birth. The theory further posits that children learn to read and write gradually, rather than at a particular point in time. This is referred to as reading readiness (Hall, 1987).

This study has mapped the literacy behaviours which pre-schoolers exhibit in selected households of Lusaka. It tried to answer the question of what role parents played in facilitating their children’s literacy development from emergent to conventional readers and writers and what print exist in these pre-schoolers homes and surrounding environments.
The study brought out literacy behaviours in the following categories: arithmetic was mostly practiced; television and radio were seen to have an influence on the pre-schoolers’ acquisition of oral language and emergent literacy through songs and advertisements; singing, which is imbedded with a lot of emergent literacy, was enjoyed by most of the children; singing the English alphabet song was prominent. The study also found out that children involved themselves in a lot of literacy related games such as Ciya-to and draft.

The study made the following recommendations. An appeal was made for teachers to be taking advantage of children’s emergent literacy. This would prevent teachers from repeating concepts which the children were already aware of. For example, this research noted that two weeks of the early stage of the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) was about concepts already known by most children long before they came to school. A further recommendation was made that early childhood education may be run as private-public partnerships or through incorporation of preschool in the already existing primary schools. The other recommendation was that there was need to design adult literacy programmes so as to empower parents in helping their young ones become literate. This would address the existing situation in most areas as parents seemed left out from the education of their children.
DEDICATION

To my husband Kasenge Bwalya and the children: Kasenge, Musonda and Mwaba, who are the greatest gift, that God has given to me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to many people without whose help this research would have been a failed undertaking. Special thanks go to my academic supervisor, Mr G K Tambulukani, for his guidance from the start of the research up to the end. I sincerely appreciate his patience and kindness.

Furthermore, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the people and Government of Norway for sponsoring my master’s studies. I wish to express my appreciation to various lecturers on the NOMA literacy programme, for their constant encouragement and quick feedback whenever I sent work for corrections and suggestions. I will forever remain indebted to them.

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I further extend my gratitude to the participants in the research without whom the research would not have been possible. I sincerely thank them all for welcoming me within their homes in order that I could collect the information necessary for this study. They made this study ‘a dream come true’.

My gratitude would be incomplete if I failed to acknowledge the encouragement that I got from my husband, who at times teased me when I relaxed. For his sense of humour, which really kept me going, I say thank you. I further extend my appreciation to my children who left unattended and sometimes treated unfairly. My special thanks go to Mwaba for accepting my taking time away from him just to do my academic work. I hope I can make up for all the lost time.

I further extend my heartfelt thanks to my father who encouraged me to enrol in the programme as one of the ‘pioneer’ literacy and learning scholars of the University of Zambia. Thanks very much bataka; you will never know how well timed you advice was. I just needed a little push and you surely did that.

I greatly appreciate my sister, Clare for patiently editing my work. May God richly bless her.

To my classmates, Thomas Zimba and Georgina Njapau, I am very appreciative of the support and encouragement I got from them.
Most of all, my sincere and heartfelt gratitude go to God the most high for keeping me focused even when I felt lost, hopeless and discouraged.

Lastly, I wish to take responsibility for the views expressed in this paper. Any deficiencies herein remain my own despite the input from my supervisor.
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1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The first chapter of this dissertation gives a background to the study. The background provides the linguistic and literacy position of the country in general and that of the study area in particular. It also highlights the need to examine what goes on at home before children start formal schooling in a Zambian set up. The background further alludes to the lack of testing in government schools on entry in order to assess the children’s literacy knowledge. Against this background, an assumption is made that lack of placement tests upon enrolment means less value attached to the literacy behaviours that these children may bring from home to school. It may also meant that these behaviours are either ignored and go unnoticed/unappreciated or assumed and taken for granted. This study argues that in emergent literacy, nothing should be taken for granted or ignored, but should rather be appreciated. There is also mention in the background of the reading readiness aspect which seems to be portrayed in the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL).

In addition to the background, this chapter contains the statement of the problem, pose of the study, the significance of the study, the research objectives/questions, theoretical frame work, definition of terms, limitations of the study and reflections on ethical issues.

1.2 Background:

Zambia’s population was first comprehensively recorded at 5.7 million in 1980. It increased to 7.8 million and 9.9 million in 1990 and 2000, respectively. The population has over the years remained young, with about 45 percentaged below 15 years. The population of Zambia was estimated at 11.7 million in 2006. The country’s average population density is 13 persons per square kilometre, while Lusaka Province (hosting the capital city of Lusaka) has the highest average of 64 persons per square kilometre (CSO, 2006).

Although Zambia is endowed with many languages, derived from 73 ethnic groups, there are seven major languages that are used besides English for official purposes (such as broadcasting and dissemination of information). These are Bemba, Chichewa, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga (CSO, 2006). Below is a linguistic map of Zambia showing the multilingual nature of the
country and in a way this may affect the area of focus in the study. Nyanja has been designated as a familiar language for Lusaka.

**Figure 1: Linguistic map of Zambia**

Language use in Lusaka, in particular, has presented a number of challenges for the education sector as well as for emergent literacy at community and household level. This is because not all Lusaka residents are native speakers of Nyanja. Emergent literacy is usually in a mother tongue or familiar language, implying that some languages may be endowed with more literacy related activities such as tongue twisters, games like Ciyato and many more while other languages may have deficiencies in such areas. Ciyato is played mainly by girls, who are supposed to make eye-hand coordination as they throw and catch stones from a shallow hole at varying intervals (Matafwali and Munsaka, 2011). It is also possible that these many languages may supplement one another in cases where one particular language may be lacking in the literacy related activities. In this case, it may be said that multilingualism could be enhancing literacy activities but this may be heavily dependent on how teachers may utilise the resources within a given class or school. Considering the afore-stated, it is clear that teaching literacy in a place with more than seven dialects posses a great challenge. This may in fact be one of the factors that explain the low levels of literacy attainment in the capital city and Zambia as a
whole among primary school going children. Therefore, the number of languages becomes a factor in this research.

The current statistical data on literacy rates in Zambia stands at 80.6% for adults aged 15 to 35 years,(World Bank, 2010) while that of the children below 15 years has not been reported. Since literacy cuts across the borders of the sustainable development discourse, there is need for a developing nation like Zambia to investigate and invest in this very important aspect of human life.

Literacy has been defined as the ability to read and write, whereas illiteracy means inability to read and write(Barton, 1997). A literate person is said to be able to read and write in order to function in the changing world (Mwansa, 1993). Though literacy is defined generally across the board, there is literacy that only applies to the younger children who may or may not be in school. This type of literacy is specific to children and is referred to as emergent literacy. Emergent literacy refers to any behaviour related to reading and writing not in the conventional sense. This is literacy noted in young children as they learn and exhibit behaviour that is literacy related. Hence this study focused on establishing the existence of such emergent literacy behaviours of the pre-schoolers in the three neighbourhoods of Lusaka. Below is the map highlighting the areas of research.
Most studies done in Zambia are about the low literacy achievement levels in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades of primary education. However, there are no significant studies on emergent literacy, which, to the researcher, seems to be the starting point of all underperformance problems in reading and writing for the Zambian child. Equally, there are studies on inventory of literacy behaviour on the Zambian pre-schooler. In other countries such as the USA, research on literacy in general and emergent literacy in particular have been conducted and inventories of preschoolers’ literacy behaviours have been done. These inventories act as a guide to how the child progresses in literacy acquisition (Baker, Sonnenschein, Serpell, Fernandez-Fein, & Scher, 1994). Therefore, the researcher considered it necessary that a study of this kind be executed in Zambia.

Further the reading readiness theory still persists in the current grade one curriculum through the first 12 pictures in the phonic flipchart indicating that there will be a point at which these children will be ready to learn to read instead of the theory of continuity advocated by the emergent literacy theory.
The Zambian grade one school curriculum under the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) is designed in such a way that the teachers view grade one children as empty vessels be filled with knowledge. The first 12 lessons in the phonic flipchart are designed in a way which disregards literacy knowledge of reading from left to right and top to bottom which the child might exhibit before formal schooling. Such an instructional process in grade one further disregards the emergent literacy theory, which postulates that a learner learns to read gradually rather than at a particular point in time (Hall, 1987). The first 12 pictures in the phonic flipchart under NBTL course for grade one, designed for reading readiness, portrays the pupils as if they have never seen print in their lives.

The NBTL is a method and course that helps children learn to read fluently and write easily as well as accurately in their local language (MOE, 2001: 2). This course and method came about as a result of the low literacy levels that were and still obtain in most Zambian primary schools. Concerns about low literacy levels among primary school children in Zambia led to the new National Language-in-Education Policy which stipulated that initial literacy instruction should be in a familiar language.

For most of the 21st century, the school literacy curriculum has been criticised as sterile, narrow, distorted and quite unresponsive to the world of print outside school (Hall, 1987). It is commonplace in Zambian schools to find children in grade one being treated as complete illiterates. The first two weeks of grade one demonstrates this idea. There is anecdotal evidence, some of which is shown in the phonic flipchart of the NBTL, that teachers judge pupils as not knowing anything about reading from “left” to “right” all the assumed knowledge which the child could have possessed prior to coming to grade one is ignored.

However, in emergent literacy terms, a child is literate if he or she is able to demonstrate reading and writing ability. The term emergent literacy was introduced in 1966 by a New Zealand researcher Marie Clay to describe the behaviours seen in young children when they use books and writing materials to imitate reading and writing activities. The terms reading and writing here are not used in the conventional way, but refer to preliminary literacy skills like holding a pencil and scribbling. In the four decades since Clay's introduction of the concept of emergent literacy, research has expanded on the understanding of the concept and according to some research, children's literacy development begins long before they start formal instruction in school; it begins at birth (or even before) and continues through the preschool years (Hall, 1987).
Scholars such as Hall (1987) have pointed out that the educatio acquired or learning which takes place during childhood (before formal schooling) is probably greater than that acquired in a lifetime (adulthood). This assumption is further supported by early bird readers parent’s guide when it states that, 80% of the child’s brain develops between the ages of 0 to 5 years. This may further imply that children learn to read and write just as they learn any other skill such as walking, eating, talking and so on, below the age of five. This may also mean that children in Zambia may have something to present to the teacher as they come to school in grade one considering the fact that the legal age for a child to start scho in Zambia is seven years (CSO: 2006). However, the question is, what exactly do these children know and possibly bring along into the formal schooling environment? Further, considering that a rich print environment enhances literacy acquisition and continued development of literacy (Serpell et al, 2005), what is the likelihood that the children in selected Lusaka households will exhibit literacy behaviour before they begin formal education? Even though schools cannot be homes, there is need for schools to recognise, acknowledge, appreciate and build on any literacy behaviour that children may bring with them from home to school. While research has been done in other countries on emergent and continued development of literacy, no research has been done in Zambia on emergent literacy to determine what literacy behaviours you children may exhibit before they begin formal schooling.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Using the notion that literacy in young children begins at birth as a point of departure, this study attempted to investigate what literacy behaviour(s), if any, young children in selected Lusaka households exhibited before they started learning conventional literacy in school. The assumption of the study was that such literacy behaviour (s) would make children move from the known to the unknown in their literacy development. The study endeavoured to fill the gap by identifying the literacy behaviours that Zambian children exhibited in their home environment that could be employed to enhance the initial literacy development in a child once in formal schooling. Stated as a question, the problem under investigation was: What literacy behaviours do pre-schoolers exhibit given that the grade one Zambian school curriculum considers them as complete illiterates.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out what literacy behaviour(s) pre-schoolers already exhibited in selected Lusaka households before they started formal schooling and possibly
brought along with them to school. These are the literacy behaviours a teacher of Grade 0ne would probably use as learners are being introduced to initial reading in Grade one.

1.5 Research objectives

1.5.1 Main objective

The main objective of the study was to establish the literacy behaviour(s) that children already exhibit from their homes before receiving formal instruction in school.

1.5.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. find out the type of literacy activities that would support the development of emergent literacy in children’s homes.

2. find out the type of print environment existing in the children’s homes or immediate environment.

3. establish children’s views of print in the environment.

4. establish the role of the parents in facilitating literacy development in their children.

5. find out how often parents read to their child.

1.6 Research questions

1.6.1 Main research question

What literacy behaviours, if any, do pre-schoolers exhibit in selected households of Lusaka?

1.6.2 Sub-Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What observable literacy activities in children’s homes would support the development of emergent literacy?

2. What type of print exist in children’s homes and their immediate environment before they start formal schooling?

3. What did the children say was the use of print in the environment?

4. What role do parents play in facilitating literacy development in their children?

5. How often do parents read to their children?
1.7 Significance of the study

While there is substantial literature on the different methods and courses for teaching grade one pupils in Zambia, there is no study on the literacy behaviours which these pre-schoolers bring with them from home to school. Studies tailored towards the identification of the possible different literacy related activities of children prior to grade one enrolment are conspicuously absent. It is hoped, therefore, that the present study will give an insight into the pre-schooler’s literacy behaviour(s) which could be used as a starting point in their progression to conventional literacy when they enter formal schooling in grade one. This may help curriculum developers to design activities for grade one children differently and cautiously. Further, with the evidence from the present study, teachers may learn to value the efforts that each child makes. Further, this being the first study of its kind in Zambia, it will significantly add to the body of knowledge and literature on emergent literacy. The study may also influence policy on the need for early childhood education and home based care services in Zambia. Further, the study is significant as it was going to help the preschool teacher to be aware of this literacy behaviour so as to acknowledge and give credit to the children. The present study could act as an appropriate tool for assessing pre-schoolers before they enter grade one in a Zambian government school. This is the case in other private institutions.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the theory of emergent literacy which was introduced by Marie Clay (1966). Emergent literacy, as opposed to conventional literacy, postulates that literacy develops gradually on a continuum. Further, emergent literacy refers to any behaviour that relates to reading and writing rather than conventional literacy at school or formal schooling. According to this theory, children’s literacy development begins long before formal schooling and is enhanced by social interaction with caring adults and exposure to a literacy-rich environment and literacy materials such as storybooks, crayons, pens, pencils and paper. A literacy-rich environment at home is important in promoting literacy and preventing reading difficulties. In literacy-rich home environments, caregivers provide children with occasions for daily reading, extensive talking or writing, language play, experimentation with literacy materials, book talk, and dramatic play (Teale & Sulzby, 1991). This can be shown diagrammatically as in figure 3 below.
In this continuum, emergent literacy, supported by literacy–rich home environment and child play and other social interaction with adults would enhance initial literacy learning once a child is in formal school. However, the teacher has to take advantage of what a child already knows. The assumption is that once done, this would, in turn, promote language development especially if the home environment with that literacy behaviour supported by the provision of reading materials such as story books, pencils, crayons, pens and paper.

Source: Adapted from Marie Clay (1966).
1.9 Reflection on Ethical Issues

Bearing in mind that the subjects of the study were minors, permission to investigate them was sought from their parents or guardians before administering of the instruments. The parents or guardians were assured that no harm, either emotional or physical, would be caused to the subjects as a result of the study. The parents or guardians were further assured that the findings of the research were to be used for academic purposes only and that confidentiality would be maintained while the names of subjects would be withheld. Instead, all the participants were given identification codes or numbers. All respondents were asked to read the consent form, and only when they agreed to participate in the research, were they requested to sign the form. The caregivers of the children who participated in the research consented on their behalf. Further, caregivers were also free to be present when the child was being tested provided they did not interfere in the process.

1.10 Definition of Terms

The following key terms used in this study are defined for the purpose of the study as set out below:

**Behaviour(s)**-this is a psychological response, the way in which a person, organism or group responds to a specific set of conditions.

**Conventional reading and writing**-children’s knowledge about literacy, when their reading and writing approximates adults’ reading and writing.

**Emergent literacy**-Emergent literacy is used here to refer to the reading and writing behaviours that precede and develop into conventional literacy.

**Environmental print**-prints in the surroundings, such as billboards, road-signs and so on and so forth.

**Household**-is a group of persons who normally eat and live together. These people may or may not be related by blood, but make common provisions for food and other essentials for living. A household may comprise several members and in some cases may have only one member.

**Home literacy environment**-It is a home setting with items such as paper, pencils among other related items that encourage literacy development.

**Illiterate person**-an illiterate person as one who has no schooling.
**Invented spelling** - this refers to children’s way of spelling letters different from the conventional spelling.

**Literate person** - is one who is able to read and write

**Literacy** - the ability to read and write

**Literacy behaviour** - any behaviour, for example pretend writing and reading, exhibited by a child as a result of coming into contact with literacy-rich environment.

**Literacy friendly** - this means a home which has materials that support literacy development such as, pencils, paper, books, plan books story books, arithmetic books and all simple materials to capture the child’s attention and focus it on any form of reading and writing activity and exercise their literacy skills.

**Participants** - this refers to the respondents in the research.

**Pre-schoolers** - this term is used to refer to children who have not yet started formal schooling.

**Pretend reading** - children’s literacy behaviour whereby they imitate conventional reading such as holding a book, as if they are able to read, read signs, symbols, gestures and many more.

**Pretend writing** - children’s literacy behaviour whereby they imitate conventional writing, for example scribbling or writing in the air and on walls of the house.

**Print knowledge** - this refers to the ability to make associations of letters to sounds.

**Reading readiness** - this refers to perspective that there is a point in time when a child has the ability to begin to learn how to read and write (the point at which child acquires requisite knowledge and behaviour to support the learning of conventional reading.

**Reading and writing** - preliminary literacy skills like holding a pencil and scribbling

**Scribbling** - pretend writing which is in form of random string of letters.

### 1.11 Limitations of the study

One of the major limitations of the study was that the researcher found it difficult to identify participants from the low density areas who had not encountered or been influenced by formal
schooling as most of these children were already in school. The difficulty in identifying such subjects in Lusaka town led to the long period of field work. Further, six parents were unavailable for interviews after their children were tested. This was attributed to the slow pace of the data collection exercise which was determined by the willingness of the parents to be interviewed. In addition, some families were transferred within the period of the data collection exercise. Further, parents were highly expectant of pecuniary advantage from the research despite having been informed that the research was an academic one with no monetary gain attached to it. This expectation could have influenced their responses. However, the triangulation of methods may have checked this limitation.

Another challenge encountered was the paucity of literature about emergent literacy in Zambia. This notwithstanding, the study reviewed various pieces of literature based on experiences in countries with different literate cultures, particularly the USA. Although there was hardly any literature about Zambia on emergent literacy, the literature reviewed is useful as a point of reference.

1.12 Summary of Chapter One

The first chapter has given the background of the study. It has also provided the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, the theoretical frame work that underlies the study, reflection on ethical issues, definition of terms as used in this dissertation and limitations of the study. The next chapter presents the review of literature that is relevant to the study.
2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction:
To place the study in the context of earlier studies, this chapter presents the review of literature that is relevant to the issue under consideration in this study. The literature review focused on literacy in general and emergent literacy in particular. It reviews literature on definitions of literacy/illiteracy and illiterate person. The chapter gives an overview of emergent literacy research. It further reviews literature on emergent literacy behaviours, literate home literacy environment, environmental print, and the different roles that the following play in the development of emergent literacy; parent and caregivers, story book reading and child play activities, that is, games, oral language and singing, among others, play in the development of emergent literacy.

Part of the literature reviewed, especially on emergent literacy, is from the European and American Countries’ perspective and so may not apply to the Zambian context. It is for this reason that the researcher’s views will from time to time be expressed in the discussions of the literature under review in order to refocus the discussion on the Zambian situation.

2.2 Literacy/Illiteracy in General

2.2.1 The Zambian Definitions of Literacy and a Literate Person

Literacy has been defined as the ability to read and write (UNESCO, 2003). UNESCO’s definitions of literacy and a literate person have been adopted in total and not much discussion has taken place on what constitutes illiteracy in Zambia. Implementers of literacy programs have at times arbitrary decided on grade equivalent. In 1969 when basic literacy was evaluated, a person was considered literate if he or she attained the equivalent of grade three but this level has been criticised because it is still low (Mwansa, 1993) and falls below grade five which is generally accepted for developing countries and grade seven for developed countries. On the contrary, grade three equivalents in emergent literacy terms can of course be considered literate. This point further highlights the Zambian focus on adult literacy in the recent past years and the neglect of emergent literacy in the country.

The Central Statistics Office of the Government of the Republic of Zambia considers an illiterate person as one who has no schooling (CSO, 1990:70). This statistical definition equally
underestimates the magnitude of the problem and render the statistics on the level of illiteracy/literacy in Zambia unreliable. Contrary to the above definition, emergent literacy considers any behaviour related to reading and writing as literacy behaviour and as such considers even the unschooled who exhibit this behaviour as literate persons.

In the absence of the nationally accepted definition, the grade equivalent of grade five would be a useful measure. This again is a relative indicator and change with the passage of time. The major determinant of what is literacy is how well we can function in the society where literacy is assumed. In Zambia the grade three equivalents is rather low. Those who pass through grade three can barely function in the fast growing and urbanising Zambia of the 21st century.

Nationally the country is moving towards provision of basic education (MOE, 1977) to its citizens up to grade nine and this should, in the not too distant future, become the basic education that can be considered as minimum level and literacy training should aim at this level not just in terms of grade but in terms of curriculum content (Mwansa, 1993: 36).

From the literature reviewed so far, it is clear that the Zambian perspective of literacy is school related. There appears to be a lacuna as far as emergent literacy concerned.

2.3 Overview on Emergent Literacy Research

In their review of the literature on literacy development, Teale and Sulzby (1986) note that from the late 1800s to the 1920s the research literature on reading and writing focused only on the elementary school years. In the 1920s, however, educators began to recognize the early childhood and kindergarten years as a "period of preparation" for reading and writing. In 1925 in the USA, the National Committee on Reading published the first explicit reference to the concept of reading readiness.

The introduction of this term gave rise to two different lines of research on preparing children for reading (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). While one group believed that reading readiness was the result of maturation ("nature"), the other group thought that appropriate experiences could accelerate readiness ("nurture"). These differing viewpoints underscore the philosophical differences that have characterised much of the research on children's development through the years.
2.4 Reading Readiness from the "Nature" Perspective

The dominant theory from the 1920s into the 1950s was that reading readiness was the result of biological maturation. From this perspective, it was believed that the mental processes necessary for reading would unfold automatically at a certain point in development (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Researchers argued that good practice would provide an environment that did not interfere with the predetermined process of development in the child. Thus, educators and parents were advised to postpone the teaching of reading until children reached a certain age. This is true in Zambia. As currently, most parents and caregivers believe that teaching children to read and write should wait until a certain age. However, these views are not in line with the emergent literacy theories which postulate the opposite.

2.5 Reading Readiness from the "Nurture" Perspective

Reading readiness is the term used to describe a particular point in time at which a child is believed to be able to read. During the late 1950s and 1960s, the dominant theory shifted from reading readiness as maturation toward readiness as the product of experience. Proponents of this viewpoint argued that if children had the appropriate experiences, their reading readiness could be accelerated. Teale and Sulzby (1986) identify several factors which contributed to this shift.

The first one is attributed to a growing reliance on readiness workbooks and tests during the first years of school, which had been used by the maturationists as an intervention tool; secondly, increased research on young children which demonstrated that preschoolers knew more than had generally been believed; thirdly, the adequacy of American education was being questioned since the Soviet Union was the first country to travel in space; and fourthly, Supporters of social equality argued that "large numbers of minority children had culturally disadvantaged backgrounds and had to wait until they got to school to overcome the disadvantage" (Teale and Sulzby 1986). In response to this shift in thinking, educators and parents were encouraged to use more direct instruction and structured curriculum in early childhood and kindergarten programs in order to
prepare children for reading. In reading readiness programs children were considered ready to read when they had met certain social, physical, and cognitive competencies (Morrow, 1997).

2.6 The Shift to an Emergent Literacy Perspective

From the 1970s, researchers began to challenge traditional reading readiness attitudes and practices. One of the pioneers in examining young children's reading and writing was Marie Clay (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Clay (1966) first introduced the term ‘emergent’ literacy to describe the behaviours used by young children with books and when reading and writing, even though the children could not actually read and write in the conventional sense. Whereas the concept of reading readiness suggested that there was a point in time when children were ready to learn to read and write, emergent literacy suggests that there were continuities in children's literacy development between early literacy behaviours and those displayed once children could read independently (Idaho Centre on Developmental Disabilities, 1996, Sulzby & Teale, 1991). The term, emergent literacy reflects the belief that, when children are raised in a literate society, they are in the process of becoming literate from infancy onward. Thus behaviours that once would have been regarded as attractive but irrelevant approximations to adult literacy become important since they are constructions of the child and are influenced by the variety of social context in which literacy is practiced. For example, when “reading” a book to a friend that consists of pictures and words, a child reveals important information about his or her emerging conception of the nature and purpose of reading (Baker, et al., 1994).

From the growing body of research on literacy development, Clay's concept of emergent literacy has evolved to include several elements as outlined below. The first one is that, Literacy development begins before children start formal instruction in elementary school (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). For example, by the age of 2 or 3 many children can identify signs, labels, and logos in their homes and in their communities (Idaho Centre on Developmental Disabilities, 1996). Another element was the concept that reading and writing developed at the same time and in an inter-related manner in young children, rather than sequentially (Idaho Centre on Developmental Disabilities, 1996; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Clay (1975) also emphasized the importance of the relationship between writing and reading in early literacy development. Until then, it was believed that children must learn to read before they could learn to write.
Further literacy also involves listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Further, the functions of literacy such as knowing that letters spell words and knowing that words have meaning have been found to be as important a part of learning about reading and writing during early childhood as the forms of literacy such as naming specific letters or words. Children learn to read so they can read to learn (Council for Exceptional Children, 1996; Idaho Centre on Developmental Disabilities, 1996; Teale & Sulzby, 1986).

Another element was that, Children were found to learn about written language as they actively engaged with adults in reading and writing situations; as they explored print on their own; and as they observed others around them engage in literacy activities (Idaho Centre on Developmental Disabilities, 1996; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). For example when hearing a story a 100th time, children would not just memorise the words, but actually learning about the meaning of the words and about how words told a story. It had been found that children passed through general stages of literacy development in a variety of ways and at different ages (Idaho Centre on Developmental Disabilities, 1996; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Therefore it is never too early to teach the child to read and write.

2.7 Emergent Literacy Behaviours

Literacy development is said to begin in the very early stages of childhood, even though the activities of young children may not seem related to reading and writing in a conventional sense. Early behaviours such as "reading" from pictures and "riting" with scribbles are examples of emergent literacy and are an important part of children's literacy development. The child’s early attempts to “read” a familiar storybook that he or she is holding upside down is a valid construction of what it means to read (Baker, et al., 1994).

According to Sulzby (1991) in Johnson (1999), from three through to four years of age, children in developed literate cultures, show rapid growth in literacy. They begin to "read" their favourite books by themselves, focusing mostly on re-enacting the story from the pictures. Eventually, they progress from telling about each picture individually to weaving a story from picture to picture using language that sounds like reading or writing language (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). At this time, children also experiment with writing by forming scribbles, letter-like forms, and random strings of letters (Barclay, 1991; Clay, 1975; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; McGee & Richgels, 1996). They also begin to use "mock
handwriting" (Clay, 1975) or wavy scribbles (Sulzby, 1985) to imitate adult cursive writing. Letter-like forms or "mock letters" (Clay, 1975) are the young child’s attempt to form alphabetic letters; these forms of writing eventually will develop into standard letters (Barclay, 1991). When using various forms of writing, children maintain their intention to create meaning and will often "read" their printed messages using language that sounds like reading (Clay, 1975; McGee & Richgels, 1996; Sulzby, 1985b). Such is the emergent literacy behaviours of children in developed literate cultures. It is, however, not known whether the Zambian children would exhibit similar literacy behaviour and this is the focus of this research.

Most Western children at the kindergarten level are considered to be emergent readers. They continue to make rapid growth in literacy skills if they are exposed to literacy-rich environments (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999). Children at this age continue to "read" from books they have heard repeatedly. Gradually, these readings demonstrate the intonation patterns of the adult reader and language used in the book. Emergent readers are just beginning to control early reading strategies such as directionality, word-by-word matching, and concepts of print. They use pictures to support reading and rely heavily on their knowledge of language (Pinnell, 1996b; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The current research investigated whether the environment to which the Zambian child is exposed, is literacy-rich to aid literacy development.

Children's writing also develops rapidly during the kindergarten year. Just as children’s reading acquisition does not occur in a linear path, children’s writing skills also reflect an overlapping development. Children continue to use the variety of writing forms developed earlier, but they typically add random letter strings to their repertoire; in effect, they create strings of letters for their written messages without regard for the sounds represented by the letters (Sulzby, 1989, 1992). At this age, children plan their writing and are able to discuss their plans with others. If allowed, they begin to use invented spelling (phonetic spelling). Invented spelling typically represents the most dominant sounds in a word, such as the beginning and ending sounds (Gentry, 1982; McGee & Richgels, 1996; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Weaver, 1988). Even though children begin applying phonetic knowledge to create invented spellings, there is a lapse in time before they use phonetic clues to read what they write. Often children will try to recall what has been written or will use a picture created with the text to reread instead of using the letter clues (Kamberelis & Sulzby, 1988; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). It is interesting to note that once children start to use invented spelling, they do not use it equally for all writing tasks. In a study on emergent writing, Sulzby, Barnhart, and Hieshima (1989) observed children employing writing forms typical of earlier literacy development when asked to engage in more
extended writing tasks. The children used invented spelling to represent single words or short phrases, but they reverted to less mature forms of writing when required to create more complex pieces. The child and the circumstances described above are not what an ordinary Zambian child would experience. This is the ideal situation one would expect.

2.8 Role of Oral Language

The importance of oral language development in the acquisition of early literacy cannot be over emphasised. Matafwali (2010) has revealed that children whose oral language is well developed at an early age have excelled in literacy, language (learning) and academic achievement in general. The principle behind such an observation is that the child learns the sounds of the spoken words and later as he/she learns to read, makes associations of the sounds which he/she has heard and spoken repeatedly with the written words. The child becomes familiar with words which when he/she comes across will not be strange and this will enhance literacy acquisition and development.

Language learning takes place at least partly as a means of social participation (Goodman & Goodman, 1990), which usually begins at home. From birth, children are engaged in various interactions with family members. Infants learn the social function of language long before they are able to utter any intelligible words. During daily routines, parents and caregivers often talk with children in a special type of utterance called motherese. Motherese contains short, repetitive phrases with exaggerated intonation and clear pronunciation (Snow & Ferguson, 1977), such as "dada" for "daddy" and "bibi" for "baby." (Weaver, 1994) suggests that such parent-child interaction facilitates the process of communication, the social function of language. In the process of acquiring oral language, young children are active agents. They not only receive language input from others, but they also generate hypotheses about rules of language use through social engagement with other more competent language users (Newman, 1985). Lindfors (1987) believes that even very young children are able to hypothesize, trying out language as they encounter it in particular contexts. Feedback from parents and caregivers as well as further exposure and interaction, children eventually modify or confirm their hypotheses (Heath, 1983).

From two to three years of age, children begin to produce understandable speech in response to books and the written marks they create. As to whether or not these happen as suggested in thes
various readings given above is what this study intends to investigate using selected Lusaka homes.

2.9  **Literate Culture**

Culture involves the activities of a community of people. It is the totality of the peoples well being and their day to day activities of which literacy may or may not be apart. A literate culture, however, is one which supports literacy development. Just like most literature on emerge literacy, information on literate cultures reviewed in this section of the essay reflects the cultural practices of the western countries. This may or may not be the case with the families under investigation in this research.

2.10  **Home Literacy Environments**

Research has revealed that a literate home environment supports the development of literacy in young children. According to Morrow and Weinstein (1986), one of the most effective approaches to helping young children develop literacy skills is to have a home environment that supports literacy. Instructional environments have a powerful impact on children’s growth in reading. While much of the research on instructional environments focuses on classroom environments, researchers believe that the same effects may be found in supportive home environments. This research intends to establish whether or not the instructional environment given to children takes into account the cultural background of children so that the emergent literacy they may have could be exploited further in formal schooling education.

2.11  **Parents Role in SharedStory Book Reading**

Literature and research show that, parents and care givers are the child's first teachers. The home is where the child gets his or her first experiences with books and reading (National Centre for Learning Disabilities, 2004).

It is never too early to begin reading to a child (McManus, 1996). By reading to infants, parents can help their children develop an understanding about print at an early age as infants learn to make connections between words and meaning (National Association for the Education of
Young Children, 1997). By engaging children at an early age in reading and allowing children to observe those around them engaged in reading activities, parents can help foster a lifelong passion for reading that leads to benefits in all areas of development as the children grow older. Children acquire knowledge of the language and of letter names. They learn that spoken words are composed of separate sounds and that letters can represent these sounds. Parents can aid in the process by reading to children, thus acquainting them with the more formal language of books, pointing out words and letters, and making them aware that words in a book can tell a story or give information.

2.12 Role of Songs

Other readiness skills are acquired through word and rhyme games. Play with language apparently helps young children focus their attention on the sounds of words as well as on their meanings.

It is in this vein that this study investigated what language games for example songs, and other activities children know and play before they start formal schooling. These can be used by parents, siblings and teachers to enhance the achievement of initial literacy development among children. Songs are known for developing oral language in pre-schoolers. Literature has further revealed that, Literacy can be promoted through songs.

The successful acquisition of reading and writing in early childhood depends on a solid background in oral language skills. It is from this point of view that scholars such as Chong & Gan (1997) have suggested that there is no better way to gain knowledge and confidence in oral language than through songs. Oral language is an interactive and social process, and songs are a natural way for children to experience rich language in a pleasurable way.

Young children seem to be naturally excited for sound and rhythm. Besides providing enjoyment, songs can play an important role in language and literacy development. Strong social bonds are encouraged through songs beginning in preschool. Toddlers can begin to experiment with grammatical rules and various rhyming patterns in songs and other written text.

Establishing a sense of rhythm can be used to increase a child's awareness of rhyming patterns and alliteration in other areas of reading and writing. Through songs, memory skills can be improved, and aural discrimination increased (Chong & Gan 1997). Songs can focus the mind on the sounds being perceived and promote learning through an interactive process. It is important to be conscious of auditory and discrimination skills in teaching children. Songs help increase
these listening skills in a fun, relaxed manner. Listening skills is key in singing, language and expressive movement, and later reading and writing (Wolf, 1992).

Songs have always been a way for children to remember stories and learn about the world around them. Using songs as a stimulus can effect one's emotions and make information easier to remember. Songs also create an environment that is conducive to learning. They can reduce stress, increase interest, and set the stage for listening and learning. The similarities between literacy acquisition and musical development are many. Therefore, teaching that combines songs with language arts instruction can be the most effective (Davies, 2000). Furthermore, it is important for emergent readers to experience many connections between literacy in language, songs, and in print.

Language in songs and language in print have many similarities, such as the use of abstract symbols. Both oral language and written language can be obtained in the same manner. That is, by using them in a variety of holistic literacy experiences, and building on what the students already know about oral and written language (Clay, 1993).

For example, emergent readers will attempt to "read" along in a shared reading of a familiar text, just as they will join in a sing along to a familiar song, sometimes making up the words as they go. Just as emergent reading and writing are acquired, rough drawing and pretending to write, musical learning is connected to song and movement. Children instinctively listen to music and try to identify familiar melodies and rhythms, just as early readers will look for words that sound alike, have patterns, or rhyme (Jalongo & Ribblett, 1997). Song picture books, such as ‘The Ants Go Marching’ or ‘The More We Get Together’, support early readers in this manner. They also illustrate how the use of familiar text, predictability, and repetition can encourage children to read. Using songs put to print can expand vocabulary and knowledge of story structure, as well as build on concepts about print. The use of music for reading instruction allows children to easily recall new vocabulary, facts, numbers, and concepts of print. For example, learning the ABC's or other memory skills requires that one learns them through songs. ‘Meet Me at the Garden Gate’ can be used to teach children to skip count by two's; it is a song that is readily learned while at the same time assimilates the mathematical concepts.

Repetition in songs supports and enhances emergent literacy by offering children an opportunity to read higher-levelled text and to read with the songs over and over again in a meaningful context. Print put in songs also allows children to build on past experiences, which in turn invites them to participate in reading and singing at the same time. Using ‘Over the River and through
the Woods’ (Child, 1996) for instruction affords first grade pupils the familiarity necessary to read a higher levelled text based on past experiences. Furthermore, teachers using repetitive text can easily model and exaggerate the repetition, rhyme, and rhythm of story, thereby encouraging the children to join in.

A child's initial introduction to patterned text often first occurs in songs, chants, and rhymes that are repeated over and over again throughout childhood. Once children become familiar with this patterning, they are excited and able to participate in shared reading, writing and other oral language experiences. Concepts about print become more meaningful, and conventions of print are learned in context. Additionally, substitutions in songs, chants or poem can provide for real language experience opportunities. When emergent readers see printed words in the text again and again, they come to identify those words and phrases by their similarities and configurations. Emergent readers who learn 'Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed' (Christelow, 1989), for instance, can quickly spot the quotations marks and capital letters in the doctor's statement, "No more monkeys jumping on the bed!" (Jalongo & Ribblett, 1997).

The effects of songs on the emotions are commonly known. However, the effects of songs on the brain and thinking are demonstrable. Research has shown that during an electroencephalogram (EEG), songs can change brain waves and make the brain more receptive to learning. Songs connect the functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain so that they work together and make learning quick and easy. Brain function is increased when listening to songs and studies have shown that songs promote more complex thinking. It can make connections between emotions, thinking and teaching (Davies, 2000) Howard Gardner's research on Multiple Intelligences supports this idea. He describes how people demonstrate different skills and talents while trying to learn. Therefore, caregivers must provide different approaches to meet a child’s areas of strength in order to be the most successful. For example, Gardner's Musical-Rhythmic learners are sensitive to nonverbal sounds and are very much aware of tone, pitch and timbre. Using rhythm, chanting, and songs with Pre-schoolers can increase their attention and interest while motivating them to learn (Gardner, 1985.)

Advertisers and filmmakers realize and utilize the power of songs to evoke emotions and get the attention of the audience. Parents and caregivers need to learn from this multi-million dollar industry and use songs to help children become literate (Davies, 2000). Good first teaching is based on using what children already know, and the influence of songs on learning is clear. Therefore it seems that caregivers should be motivated to incorporate, songs,
rhymes, chants and rhythm in the scaffolding rather than just talking. Music can set the stage for learning, increase a child's interest, and activate thinking. This study considers the child’s exposure to various songs and ability to sing long before coming to school as emergent literacy behaviour. These songs could be rich sources of emergent literacy that a child has but which school assumes is not there at all. This study makes an attempt to explore more this idea further.

2.13 Summary of Chapter Two

The chapter above has provided a synopsis of literature relevant to this study reviewed by the author. It has highlighted different studies that show the importance of home literacy and the impact that different oral language related activities may have on a growing child and suggest that early childhood literacy experiences may lead to successful reading acquisition. Parents and caregivers are therefore challenged as first teachers of their children. The proceeding chapter will present the methodology employed in this study.
3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The period assigned for fieldwork for this study was three months. The work was carried out within the planned period of time. As already stated in chapters one and two this study will, in specific terms, try to find out the Literacy behaviour which Pre-schoolers exhibit in selected households of Lusaka. The choice of research methods, sample selected as well as the techniques used, will be described in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

Yin (1994:19) describes a Research Design as “an action plan for getting from here to there.” He further defines a research design as a “blueprint” of the research, which deals with four problems: (1) what question to study, (2) what data is relevant, (3) what data to collect, and (4) how to analyse the results. The relevance of a research is, therefore, to avoid collecting data that is not relevant to the research question (Banda, 2002).

The research used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The practical tests were quantitative. The researcher sought to interpret the observations and the respondents’ views to establish what literacy behaviour young children exhibited. The research was naturalistic because there was no systematic manipulation of any process. In the observations, the researcher looked for environmental print around the home. In the interviews with parents, the researcher inquired on their involvement in aiding the emergency of literacy knowledge or behaviour in the child. By administering the test to the child, the researcher found out what literacy behaviour the child exhibited and recorded the findings in table form.

3.3 Population

The population included all school-going aged children but had not yet started school in Lusaka and the parents to these children were also part of the population.

3.3.1 Sample Size

The sample for the Research was drawn from Lusaka. 15 to 19 households were selected in the Lusaka District of the Lusaka Province. This made a total of 21 participants under study. 15 parents or caregivers were interviewed and the number was not equal to the number of children
under study because some households had more than two children as participants in the study. Further, few caregivers were unavailable for interviews after their child had already been tested. Only children who had not attended any formal schooling were part of the sample. This was done deliberately in order to level the field so that kindergarten does not become a factor. The table below shows the total number of boys and girls who made up the sample.

**Table 1: Total sample size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Age distribution-Pre-schoolers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher included the children younger than 6 and above because the children in a Zambian grade one class were not of the same age. In fact, some entered grade one before they turned 7 years, although in theory that should not be the case. On the other hand, some children enter grade one when they are above the official age, as old as 11 years therefore, age here was not a factor for disqualifying a participant in this research because children still find themselves in the same classes which are heterogeneous in terms of age and are treated equally.

A further dimension of the age of the children in the sample was that, there were still children who were of school going age and even above but did not go to school. Some of them claimed to have relocated from the villages not too long before the commencement of the study.
3.3.2 Choice of Participants

The mothers were chosen as respondents in the interviews because they are the ones who, it is believed spend most time with their children. Literature also reveals that, a child’s ability and willingness to learn are strongly influenced by the mother’s education and literacy level. Literacy gaps are often passed on between generations (Dean, 2009). Further, the researcher being female felt comfortable to deal with female participants.

3.3.3 Delimitation

The areas from which the samples were drawn were those in which parents took their children to government schools straight to grade one. The children had no background of having attended nursery school. It is for this reason that the study constituted participants mostly from the high density areas of the district. This was discovered during the pilot study through the school enrolment registers at various schools visited before the study.

3.3.4 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used in this study. This is because Purposive sampling starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that only households with non school going children aged 4 onwards were targeted. Further, purposively Chichewa, Chibemba and English speaking households were selected to avoid the language barrier between researcher on the one hand and participants on the other. Due to the nature of the sampling procedure, the results of the study may only be generalised to the sample and not to the whole population. Further, snowballing was employed from one participant to the next. In the process the researcher interviewed one Tonga speaking caregiver because she was well acquainted with the Nyanja dialect. Generally speaking, most of the respondents understood Nyanja, this being the regional official language for Lusaka.
3.4 Data Collection Instruments and Tools

The following were the research instruments: Interview Schedules, Home Literacy Environment Checklist and Test Score Sheets. These were tested a month prior to the research.

**Interview Schedules**

These were used as a guide for the researcher in the interviews with parents and caregivers. (See appendix II)

**Practical Test Score Sheet**

These were used to record the tested literacy activities that the children were able to perform during the practical test. (See appendix III)

**Home Literacy Environment Checklist**

The Source of this instrument was the, ‘Get Ready to Read’ designed by the National Centre for Learning Disabilities under topics, ‘Early Years (Birth-5), Nurturing a Growing Reader’. The observed environmental print and whatever home literacy activities were recorded in the Home Literacy Environment checklist. (See appendix IV)

**Document Study Checklist**

This was used to record the data for the analysis of the books that the parents termed children’s books in relation to what in emergent literacy terms, were considered fit for emergent readers. (See appendix V)

3.5 Research (Testing) Tools

The tools included those outlined below.

**Paper and Pencils**

These were the tools that the researcher used in testing the literacy behaviour which preschoolers exhibited in their homes. The researcher administered these to the children and
observed what they were able to do with them. Among the literacy behaviour observed were the handling of the pencil, writing from left to right, top to bottom and general pre-writing skills.

**New Breakthrough to Literacy Level One Course Books and Phonic Flipchart**

These were given to the children and the researcher asked questions about the pictures and letter knowledge from the children. The researcher observed and listened to any pretend reading activities as well as the holding of the books once the children were asked to read. The researcher also observed picture identification and literacy behaviour related to matching of letters and shapes. The researcher, further asked the children to do what they thought was done with the materials presented to them.

**Alphabetic wall chart**

This was used for testing letter knowledge of the pre-schoolers.

**3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

The following procedure was used to collect data:

**3.6.1 Piloting**

The pilot study was undertaken in the neighbouring schools and the sample included pre-schoolers. The researcher took advantage of the orientation programme organised by the nearby schools for pre-schoolers, who were brought in the schools for orientation in to grade one prior to enrolment in the school. The schools involved were within the proximity of the sample areas for actual research. These schools included Kabulonga Basic School, which receives children from Kalikili), woodlands B basic school (which receives children from woodlands extension and Chalala areas) and Nyumba Yanga Basic School which receives children from Bauleni). The New Breakthrough to Literacy instruments were used to test their literacy behaviour(s).

Although the researcher wanted to use this group as a control group, the interviews with parents and caregivers of these children were not possible because they were not aware that a researcher would come in to interview them. The purpose of the study was to test the instruments as to whether or not they were suitable. This process also served the purpose of availing the researcher a chance to identify which schools had a reputation of enrolling children who had not been to kindergarten. After piloting in nearby schools which receive grade one pupils from the named
sample areas a month before actual data collection, the exercise proved successful and the instruments deemed fit for actual research. This was a one day programme for each school but was conducted on different days.

The researcher further piloted the study on very young children who were between the ages of 2 to 4 years old. The pilot reviewed that younger children were more confident than those slightly older. Through this pilot study, the researcher was further reassured that the topic was researchable and instruments fit for the exercise for which they were designed.

Child A in the pilot was able to pseudo read and imitated older peoples reading and able to use a pencil and a paper for writing and scribbling.

Child B in the pilot was able to scribble and describe what he wrote. He said, he had drawn his mum and dad. When he was given a booklet in which to pretend write, he filled the entire book with scribbles. The parents were shocked at how well he child was able to hold a pencil. They wondered who could have taught the child to hold a pencil.

On the 4th of January 2010, the researcher piloted the instruments at Kabulonga Basic School. This was after an appointment made earlier to meet children and parents as they came for orientation. The findings were that, some children were able to write strings of letter-like and number-like figures. Some of these figures were in upper case while others in lower case. Almost all the children tested were able to hold the pencil properly.

On the 7th of January 2010, the researcher piloted the instruments at Woodlands B Basic School. This was after an appointment made with the school authorities two days before grade one orientation programme. This was intended to meet the parents and children before schools were in session. The response was poor because it appeared that the parents were tired and bored with the orientation process. The researcher only managed to train four children among whom was an 11 year old girl starting grade one.

### 3.6.2 Actual Data Collection

The actual data collection exercise was undertaken over a period of three months. The researcher made appointments with the participants before going for interviews and observations through the nearby school authorities, house servants, relations and friends. The researcher sought assistance in mobilising these children through the local school authorities and church
members. The actual procedure started with observation of print in the environment, then the children were given the practical test after which, interviews with parents and caregivers were conducted. The interviews and the practical tests complemented each other. As the researcher administered the test, she observed and ticked against the literacy behaviours being performed by the children on the Test Score Sheet. Follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify any inconsistencies and to collect more information.

In Kalikiliki, an appointment was made on the 25th of February to meet one parent and child on the 26th of February 2010, child 12 was tested and observed on Friday 26th February 2010. The child was eight years old. She was able to do quite a number of things as the Test Score Sheet would indicate. Still in Kalikiliki, child 19 and the mother were interviewed, tested and observed after some failed appointments on the 4th March 2010. The test was not as satisfactory as earlier interviews with the other children in Bauleni compound. The child was rather shy and this fact is indicated in the Test Score Sheet.

On the 10th of April 2010, in woodlands extension, child 5 was interviewed. The appointment was made two days before the actual interview and the test with the parent and child respectively. It came to the researcher’s attention that the parent of child 5 was Tonga but understood Nyanja. Therefore, the researcher decided to go ahead with the interview, observation and test. The Researcher further noted that the family under discussion had only been in Lusaka for less than a year and this partly explained why the child had not yet been incorporated into the main stream of school going children of the same age.

3.7 Data collection method

Baker, et al., (1994) states that, more recently, the trend is towards direct observation of literate activities within the home. Rather than rely on quantifications of material resources or on parental reports of literacy-related behaviours only, researchers have begun to document the variety and scope of literacy events within the home through descriptions and microanalysis of parent-child interactions during such events. This changing emphasis is leading to a better understanding of the role of the family in the literacy development and how this role varies in the different socio-cultural communities. This is particularly desirable from an intervention perspective because change can more readily be effected in process variables than in status variables such as parental occupation. The current research, though on a much smaller sample, applied the above method to some extent in finding out the literacy behaviours which preschoolers exhibited in selected households of Lusaka. The literacy event in the homes of those
involved in the current research was home-work writing for the older siblings who attended local primary schools.

3.7.1 Interviews

The researcher used Semi-structured interviews to elicit information from the parents of particular children in the study. This was aimed at finding out the literacy behaviour and knowledge that they were able to observe from the children. Further, the interview would help to highlight what literacy support parents gave to their children. This data was helpful in answering the questions on what literacy behaviours were observable and it would supplement the data in case the children did not perform well in the test at the time of the research. Through the interview with the parents, information about literacy behaviour, richness of the home environment, reading and writing practices and variety of literacy activities was gathered.

3.7.2 Practical test

This was designed by the researcher using ideas from Christopher Lonigan standardised assessment of Pre-kindergartens’ emergent literacy and the Baltimore study inventory report for emergent literacy behaviour. The test gave the researcher an opportunity to actually observe the child engage in literacy activity and therefore establish the children’s performance on a literacy behaviours test. The researcher used level one NBTL core books to test the pre-schoolers on what they were able to do with the books. Further, the researcher used ideas from the NBTL phonic flipchart to test literacy behaviour(s) that the pre-schoolers exhibited.

3.7.3 Observation

This method was used to observe the print environment. The researcher observed environmental print around the home and about the home where this was possible.

3.7.4 Document study

Having observed the print around, and inquired from the interview regarding the kind of print available in the homes, the researcher studied and determined whether or not the materials available were appropriate for supporting emergent literacy.
3.8 Data Analysis

Since the present study was mainly qualitative, data analysis (particularly pre-processing) began during the data collection stage. At this stage one of the things the researcher did was to ensure that the data were internally consistent. For example, the researcher made follow-ups with participants to clarify any contradictions and gaps in the interviews. Data preparation then followed and included, summarizing and organizing the data according to categories. At the final stage the researcher made interpretations of the observations and responses.

3.9 Summary of Chapter Three

Chapter three presented a description of the methods; data collection techniques sample size, delimitation and duration of the data collection exercise. The following chapter presents the findings of the study.
4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction
This chapter presents findings from the practical test, the interviews and the observation checklists. The findings are presented under themes which are derived from the research questions. The Pre-schoolers have been given codes and in this case the coding system used is numeric. Therefore, the participants in this report have been referred to using numbers 1 to 21. The parents who were interviewed are also referred to using the same numbers as those of the children they represented. The findings presented in table form below indicate the literacy behaviours that were tested using the ideas from the standardised test on Pre-kindergartens’ emergent literacy assessments by Lonigan et al., in Wasik (Ed), (in press). The standardised tests are adapted to the local situation in Zambia through the use of language and vocabulary familiar to the participants in the research. The study refers to Pre-schoolers to mean Pre-kindergarteners and, therefore, the tests are on literacy activities or behaviours which children may or may not exhibit before formal schooling.

The Children numbered 1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 and 11 were the ones who formed the sample for the age range of 4-6 years. On the other hand, children numbered 12, 13, 14,15,16,17,18,19,20 and 21 were the ones that formed the sample for the age range of 7-9 years.

The arrangements of the scores are in ascending order with the lowest at the beginning and the highest at the end.

4.2 Literacy Activities in Children’s Homes

There are a number of literacy activities that could be deemed necessary in supporting emergent literacy and these include: print related play; puzzle and card games; storytelling; singing; tongue twisting; games such as Ciyato, ciyenga, nsolo and draft (bottle tops game); handwork; and other motor activities such as running, jumping and pretend writing on walls, ground or slabs.

4.2.1 Findings from the Practical Tests
A number of observable activities in children’s homes which would support the development of emergent literacy were identified through the use of practical tests. The findings in this section have been presented using tables. The findings here have shown that there are a number of activities that could be observable in children’s homes that can be deemed to be supportive of the development of emergent literacy. However, these findings have also shown that these activities
were not found in all homes. In order to make the tables user-friendly, ticks and crosses have been used. The former have been used to show the behaviour exhibited while the latter shows the non-existence of observable activities in particular homes that would be said to be supportive of emergent literacy development. In short, we would say the tables below show the literacy behaviours that the Pre-schoolers in the sample exhibited represented by a tick and those that they were not able to represent by a cross. The findings have been presented in two age categories. The first category is that of children who were aged 4-6 years and the second category is for children who were aged 7-9 years at the time of the research in all the three areas of the research. The Bauleni sample is coded 2, 3, 4, 13, 15, 17, 18 (green) while the Chalala sample is coded 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 20, 21 (red) and lastly the Kalikiliki sample is coded 6, 12, 14, 19 (blue).

**Table 3 below indicates the test scores for 4 - 6 year olds’ Reading behaviour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Behaviour Tested (variables)</th>
<th>Test Scores obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correct holding of book</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Point front and back of book</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Letter recognition</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Number recognition</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aware that words in book make story</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Distinguish between text &amp; picture</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tell story from picture</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Language knowledge</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Answering questions</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tongue twisting</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pretend reading</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Read from left to right</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Read from top to bottom</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Distinguish Nyanja from English script</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Label recognition</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Locate print in the home</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pseudo reading</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Out of</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The scores in table 3 above show the results of the Ch la la sample predominately occupying the lower level scores. More than half of the sample scored slightly above 50%. Out of the 18 literacy behaviour tested among the 4-6 year olds, the scores ranged from 7 as the lowest to 13 as the highest. The table below shows the 7 - 9 year olds' reading behaviour from all the three sites.

**Table 4: 7-9 year olds reading behaviour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Behaviour tested</th>
<th>Test scores obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19 15 13 14 20 16 21 12 18 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correct holding of book</td>
<td>× √ √ × √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Point front and back of book</td>
<td>√ √ √ × × × √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Letter recognition</td>
<td>× × × × × √ × × ×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Number recognition</td>
<td>× × √ √ √ × √ √ ×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aware that words in book make story</td>
<td>× × √ × √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Distinguish text &amp;picture</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tell story from picture</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Language knowledge</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Answering questions</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tongue twining</td>
<td>× × × × × × √ × ×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pretend reading</td>
<td>× √ √ √ × √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Read from left to right</td>
<td>√ √ √ × √ √ √ × √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Read from top to bottom</td>
<td>× × × √ √ √ × √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Distinguish Nyanja from English script</td>
<td>√ × √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Label recognition</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ × √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Locate print in the home</td>
<td>√ × × √ × √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pseudo reading</td>
<td>× × √ × √ × √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total mark</td>
<td>9 9 12 12 13 14 15 15 16 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out of</td>
<td>18 18 18 18 18 18 18 18 18 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 above shows the chalala sample taking scores in the mid position (predominately) while the Baule ni and Kaliliki samples occupy both low and high level scores. The scores for the 7-9 year olds show that the sample scored 50% and above with scores ranging from 9-17 out of 18 variables tested. The table below shows test scores for writing behaviour of 4 – 6 year olds (writing behaviour).
Table 5: 4-6 year olds writing behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Behaviour Tested</th>
<th>Test Scores obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 2 6 8 10 11 3 9 5 7 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ability to recognise a pencil and paper</td>
<td>v v v v v v v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Awareness of the use of pencil</td>
<td>v v v v v v v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ability to hold a pencil</td>
<td>v v v v v x v v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Awareness of the use of a paper</td>
<td>x v v v v v v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ability to use a paper</td>
<td>v v v v v x v v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ability to scribble letter-like forms</td>
<td>x x x x x x v x x v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ability to describe what one has written</td>
<td>v v v v v v v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ability to write from left to right</td>
<td>x x x x x v v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ability to write or scribble from top to bottom</td>
<td>x x x x x v x v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Able to use inverted spellings</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ability to use mock h/writing</td>
<td>x x x x x x v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ability to scribble number-like forms</td>
<td>x x x x x v x v v v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ability to make alphabet letters</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total mark</td>
<td>4 6 6 6 7 8 8 10 10 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out of</td>
<td>13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 above represents scores ranging from 4 to 11 of 13 total variables tested with the Chalala sample predominately occupying both the mid and higher positions whereas the Bauleni and Kalikiliki samples occupy the lower levels. More than half of the sample scored above 50%. The table below shows 7–9 year olds writing behaviour.
Table 6: 7-9 year olds writing behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Behaviour Tested (variables)</th>
<th>Test Scores obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ability to recognise a pencil and paper</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Awareness of the use of pencil</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ability to hold a pencil</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Awareness of the use of a paper</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ability to use a paper</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ability to scribble letter-like forms</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ability to describe what one has written</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ability to write from left to right</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ability to write or scribble from top to bottom</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Able to use inverted spellings</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ability to use mock h/writing</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ability to scribble number-like forms</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ability to make alphabet letters</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total mark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out of</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above represents scores above 50% for all the subjects in this age range. The lowest score being 8 out of 13 and the highest score being 12 out of 13. These scores have no children from a particular area of research occupying a specific position but all the areas are represented in all three positions of low, mid and high position. However, the scores are all above 50%.

Generally, of the 31 literacy behaviours tested in both categories, the scores ranged between 14 for the lowest and 27 for the highest. The scores for reading behaviours for the 4-6 year olds ranged from 8-15 out of 18. The scores for the writing behaviour for the same age group ranged from 4-10 out of 13. On the other hand, test scores for reading behaviours for the 7-9 year olds ranged from 9-17 out of 18 while the scores for the same age group for writing behaviour ranged from 8-12 out of 13. Therefore, all the children exhibited literacy behaviour before school according to the test results. Below is the narration of the results from the tables.
1. **Reading behaviour**

Eighteen children were able to hold the book correctly while three were unable to do that. Fifteen children were able to point out important features such as front and back of the book while six were unable to do so. Five were able to recognize letters while 16 were unable to. 14 children were able to recognize numbers, while seven were not able to. The children were aware that words in a book can make a story, while 12 children were not aware, and when asked to state the purpose of the words, some responded that the print, *vimanumber*, were for decorations or that they meant nothing at all, or that they did not tell anything related to the picture. The researcher would ask the child in Nyanja as follows, “*viti uza chani ivi vimanumber?*” meaning, what does the print on the books tell us? The child would answer: “*palibe*”, meaning “nothing”. In some cases, the researcher would ask: “*nivachani ivivima number?*” meaning, what is the purpose of the print on the books? Alternatively, the researcher would ask: *bannene bana vilemba ivi vimalembo, bana vifakilapo chani?* Meaning, why were these writings put here? Those 9 who were aware would say, “*Ati tibelenge*”, meaning “so that we should read”. In some cases the children would answer “*ati fintuza vintu*” meaning “the print is telling us something”, in other cases, the children would answer “*ni vo phuzilapo*” meaning, something to learn with.

As for the ability to distinguish between text and pictures, 19 children were able to make this distinction while two were not. Those who were able to make this distinction would say “*ivi vima number sivipalana or visiyana na tu bantu*” when asked what they could see on the page they would say, “*Pali tu bantu navimanumber*”, meaning, that the *numbers* (a word used to mean both print and text) were different from the pictures. As regards the ability to tell a story from pictures, 18 were able to do so while three could not. Further, all the children in the sample had language knowledge.

Eighteen children were able to answer questions very well while three were a bit shy. Six children were able to tongue twist, while 15 were unable to. 15 children were able to sing and six were unable to sing. The children sung their own songs. 10 children were able to pretend read, in the sense that they used language that sounded like reading, though not following or pointing at the words, while 11 were not able to. Those who were able to pretend read made sounds like that of one reading, which actually sounded like a song, while those who failed did not say anything, not even the wrong words. 14 children were able to read from left to right while seven were unable to. When asked how they would read if they knew how to read, the 14 pointed in the right direction and the seven pointed the wrong direction. Nine children were able to read from top to bottom while 12 were unable to do so. 18 children were able to recognize logos or labels such as
the Spur Supermarket and Kokoliko chicken snack labels while 3 were unable to. 11 children were able to name places in the home where print or books were kept or located while 10 were unable to do so. Nine children in the test were able to pseudo read which means pointing at the words but saying different words from what is written while 12 were unable to.

2. Writing Behaviours

All the 21 pre-schoolers were able to recognise a pencil and paper. They were also aware of what a pencil is used for, except one. All the 21 were able to hold a pencil and were aware of what a paper is used for, except one. All the 21 were able to use a paper. Nine out of 21 were able to scribble letter-like forms. All 21 did describe what they wrote. As regards ability to write from left to right, 11 were able to while 10 were unable to. 13 were able to write from top to bottom, while eight were unable to. All 21 Pre-schoolers in the sample were unable to use inverted spellings. Nine children were able to use modern writing while 12 were not. 15 of the Pre-schoolers were able to scribble number-like forms but six were not. On ability to make alphabet letters, only three were able to do so and 18 children were not.

3. Findings from Interviews

Among the activities in the homes that would support development of emergent literacy captured in the interview schedule were home work writing by older siblings or school going friends; child’s behaviour towards reading; print related play; puzzle and card games; storytelling; singing; tongue twisting; games such as *Ciyato, ciyenga* and draft (bottle tops game); handwork; and other motor activities such as running, jumping and pretend writing on walls, ground or slabs.

This research found that, one of the activities in the homes that would support literacy development was the writing of home work. This was by either school-going siblings or neighbours. It was during the period of homework that the pre-schoolers in the research would imitate their school-going siblings and neighbours. An example is Parent 16 who reported that her child sat down to learn from the neighbour who attended a nearby government school. The parent said that the school-going neighbour taught her friends including child 16 sums in mathematics which she wrote on the broken down ceiling board using the chalk she obtained from school. She further made all those listening to her write on er. The parent informed the researcher that the rest of the parents in the neighbourhood encouraged her to teach her friends.
The parent of child 11 reported that the child was stopped from holding his school-going sister’s book whenever he wanted to write on grounds that “ni buku yamunzako” meaning, “do not touch the book, it is for your friend.” The mother to Child 7 reported in the interview that, she and her husband took it upon themselves to teach their son since he had no older siblings to do homework with at home.

Thirteen parents reported that their children did not play puzzle games while parent 16 reported that her child played puzzle games with her friend from the neighbouring house. Parent 16 further reported that the father read with the child though the child was afraid that the father would beat her if she did not learn or understand what the he wanted her to learn. Parent 20 reported that her child played matching games which she thought were similar to puzzle games. The reason given by one parent as to why Puzzle games were not played was due to lack of resources.

When asked whether or not their children in the sample were able to hold a pencil, parent 19 reported that she had not really observed but the test score shows that the child was able to hold a pencil while the rest of the parents reported that their children were able to hold pencils.

The other question in the interview schedule that helped answer research question one was, what do the children play or spend a lot of time with that parents thought would help their children learn reading quickly once in school? In response to this question, seven parents reported activities such as moulding, playing with toy cars, pseudo cooking and other activities dealing with handwork, whereas eight parents, 16, 19, 20, 14, 9, 7, 5 and 21 reported that their children played with books and pencils while others said that their children spent time drawing numbers 1-10 on the ground with their school-going friends scaffolding the process. The activities reported other than these mentioned were playing with books and flipping of magazine pages (pretend reading). Among the eight parents one reported that her child scribbled on newspapers.

When asked whether children scribbled on the walls or on the ground, 13 parents reported that their children scribbled either on the wall or on the ground. What they scribbled ranged from cars to people and number like structures. However, three parents among these said they stopped their children from scribbling on the walls and said they encouraged them to write on the ground. Two parents reported that their children never scribbled on the walls. These were parents 15 and 16 of Bauleni and Chalala respectively.

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When asked whether their children enjoyed being read to one parent reported that child 16 kept quiet because she was scared of being beaten by the father who read to her. Five parents reported that their children were never read to, while 19, 18, 21, 5, 9, 7, 8, and 12, reported that their children enjoyed being read to by either their fathers or uncles. Two reported fathers reading to their children while the rest reported siblings, uncles and neighbours reading to their children. The reading referred to in most of these instances were writing and counting of numbers, described by one parent as “kubelenga ma one” meaning reading numbers not story book reading or letters and sounds.

On tongue twisting and singing, reference is made to tables 3 and 4 items 10 and 11 of the test score sheet. From the interviews all parents reported that, tongue twisters were not practised. Singing was said to be practised by all the children in the sample. The type of songs was mainly Zambian gospel songs. These findings actually agree with the test scores as presented earlier.

Moulding, singing and storytelling, games such as Ciyengi, Ciyato, nsolo, eagle and katouch were prevalent in some instances. In the research, children enjoyed singing for the researcher. When asked where they heard the songs that they sung, children said that they heard the songs from the radio, church and in few cases from the television.

In Chalala, the children coded 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 20, 21 exhibited emergent literacy behaviour in that they played with sticks and bottle tops. In Kalikiliki the children coded 6, 12, 14, 19 played Ciyato, eagle, katouch, draft, pseudo cooking that is, imitating older people, while most of what they did was moulding cars with mad and others engaged in sports, split running competition and making items such as cars and also building houses with stones in places where construction works were in progress such as Chalala. The Bauleni children are coded 2, 3, 4, 13, 15, 17, 18 among whom only two parents were interviewed and reported that the children in the area played Ciyato, widi, eagle, katouch and for the boy draft, a game of bottle tops.

Further, the parent to child 8 of Chalala, reported that, her child would ask her sister who went to school in Nyanja about print that, “ivi vimalembo ni vo belenga kusukulu, muzitayako nzeli, muzibelega” the child also boasted that he could write better than his sister who attended a local primary but the mother thought that he scribbled nonsensical things. The mother reported in Nyanja that “amalembo vachabe chabe” meaning the child writes nonsensical things.

Parent 7 reported that her home was literacy-friendly. She further said that she had acquired at least two reading books for her son. It was brought to the researcher’s attention that both parents
to child7 taught the boy reading and writing especially the alphabet and vowels:a e i o u. The findings also showed that they did not teach all letter sounds to the child.

The homes in Chalala were communal and so books were in the custody of the parents and were hidden in the bed rooms meaning that the children could not easily access the print materials in the home.

Eleven out of 21 children in the sample revealed that books were kept in the bedrooms of their parents. Others did not even know the location of print, such as books and magazines.

4.3 Print in children’s homes and their immediate environment

Findings from interviews

Ten parents reported that their homes were literacy-friendly and six out of the 10 were from Chalala, a lowdensity area. Two were from Bauleni and the other two were from Kalikiliki, both high density areas.

Out of the 10, two were Jehovah’s Witness and, therefore, had access to religious books. One was from Kalikiliki, parent14 and the other from Chalala, parent 21. However, the child from the Chalala parent indicated in the test that she did not know where the mother kept the books. She said she did not know anything about books when asked during the testing session with the researcher. On the other hand, five parents interviewed reported that their homes were not literacy-friendly.

However, the researcher noted that parent 5 later indicated in the interview that there were exercise books in the home for the child’s elder cousin who was in grade eight. Further, parent 5 reported having a bookshelf where the bible and dictionary were kept except that the household did not have story books.

Seven parents reported that they had pictures in their homes. Those children looked at and could explain what was on the pictures if asked. On the other hand eight parents reported not having pictures in their homes. Among the pictures reported were calendars and magazines for those who said they had pictures.

There was no consistent pattern in which parents acquired books for their children. The books bought were sometimes not specifically for one child but for all in the house and some of these reported books were plain not readers or alphabet books. And these books were sometimes donated and not bought. 10 parents reported that they had not bought or acquired books for their
child and five reported that they had either bought or were given at least one book (alphabet book was reported by two parents) for their child.

**Kinds of Print/Books in the Homes**

The researcher inquired about the availability of various kinds of materials in the different homes. These materials included books, magazines, hospital cards and telephone directories.

Parent 14, a Jehovah’s Witness, reported that they had all the four kinds of books listed above. Parent 12 reported that the home had no print materials in the categories above. However, she later presented two Kwatu HIV magazines which were distributed by the local clinic in Kalikiliki. She, further, reported that the hospital cards were not kept at that home but at her parent’s house. Her parent lived within the neighbourhood. She explained that her child spent some time with parent when her step father was around. Parent 20 reported that the home only had hospital cards. Parent 9 reported that the only print material in the home were a book and hospital cards. Parent 5, whose child had reported a neighbour teaching him and not the grade eight elder cousin, reported that there were exercise books belonging to her grade eight niece in the home. She, further, said that the home had a dictionary and a bible. Parent 15 said the home had magazines, hospital cards and a bible. Parent 10 said the home only had exercise books. The rest of the parents reported that they had all the kinds of books except the telephone directory. Among these, parent 21, a Jehovah’s witness, said that they had the Nyanja version of Sanj a religious book of their church. Parent 16 reported that the bible in the home was in Nyanja. Calendars were in English while those households that possessed bibles had them in their familiar language. The researcher was in one Kalikiliki household present with Indian recipe books as children’s books. These books had small printed writings. The researcher found out that Pre-schoolers in Chalala seemed to have been exposed to most appropriate reading and writing materials than their counterparts in Bauleni and Kalikiliki. In chalala, the researcher discovered that there were more appropriate books for emergent readers than in the other two areas. The parents reported that they had acquired alphabet books and a number of books for their children from the neighbours and from the homes of their employers, for those who worked as house servants. Parent 16 in Chalala further reported having received some nursery books from his employer who owned a nursery school. Although the care giver is the mother, the father seemed to have little interest in teaching the child to read and write. Surprisingly, the father kept these books for his younger son because he believed that educating a girl child was a waste of money and time. The child under discussion was a girl. The researcher found out that the father taught the child to read but the child was scared of the father. This was attributed to the fact that
the father had more interest in his son, and for him, he kept books to be used at an appropriate time.

**Findings from Observation**

The print materials common to all households included Calendars, soap packaging materials such as boom and bullet boxes. Wall clocks were also prominent in some households. Most of the print was in English.

**Environmental Print Presented by Area of Research**

Below is the presentation of the print in the environment of all the three locations of the research.

**Woodlands Extension/Chalala Areas**

In Chalala, print available were posters for mobile top-up and advertisement for the sale and rent of a house. In one case the advertisement stated “house4 rent” using inverted spellings (four). Other print included bill boards for Zain and MTN, the two telecommunications companies that were around at the time of the research, road signs, street names such as, lake road, school names, such as, lake road school, Sacred Heart of Jesus, house and plot numbers such as, 12382/12424, and 12352/12367. Lodge names like, Mulemfw Lodge and shop names like, Aunt B Professional and shopping mall names such as Crossroads.

**Kalikiliki**

The different print available in Kalikiliki included posters such as those for barber shops, Zain advertisements, the same as in Chalala above. There were also shop names like, Nkwazi Tuck Shop, Ernest Shop. Others were house and plot numbers as follows: 53/07, 46/16, 53/09, school names such as Kalikiliki Community School, church names, like Baptist church. The researcher also observed that most of the posters were advertisements.

**Bauleni**

In Bauleni, Zain, MTN and other business posters were prominent. School names such as Chithuzu Christian Academy were also found in Bauleni. House and plot numbers like 33/36 and 33/15 were observed. Also available were shop and bar names such as, Corner Tavern, Home
Shop/ndiyo Centre and Tom Tiger investments. The other print available in Bauleni was the name of a Police Post.

4.4 Children’s View of Print in the Environment

Findings from Practical Test

Nine children (two from the 4 - 6 years old sample, (child 8 and child 7) and seven from the 7-9 years old) were aware that print indicated on the NBTL level one books was put there in order that it must be read so that a message could be obtained from the writings. On the other hand, some children could not associate print to any meaningful activity such as making sense out of print, but rather that print was for decorations. Some children could not make any associations between print and picture even when asked to tell the story in the book by looking at the picture. But for the majority of the children in the sample, pretend reading was prevalent. This was observed by both the researcher and the parents during the testing and at other time before the test in the daily experiences of the children. When asked about what print meant to them they said “palibe”, in Nyanja, meaning it meant nothing at all.

Findings from Interview

Parents 9, 20, 11, 12, 18, 6 and 16 reported that their children did not know the function of print, while parent 5 was not sure whether or not the child knew the function of print. This brings the total number of parents who reported negatively to eight. Seven parents reported positively on their children’s awareness of the function of print. These were parents numbers 14, 15, 10, 7, 19, 8 and 21. In Nyanja, the mother to child 8 reported that the boy had remarked to his sister about print that, “ivi vimalenbo ni vo belenga kusukulu, muzitayako nelu Queen, muzibelenga” meaning that print is for reading at school, you should concentrate in reading it. However, the findings from the interview and the test gave conflicting results in the sense that children 20, 12 and 16 whose parents reported as being ignorant of the function of print were seen in the test as being aware of the function of print. On the contrary, children 14, 15 and 19 whose parents reported as being aware of the function of print were seen in the tests as not being aware of the function of print. This discrepancy could have been as results of nervousness, on the part of the child in the presence of the researcher. In the cases were the parents reported positively and e
researcher observed otherwise. On the other hand parents who reported negatively and the researcher observed otherwise could mean that the parents were not aware of their children’s knowledge of print.

Further, 14 parents reported that they never encourage their children to dictate stories to them so that they (children) could see their own words in print. One parent, nevertheless, reported her husband doing so by writing words such as kadolî meaning ‘doll’ after a child said the word. This was done by the father of child21, a Jehovah’s Witness in Chalala area. This was so because the female parent was not able to write but she claimed to know how to read.

4.5 Parent’s Role in Facilitating Literacy Development in their Children

Some of the roles that parents are supposed to play in order to facilitate literacy development in their children are creating a reading area; providing reading materials and opportunity for literacy practice; acting as role models for their children; encouraging children to experiment with pretend writing; and engaging the child in reading.

Findings from Interviews

Eight parents reported that they had surfaces in the homes such as tables where the children could practice literacy. The same parents reported that they had places were print was displayed in the homes and this was mainly television stands. Three other parents reported that they kept the books in the bags hung on a nail in the bed room. They were parents 7, 10 and 19. Parent 7 reported keeping books in a box for fear of losing them to the neighbours who shared a house with them. Parent 19 kept some magazines in a bag despite having what others used as a display for books, a television stand. Four parents reported they neither had a reading area nor a bookshelf or television stand.

With regard to the provision of specific books for the child in the study Parents 7, 9 and 20 reported that they bought at least one book for their child. Parent 21 reported having bought three books for all her children but not specifically for child 21. The other two parents reported having acquired books for all their young children in the home but did not specify how many. Parent 18 of Bauleni said, she bought plain books for practising writing and not reading. Nine parents however, reported that they had not bought any books for their children.

Further, when asked whether parents encouraged their children to scribble and experiment with pretend writing during pretend play, the following was recorded. Parent8 said, in Nyanja,
“nimamwaza kulemba ma one noti va chabe chabe” meaning that, ‘I tell him to write numbers not useless things’. She went on to say that he could, sometimes, write one thing but said that he had written another. For instance he would write the number ‘1’ but says that he has written number ‘3’.

When asked whether or not they told stories to their children five parents reported that they never told stories to their children. These were parents 6, 8, 12, 16 and 19. These included three parents from Kalikiliki and two from Chalala. The other 10 reported that they told stories to their children. However, there is no significant difference in the children’s performance on the test between those who were told stories and those that were not told stories. This may point to the fact that there is really no connection between being told stories and reading. Reading was not practised as compared to arithmetic in these areas. Also some stories told were not seen in print. Therefore, storytelling was treated separately or independently from print. In other words, these findings have shown that there is no one to one correspondence of stories being told (oral language) and print available in the immediate environment.

When asked whether the parents pointed out important features of the books such as front, title and author while reading to the child, six parents reported that they did point out these important features to the child. These included parents who reported either siblings or uncles reading with the child since they could not read themselves. These were parent 7, 8, 9, 14, 20 and 21. Nine parents did not point out important features of the book probably because they did not have the books but rather had paper which they used for writing on rather than books for reading. When asked whether or not the parents regularly changed books available giving the children access to new books as well as old favourites, all the parents reported negatively except parent 21 of Chalala who said she got books from church (Jehovah’s witness).

All but one parent reported that they never allowed children to dictate stories to them so that children could see their own words in print.

When asked whether or not they engaged their child in reading, seven parents coded 5, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18 and 21 said they did while eight said they did not. Parent 21 reported that the father and uncle engaged the child in reading. However, some parents referred to counting of 1 to 10 as a reading activity, which in this case was common to all except that it was not the parents who were engaged in these activities with the children but other people.
It was also reported by some parents that they engaged their children in re-sighting the alphabet song. Eight parents reported that they did not engage children in reading either due to lack of time or not being able to read themselves.

In other homes the parents who were better informed allowed and encouraged their child to scribble on the ground but not on the walls, because most of the respondents rented houses so the landlords could not let them make the walls of their houses dirty. However, some parents discouraged their children from scribbling on what would be called sign posts. One such instance of discouragement was reported in the home of child 6 in Kalikiliki compound.

**Findings from Home Literacy Environment Checklist**

Findings from the checklist show that most children never observed their parents engage in reading but did observe their siblings, neighbours and uncles. From the behaviourists’ point of view, children imitate what they observe. However, the question that seems obvious is to whether or not parents in these homes are the role models to their children. Role modelling can either be positive or negative as observed and feared by some parents according to Kozol (1958; p. 57) who quotes one parent saying,

“I look at my seven year old son and my 12 year old daughter and I want to help them with their homework, but I can’t. My son was supposed to repeat the ninth grade for the third time this year. He finally said he would dropout”.

This clearly shows to what extent parents who cannot read and write can influence their children’s academic achievements. The only thing that parents who could not read and write could do was encourage literacy activities initiated by the child itself. This was in some instances not done deliberately that the child would build on these skills once in school but they happened coincidentally because the child had initiated the activity then the caregiver had no choice but to assist. Children’s role models were in most cases older siblings, uncles and friends in the neighbourhood who attended local nursery schools or government schools.

**4.6 Parent-Children Shared Book Reading**

**Findings from Home Literacy Environment Checklist**

The table below presents the frequencies of parents’ involvement in the literacy activities with their children.
Table 7: Frequency of parent involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Parents codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in a while</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ever</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 above indicates the times that parents actually did involve the child in literacy activities, not necessarily reading. For most of the children who formed the sample, their parents were illiterate and could not read in both English and the usage of wider communication, in this case, chinyanja and or Chibemba. A few (one or two) in the sample were able to read the bible in a local language. Mostly parents read to themselves and the children observed, Child14 observed her mother reading to herself but said that she had never observed her father read or write.

Table 8: Education level of parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ codes</th>
<th>Grade level attained</th>
<th>Level of education of parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 above indicates the level of education of the parents interviewed. The parents are represented by the numbers of their children that is, 5-21 in the vertical axis. The horizontal numbers represent the grade level of the parents. The ticks represent each parents grade level attained, with zero meaning never been to school. The ticks represent grades 1-12. Seven out of the 15 parents interviewed were unable to read and write, these were; 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 20. Two reported that they were able to read but not write. These were parent 10 and parent 21. Parent 12 claimed to be able to write but not read. The rest of the parents’ sample was able to read and write. These were parents; 5, 7, 11, 16 and 18.

The findings in the table above show that the higher the level of education the more literate the parents in the sample were. Those that were able to read and write had gone up to at least grade seven and eight and at most grade twelve. Even those parents who reported that they never engaged their children in reading reported the following frequencies for child oriented literacy activities as shown in table 9 below. Table 9 below shows the frequency of literacy activity initiated by the child.

**Table 9: Child’s initiated activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Children’s codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5    6    7    8   9   10   11   12   14   15   16   18   19   20   21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daily</td>
<td>v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once a week</td>
<td>v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice a week</td>
<td>v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times a week</td>
<td>v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in a while</td>
<td>v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v     v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two parents reported four to six times a week, which is interpreted in the table as daily. Six parents observed the frequency at which the children engaged themselves in reading as being two to three times a week. One parent reported once a week, five parents reported three times a week. Four reported once in a while and lastly two parents reported that their children never initiated any literacy activity.

4.7 Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter above has presented findings on the literacy activities that pre-schoolers engaged in at various homes. It has also presented finding on the print and views of children about print that existed in their homes and immediate environment. The chapter further presented findings on the roles that parents played in facilitating literacy development in their children and how often parents read to their children. The proceeding chapter focuses on the discussion of the findings.
5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of the study. This study made an attempt to identify emergent literacy behaviours which Pre-schoolers exhibited in selected households of Lusaka. The discussion in this chapter is based on the objectives of this study. The objectives of this study were to:

- establish the literacy behaviour(s) children already exhibit from their homes before receiving formal instruction in school;
- find out the type of literacy activities such as games played that would support the development of emergent literacy in children’s homes;
- find out the type of print environment existing in the children’s homes or immediate environment;
- establish children’s views of print in the environment;
- establish the role of the parents in facilitating literacy development in their children; and
- find out how often parents read to their children.

The major findings have been discussed according to the research objectives. This is followed by recommendations.

5.2 Major Findings

5.2.1 Literacy Activities Children engage in at Home that would Support the Development of Emergent Literacy before Formal Schooling

The study has found out that many children do engage themselves in various activities that could be deemed necessary for the development of literacy skills later. The research has found out that long before children entered formal school, they played games such as Ciyato and did rhyming in songs. They also involved themselves in pseudo reading and writing activities.
The study has established that children played a lot of games that could be said to be supportive of literacy behaviour. However, the findings seem to show that quite often both parents and children were not aware that those games could be relevant to literacy behaviours development just like they viewed the inscriptions or writings on walls as mere decoration. The study has identified games such as Ciyato, nsolo as very useful in the development of emergent numeracy. While children played Ciyato, they were mere observers in nsolo as it required higher thinking skills. However, the argument that can be raised here is that by merely observing, children did enhance their emergent literacy because they heard names of objects which were in words that represented numbers. The research has also found out that there were Zambian languages which had more language games and tongue twisters than others. In this case it may require a skilled teacher to take advantage of other children from other language groupings to bring more of these games from their languages. However, this is when children are at school [which is not the focus of this study] but does show that even at home level, children may learn of these games. This may not necessarily be from their parents but also from peers, neighbours and other adults in the community.

Another literacy activity brought out by the research as singing. A number of songs that children sung had the capacity to expose them to a number of literacy behaviours that could be used later once the children started school. It was observed that the children under study sung Zambian songs that were in the familiar languages which were mostly in Nyanja and Bemba to a lesser extent. The finding showed that songs were heard from the radio and television. Songs in these areas played a role in oral language development. The researcher discovered that almost all the 21 children tested were able to sing, except that there seemed to be lack of appreciation of this act by the caregivers who probably lacked the information on the importance of songs in the success of literacy acquisition. This is, however, contrary to the dictates of current research that urge adults to provide children with a variety of interesting language experiences of which singing is apart.

The research also found out that other than environmental print, television and radio seemed to have a lot of influence in the development of oral language. This was mostly through songs, drama and advertisement especially those done in the Zambian languages such as Zambian music by local artists, Banja, meaning ‘family’ a television drama on Muvi television channel and one lole two flavour a famous advertisement aimed at the children for Lolly pops (sweets). The children had language knowledge because they were able to speak and use language to speak, and as they spoke, they did not mispronounce words and further they were able to sound out words as
they answered questions. This means that they were phonologically capable of sounding out words though not syllabically but as wholes. Therefore, they seemed to have developed oral language which is important in emergent literacy and in literacy development as a whole.

The research further found out that tongue twisters were not practised in the homes of these children. When asked whether or not parents were encouraging their children practice tongue twisting, they said they did not. This was because they were not aware of phrases for tongue twisters in Nyanja. For instance in Bemba, the term for tongue twisters is utunyongandi while an example of such is a phrase that goes “akakopakapotokaibye”. This may be similar to the English version that goes ‘Peter Piper picked a packet of pickled peppers and the packet of pickled pepper that Peter Piper picked was...’ This may suggest the need to have teachers who are speakers of children’s mother tongues so that language is not a barrier. The other issue to be looked at could be a pedagogical one, involving methodologies utilised by teachers and even the way learning and teaching materials are prepared. Preparing work sheets on some tongue twisters for the use by various teachers may help in situations where one language may be deficient in tongue twisters.

These tongue twisters in oral language development help in the flexibility of the tongue. Therefore, not encouraging these children to tongue twister disadvantages them. Children may face difficulties in speaking fluently, pronunciations, reading or even singing the alphabet song. This may also affect other language play that may be required at a later stage in the development of literacy.

5.2.2 Print in Children’s Homes and their Immediate Environment

The findings revealed that there were variations in the provision of reading materials. Despite these variations in the way parents in the sample acquired books, one good thing about this act was that they had some value attached to literacy. This allowed children to get acquainted to books and practice emergent literacy.

The findings have also shown that in some cases, children were indeed exposed to literacy environment inform of print but some contentious issues were that the font of print of such print materials was not suitable for children. The findings have shown that the print environment in these areas was not so supportive of emergent readers because the language used for labels, posters, billboards and school names was not familiar in most instances, meaning that such print may not have so much influence on the emergent reader. This could be because research has
shown that there is no one-to-one correspondence of the language children develop orally and the print found in the environment.

The researcher would like to argue here that even though the print was in foreign language and small font, this may not have mattered. What mattered at this level was that children were being exposed to some print that they could see and even do pretend reading; a valid reading readiness activity. The research found out that pre-schoolers in Chalala seemed to be exposed to more appropriate reading and writing materials than their counterparts in Bauleni and Kalikiliki. However, the findings did not necessarily show that children in the homes with rich literacy environment exhibited high levels of literacy behaviour as there could be other variables such as parent involvement in helping such young ones.

The findings from this study suggest that there was no significant difference in the children’s performance in the tests due to differences in the amount of print in the homes and immediate environment. The possible causes could be various variables that could be there in terms of peers, adult–child interactions and may sometimes not be known to parents.

The researcher’s argument which goes in line with Morrow, 1995, is that, environmental print is of no use to the child if no adult brings the child’s attention to it. Much as there may be print in the home and immediate environment of the child, if no adult or caregiver makes an effort to make the child aware of it or ring the child’s attention to the print. Moreover, the majority of the parents were not able to read. This idea points to a higher possibility of them not bringing the child’s attention to the print.

In addition, the researcher would argue that although some parents reported that they had pictures in their homes, they actually kept them in bed rooms and not in the communal living room where children could access them. The other discovery made by this research is that there was lack of knowledge on the part of parents on what could be considered as reading materials. There are some parents who did not consider materials such as calendars as reading materials that could enhance emergent literacy in children. The researcher’s argument is that such parents may not utilize the print available to initiate literacy activities because they lacked both the knowledge and the strategies to do so and that may explain why in such homes such materials were kept in bed rooms as they assumed that children could not make any good use of them.

The research also found out that for those children whose siblings went to school, there was more print in the homes than those who were the oldest in their homes. For some, the home environment only had materials such as calendars and old magazines. In other homes there were
only pieces of paper where the children scribbled some things. However, even the homes that had materials, it was inappropriate for children because the writings were either too small and too many or that the language was not familiar to the child. It is reiterated that at this stage, language may not matter much as children do not know how to read but may be doing pretend reading activities. What is important and key to this study and this research question in particular is that the provision of reading materials can be done by any person other than parents alone and these materials can include even calendars and other materials.

5.2.3 Children’s Views of Print in the Environment

This study found that a number of children were aware of print materials that were read at home or in church. Some children thought that some print like those made on walls were just for decoration. This could be as a result of what some parents told them. This research also showed that those parents who thought reading and writing were limited to school did not encourage their children to scribble on pieces of papers as the feared that if they encouraged such practices children would scribble on walls and make marks on other variables in the homes. Key to this research was that many children were aware of what print was and the purpose for it. The assumption made by this research is that those children who see elders and school-going friends read (the Bible and Newspapers) may admire them and wish they would read like them. Such admiration may be translated into motivation on the part of children to strive to reach that level once they start school.

5.2.4 The Role that Parents Play in Facilitating Literacy Development in their Children

The findings have revealed that most homes visited did not have appropriate reading areas. The probable reason is that, the homes were small and most space provided for by parents for reading were coffee tables which were also used for serving of food. The libraries in these homes were boxes in which ‘inappropriate’ books were kept as the case turned out for most of the children in the sample. This only applies to homes in which materials such as magazines and church books such as Awake were available. Due to such kind of storage of books, some children in the sample could not locate literacy materials in their home. This in itself explained why certain literacy practices lacked in the homes because according to research, for pre-schoolers to emerge literate, materials for practising reading should be readily available.
The findings have also shown that parents who were literate had a better chance of surrounding their children with a literacy-rich environment, which made it possible for children in such homes to play more literacy games and activities both unconsciously and consciously. One other point shown by these findings is that those parents who were not literate sometimes identified which activities could be literacy activities or not and that way did not allow their children to play such activities or could even discourage them all together.

This research has further found out that most parents engaged with children on literacy activities that they were comfortable with, such as arithmetic, probably because their economic activity was buying and selling and therefore had a grasp of the basics in arithmetic. The argument is that some parents purposefully supported literacy behaviour motivated by the benefit they would get from that. The research found out that many parents exposed their children to the English Alphabet though they did not have the ability to teach them the letter sounds. This had some implication for the growing child because they did not see a direct relationship between words spoken and written. These two things were treated independently. This is contrary to the literature which shows that there is a direct relation between the spoken words and the written words. This is a major observation in this study because it may explain the mismatch between home and school. At school, children are supposed to relate what they say and print in the books. Furthermore, this does not make parents role models. Parents lack the tools required for them to teach children how to get interested in reading and writing. They also do not involve the child in this process but dictate what and how the child should learn, so no input from the child.

The above notwithstanding, it must be clearly recognised that parents are not teachers to be teaching their children the letter sounds and later the graphic symbols. This is what teachers will do once these children start formal schooling. What this research has discovered is that some parents do have the English alphabet books in their home which is a key tool in emergent literacy on the part of children before they start school. The pertinent issue here is that there are contradictions when such children start Grade one where in NBTL, they are now encouraged to show and teach these children the Zambian language alphabet and not the English one.

Generally, many research findings and literature support the notion that when parents are literate, children benefit, as parents will encourage their children to develop interest in education in general and literacy in particular, and may supply their young with a lot of materials to encourage literacy activities. In this study, however, the level of education of parents (although not very high) was not a big factor in the enhancement of literacy behaviour of their children.

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Further, the study has also shown that, the level of education of parents was insignificant in determining how well literate their children were. This also means that the children in the sample exhibited literacy behaviour regardless of their parent’s level of education. It is also likely that the children in the sample socialised with other people other than parents. The above observation further reflects the nature of the socio-cultural setting of the African community which differed greatly from the European community in which a literate home environment referred to the home in which only nuclear family members lived.

The socialisation style in the Zambian community is that of a child being every other person’s responsibility not just its parents. In line with the common African saying adage which states that, “it takes the whole village to raise a child,” this concept also applies to the child’s acquisition of literacy concepts and imitation of behaviours from friends in the neighbourhood. It is generally accepted that parents play an incredibly important role in their children’s success in school without which a child goes through school with the odds overwhelmingly against success (Carrol, 1993).

The parents in this study played a very insignificant role in their children’s literacy development because these parents lacked the knowledge on the importance of home literacy as well as basic literacy skill to transfer to their children.(My personal argument and experience as a teacher and researcher is that the levels of education on the part of parents especially mother who by African tradition, spends more hours with children than their father was important and played a big role in the enhancement of literacy behaviour of children. However, more research may be needed to establish other variables at play in this case.

The evidence in this study has also proved right the assumption that there is a difference between low density and high density areas in terms of exhibition of literacy behaviours in the children. Generally, the children from Chalala, a low density area, exhibited more literacy behaviours than their counterparts in the two high density areas. However, there were exceptional cases, such as Child 6 of Kalikiliki who scored more than everyone else in the sample for his age group. This could imply that there were other variables at play such as peer influence, adult and children interaction such as neighbours.

The research has however, established that the economic levels of parents, literate or otherwise play a role in the enhancement of literacy behaviour in children. The research has found out that low income households dedicated more time on economic ventures in a bid to put food on the table than seeking to provide materials to support literacy activities in their homes. Parents from
such households were preoccupied with where the next meal for their children would come from rather than engaging in literacy activities with the child. Therefore, the Socio-economic status (SES) is a determining factor of what literacy behaviour pre-schoolers exhibited in these areas. One point that would be of interest and with a potential area for future research is that parents from low income group tend to involve their young ones more in numeracy than literacy related activities. This could be because of the activities they were engaged in such as selling and buying.

Related to the above assertion, one of the unique findings of this study was that one common trend among all the children, irrespective of sex, was that they exhibited an inclination to numeracy rather than literacy. This explains why children were mixing up letters as numbers. The explanation could be that most children were exposed to numbers rather than letters, so they were unable to describe letters. They instead referred to them as “vima number” which is a pejorative way of describing numbers. For those who went a step further, they would say, for example, “number “b”. It is arguable that because some parents send their children to the markets to buy various commodities, the children often practice numbers in order not to be short-changed. This may explain why some children may have been better in numeracy than in letter recognition. However, more research is needed to ascertain variable that may be at play in such cases.

Another point that the findings have revealed is the notion that some parents had about the role school and teachers should play in the learning of their children. The findings have shown that some parents thought literacy activities were supposed to be done at school and with teachers only. This could be the reason why they did not want to have anything to do with literacy oriented activities and this could be the reason why some children, who heard what their parents said, also said reading and numbers was done in schools.

5.2.5 Frequency of parents reading to their children

The research found out that reading to children by parents was not a priority in the research areas, implying that whatever children knew was mostly from their siblings and neighbours.

Findings have shown that many parents did not have the time and energy to read to their children. Further, most parents were not able to take their children to either the libraries or book shops in the nearest places.

In some cases, it was found out that Children were never given a chance to practice literacy even when it was self-initiated. Parents would interfere during home work time for siblings and neighbours who went to school. The research found out that some parents discouraged their
children from getting involved in literacy activities that could promote emergent literacy in readiness for formal school. This was particularly so in the parents were illiterate and the child wanted to learn something from the sibling who went to formal school. Such parents tended to think that when the child asked questions to its sibling during home work time, the child was disturbing that sibling. On the contrary, this was how children benefitted from their siblings as they got help which they could not get from their illiterate parents. The research further found out that such parents even stopped their children from engaging in literacy activities saying that was to be done in school. The findings have shown that in such cases, parents discouraged the literacy behaviour in their children. They did not allow them to access the reading materials. They thought that that was to be done by teachers when they started school.

5.2.6 Emergent Literacy Knowledge

The research found out that, there was ignorance on emergent literacy among parents and caregivers because reading and writing were associated exclusively with school, not home. Help was mostly given to school going siblings. The lack of knowledge on emergent literacy among the parents of the children involved in this research to little, if any, support or even acknowledgement of the importance of emergent literacy activities. Instead, these activities were considered useless and a waste of time, especially that the parents had to deal with livelihood issues which they considered more important. This was because literacy was not prioritised in these areas and therefore its support was purely coincidental, it was not their core business. Hence support did not come as a planned activity but rather coincidentally and usually initiated by the child itself or its friends. This is contrary to the western culture where literacy activities are planned, such as shared book reading or bed time story reading done even by male parents.

The researcher would argue that, the relegation of activities related to learning to read and write to schools could be culturally influenced. In the Zambian perspective, teaching children to read and write was the job of the teacher. The mentality was that, teachers should teach the child. It would appear that the high cost of education once paid by the parents, justified the parents’ non-participation in the literacy acquisition of their children. The cost seemed to be an exchange for the service that the teacher offered to their children. It is unfortunate to think of learning as something that takes place in school only because much human learning occurs outside the classroom, and people continue to learn throughout their lives.

Findings in this research have further shown that, more often than not, parents expected too much from their child in becoming conventionally literate straight away from nothing yet at the same
time ignored what children exhibited in form of emergent literacy. Most of the efforts that the children made in these settings were either unacknowledged or unrewarded. Findings have further shown that parents had a tendency of disregarding any efforts that the child made in terms of reading and writing. They would always want their children to write as if they were already adults. The researcher’s argument is that, with such comments, there is a possibility that some children’s morale or spirit to continue with activity that would support reading or writing later would be killed immediately. The assumption this research has brought about for further debate and research is that identification of all these literacy behaviour should be early enough and requires special teachers’ expertise and remediation. The contribution to new knowledge which this research is bringing forward is that it is only by knowing what children already know (emergent literacy) that we can help them progress well from emergent to conversional readers and writers.

Findings have shown that there were some parents who did not just read to their children but made an effort to teach their children the alphabet. However, among those children exposed and taught the English alphabet, those who named letters as numbers were in the majority. This could have been due to lack of a common term in Chinyanja for letters. As already stated, the reason attributed to this scenario could be that children in these settings were exposed more to arithmetic as compared to reading and phonics. Even those whose parents said taught them the English alphabet when singing the alphabet; they sung it without necessarily following all the letters in order.

Findings further showed that Children tested were able to identify numbers but confused letters as numbers. It is possible that this could have been so because some languages in Zambia do not seem to have the words for letters. Therefore children were not able to pronounce them properly as they do not have phonemic awareness. Research has shown that one (a child) is only phonemically aware when one is able to say letter names and their corresponding sound (Ojanen, 2007). What may have worsened things in this aspect of the study was because children sampled spoke Nyanja but were exposed to the English alphabet which does not have a one to one correspondence to the sounds in the Nyanja language. However, the researcher would strongly argue that what was important was that children were aware of letters and that they already knew how to sound them as they used the mother tongue. This knowledge enhanced their phonemic and phonological awareness and would be useful once they entered formal schooling.

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The other finding which is a contribution to new knowledge is that age matters in emergent literacy. In this study the younger children tended to be more confident than the older children, probably because the younger ones were less shy and not worried about giving wrong answers than the older ones who were conscious of their actions. Children aged between two years (in pilot) and four years (in the actual study) were more confident emergent literates than those aged five to eight years. However, the test results in the table for the age range of 7-9 years old show that scores were generally higher than those in the table for 4-6 year olds. Hence, the study found that age may be a factor on what literacy behaviours pre-schoolers exhibited. The message coming from this study is not to wait for too long before children are exposed to emergent literacy activities so that they have more chances of developing reading awareness and readiness for formal school.

5.3 Summary of Chapter Five

This chapter has discussed the findings on the literacy activities that pre-schoolers engaged in at various homes. It has also discussed findings on the parents’ and views of children about print that existed in homes and immediate environment of the children. The chapter further discussed findings on the roles that parents played in facilitating literacy development in their children and how often parents read to their children. The next chapter presents some recommendations.
6.0 CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Recommendations

The study has come up with the following recommendations:-

1. Since children know different things even at the same age, age should not be a determinant factor on who enters grade one and who does not. Government should introduce performance tests prior to entering grade one gauge the readiness of each child for grade one. This will help assess the amount of emergent literacy a child exhibits.

2. Since the scenario in most government schools is that children start school at various ages such as 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and even 12, hence various developmental stages, it is recommended that the government prepare different level syllabi for different developmental stages for the children.

3. Parents should be made aware of such research findings through dissemination seminars on the importance of emergent literacy and that they can play a part by surrounding their children with literacy and numeracy rich-environment to prepare them to formal school. This is because this research has found out that most parents, especially among the illiterates, think that learning to read and write start when the child goes to school.

4. Parents must be made aware of the fact that they can be participants in the learning of their children by encouraging them to develop interest in literacy and numeracy activities long before they start formal school. That way those who do not go to pre-school will benefit from the home environment which will in this way become prototype of pre-school.

5. That the seven years official age for a child to start school does not mean the year for the child to be exposed to literacy and numeracy activities to enhance the development of emergent literacy which will form a base when the child starts formal school.
6. That the ages from 1-5 are key to child’s development and hence the need for parents to surround the child with literacy and numeracy activities and games to support phonemic and phonological awareness before the child starts formal school.

7. This study recommends that Government pre-schools be introduced at no cost to the parents at every primary school so that parents do not fail to send their children to school because of lack of finances.

8. Government and Non-Governmental Organisations must jointly run pre-schools and community libraries to complement each other and promote literacy.

9. These pre-schools must have trained teachers who should make use of the emergent literacy and numeracy skills children bring along to formal schools from their homes. That way a child will be moving from the known to the own.

10. The government must implement and reinforcement language of play or familiar language or mother tongue to be the language of instructions in all pre-schools so that there is no break from home to pre-school and eventually to Grade one unlike the current confusion of children learning in English in the mushrooming privately owned preschools then NBTL in government schools and then English in grade two. This scenario is so confusing to the child whose emergent literacy is in the mother tongue or language of play different from the one used in school.

11. Identification of emergent literacy must be included in adult literacy programmes so that parents support literacy activities in their children as they learn to read themselves. There is also need for parent conscientisation for them to play a role as child’s first teacher at home and the importance of home literacy compounded by the right attitude towards knowledge acquisition.

12. There is need for government through Ministry of Education and Ministry of information and Broadcasting to caution the public and those in the private sector on the need to use appropriate language in the dissemination of their messages on TV and Radio and include children’s programmes with language and activities that support literacy behaviour.Currently most programmes are for adults and a number on films that are not child-friendly and with nothing to do with literacy or numeracy development in children.
6.2 Conclusion

This research has established that, despite the fact that teaching of reading and writing were not prioritised in the areas of research, children generally exhibited enough literacy behaviour. All the children did exhibit behaviours ranging from handling of books to pretend reading. They were also able to engage in other literacy-related games and play which teachers would build on once these children were in school. All the children had language knowledge because they had well developed oral language skills. The research further revealed that children in the research areas were able to orally count and write numbers. They were also able to identify numbers. The study has further established that the children in the sample were able to sing the English alphabet song and Zambian songs. The research further shown that, apart from environmental print, there could be other variables at play in the development of emergent literacy behaviours in children. This could be; age, peer influence and parental scaffolding in literacy related activities. The study has further revealed that parents and caregivers lacked the requisite knowledge about emergent literacy.
References


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Wright Group. (1992). **Old MacDonald Had a Farm**. Hong Kong: Colorcraft.

**www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/cntareas/.../1 0.htm - Cached - Similar**

APPENDIX I

Informed Consent Form

Dear Respondent,

This serves to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. Further implications for your participation are explained. Finally, you are being asked to sign this form to indicate that you have agreed to participate in this exercise.

Thank you in advance.

1. **Description**

This exercise is an education research; the researcher is a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a degree in Literacy and Learning. This research is a major requirement for the researcher to complete her programme. Thus, this exercise is purely academic.

2. **Purpose**

The researcher wishes to find out what literacy behavior(s) or knowledge that pre-schoolers possess or exhibit before formal instruction. The researcher is interested in looking at the home and surrounding environment that enhance early literacy knowledge acquisition.

3. **Consent**

Participating in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this exercise.

4. **Confidentiality**

All data collected from this research is treated with utmost confidentiality. Participants are assured that they will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research.

5. **Rights of Respondents**

All efforts will be taken to ensure that the rights of the participants are protected and respected. Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants are free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the researcher if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

6. **Declaration of Consent**

I have read and fully understand this document. Therefore agree to participate in this exercise.

..............................................................  ..............................................................

Signature                                      Date
APPENDIX II

Interview schedule for parents

The University of Zambia

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Sciences

Education

An interview schedule

This interview schedule is for parents, guardians and caregivers. It is meant to find out from them what they know about the literate behaviors that children in selected households of Lusaka exhibit before they receive formal instruction in school. Please be free, honest and frank as you are engaged in this very important topic. The information you give will be used for academic purposes only and your personal details will be kept confidential.

Interview schedule for parents or caregiver

Identification data (for official use only)

Name of Parent: ........................................................................................................

Name of Child: ...........................................................................................................

District : ................................................................

Township : .................................................

Location : ....................................................

House/plot No : ...........................................

Date of interview: ........................................
Time of interview........... end.............

Sex of respondent: ..................

Part one

Background (Education and family)

1. How far did you go in your education?......................................................

2. Is your home literacy-friendly? .................................................................

3. Are you able to read and write?.............. .............................................

4. In what language are you able to read?.......... ...........................................

5. How many children do you have?.............. .............................................

6. How many of your children are below school-going age?

7. Do they go to school? YES NO

8. What does the subject do when the older siblings are writing their home work?
.........................................................................................................................

Part two

Content

1. Does the child play puzzle games?YES NO

2. Does the child know how to hold a pencil? YES NO

3. What do the children play or spend a lot of time with that you think can help them learn reading quickly once in school?
4. Do you have pictures, or drawings, those children look at and can explain what is on the picture if asked?  
   YES  NO

5. Do you engage the child in reading?  
   YES  NO

6. Do children draw anything on walls or mold objects arious shapes using ant hill soil?  
   YES  NO

7. Does the child scribble on the wall?  
   YES  NO

8. Does the child enjoy being read to?  
   Yes  NO

9. Do your children have responsibilities say at church distributing hymn books or other activities that have something to do with print?  
   YES  NO

10. How often does the child get a paper and pencil?  
    YES  NO

11. What does the child use a pencil for?  
    -drawing
    -scribbling
    -writing

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12. Do you have a family reading area? Or book shelf? .................................
13. When reading, how does he/she hold the book? .................................

.................................................................
14. Does the child point at the words from left to right or the other way on the page? .................................

.................................................................
15. How many books have you bought for the child? .................................

.................................................................
16. Do you have books/magazine, hospital cards, telephone directory in your house? What kind of books do you have? .................................

.................................................................
17. Does the child know what print is used for?
18. Do you tell stories to the child? ...........................................

YES  NO

19. Does the child like story telling? ...........................................

YES  NO

20. Does the child enjoy music? ...........................................

YES  NO
21. Does the child sing?  
YES  NO

22. What motor activity does the child show?  
- running  
- jumping  
- handwork

23. Is the child inquisitive? Does he ask questions?  
.................................................................................................................................

24. Does the child enjoy dismantling things like toys?  
.................................................................................................................................

25. While reading to the child, do you point out important features of the book such as the front, title and author?  
.................................................................................................................................

26. Do you regularly change the books available, giving children access to new books as well as some old favourites?  
.................................................................................................................................

27. Do you encourage children to scribble and experiment with pretend writing during pretend play?  
.................................................................................................................................

28. Do you encourage children to dictate stories to you so that they can see their own words in print?  
.................................................................................................................................

End of interview, thank you!
### APPENDIX III

#### Test Score Sheet

Location.................................. ge.................................................................

House no.................................. date.................................................................

Name of parent..........................................................

Name of child..........................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 “Reading” Behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child can hold book correctly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can point out features such as front and back of book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to recognize letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to recognize numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aware that words in a book can make a story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Able to distinguish between text and pictures
- Able to tell a story from the picture
- Has language knowledge i.e. words are made up of sounds
- Answering questions
- Can do tongue twisters
- Able to sing
- Can use language that sounds like reading or written language (pretend reading)
- Able to read from left to right, from top to bottom
| • Able to distinguish chinyanja script from the English script |
| • Has logo recognition – can identify labels |
| • child names areas where print is located in the home or immediate environment and can identify common signs and symbols |
| • can perform pseudo reading |

2 **“Writing” Behaviours**

<p>| • Able to hold a pencil |
| • Able to use paper |
| • Able to scribble on paper letter-like forms, random string of letters (pretend writing) |
| • Able to describe what one has written |
| • Able to use mock handwriting – imitate adult handwriting |
| • Make alphabetic letters |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Able to write from left to right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Aware of the use of paper and pencil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Able to write from top to bottom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Able to use invented spellings to represent single words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX IV

Home literacy environment Checklist

This instrument is designed to assess whether literacy environments at home provide a range of quality literacy experiences.

Subject’s Name: ...........................................    Housenumber:

..........................................................

Date: ..........................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 What the child has</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one alphabet book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetized alphabet letters to play with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crayons and pencils readily available for writing and drawing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper readily available for writing and drawing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A table or surface readily available for writing and drawing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one rhyme book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least one picture book.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>What parents and caregiver do</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read a picture book with the child at least once a week.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read a picture book with the child at least four times a week.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach new words to the child at least once a week.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teach new words to the child nearly every day.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have detailed and informative conversation with the child at least once a week.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have a detailed and informative conversation with the child nearly every day.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help child learn nursery rhymes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Encourage the child to say what he or she wants using complete sentences.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Take the child to the library or book shore.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What the child sees parent and caregiver doing</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Reading books, magazines, bible, newspaper at least once a week.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading books, magazines, bible or newspaper nearly every day</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Parent as role model</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A good reader</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Has large vocabulary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Began to read picture books with the child before he or she was a year old</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Help rendered to the child by parent and caregiver</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Help the child learn to sing or say the alphabet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Help the child to name letters of the alphabet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help the child learn to write letters of the alphabet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Help the child to write his or her name</td>
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<td>Help the child how to rhyme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help the child learn the sounds that letters of the alphabet make (e.g., &quot;M makes the mmmm sound&quot;).</td>
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APPENDIX V

Environmental print and document analysis check list

Location......................................................................................................................... Age.................................................................................................................................

House no......................................................date.................................................................................................................................

Name of Parent................................................ Name of Child.................................................................................................................................

1. Environmental print

a) Posters

b) Bill boards

c) Road signs

d) Street names

e) School names

f) House/plot numbers

g) Shop names

2. Home print

a) crayons, pencils and paper for children’s writing and drawing

b) materials containing everyday print available for pretend play, such as empty cereal boxes,

c) Packaging and labels.

d) Calendars

e) Wooden/plastic alphabet letters to help children learn names and shapes of letters

f) Variety of materials for pretend play such as doll and toys
g) Picture books in readable condition

h) Alphabet books or wall charts

i) Colour picture books

3. **Document Study**

a) Do the books for reading include a good portion of words the children can decode using phonic skills?

b) Are the books in large print and with colourful photographs?

c) Is the book/text easily seen by the children during guided reading?

d) Do the books for reading have text that includes the repetition of high-frequency words?