

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

7.1 Introduction

The questionnaires were distributed personally and principals were requested to allow research to be carried out. Teachers were all very busy with final preparation for the last term of the year but agreed to help in allowing learners to complete the test and they confirmed that reading was an issue that needed to be dealt with. All the questionnaire categories were answered by all the schools except for the response to original texts. Teachers felt that the length of the questionnaire would interfere with their time schedules and the only two schools willing to answer all categories were Potch Primary and Mohadin. Results were collected after a week and 150 of the 200 responded. I had to do an extra testing of approximately 50 more learners and eventually received back a total of 186 questionnaires. The following evidence was found.

Schools participating were:

- A English-medium school: Mohadin (Black: 18; Coloured: 6; Indian: 8)
- B Afrikaans-medium school: Moorivier Laerskool (Black: 2, White: 30)
- C English-medium school: Potch Primary (Black: 68; Indian: 1; Coloured:1)
- D English medium school Promosa Primary (Black: 16; Coloured: 24)
- E An English-medium farm school (Black: 10)

Total: 186 learners

All learners were between the ages 11–14.

Data were collected and no space was left on the original form for counting the votes as the response to the questionnaire needed to be counted by means of specific tables making room for counting male and female response separately in some cases, as the

questionnaire had to be user-friendly without encumbering the reader with extra spaces which could confuse especially the young target group. The questionnaire was designed to contain all sociolinguistic issues even though in a disguised way such as, for example, response to texts where specific gender reactions were focused on. When counting the votes a special form was designed to contain open spaces to fill in the specific information looked for such as distinguishing between reactions and responses of males and females separately. If these responses had been worked out and already been separated on the questionnaire it could have influenced the way in which boys and girls would respond they would know that their gender response was being tested.

All the sociolinguistic variables included in the questions asked in the introduction to this thesis can in fact be related to what was being tested in the questionnaire. The type of question (yes/no questions) was chosen for the test as it was anticipated that statistics could then more easily be calculated and inferences made. Since gender preference was an issue sparking off interest and needing investigation, it was decided to tackle the issue first. (Compare the tables and figures before reading the analyses in the following sections).

7.1 Gender preferences (Table 1, Figure 1)

It was amazing how much could actually be inferred from as little as supplying information on a few preferences and indicating sex. Learners were given the choice of selecting their most favourite type of story, given the options of romance, science fiction, adventure, horrors and detective stories. It was quite surprising to note that 22,3% of the total of males actually preferred romantic stories. The percentage is lower than for girls (29%), but is quite high when considering that their most popular choice was adventure - which 23,6% males voted for. Boys seem to be particularly fascinated by science fiction and 21% voted for it as a first choice. Horrors received also 17,1 % votes and detective stories seem to be less interesting to them.

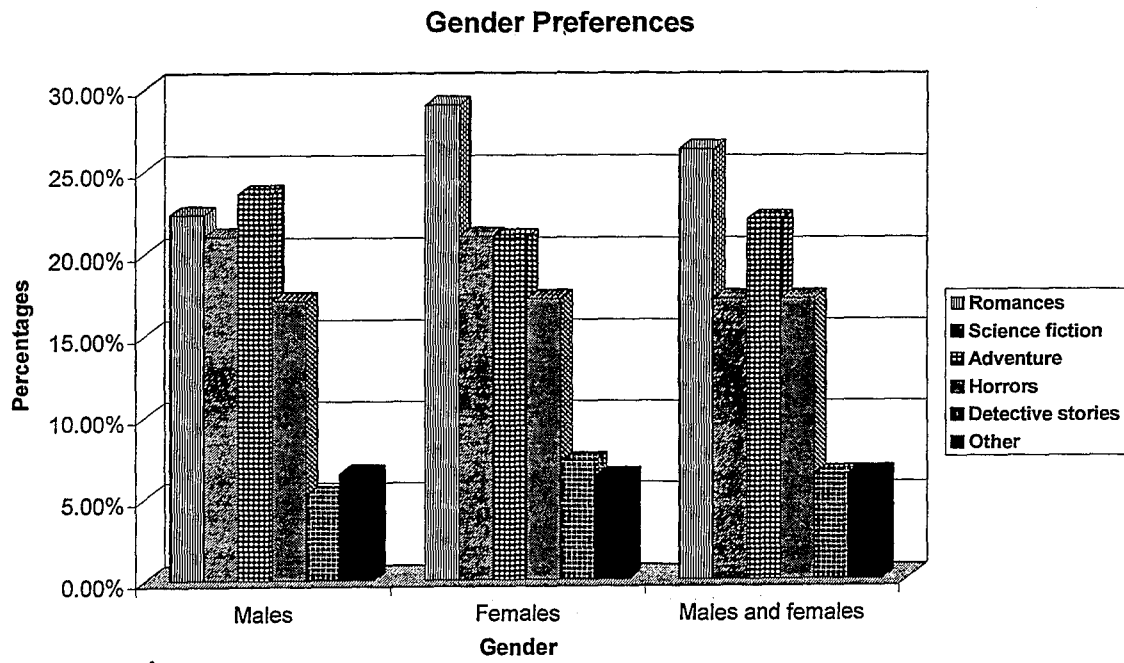
Girls understandably, when considering their emotional development at the specific age group of 11-14, are very fascinated by romantic stories. 26,3% of the girls voted for romance. In the second place 21% voted for science fiction and 21% for adventure (see Figures 1 and 3). These statistics of science fiction are rather surprising and warrants indeed some attention. Authors should take note what exactly the market wants. Horrors are also almost equally popular with girls and boys.

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE	SCHOOLS- numbers	Mohadin- 11 Males-	Mohadin - 23 Females	Total- 34 Learners	Moorivier13 Males	Moorivier 19 Females	Total-32	Promosa-- 15 Males	Promosa 25 Females	Total-40	Potch Primary-30 Males-	Potch Primary 40 Females	Total-70	Farm School 7-Males	Farm school 3 Females	Total 10	Males grand total - 76	Males: Percentages	Females: grand total - 110	Females percentages	Males and females grand total 186	Males and females percentages
SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIABLES-response																						
GENDER																						
Romances- rated first	1	5	6	0	3	3	0	13	13	13	10	23	3	1	4	17	22,3%	32	29%	49	26,3%	
Science fiction- rated first	1	3	4	2	0	2	4	3	7	8	10	18	1	0	1	16	21%	16	21%	32	17,2%	
Adventure- rated first	5	6	11	4	4	8	5	1	6	4	12	16	0	0	0	18	23,6%	23	20,9%	41	22%	
Horrors-rated first	2	5	7	3	7	10	3	2	5	4	5	9	1	0	1	13	17,1%	19	17,2%	32	17,2%	
Detective stories-rated first	1	2	3	0	1	1	1	2	3	0	1	1	2	2	4	4	5,2%	8	7,2%	12	6,4%	
Other rated first	1	2	3	3	4	7	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6,5%	7	6,3%	12	6,4%	
No response				1		1	1	3	4	1	2	3				3	3,9%	5	4,5%	8	4,3%	
Major characters preferred																						
Males voting for males	10		10	10		10	14		14	28		28	7		7	69	90,7%					
Males voting for females	0		0	3		3	1		1	2		2	0		0	6	7,8%					
Females voting for males		2	2		12	12		7	7		5	5		1	1				27	24,5%		
Females voting for females		15	15	0	7	7		18	18		33	33		2	2				75	68,1%		
Learners voting for both sexes	1	6	7								2	2				1	1,3%	8	7,4%			
No response																						

Total of males and females voting for male characters = 96 = 51,6% Total of males and females voting for female characters = 81 = 43,5%

Table 1

Figure 1



Gender Preferences : Males

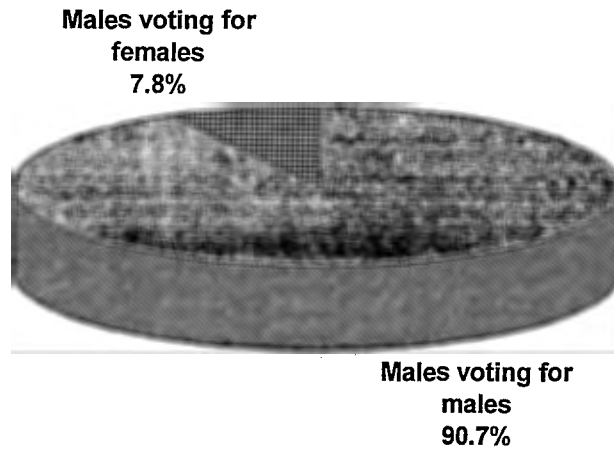


Figure 2 (1.3% males voted for both sexes)

Gender Preferences : Females

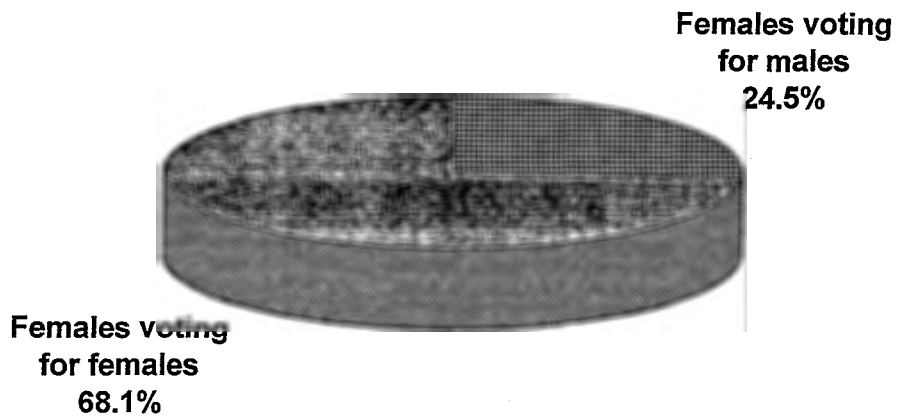


Figure 3 (7.2% females voted for both the sexes)

What was particularly interesting was that 43% of the Black learners attending Potch Primary were interested in romance whereas the boys from Mooirivier, Mohadin and even Promosa did not show any noticeable interest in this specific type of story. It is, however, illuminating to note that a large number of Potch Primary learners – fifteen - are fourteen year-olds and that the preference can perhaps be explained in terms of their age. Boys older than thirteen are probably at a more advanced developmental stage and therefore show a keen interest in romance as they grow and start becoming interested in girls. Interesting was the fact that Mooirivier (white girls) are so keen on reading horrors. Their percentage was much higher for that choice than any other group of girls. Horrors are actually their first choice (36,8% voted for horrors) and even more popular than romance which received a vote of 15,7%. Horrors also rate as the second popular option among girls from Mohadin (21,7%). Girls also seem to like horrors more than boys. The craving for horrors may possibly stem from their awareness of being physically more vulnerable than the boys. The percentage may also, however, reveal a mere awareness of vulnerability and an interest in Halloween, that at the same time scares youngsters but fascinates them.

Goldman (2000) urges writers to give non-fiction a try and the numbers gathered show that learners do show an interest in science fiction. Science fiction overall is the third most popular choice sharing its position with horrors. Romance, however, remains tops (it is thus no wonder that Barbara Cartland sold so many books).

Concerning the choice of male or female major characters in stories, it was found that 90,7% of males voted for male major characters and 7,8% males only voted for a female hero. The percentage of females voting for males is larger than males for females and amounts to 24,5%. It seems that some females are interested in male heroes. 68,1% of the females voted for a book with female characters (see Figures 1, 4 and 5).

Only 9% asked for a book to share the positions of males and females by voting for both the sexes. Considering the numbers it was evident that for the specific age group 76 were males participating and 111 females. The number of females is thus bigger, but in general

females were more numerous. If an author wants to earn money he will then target the females and write a book with a female hero, as 68,1% of females is still an impressive number.

7.2 Ethnicity (Table 2, Figures 6 and 6)

One of the hypotheses of this thesis was that culture does influence choice of reading and that postulate did become clear from the studies carried out. Statistics differed considerably between White and Black schools. It is indeed true that White children prefer a white character to be the major character. 90,6% of White children want a White character in the leading role. The Black children are more flexible concerning mixing cultures as they said that despite the fact that they do not prefer a White in the leading role in their book, 74,2% of the Black learners attending Potch Primary preferred a book with mixed cultures which is both surprising and illuminating. As for Promosa, the percentage requesting mixed cultures was 0 and for Mohadin 29,4%. The White school adamantly resisted a book with mixed cultures as 3,1% voted for a book with such mixed cultures. Maybe the fact that the Black people have so many different cultures within their Black cultures makes them more open for mixed cultures, as nine of South Africa's eleven official languages are Black languages each with a different language and culture. The request for township stories was also very surprising as 40,6% of Mooirivier's children were interested in learning more about townships and it seems that they are uninformed and that may also be the reason for their sticking to their mother culture. 74,2% of Black children want to read about the townships in Potch Primary and it goes far to support the notion that readers would like to read stories in which their own cultural concepts feature.

Table 2 – Ethnicity

	Mohadin 34	Moorivier 32	Moorivier percentages 32	Promosa 40	Potch Primary 70	Potch Primary percentages	Farm school 10	Total	Total percentages
ETHNICITY									
I prefer characters to be:									
Black	18	1	3,1%	9	17	24,2%	8	53	28,4%
White	11	29	90,6%	8	12	17,1%	1	61	32,7%
Coloured	3	1	3,1%	18	2	2,8%	1	25	13,4%
Indian	2	0	0%	5	2	2,8%	0	9	4,8%
Mixed	10	1	3,1%	0	37	52,8%	0	49	26,3%
I would like to read about stories in townships	25	13	40,6%	31	52	74,2%	7	128	68,8%

Figure 5

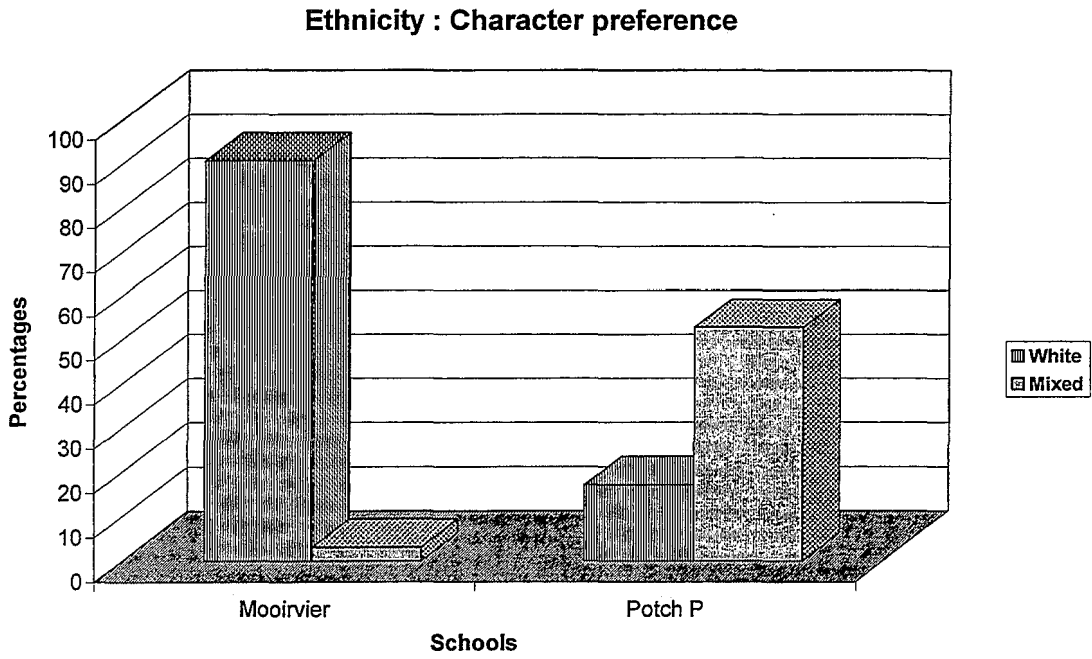
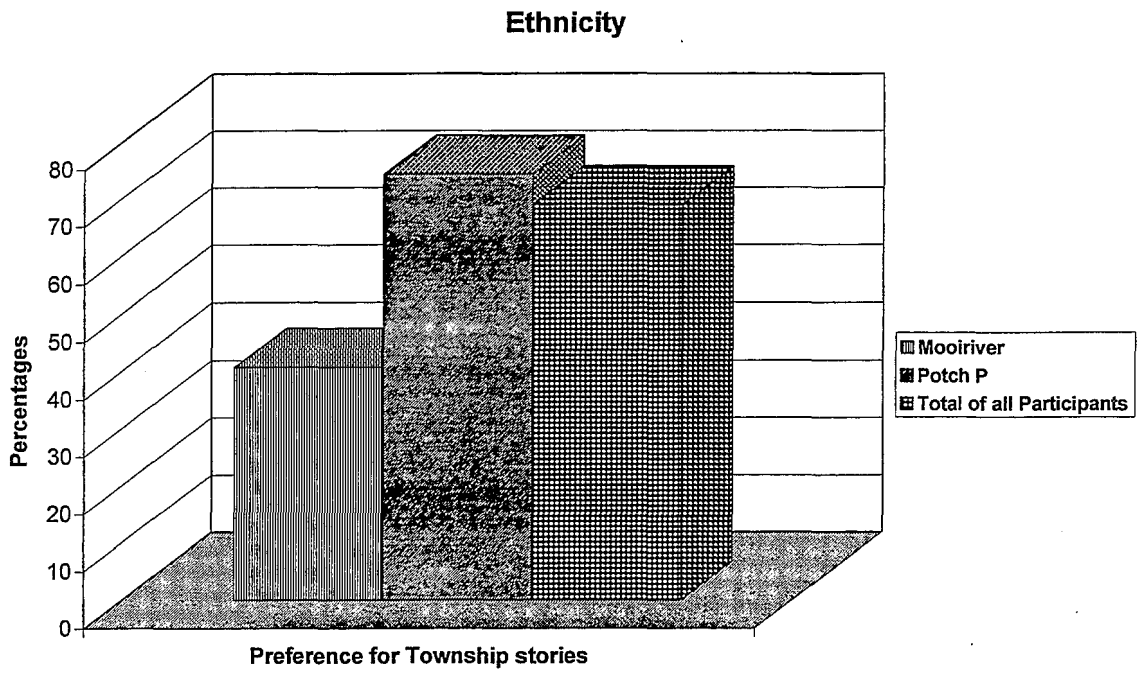


Figure 6



7.3 Socio-economic factors (Table 3, Figure 7)

As for socio-economic issues, it was quite evident that the White children had the advantage with 53,1 % of their group having internet at home which implies that they fall within a higher group of income or that internet is maybe a real priority. The concern about internet threatening the reading book is a valid and statistically verified real fact. Of the two groups disposing of internet, 46,9% of the 31 children claimed to prefer internet to reading a book. It is thus a point in case and authors of children's literature will have to face the fairly harsh reality that internet has arrived and has become a very important contender for the minds and souls of the young. Only these two groups' numbers were taken into account as it was argued that those who do not know what internet is cannot express a proper opinion in this regard. It is thus also a matter of finances and as long as income is a problem, books will still be read as a cheaper commodity.

It was also evident from the statistics that many black children do not have the privilege of having a private nook in the house to read peacefully. Only 50% of the learners attending Potch Primary have a private reading corner as compared to the 87,5% of children attending Mooirivier. It shows that there is an inequality in socio-economic factors, as housing and provision for a private room remain a privilege for those who can afford it. To read quietly and undisturbedly requires a private spot where the learner can concentrate and even though some people can read amidst much noise and together with the rest of the family members, concentration will be best if a silent nook is provided. The number of magazines and books at home is in total quite satisfactory considering South Africa's illiteracy rate and the number of supply is again higher among White children than is the case for Black children.

Table 3 – Socio-economic factors

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS									
We have internet	3	17	53,1%	2	0	0	0	22	11,8%
I have a private reading corner	24	28	87,5%	17	35	50%	1	105	56,4%
I have books and magazines at home to read	26	32	100%	37	58	82,8%	2	155	83,3%

Socio-Economic Factors

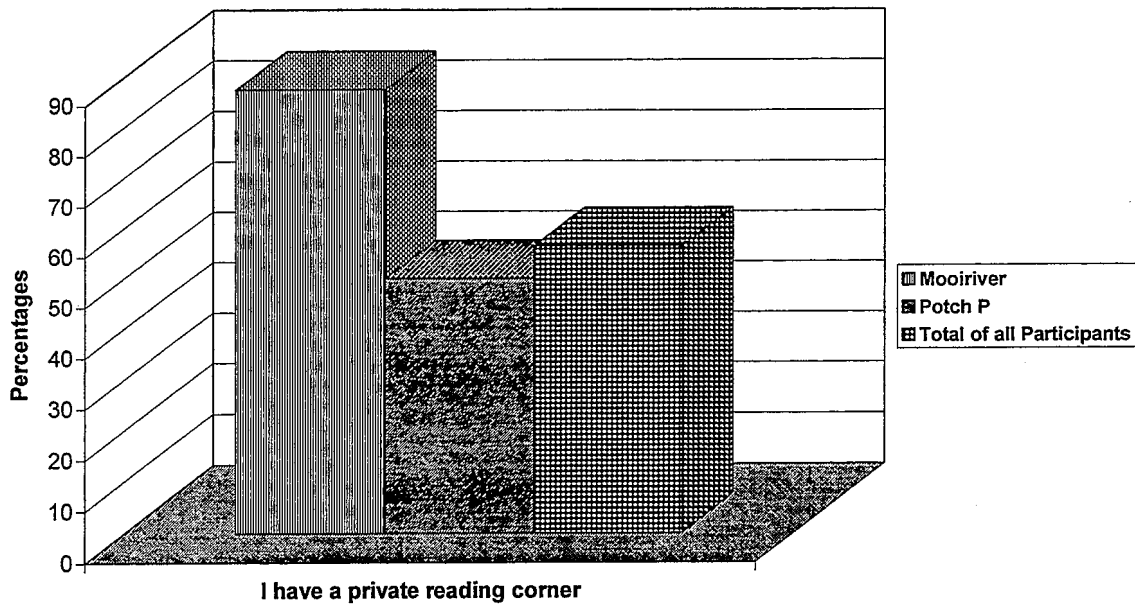


Figure 7

7.4 Education (Table 4, Figure 8)

According to statistics the total percentages of all participants show a very reassuring and sincere involvement. 76,8 percent of the 186 participants' parents read to them when they were little. It was also possible to observe the difference between Black and White parents as Mooirivier had 32 participant of which 30 were White and Potch Primary had 68 black participants, 1 Indian and 1 Coloured. It was therefore also possible to identify problem areas and the statistics show that only 65% of Black parents of these specific participants read to their children when they were little. It is very important to start language learning and teaching as young as possible and to read to the children even though they cannot read as youngsters, as they pick up vocabulary.

Maybe there is also a need for African first-language books to read to the children as proven by the statistics when considering the wish for township stories (74,2% of Blacks in Potch Primary) in the rationale to this thesis, and that that may be a reason for the low percentage of Africans reading to their children when young. The statistics also show a

very interesting tendency and that is that the 40,7% White children maintain that their parents do not even encourage them to read. A possible explanation may be that their reading habits are already established and that the parents know that their children of which 82% are members of a public library are reading anyway. The statistics pertaining to the Black learners show that only 38% of these Black children of Potch Primary are members of a public library, which is lamentable, seeing that membership at a public library costs the minimum. 94% of the Black parents, however, do encourage their children to read and maybe they must make this part of an effort to have their children enrolled at a public library. During the interview sessions, it became apparent that transport was also a problem for membership as many Black parents do have transport problems. Mobile libraries are probably a very worthwhile solution to this problem and should visit the townships trying to reach all the children living at the furthest points in the townships.

Table 4 - Education

Education: ROLE OF PARENTS	Mohadin 34	Moorivier 32	Moorivier 32 percentages	Promosa 40	Potch Primary 70	Potch Primary percentages	Farm school 10	Total	Total percentages
My parents read to me when I was little	28	31	96,8%	36	46	65%	2	143	76,8%
My parents encourage me to read	31	19	59,3%	40	66	94%	9	165	88,7%
We read when together at home	20	15	46,8%	30	33	47,1%	2*	100	53,7%
I am a member of a public library	25	26	81,2%	26	27	38,5%	0	104	55,9%
ROLE OF TEACHERS									
I am exposed to sufficient material at school	34	32	100%	37	67	95,7%	10	180	96,7%
I enjoy reading periods at school	34	32	100%	37	67	95,7%	10	180	96,7%

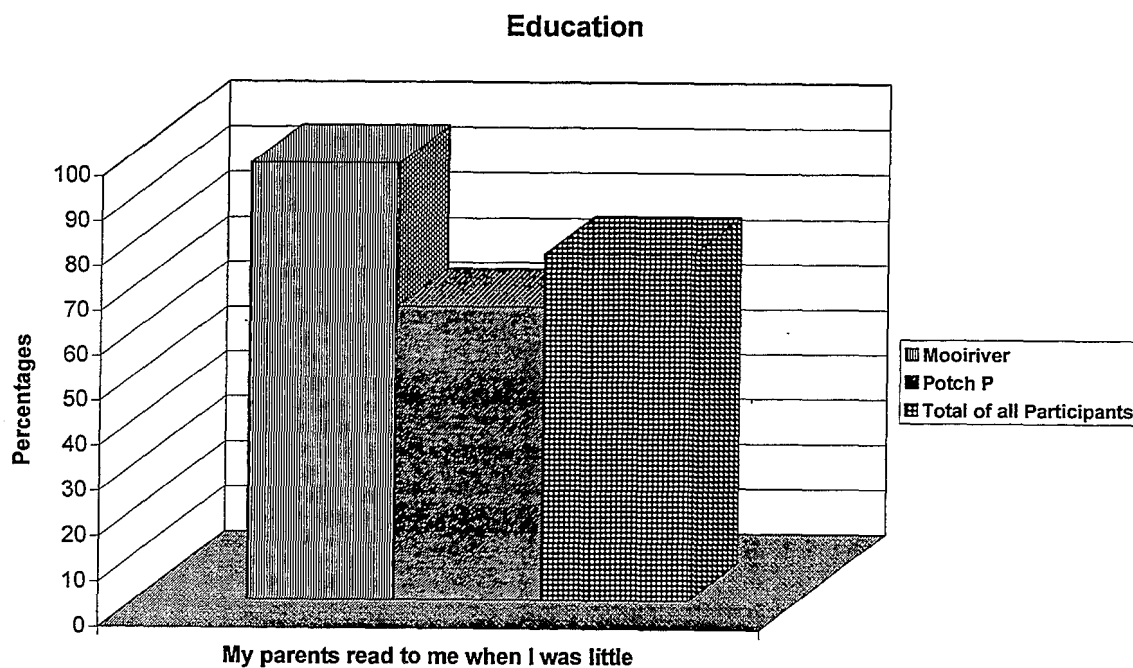


Figure 8

The percentages may also possibly reflect a greater need for reading material in township schools than at a Black school in town with more resources. Calculating from the numbers available the percentages for sufficient reading books at schools are: Mohadin: 100%, a township school, Promosa 92,5% which is lower and the farm school children replied to the questionnaires that their teacher, who was in fact also their principal, took great pains to supply library in terms of boxes of books serving as a media centre. Teachers should justly be applauded for their tremendous sense of vocation in serving an educative purpose and long live the teachers always trying to fight illiteracy.

As for who reads the most books (see table), boys or girls, the learners responded as follows: Girls admittedly seem to read less than boys (statistically-proven and determined according to numbers and percentages). One just wonders about how reliable their honesty in this respect was. Reading habits according to these statistics compared between a black and a white school (given that one or two of these learners were from other ethnic groups per group), Black learners do read fewer books than white learners and the 24% of the black female learners is quite alarming. It shows an area of special educative needs as well as a problem with resources.

7.5 Specific choices and responses to abstracts and summaries

These responses are first given before the discussion begins.

Table 5 – Special choices

SPECIFIC CHOICES: preferences									
I prefer comedies to tragedies	28	25	78,1%	37	66	94,2%	7	163	87,6%
I prefer fables to real –life stories	6	10	31,2%	5	22	31,4%	4	47	25,2%
I prefer real-life stories	28	22	68,7%	35	44	62,8%	6	135	72,5%
I prefer colourful pictures	33	29	90,6%	38	63	90%	10	173	93,0%
I prefer pictures	32	22	68,7%	38	66	94,2%	5	163	87,6%
I prefer no pictures	2	10	31,2%	2	2	2,8%	5	21	11,2%
I prefer letters to be small	6	2	6,2%	5	6	8,5%	4	23	12,3%
	Mohadin 34	Mooirivier 32	Mooirivier 32 %	Promo- sa 40	Potch Primary 70	Potch Primary %	Farm school 10	Total	Total percentages
I prefer letters to be of medium size	24	27	84,3%	29	51	72,8%	6	137	73,6%
I prefer hard book covers	26	17	53,1%	22	50	71,4%	9	124	66,6%
I prefer soft book covers	8	15	46,8%	18	20	28,5%	1	62	33%
I prefer comics to picture books	34	30	93,7%	37	62	88,5%	6	169	90,8%
I prefer long stories	22	30	93,7%	36	54	77,1%	5	147	79,0%
I prefer short stories	12	2	6,2%	4	16	22,8%	5	39	20,9%
I prefer watching TV to reading books	18	25	78,1%	18	40	57,1%	9	110	57,1%
I prefer reading on internet to reading books (on shelf)	17	14	43,7%					31 of 66	46,9%
I have read ---books by Aug 2000									
1	3	4	12,5%	6	14	20%	2	29	15,5%
3	13	9	28,1%	14	26	37,1%	4	66	35,4%
5	5	8	25%	3	7	10%	3	26	13,9%
More	13	12	37,5%	17	20	28,5%	1	63	33,8%
I am fond of reading	25	21	65,6%	40	45	64,2%	6	137	73,6%
I am interested in writing stories for others to read	14	8	25%	23	41	58,5%	1	87	46,7%

Table 6 - response to extracts

RESPONSE TO EXTRACTS	Mohadin		Potchefstroom Primary School	
1. Music maker	0	0	7	10%
2. Maria's movie comeback	17	50%	2	30%
3. The speckled band	5	14%	8	11%
4. Starpol the spider	0	0	5	7,1%
5. Harry Potter	4	11,7%	6	8,5%
6. Asterix	7	20,5%	9	12,8%
No Response	1	2,9%	14	20%
	34		70	

Response to extracts

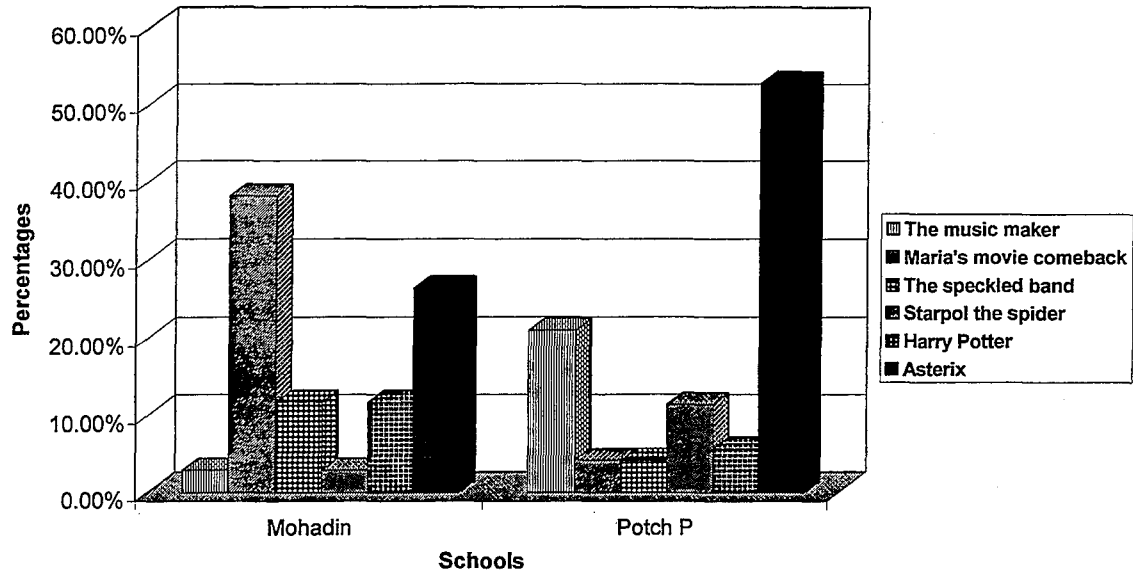


Figure 9

Table 7 - response to illustrations

RESPONSE TO ILLUSTRATIONS	Mohadin		Potchefstroom Primary School	
1. Music maker	1	2,9%	0	0
2. Maria's movie comeback	13	38,2%	15	21%
3. The speckled band	4	11,7%	3	4,2%
4. Starpol the spider	1	2,9%	3	4,2%
5. Harry Potter	4	11,7%	8	11,4%
6. Asterix	9	26,4%	4	5,7%
No Response	2	5,8%	37	52,8%
	34		70	

Response to Illustrations

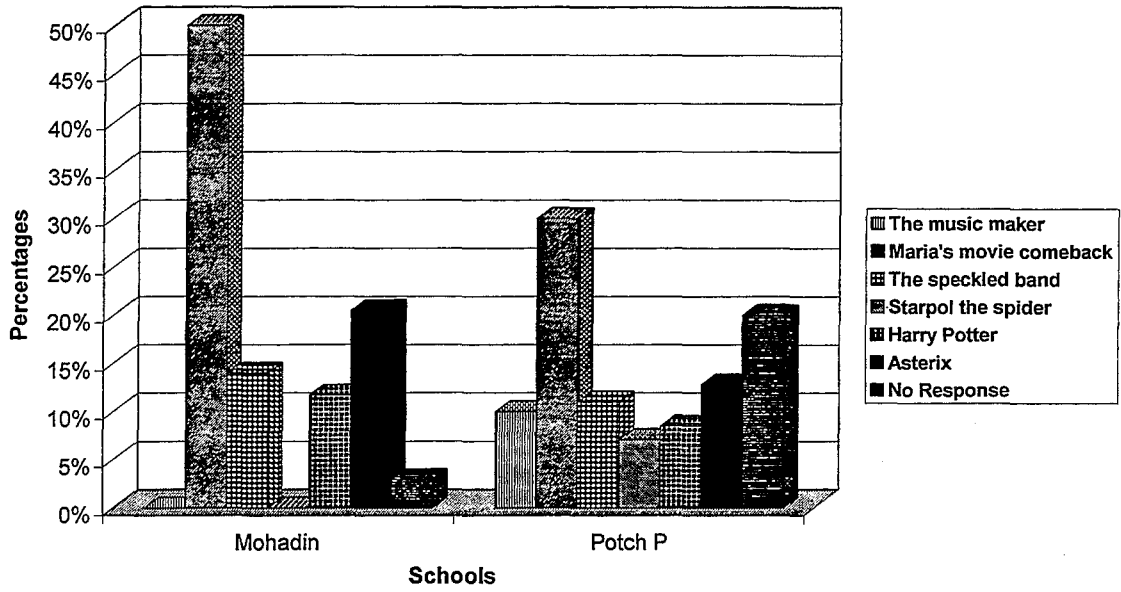


Figure 10

Table 8 - responses to summaries

RESPONSE TO SUMMARIES	Mohadin		Moorivier		Promosa Primary		Potchefstroom Primary School		Farm School	
	34		32		40		70			
1. BFG	14	41%	16	50%	4	10%	11	16%	3	30%
2. The strange piece of paper	1	3%	2	6%	11	28%	22	31%	2	20%
3. The speckled band	4	11%	6	18,7%	12	30%	9	13%	1	10%
4. Oliver Twist	9	26%	8	25%	10	25%	24	34%	3	30%
No Response	6		0		3	7,5%	4	6%	1	10%

Response to Summaries

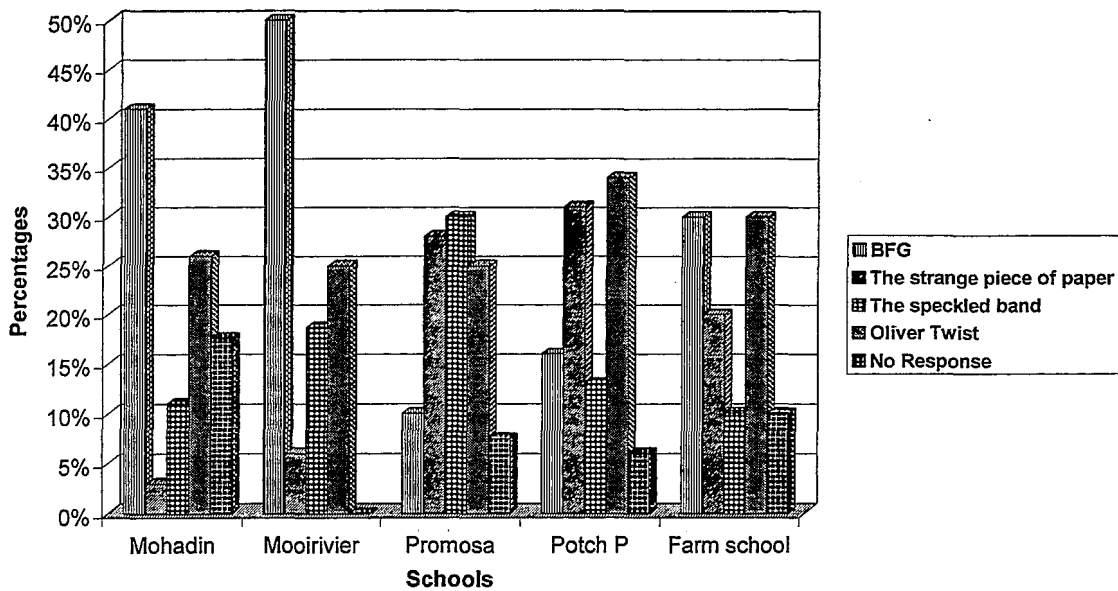


Figure 11

It had been predicted that the book a child would like to read would have colourful pictures, a proper durable book cover, a riveting story, a happy story - relieving the reader of the harshness of reality containing an element of escapism and a layout that is conducive to enjoyable reading (including font size and style and general orthography).

These predictable aspects proved to be exactly the case when studying the statistics. 87,6% of the 186 participants preferred comedies to tragedies, 93,0% of the children preferred colourful pictures, 87,6% preferred pictures. What was pretty interesting was the fact that the need for pictures differed from school to school. When comparing the Black children with the White children it was found that 68,7% of the total number of Moorivier's 32 learners preferred pictures whereas the need for pictures among Black learners was bigger: 94,2%. This phenomenon may perhaps be best explained in terms of beginning to read a second language where pictures support the content and serve as an aid to complement the story and simplify comprehension. Black learners require more pictures because of the fact that English is in many cases even their third or fourth language and they struggle to understand the content. Response to extracts and summaries carried out revealed the following interesting no response phenomenon:

Moorivier's children all responded to the extracts. 17,6% of Mohadin's children did not respond, 7,5% of Promosa's children did not respond and 6% of Potch Primary did not respond.

The tendency of no response goes to show that the many learners and especially Black learners do struggle to read English with comprehension and as fast as White children. As for response to extracts, it was not possible to compare the White and the Black learners because of the fact that not all schools could see their way open to answer the lengthy questionnaire. The total number of no response at Potch Primary whose children were given ample time to complete the questionnaire as I was carrying out these tests myself, 20% did not respond and 2,9% of Mohadin did not respond. The response to pictures shows almost similar statistics for Potch Primary. 52,8% did not respond and at Mohadin 5,8% did not respond.

Further more it was noted that 73,6% of all 186 participants said that they enjoyed reading a lot, and a further point of interest was that only 46,7% of all learners were interested in writing stories for others to read. It is probable that the learners who are more linguistically inclined are the ones answering a yes for writing. Those who are better at Maths probably prefer doing other things to writing stories. Another salient aspect is the fact that when considering the total number of reading books read by Aug 2000 the number of books for Black children is much lower than for White children. 37,1% of the Black children of Potch Primary in total, irrespective of gender, maintained that they had read three books as compared to the 28,1% of White children and then 28,5% of the Black children have read more books in comparison with the White school Moorivier whose learners who maintain to have read more than five books reflected a 65,6%, which shows that the White children read more.

The learners attending the farm school also showed a low percentage for reading more than five books and farm schools should receive more support than they are given at the moment so that these farm children, even though they are only a few, can have, according to the new human rights bill, equal opportunities of in education. The farm school

included does not even have electricity and thus no projectors. It even has a dung floor and no formal media centre. The parents cannot pay the school fees decided on by the governing body and the general income of the farmer workers is so low that they cannot afford to send their children to other schools in townships or even in town.

Television seems to pose a threat to the reading book indeed, since almost without exception all children prefer to watch television to reading a book. 57,1 percent of all the children in total preferred watching television. The percentage for Black and White children differs considerably and it is apparent that 78,1% percent of the White children participating preferred TV as compared to the 57,1 percent of the Black children of Potch Primary. Maybe Black children do watch TV but they probably prefer Black programmes that might not be as fascinating as the reading books available.

As for response to types of stories the readers who participated and who were able to manage the pressure of answering a long questionnaire it was found that concerning the type of stories romances were indeed the most popular as 50% of Mohadin's learners preferred romances and 30% of Potch Primary's children preferred romances. Concerning comics, Asterix received a vote of 20,5 % popularity among Mohadin's learners and 12,8% among Potch Primary's learners. It was also very interesting that Harry Potter did not receive as many votes as would be expected though very popular among them as 11,7% of Mohadin liked it and 8,5% of Potch Primary liked it. The preference for culturally familiar stories was also reflected in the response to summaries. An Afrocentric story with Black characters was the second most popular choice for Potch Primary, a largely Black school with the exception of two learners. Only 18,7% of Mooirivier's children preferred the Afrocentric story and rather voted for BFG which received 50% of votes as opposed to the mere 16% of Potch Primary. Old-time classics such as *Oliver Twist* were also very popular among all groups and it again emphasises that a good story will attract attention despite the cultural elements present when the author focuses on a human experience. 7,5% of Promosa's learners initially claimed that they did not like detective stories when responding to questions, but the detective story of Sherlock Holmes showed a preference of 14%. This inconsistency can perhaps be

ascribed to the author's skill in hooking the readers by manipulating and convincing them to like detective stories. These detective stories have a well-planned plot and credible characters and focus on the human experience, serving to say that even detective stories can be popular. Mohadin's teacher said that the children had discussed *Speckled band* in class earlier on during the year and enjoyed reading the extracts and summaries a lot.

The rather low percentage of votes for Harry Potter can most possibly be ascribed to the fact that these novels are rather suitable for a skilful reader and are books particularly popular with grown-ups among the ones who condone Rowling's books.

As for illustrations, *Maria's Movie comeback* received the most votes as 38,2 % of Mohadin's children voted for this romantic book and 21% of Potch Primary. Studying the illustration it was clear to me that the picture represents friendly people and friends standing together, supporting one another all in harmony and even multicultural characters people the picture. It again underlines the need of Black learners to mix with other cultures as their previous choices have statistically revealed.

7.7 Religion

Concerning religion, learners have a vast number of different religions. The questionnaire could not even provide the examples they came up with. Religion remains a topic to be dealt with in terms of the greatest sensitivity of all sociolinguistic aspects. Parents will not approve of material that are in direct contradiction to what they intend their children to learn considering the high percentage of involvement in their children's reading habits.

7.8 Examples of books suggested by learners

Here follow some of the original responses by learners per group to the question:

My favourite book's title is

Mohadin

Horror stories by Duncan McLoud

Charlie and the chocolate factory by Roald Dahl

Goose bumps and horror stories

Room 13 and ghost stories

Sweet valley high

Science fiction and horror stories

Books by Ian Fleming

Books like Robinson Crusoe

Fairy tales and adventures

Roald Dahl and Danielle Steel's books

The lion king

Matilda by Roald Dahl

Love stories

Moorivier

BFG

Trompie

American beauty

Child in darkness

Harry Potter

Goosebumps

Roald Dahl's books (*Matilda* by Roald Dahl)

Sweet valley high

Promosa

Drum

The red bus

The lion king

The lion and the mouse

Snow white

About animals

Romantic love stories

Ghost train

Three little pigs

Cinderella

Arabella

Pippo

The three bears

Read right

About soccer

Superman

Gateways

History book

Potch Primary

Oliver Twist

Snow-white

Beauty and the beast

Cinderella

The lion king

Grandmother's hat

Street fighter

Winnie the Pooh

Mickey and Donald

Goosebumps

Comics

Donald Duck

X-men

Science fiction

Hansel and Gretel

Cinderella

Hercules

Alice in Wonderland

Drum

Bona

Sleeping Beauty

Farm school

Pinkie

Vlieg hoog vlieg laag

Child in darkness

Snow-white

Die groot pampoer

Aircraft ships

Flight into danger

Beautiful and ugly

By just mentioning the names of favourite stories, the television as influence on youngsters is again picked up unmistakably. Many learners just mentioned favourite television programmes irrespective of whether they had to mention the names of books. These examples also show that some learners can handle more complicated books more easily than others and these examples also demonstrate that the Black learners most probably do not have easy access to a variety of books from which to choose – hence the rather circumscribed choices.

Mohadin's learners claimed to enjoy fairy tales and fables. Promosa and Mohadin's responses compared well, both mentioning similar choices. Mooirivier's learners mentioned more advanced books than the other schools participating. The farm school's learners even mentioned Afrikaans names, which could have any number of explanations, but which could have something to do with the fact that there is no media centre, and with the teacher supplying whatever she can one could venture a guess that these books were probably donated haphazardly. The teacher should at least be praised for supplying some material even though she does not have resources at school because of the socio-economic problems of the pupils attending the school.

7.9 Conclusion

In retrospect I was quite pleased with the learners' honesty and that there was not even a single one trying to make fun of the questionnaire, answering weird things just to shock the marker of the questionnaire. They were actually very serious about giving their viewpoints and it can most probably be attributed to the wonderful principals and teachers showing them that certain material must be treated seriously also because of loyalty towards their schools. All the schools that participated can feel justly proud of their children and the way they responded upholding their schools' good reputations.

7.10 Summary

In summary it can be said that gender response remains an interesting phenomenon and that it was quite surprising that so many males voted for romances, that males still prefer male heroes and females female heroes despite the fact that the percentage of females voting for male characters is higher than for males voting for female heroes. The interest in township stories seems to be statistically quite higher than initially expected and a request for mixed cultures in books is more a request from Black learners than from White learners. Parents and teachers are seriously involved when learners grow up. Black parents need to read more to their learners and something must be done about the problem that children prefer to watch television to reading books. Black schools do

appear to experience serious socio-economic problems, for example, supply in resources and farm schools seem to suffer even more. The fact that boys, percentage-wise, seem to read more than girls is also very surprising. Response to real texts and summaries reflect the learners' choices when asked about choices in the first part of the questionnaire which makes one think that the statistics do seem to be reliable.