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Language and Literacy Issues in Botswana

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This study investigated current language and literacy issues in the African country of Botswana. Four students who are pursuing graduate studies in the United States provided data for this case study. This results of the study are contextualized by descriptions of the language and literacy contexts of Botswana, historically and today. Thus, the data came from the women's accounts, my own experiences as a scholar in Botswana, and through existing scholarship on Botswana. Through this investigation, I sought to uncover insights into issues of literacy practice and the educational system of Botswana.

Data for the study were collected through formal interviews that lasted for 1½ to 2 hours per visit at the informant's residence and at my residence for the informants who visited from states outside Michigan. The interviews were audiotaped and subsequently transcribed. The study lasted for a period of 4 months (from September to December, 2003). The questions were open-ended and some had a list of possible prompts to guide the interviewer to the information wanted. In addition to formal interviews, I visited some informants' homes once per week to observe the kind of literacy materials that were available as well as literacy practices in which they were engaged. Because I had a common language of communication (Setswana) with all the informants, I conducted the interview mostly in that language, although at times there was code-switching between English and Setswana. Data were analyzed in relation to the categories of questions that mainly covered out-of-school literacy practices, historical literacy practices, and school literacy practices.

The informants of this study and I are colleagues from the University of Botswana where we taught in various departments. We are in the United States on study leave pursuing postgraduate degrees at different universities. I therefore selected the informants who were within reach from my place of study. I wanted to compare the circumstances under which I attained print literacy with those of other professionals from my country so as to explore insights that might be drawn for literacy education in Botswana schools.

POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

I am a 44-year-old woman who grew up in a rural village where I did my primary education. My parents were farmers who had attained very little elementary education. They had only the basic skills of reading and writing, not much education. The most common forms of literacy practices in my home and community that children were exposed to during my childhood days were storytelling by elderly people, play school that was conducted by our elder siblings who attended school, and traditional games. I went to one of Botswana's main cities for secondary education where I saw a library and book shops for the first time. Later on I ended up in the capital city (Gaborone) to attend university. I teach in the teacher education department at the University of Botswana and am currently pursuing a PhD at Michigan State University in the United States. All names given to informants in this study are pseudonyms.

Informants

Dineo is a 38-year-old teacher who grew up in a rural village with parents who had never attended school. She went to primary school in her village and later transferred to secondary school in a mining town where her father worked in the mine as a laborer. After secondary education, she went to the capital city to the university. She is married with one child. Dineo and her husband communicate with each other in Setswana in their home but in English to their daughter, whom they send to an English medium private school. The daughter speaks very little Setswana. The reason given for this scenario is that she was sent for babysitting at a very young age where she was taken care of by non-Setswana speaking caretakers who communicated with her in English. Following babysitting from an English-speaking environment, the girl was sent to an English medium school at age 6. She ended up acquiring more English than Setswana because she was denied the latter even at home by the parents. Dineo teaches in the Home Economics Department at the University of Botswana. She has been studying for a masters degree in Early Childhood Education in a large Midwestern university in the United States. She has once visited her family back home and her daughter also visited her twice in the United States.

Peo, 33 years old and also a teacher, grew up in the capital city. She was raised by her mother who is a secretary in a government department. Peo obtained all her education in Gaborone, from primary school to university. She teaches in the African Languages Department at the University of Botswana and is studying for a masters degree in a Western university in the United States. She is married but has no children yet. She has been in the United States for only 1 year and has visited Botswana once.

Tshidi, 34 years old, is a single parent of one child. She grew up in a semiurban village and obtained both her primary and secondary education there. Then she went to Gaborone for university education. Tshidi was introduced to reading and writing by her father who is an elementary school teacher. She remembers learning the word "equator" from her father. She also recalls how she got excited the day she wrote the number "8" as she had difficulty writing it among all the numbers she knew. Tshidi was exposed to many reading materials like books and magazines before she started school. Like Peo, Tshidi teaches in the African Languages Department at the University of Botswana and is studying for a masters degree in Theater/Literature in an Eastern university in the United States. She has visited Botswana once in the 2 years she has been in the United States.

Naomi, 39 years old, is married with two children. She also grew up in a big semiurban village where she obtained her primary and secondary education. She was introduced to reading and writing by her mother who is a retired teacher now. She went to Gaborone for university education after which she joined the teacher education department at the University of Botswana. She is studying in a Midwestern university in the United States for a masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Naomi has visited Botswana twice since she came to the United States.

The chapter starts with an overview of the language situation in Botswana. The next section briefly describes the nature of education that existed in the country (precolonial education) before the introduction of Western education by the missionaries. Thereafter I focus on the colonial education that brought print literacy to the country. The final section is a discussion of the findings, followed by the conclusions.

GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND LANGUAGE CONTEXTS OF BOTSWANA

Geography and Language

Botswana is located in the interior of Southern Africa. It is bordered by Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. The number of languages spoken in Botswana¹ is estimated to be at least 25 (Batibo & Smieja, 2000).

¹Botswana is the name of the country.

Setswana² is demographically the most dominant language in the country, spoken by at least 80% of a population of 1,680,863 (Botswana in Figures, 2001) either as first or second language. It is the declared national language (Government of Botswana, 1985) and the *de facto lingua franca* of the country. It is sometimes referred to as the second official language in government circles. Setswana is offered as a compulsory school subject at primary and secondary school levels.

English is the declared official language (Government of Botswana, 1985), the language of government and administration, science and technology, educational and international relations. It is the medium of instruction for all subjects at primary and secondary school levels except for Setswana classes. The number of minority languages spoken in Botswana is estimated to be 23. According to Batibo and Smieja (2000), it is difficult to determine the exact number of minority languages because "many of these languages, particularly the Khoesan ones, form language clusters involving several linguistic or socio-cultural entities" (p. xv). Thus, for some languages spoken in Botswana, it is not easy to distinguish between a language and a dialect. The minority languages have no official status in Botswana. Setswana is also spoken in some parts of neighboring Namibia and South Africa.

Precolonial Education in Botswana

Botswana was a British protectorate for 81 years, from 1885 to 1966. During the precolonial era, Botswana had some traditional form of education that "was part of a whole system of belief, or religion, as well as a means of socializing children into the accepted norms of society" (Parsons, cited in Crowder, 1984, p. 22). Parsons classifies traditional education into three categories: *informal*, *formal*, and *vocational* education. There was informal education in the home, which was mainly parenting, and included relations among siblings, with special emphasis on the aged as repositories of wisdom.

Formal education was characterized by *bojale* and *bogwera*, adolescent initiation schools for females and males, respectively. In *bojale*, young female adults were formally taught matters concerning womanhood, sex, behavior toward men, domestic, and agricultural activities. *Bogwera* was formal instruction for young male adults where they were circumcised and taught skills such as kaross sewing for shields and clothing, and modeling cattle in clay to reinforce practical knowledge of livestock. They were trained to be responsible men, warriors, and fathers. Whereas women qualified for motherhood and marriage after *bojale*, *bogwera* did not qualify men for mar-

²Setswana is the language spoken by most people. Batswana refers to people of Botswana (in plural terms, the singular form is Motswana).

riage until after they had proved themselves as herders, hunters, and fighters. Vocational education consisted of part-time individual apprenticeships in trades such as medicine, mining, and smelting. Also, skills in agricultural and hunting techniques were imparted.

Colonial Education

Western education in Botswana was introduced around 1847 by David Livingstone, a missionary of the London Missionary society. This education replaced "traditional" or "heathen" precolonial education (Parsons, cited in Crowder, 1984, p. 22). The churches financed education and were therefore in full control of the curriculum and its content.

The curriculum consisted of Christian scriptures. A translation of the New Testament into Setswana came into being in 1840. The translation for the rest of the Bible was completed by 1857. Robert Moffat, a leader of the missionaries, provided the first translation of Setswana into the Roman alphabet and translated the Bible into written Setswana. In 1860, a school was established at Shoshong (then the Bangwato³ capital) where children were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and scripture in Setswana. The main emphasis was to instill in the students obedience and discipline.

By virtue of being tribal leaders, the chiefs were involved in the administration of the schools, so they had some input in educational matters even though very limited. In 1966, when the country became independent, the education policy shifted from colonial education to the kind of education that would meet the needs of the emerging society. Education was seen as a crucial aspect of economic development and the development of human resources. In this regard, postprimary education was emphasized and expanded during the early years of independence.

Education prior to the missionaries was oral. Print literacy began with the missionaries. Printed texts began with the translated Bible, and the reading of the Bible was the result of the Christian mission activity in Botswana. By the time schools were introduced, the majority of families had only the Bible and the church hymn book (that for the London Missionary Society) in their homes. Consequently, many children who started school during the early years of independence came from homes in which very little reading and writing occurred.

LITERACY AS MAKING MEANING

When asked what *literacy* meant to them, the informants for this study indicated an understanding that literacy means the ability to read with under-

³Bangwato is one of the ethnic groups in Botswana.

standing and to apply information read to the reader's situation, not just the technical aspects of decoding and encoding print. Literacy was associated with making meaning out of written material. Naomi defined literacy as being able to read using different genres, to be able to apply information read to the reader's situation, and to communicate one's thoughts through writing logically. Peo understood literacy to mean the ability to read comprehensively and critically as well as the ability to write grammatically correct sentences. One could attribute the definition of literacy as making meaning from textual material as related to the informants' level of education. Being graduate students and teachers by profession, the informants' understanding of literacy has moved beyond merely decoding words from printed text. Reading and writing are an integral part of their day-to-day lives due to the nature of their professions. Even outside of academic work, these highly educated women engage in the acts of reading and writing both in the United States and in Botswana in many domains for various purposes, including self enrichment and religion. They read magazines, newspapers, and use the Internet, varying their literacy practices according to the purposes and contexts within which they are operating.

HEGEMONY OF ENGLISH

Literacy practices of the informants and the materials they read revealed the degree to which English dominates in their lives, whether in Botswana or the United States. All of them report doing vast amounts of reading and writing in English for academic purposes in both countries.

Printed Texts

Examining the textual artifacts in their U.S. homes, it was clear that English dominates. Many of the artifacts, even those from Botswana, are written in English. In addition to formal interviews, I visited the homes of informants who were within reach once per week (a total of six visits per informant) to observe the kinds of literacy materials that were available as well as literacy practices in which they were engaged. I found documents such as newspapers, magazines, tourist guides, funeral programs, postcards, greetings and birthday cards, personal letters, calendars, and home decoration crafts.

The Botswana newspapers I found were *The Daily News*, *Mmegi/The Reporter*, *The Botswana Guardian*, *The Gazette*, and *Mokgosi*, and a magazine, *Kutlwano*. On analysis, I realized that of the newspapers, only *Mokgosi* is solely written in Setswana. This paper was founded in 2000 by a group of Batswana whose objective is to promote the national language because it is evidently dying. Most of the news in *The Daily News* is in English. Only one page, which comes towards the end of the paper, has a few articles written in

Setswana. That Setswana page appears hidden, as it comes just before the last page in all the papers I observed. In the past, many people have raised concerns that the Setswana news in this newspaper is news that had appeared on the previous day in English. *Mmegi/The Reporter* is also predominantly an English newspaper but has a column in Setswana and another one in Ikalanga, one of the local languages spoken in Botswana. The magazine, *Kutlwano*, is balanced; about 50% of the articles are in English and 50% or more in Setswana.

The distribution of the magazine *Kutlwano* illustrates the relationship between social class and textual practices and access (Luke, 2003). This magazine and *The Daily News* are produced by the Department of Information and Broadcasting, Botswana government. The newspaper is distributed widely at no charge; the magazine is sold at a very low price—the equivalent of less than U.S. \$1 and is therefore popular among the low-income people and those in rural areas. The two are found almost everywhere in the country. Only two of my informants read *Kutlwano* and *The Daily News*. The other two seldom read newspapers. The women report that in Botswana, educated people seldom read *Kutlwano*. The daily news is read mostly by government employees because it is distributed in all government departments every working day. The private newspapers, *Mmegi*, *The Guardian*, and *The Gazette*, are more popular among the educated elite and have a wide readership. Some people argue that they prefer these newspapers because they present a variety of news, unlike the government paper, which is censored and is narrow in some respects.

Oral Language

The higher status accorded English in Botswana is also revealed in the choice of English as the medium of communication among people who have been to school or the educated elite. I explained the purpose of this research in Setswana and told the informants that they could respond in either English or Setswana. All the informants responded primarily in English, with code-switching between the two languages at times. Although this may have been prompted by the fact that the questions were written in English, in Botswana, most educated Batswana also communicate with each other primarily in English with some code-switching between their local languages and English. Data for this study confirmed that the informants use English, or code-switch, in many domains, including personal matters such as writing letters and e-mail messages and in telephone conversations with their fellow-country colleagues. By virtue of being in an English-speaking country (the United States), the tendency to use English with those who also know Setswana as a native language has, understandably, intensified.

The informants stated that even in personal domains like shopping, they use English. They use Setswana only for items that are labeled in Setswana. The common example cited by the informants was of *mabele*, meaning "sorghum," which is one of Botswana's staple foods. Sorghum is locally produced and packaged; for this reason, the retail label is the Setswana version—*mabele*. English has made fewer hegemonic inroads in the rural villages as compared to the cities. The informants pointed out that Setswana is mostly used at very local levels for social events like funeral programs mostly in villages. It is not uncommon, though, to find people in cities writing their funeral and wedding programs in English because they want to include the non-Setswana speakers as well. Most government materials in Botswana are also written in English. The women gave examples of documents such as driver's licenses, marriage certificates, and bank documents.

English and Power

English, as a foreign colonial language, is the official language in Botswana and associated with socioeconomic power. Most jobs require people who have done well in English at school. Everybody aspires to learn English or have his or her children learn English. Although public schools are funded by the government, increasingly parents strive to send their children to English medium schools where they pay tuition. Such parents tend to speak English to their children in their homes so that the children attain fluency. Nyati-Ramahobo (1996) reported that this hegemony of English is seen as also responsible for the demands of learners in literacy programs for English literacy and the subsequent training of literacy assistants and literacy group leaders in the teaching of English as a second language. In sum, literacy in Botswana, among the educated and the to-be-educated is associated with speaking and reading English. The language in education policy has elevated the status of English such that being literate in English is seen as a form of empowerment.

Given this association of English with print literacy and with power, one finds clear and definite differences in language practices among the life spheres of home, school, and work in Botswana. At home, people communicate in their local languages, most of which are not taught at school with the exception of Setswana. Thus, the disparity between home and school is greater for children for whom Setswana is not their mother tongue. For them, the school domain is different from their life world (Gee, 2000). They are encouraged to speak English around the school premises because it is the medium of instruction for all subjects except for Setswana. The reading and writing also are done mostly in English. Children are punished when they are caught speaking to each other in their local languages.

In the domain of religion, local languages or Setswana are used for services. In the rural areas, all churches use local languages for services. In the urban areas, religious services are conducted in either Setswana or English (or both). English is used only in those churches in urban areas that have mixed population of Batswana and foreigners.

At work, official matters like meetings are conducted in English though people speak to each other in Setswana or their other local languages. There are many more print literacy resources in English than in Setswana—texts such as books, magazines, newspapers, videos, movies, and the Internet. Most government documents (e.g., driver's licenses, passport application forms, national registration forms) used to be written only in English; some are now becoming available in both English and Setswana. Medical documents, such as records for patients including vital information such as immunization for children and labels on medicines, are written in English.

Overlaying this identification of life domain with language is the interplay of social relationships with language. In Botswana, the use of a particular language is often determined by the social relationships among the people involved. The informants for this study reported that they usually communicate with their family members and other Batswana students in Setswana in Botswana and the United States. For domains such as entertainment and personal expression, communication is either in Setswana or English, depending on the relationships involved. Because their fields of study are not available in Setswana even in Botswana, the informants do their academic work in English. The only Setswana materials they read are the few magazines and newspapers they brought with them from Botswana.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LITERACY IS PREDOMINATELY ORAL

With this association of print literacy with English, it is interesting to note that the informants agreed that there is no real culture of reading and writing in Botswana, as compared to descriptions of the United States (Taylor, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1986) or British (Barton & Hamilton, 1998) contexts. Many children grow up in homes that have no reading material, and not much writing occurs. The informants concurred that during their childhood days, most people in their communities did not read anything except for activities that had to do with work for those who were employed. Some elderly people read the Bible for religious purposes but did not engage much in writing. In most homes, books that were available were the Bible and children's school books. Children were introduced to print literacy by their siblings who attended school. Only a few became literate through the influence and/or teaching of their parents.

National Literacy Survey

This insight is supported by the first national literacy survey that was conducted in 1993, which reported that there was no reading and writing culture in Botswana.

According to the survey, 33.9% of people who could read Setswana never read anything, with females in the majority (76.2%). The majority of those who could read English reported that they were not interested in reading anything in English. Females (70%) expressing less interest than males. Reasons given for not reading or writing revealed the relatively limited life domains mediated by print literacy, for example, "nothing to read or write," "lack of time," "lack of interest," "could not read well," and "poor eyesight." Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 provide relevant results of this survey.

Responses by the four Batswana women illustrated this absence of a print literacy culture and the preference for oral communication. To announce social events like wedding ceremonies, birth of a child, or death, for example, certain family members are sent to tell people in other villages or in the neighborhood. This practice is such a cultural norm that, even today, some people do not attach value to card invitations or accept them as worthy, especially when they are from close relatives. People want formal invitations by word of mouth. Card invitations are regarded as impersonal and associated with Westerners.

TABLE 3.1
Eligible Population Who Could Read by Language, Reason for Never Reading and Gender—1993

Reason	Setswana			% of Grand Total	English			% of Grand Total
	M	F	Total		M	F	Total	
Nothing to read	56.6	43.4	752	23.4	83.0	17.0	88	9.6
Lack of time	49.0	51.0	363	11.3	53.6	46.4	28	3.1
Lack of interest	35.7	64.3	947	29.5	30.0	70.0	700	76.3
Could not read well	23.8	76.2	1,090	33.9	23.7	76.3	59	6.4
Poor eyesight	75.8	24.2	62	1.9	100.0	—	43	4.7
Total	38.8	61.2	3,214	100.0	38.7	61.3	918	100.0

Note. M = Male, F = Female.

From Report of the First National Survey on Literacy in Botswana (1993).

TABLE 3.2
Eligible Population Who Could Write by Language, Reason for Never Writing and Gender—1993

Reason	Setswana			% of Grand Total	English			% of Grand Total
	M	F	Total		M	F	Total	
Could not write well	43.4	56.6	2,085	53.6	53.0	47.0	610	68.0
Nothing to write	24.0	76.0	438	11.3	52.6	47.4	95	10.6
Nobody to write to	35.7	64.3	235	6.0	53.1	46.9	64	7.1
Lack of time	36.2	63.8	376	9.7	39.5	60.5	86	9.6
Lack of interest	23.6	76.4	759	19.5	64.3	35.7	42	4.7
Total	36.2	63.8	3,893	100.0	52.2	47.8	897	100.0

Note. M = Male, F = Female.

From Report of the First National Survey on Literacy in Botswana (1993).

Written documentations, although in official use, are still not integrated culturally in the lives of many Batswana, according to the informants. For example, documentation of such events as childbirth is attached more to certain historical events in people's lives than to written birth certificates. Dineo explained:

Most of our parents do not know their exact birthdates but would tell that they were born during the war of Hitler, meaning that they were born during the Second World War. Some say they were born during the year of the great drought. Naming of children was also not done haphazardly but after careful observation of some important events in people's lives. We have people who have been named after certain events like during the year when locusts attacked the country. Children who were born at that time were given names like Tsie, meaning the locust (if it's a boy), or Mmatsie if it's a girl, which means mother of locusts. Those who were born in 1966 when the country gained its independence were named Boipuso which means independence or MmaBotswana—mother of Botswana.

Historically, Batswana learned about events that took place locally or in distant places around the world, not by reading books or newspapers, but through names given to children who were born during those times, or through songs that were composed about certain events and passed on

from one generation to the next. Several informants acknowledged that the oral nature of Batswana culture is inherent in them even today. As an example, they relayed that, even though they try to keep things like personal diaries, they sometimes forget to record events or to refer to them on a daily basis. "The young generation is able to cope with such modern literacy practices but for people who were born in the 1960s, it is not easy. We are used to being told things verbally and keep them in our memories," said Dineo.

The Role of Oral Literature

Despite the absence of print literacy in Botswana homes, the informants stressed that children still acquire a high degree of education. They pointed out that they gained a lot of education from their elders. Traditionally, Batswana children used to learn folktales, riddles, proverbs, and idioms at home from their elders. Although stories considered as passed along by elders were previously told orally, they are now conveyed in school through books written in Setswana. Naomi explained:

Setswana is one language that is rich with proverbs and idioms. To emphasize a point, my grandmother always used proverbs and I really enjoyed that. This is the reason I liked reading Setswana literature books at high school, to enjoy the language. I no longer read any Setswana books because my teaching subject is in a different field, and I really do not have time to do that. The folktales offered a lot in moral values. We learnt moral lessons like cheating is a bad thing.

Naomi believes that oral literature taught mental development and critical thinking skills. She described how, in their home, some evenings were devoted to competition of riddles between them and other children in their neighborhood.

The competition was some form of a game to find out who could think fast and use imagination. Some Setswana riddles are questions which are in the form of a statement, for example: My mother's white house which has got no door (*Ntlo ya ga mme e e senang lebati*), the answer is "an egg." One group says the riddle and the other one supplies the answer. The aim is to test one's imagination of associating things within a short time. The answers have to be given quickly or else the group loses its chance.

The oral literature discussed is recognized and has been included in the Setswana curricula at all levels of the education system, from elementary school to university. As to whether the way in which it is taught impacts positively on the learners is a matter that needs investigation.

Emergent Literacy Experiences

Given this reported lack of print literacy culture in the homes of the informants when they were children, the question of emergent literacy experiences and knowledge construction arises. Western research on emergent literacy documents that young children learn critical early literacy concepts by observing and participating in many different literacy events in their homes and communities (Purcell-Gates, 1995, 1996; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). In the Botswana context, in homes where siblings are attending school, this type of learning occurs with the available texts, primarily school books. The informants for this study who had older siblings who attended school, and were therefore exposed to books at an early age, reported that they learned to read and write before they started school formally.

Tshidi was brought up by parents who had attained higher education of Standard 6. Until the 1940s, only primary education up to Standard 6 was provided in the country (Tlou & Campbell, 1984), and people who had gone to school up to that level were regarded as educated. This is no longer the case. Primary education is 7 years, followed by 3 years junior secondary education and 5 years senior secondary (high school) education after which people can go for tertiary education. Depending on who makes the judgment, ordinary Batswana people who are regarded as educated are those who have at least obtained a high school education. People whose parents had Standard 6 were exposed to print literacy earlier and this influenced their literacy practices later in life. Tshidi reads widely than others and has even written some Setswana short stories that were published a few years ago.

CONCLUSION

The literacy practices of the informants in this study highlight important factors that need to be considered in the design of literacy programs for Botswana schools. The study has revealed three major themes: (a) hegemony of English; (b) division/separation of domains of home, religion, school, work/official language; and (c) heavy influence of cultural preference for oral over written language. Most children in Botswana are exposed to various sources of oral literacy before they start school. Only a few whose parents are educated have exposure to print literacy before they start school. Language policy devalues the status of Setswana and other minority languages while promoting that of English. For this reason, people do not consider their languages as resources. In order for families to utilize their cultural and linguistic resources to contribute to their children's education, there should be a connection between school and home at the policymaking level. Gee (2000) posed, "school-based, specialist, academic, and public-sphere forms of language often require us to exit our life world ..." (p. 66).

He argues that in the process of being exposed to specialist domains, the minority and poor children are denied the value of their life worlds and their communities in reference to those of the advantaged children. The literacy practices experienced at school by children from minority groups are far removed from those of the mainstream children.

To promote adult literacy, the resources used in the adult education curriculum should draw content from the day-to-day activities and events adults experience in their lives. To inform the language in education policy and the school curricular, large scale research about cultural practices of literacy for the different ethnic groups in Botswana should be conducted.

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The Immigrant Experience: Languages, Literacies, and Identities

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The literacy as multiple and social frame makes clear the ways that language and literacy practices are woven within and weave together the different paths that people take throughout their lives. Whereas the previous two chapters provided insights into language and literacy practices within contexts of political and military domination, the following three case studies examine these issues as they play out within the lives of three different groups of immigrants to the United States.

These portraits of language and literacy practice reveal other faces of linguistic hegemony. Taken together, they also add detail and texture to the complexity of language practice by demonstrating the diversity of immigrant experience, a diversity that reflects the influences of country of origin, native language, purpose for migration, and historical practices and experiences.

Kristen Perry's study (chap. 4) of a group of Sudanese "Lost Boys" who have settled in the Midwest region of the United States explores issues central to the multiple and social literacies frame: (a) language gain and language loss as the result of political and military force; (b) the acquisition of new languages and literacy practices driven by cultural and personal agency and purpose; (c) the interrelationships of religion, schooling, culture, and history; and (d) language and literacy practices.

Gaoming Zhang (chap. 5) focuses on another group of immigrants to the United States—Chinese and Chinese American families living near a large university. The portrait provided by Zhang reveals a very different picture of language loss and gain. This group of immigrants, living and learning within the national hegemony of English, approach language and cultural maintenance in other ways, expressing different motivations and taking different steps. With radically dissimilar historical and immigrant experiences, the Chinese families and the Sudanese refugees present varied and culturally specific pictures of language and literacy practice.

Finally, Kamila Rosolová (chap. 6) explores the language beliefs, values, and textual practices of two very different Cuban refugees in the United States. This case study is an interesting addition to this grouping of immigrant studies for several reasons. First, it provides yet one more instance of diversity and variety to the emerging portraits of immigration, demonstrating again the impacts of historical contexts, personal familial contexts, and conditions of immigration. Secondly, it provides a striking portrait of difference within the case. Although both informants were relatively recent refugees