

Enhancing Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Education through Folklore: A Case Study at the Further Education and Training Phase in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This article critically examines the role of folklore in teaching indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) within the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in South Africa, specifically in Home Languages curricula. Despite the recognised importance of indigenous knowledge systems in enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of education as articulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), their integration into formal education remains hypothetical. Utilising a culturally relevant pedagogy framework iteratively and the decolonial theory, this article explores how folklore could serve as an effective medium for implanting the IKS formal education. The findings accentuate the need for policy reforms to prioritise folklore in the FET phase, ensuring that all learners studying Home Languages are exposed to IKS as that is crucial in nurturing the cultural identity and cognitive development among learners.

KEYWORDS

Indigenous knowledge systems; folklore; culturally relevant pedagogy; decolonial theory; Further Education and Training phase; South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the teaching of folklore as part of the Home Language (HL) curricula to amplify the learners' knowledge and understanding of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), their value and relevance in understanding themselves, the world around them and to draw from IKS as a resource in their formal learning. One of the principles that the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R–12 is based on, is that of valuing the IKS (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2012). This means that IKS should be held as driving forces in the processes of teaching and learning by merging them into the formal teaching of the curricula in schools and not be undermined in favour of exogenous knowledge.

There are various scholarly definitions and explanations of what Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is. Daniel et al. (2022) define IK as a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, innovations, practices, and beliefs that promote sustainability and the responsible stewardship of cultural and natural resources through relationships between humans and their landscapes, physical, social, cultural, and spiritual systems. This view concurs with Grey (2014) who views IK as encompassing expressions, practices, beliefs, understandings, insights, and experiences of indigenous groups, generated over centuries of profound interaction with a particular territory. IKS are not static and are the body of accumulated wisdom that has evolved from years of experience, trial and error, as well as problem solving by groups of people working to meet the challenges they face in their local environments, drawing upon the resources they have at hand (Green, 1994). Additionally, Murove (2018) synthesizes IK as the knowledge that is relevant to the cultural context in which it is generated and disseminated. These are only a few of the definitions of IK. What is conspicuous in the above definitions concerning IKS, and in the interest of this study, is that IK and IKS refer to the knowledge generated by indigenous people through their encounter with nature and the environment. It is knowledge that has been tried and tested, that embodies and preserves cultural aspects and is not static (Kugara & Mdhluli, 2023; Nevhudoli & Olive Netshandama, 2023; Omodan et al., 2024)

CAPS acknowledges the rich history and heritage of South Africa as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the Constitution. Based on this statement, one could therefore suggest the following, concerning the IKS: 1, IKS are the substrata of the South African school curricula. 2, IKS are the curators of history and everything of indigeneity, both tangible and intangible, which people preserve with pride as part of their existence, such as culture, traditions, art, and language. 3, To consider IKS as important and worthwhile is in synergy with the values stipulated in the Constitution of South Africa. Based on the above argument then, IKS are the bedrock of the South African curriculum and must never be disregarded in the process of teaching and learning of home languages (HLs) in all phases, including the Further Education and Training (FET) phase.

It is on this basis that this article critically examines the role of folklore in enhancing the teaching of IKS within the FET phase in South Africa, specifically in HLs curricula. Understanding what IKS are; what they encompass and the IKS' valuable contribution to the body of knowledge

is crucial for FET HL learners' comprehensive interpretation and understanding of the curriculum they are taught at school. In addition, it is important for the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to realise the defects of not enhancing the teaching of IKS as part of HL in the FET phase.

The pivotal role played by language in the transmission of information, knowledge, sharing experiences and its intrinsic relatedness to culture and identity can never be overemphasised. Indigenous languages, as Matthee and Turpin (2015) and Shava and Manyike (2018) note, capture, and transmit the knowledge and wisdom of indigenous communities through stories, proverbs, folktales, myths, poetry, and songs that convey meanings about individuals, society, culture, and interactions with nature. The folktales are paramount as the custodians and the vehicles for storing and passing of IKS from generation to generation. In a nutshell, home languages are the vehicles of transmitting IK through folklore. Accordingly, folklore teaching, therefore, is indispensable in enhancing learners' understanding of IK, and how they can derive and generate knowledge from it. In view of this then, there is an interconnection between IK, folklore, and home (indigenous) languages.

Folklore, as demonstrated in the discussions above, is the vital component of culture through which people in their communities are able to nurture their heritage, customs and traditions, norms, and values (Kuzembayeva et al., 2024; Yende, 2024). This is affirmed in the article entitled: "The Fascinating World of Folklore: Exploring Cultural Traditions," as it avers that by and large, folklore is, in fact, the preservation of cultural heritage as it allows societies to celebrate their past, embrace their present and shape their future. It promotes social cohesion and is a social tool for social integration. In addition, it emphasises the value of global citizenship, such as respect for diversity, human rights, and sustainable development, which stories touch on, and which remain to be discovered and translated into daily life (Kim, 2016). Chiparausha and Mavhunduse (2018) have explored the role of folktales in the preservation of IK among the Shona. They employed a documentary research method and analysed the folktales. The findings showed that language, as part of the IK was itself preserved through the study of folktales. Also, idioms and proverbs, and socio-cultural norms and practices are also embedded to folktales. To a large extent, folklore, according to the above arguments, accentuates that IKS, and folklore are interdependent. Consequently, the teaching of IKS as part of Home Languages in the FET phase necessitates the teaching of folklore as part of HL curricula.

Background of the Problem:

CAPS for Home Languages in the FET phase aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, 2012). This means that it advocates the contextualisation of the curriculum to the learners' everyday lives and the IK from their respective environments and communities, to enhance their understanding of the curriculum in the classroom. It is undeniable that CAPS for Grades 10–12 underscores the importance of valuing the IKS in the teaching of HL curricula.

Contrary to the above notion concerning IKS in CAPS, there is the challenge of limited inclusion of IKS as part of the formal curriculum for the HL in the FET phase. CAPS for HL in the FET phase, as the policy documents which also stipulate the syllabus that must be taught, is silent concerning the teaching of IKS. Perhaps this is due to folklore being presented as an alternative to a novel. Intrinsically, the content to be taught combines both the novel and folklore and thus mainly refers to a plot structure, characterisation, themes, setting, conflict, irony, and the role of the narrator, even in relation to all the folklore subgenres. This might have hampered the teaching of IKS in the Home Languages' curricula, especially in literature of which folklore is a part. This limited inclusion of IKS in the teaching of HLs is evident in the DBE Diagnostic Reports (2019-2023) for all Grade 12 HL and in the November and June Paper 2 examination question papers. In Afrikaans and English HL in November Paper 2 question papers from 2019 to 2022, there are no questions addressing IKS. In fact, folklore does not even appear as one of the genres that is examined. On the other hand, with isiXhosa (2019-2023), IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, and SiSwati Paper 2 question papers for November 2020 to 2022, folklore is examined, but even then, questions that address IKS are minimal. I investigated the question papers from these abovementioned languages as they are languages that I could read and understand. Also, in the English HL and Afrikaans HL Grade 12 examination papers for Paper 2, 2019-2022, the indication was that folklore is not covered in Grade 12. Additionally, the de-emphasis on the teaching of IKS in CAPS for HL in the FET phase cuts across all languages, as all the CAPS for HL in African languages are adapted versions of the English one as is evident in the examination papers. It must be noted that, although I have made mention of other HLs' November examination papers, the in-depth analysis and scrutiny only focused on IsiXhosa HL November and June Grade 12 Paper 2 examination papers. I chose IsiXhosa HL Paper 2 examination papers because IsiXhosa is my mother tongue and, therefore, as I am more confident and comfortable with it, there would not be any limitations in scrutinising the IsiXhosa HL Paper 2 examination questions.

The mention of the IKS in the teaching of literature in HL in the FET phase, specifically in folklore, only became apparent in 2017 with the revision of the Examination Guidelines for Languages and, consequently, in the current Examination Guidelines document that was issued in 2021. In the 2021 Examination Guidelines, the assessment of IKS is embedded in the folklore genre. This means that only learners from the schools that have chosen folklore as one of the genres for literature are taught IKS. If the CAPS for HL in FET phase, as a policy document, allows schools, for whatever reason, to choose between the novel and folklore, it gives them permission not to teach folklore. Folklore itself forms part of IKS. This challenge is crucial and must be addressed, as it may hinder the holistic growth and academic performance of HL learners in the FET phase. It may also promote exclusion in the process of teaching and learning and perpetuate the marginalisation of IK in favour of exogenous knowledge.

Research Questions and Objectives:

This article responds to these focal questions: What factors contribute to the limited inclusion of IKS in the formal syllabus of HLs in the FET phase? How could the teaching and learning of IKS in HL in the FET phase be enhanced through the teaching of folklore? What strategies could DBE utilise to address these challenges? The objectives were twofold: To identify the impact of the shortcomings of CAPS concerning the teaching of IKS in HL in the FET phase, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of folklore in the learning of IKS in schools. In view of the stated objectives, this study explored the body of scholarly research, acknowledging contributions and identifying gaps in IKS teaching through folklore in the HL curriculum in the FET phase.

Other Research Studies:

There is a plethora of critical scholarly research on the role of folklore in the teaching and learning of IKS, which this study needed to consider to be able to arrive at rational conclusions as to whether there is a gap in a specific phenomenon of scholarly discourse. This review of other research done was customised, reviewing literature relevant to this study, to digress from focusing on scholars that discuss a similar phenomenon that may lead to gratuitous duplication (Liu et al., 2022). The literature reveals varied findings on the Africanisation of IKS through its integration from community into science, the centralisation of IKS in the curriculum (Mashoko, 2014; Msila, 2014; Nomlomo & Sosibo, 2016) and its use as a source of solutions to the current historical inaccuracies, discrepancies, biases and prejudices (Mvenene, 2017). Studies have dealt with experiences for IKS' existence in schools, finding their space amidst technology, the use of their modal strategies and the need for IKS to evolve in representing and reflecting the changing nature of the society (Bhatta & Dahal, 2021; Keane et al., 2023; Machimana, 2024; Motinyane, 2023) and transition to digital reconstruction (Ain & Wahid, 2023).

Challenges such as lack of proper training and support for teachers have been identified (Castiano & Mkabela, 2014 Cindi, 2021; Kigozi, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Mavuso et al., 2023). Apart from the lack of support and proper training, the lack of awareness of the value of IKS in educational settings, Eurocentric stereotypes which regard IK as unscientific and a lack of knowledge of what constitutes IK awareness of its sources and possessors were also identified as some of the challenges (Chabaya & Chabaya, 2023; Jumba & Mwititi, 2022; Manzunzu, 2022). Some scholars (e.g. Banes & Cruz, 2021) have identified the lack of explicit policy and monitoring schemes in the curriculum, teaching strategies and pedagogies as impeding the integration and development of IKS. Kelkay et al. (2023) have mentioned the lack of attention given to IK in the textbooks and inaccessibility of well-documented indigenous values as one of the challenges in inclusion of IK by teachers in the classrooms. de Silva et al. (2018) and Modory (2021) have conducted research on culturally relevant teaching through a multicultural lens and a culturally relevant education. Many scholars, both South African and international, have researched IKS and the use of folklore in the teaching of languages in schools; however, research on the enhancing of IKS through folklore in HLs in the FET phase has been minimal. This gap is what the study, reported in this article, sought to address, emphasising the need for culturally relevant

pedagogical approaches and decolonisation of the HLs curricula by enhancing the IKS as part of the HLs learning, through the study of folklore. The potential of folklore to amplify the study of IKS is evident from its definitions, as well as its relation to IKS and language, as already discussed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To capture the cultural and educational dimensions of IKS and folklore, the study incorporated theories from cultural pedagogy and indigenous education. In adopting the culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) framework, the study examined the potential of folklore in serving as an effective medium for embedding IKS in formal education, consequently advancing cultural identity and cognitive development. The CRP framework is rooted in a social justice, systematically addressing the pervasive gaps in the educational experiences of students from historically marginalised communities (Allen et al., 2017). CRP is described by Ladson-Billings, the developer of this framework, as a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. At its core, CRP leads to (a) a high level of academic excellence; (b) cultural competence and (c) critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In other words, CRP underscores that in a classroom that is culturally relevant for learning, the learners' identity and integrity will be upheld, and they will be motivated to critique knowledge and information and thus be encouraged to perform to the best of their abilities. CRP, in a nutshell, champions the bridging of the gap between the learners and the curriculum, the teacher who may have a diverse background from the learners and the gap that is between the learners themselves.

When CAPS refers to the levels of language as Home Language and First Additional Language, it does not mean that the language is a native language, but it refers to the proficiency at which the language is offered (CAPS, 2012). This, therefore, means that the HL class not only comprises learners who are native speakers of that language but also learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. CRP fosters the consideration of learners' prior knowledge from their social backgrounds and cultural identities in the process of teaching and learning.

To highlight the need for a pedagogy that embraces indigenous knowledge and counters colonial influences in education, the study, in addition to CRP, employed the decolonial theory. Decolonisation is an umbrella term for diverse efforts to resist the distinct but intertwined processes of colonisation and racialisation, to enact transformation and redress in reference to the historical and ongoing effects of these processes, and to create and keep alive modes of knowing, being, and relating that these processes seek to eradicate (Stein & Andreotti, 2017). The decolonial theory is in synergy with the CRP in that it encourages the notion of curriculum as a lived experience, constructing and reconstructing knowledge through experiences (Okyere, 2018). The CRP was used as the lens in examining the efficacy of the current literature curricula in enhancing the teaching of IKS in HLs in the FET phase. However, the study also delved into the decolonial approach in looking at how anti-dominative approaches to the curriculum could

also be achieved through the curricula and assessment in the teaching of IKS through folklore in HLs in the FET phase. The decolonial theory and culturally relevant pedagogy, in essence, affirm what is stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement (2012), as some of its principles are infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights and the valuing of IKS. To achieve what these principles demand in the teaching and learning process in schools, this study examined the extent to which IKS is taught in the HL teaching in the FET phase as one of the embodiments of the decolonialisation of the curriculum through the lens based on the tenets of the CRP.

Research Questions and Objectives' Alignment

Limited inclusion of IKS: The first research question explored the factors that contributed to the limited inclusion of IKS in the formal HLs syllabus in the FET phase. The compulsory teaching of folklore in the FET phase, as against folklore presented as an alternative genre to the novel by CAPS, might give enough space and time for the learning and teaching of IKS as part of the HLs formal syllabus. The formal inclusion of IKS in the HLs' curricula would not only enhance learners' confidence in themselves and affirm their identities but would also encourage their critical thinking skills in deconstructing knowledge and identifying exclusions that perpetuate distorted truths that IK is inferior to exogenous knowledge.

Efficacy of Folklore in Enhancing IKS: The second question examined how the teaching of IKS in HLs in the FET phase could be enhanced through the teaching of folklore. Folklore, in all its subgenres, embodies IK. Therefore, the teaching of folklore, considering and understanding the learners' diverse backgrounds and identities, would give learners the opportunity to learn IKS and use it as a springboard in understanding knowledge that might be foreign to them. In addition, the learning of IKS as part of the HLs curricula would support the notion of making the curriculum part of the lived experiences of learners.

Addressing the shortcomings of CAPS concerning IKS: The objectives of the study included identifying the impact of the shortcomings of CAPS concerning the teaching of IKS in HL in the FET phase and illustrating the effectiveness of folklore in the learning of IKS in schools. The in-depth scholarly description of folklore and IKS provides a foundation for teachers to advance their strategies in using folklore to enhance the effective teaching of the IKS as part of literature study in the FET phase.

Benefits of the research

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it addresses the limited inclusion of IKS as part of the formal curriculum for the HL in the FET phase. Even though the CAPS document puts emphasis on the value of IKS, inclusivity and contextualisation of the curriculum to the learners' daily life experiences, the findings of this study reveal that the IK remains marginalised in the formal teaching of HL in the FET phase. Contemplating the scholarly perspectives, it then becomes conspicuous that the teaching of folklore should encapsulate the teaching of IKS. That would not only enhance the teaching and learning of the IKS which in turn would improve the learner's cognitive performance, but it would encourage learners to embrace their cultural

identities and that of others. This consideration is crucial for the learners' holistic development and preservation of one's culture and heritage whilst acknowledging and respecting diversity.

Additionally, this study not only identifies the shortcomings of CAPS in being silent concerning the teaching of IKS in the literature syllabus for the HL FET phase, but it also proposes a solution by suggesting the compulsory teaching of folklore to enhance the teaching and learning of IKS in the FET phase in the HLs. The extensive research by scholars on folklore, IKS, and the teaching of languages could never be subverted, but the research on the teaching of IKS in HL in the FET phase through folklore is minimal. This study then, although it does not bring all the answers concerning the teaching of IKS at schools, does contribute to the existing knowledge by stimulating debates on the relevance of folklore in education and the impact of teaching and learning IKS in HL to the decolonisation of the curriculum.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design was qualitative and exploratory, focusing on understanding the defects of limited inclusion of IKS as part of the Home Languages' curricula. The primary data source for this study was the IsiXhosa Home Language Paper 2 November and June examination papers from 2019 to 2023. The qualitative exploratory approach encourages profound, qualitative examination of existing data and uncovering the challenge of limited inclusion of IKS in the formal curricula of HL in the FET phase, the possible impact of IKS on learners and South African education at large and suggests possible solutions. Additionally, this method elicits more insights and debates on the issue at hand.

Document Analysis

Selection and Examination of Documents: The core of this study involved a detailed analysis of the IsiXhosa, November, and June Paper 2 examination question papers over five consecutive years, that is, from the year 2019 to 2023. These documents were chosen for their relevance and the rich insights they provide into the teaching of IKS in the HL in the FET phase. Additionally, assessment reflects what is taught in class. The Grade 12 examination papers are supposed to be valid, fair, reliable, and authentic; and have gone through several stages of quality assurance. Furthermore, as already stated, I am a native speaker of the language and, as such, there would be no limitations in probing the IsiXhosa HL question papers.

Data Extraction: Key information, including questions based on folklore as one of the prescribed genres, and identified questions addressing IKS, were extracted from these question papers. This process involved carefully reading and cataloguing relevant data that directly pertained to the research questions.

Coding and Thematic Identification: The extracted data were subjected to a coding process. This involved identifying and categorising questions based on the novels and those based on folklore and patterns that emerged from the question papers; for instance, questions that addressed IKS in both the novels and folklore.

Analysis Using the CRP Framework pertaining to IKS: CPR will serve as the analytical lens. Each aspect of the data was examined in terms of how IKS has been or has not been addressed. For example, understanding what IKS entails, and the principles of the CRP and decolonial theory provided insights into the prevailing limitations in the teaching of IKS in the HL in the FET phase and potential solutions were suggested.

Synthesis and Interpretation: The final stage involved synthesising the coded data and interpreting it within the context of CRP and decolonial theory. This synthesis aimed to construct a cohesive narrative that connected the challenge of limited inclusion of IKS in the teaching of HLs' curricula in the FET phase, highlighting the potential of folklore in its teaching and learning. This interpretive process also critically evaluated the feasibility and efficacy of folklore in enhancing IKS in the FET phase HL curricula.

Validity and reliability of the research: These steps helped me to establish the trustworthiness and minimise biases and errors in this research. Data used were from the diagnostic reports and the DBE's final examination question papers, which had been reviewed by the curriculum specialist and documented and published on the Department of Education's website. Also, the question papers analysed had gone through all the examination stages and processes as conducted by the DBE and UMalusi for validity and reliability.

Additionally, the following HLs' Diagnostic Reports and Grade 12 Paper 2 final question papers were also scrutinised for the availability and the quantity of questions based on IKS and the total marks allocated. Those languages were: English HL, Afrikaans HL, Siswati H, IsiNdebele HL and IsiZulu HL.

Data quality Check: I not only scrutinised the five-year period diagnostic reports for IsiXhosa HL but also scrutinised the IsiXhosa Grade 12 final question papers from 2019 to 2023 to ensure data consistency and completeness.

Additionally, data and the analysis were documented transparently in order to facilitate replication and verification.

Expected Outcomes

Through this methodical document analysis, the research aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the current state of the teaching of IKS in HLs in the FET phase. The study offers insights into how folklore can be utilised in teaching practices to enhance the teaching and learning of IKS in HLs in the FET phase. This research will contribute to the broader discourse on effective culturally responsive pedagogical strategies in the context of decolonisation of South African language education, with a specific focus on the formal inclusion of IKS in education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to pinpoint the factors that contribute to the limited inclusion of IKS in the formal teaching of the HL curricula in the FET phase. Additionally, the study considered the usability of folklore in enhancing the teaching of IKS. In that context, the IsiXhosa HL Grade

12 examination papers for November and June 2019 to 2023 were examined in depth. The data in the table below explores the marks allocated to the IKS questions based on the novels and those based on folklore. It must be noted that there were three novels according to the IsiXhosa HL question papers, but the questions were the same in all of them as they were presented as choices. Additionally, the novel was chosen because it was presented as the alternative genre to folklore according to CAPS and the DBE Examination Guidelines of 2017 and 2021, which guides the setting of the abovementioned question papers. The results of exploring the IsiXhosa HL Grade 12 November and June question papers emerged as follows:

Table 1.

Marks Allocated to IKS Questions in isiXhosa HL Exam Papers from 2019 to 2023

Marks allocated to IKS questions in isiXhosa HL exam Papers				
Novel Questions			Folklore Questions	
November Exams	Essays	Contextuals	Essays	Contextuals
Year 2019	0	0	25	4
Year 2020	0	0	25	4
Year 2021	0	0	25	4
Year 2022	0	2	25	4
Year 2023	0	2	25	6
June Exams	Essays	Contextuals	Essays	Contextuals
Year 2019	0	0	25	3
Year 2020	0	0	25	2
Year 2021	0	0	25	4
Year 2022	0	2	25	4
Year 2023	25	2	25	8
Total marks in all the years		Novel: 33		Folklore: 293

The Grade 12 examinations reveal what the learners have been taught in the FET phase. The above table illustrates what transpires in the IsiXhosa HL teaching in the FET phase concerning the inclusion of IKS in the literature syllabus.

IKS Paper 2 IsiXhosa HL essay questions on novels from 2019 to 2023:

As shown in Table 1 above, in the years 2019 to 2023 in both the November and June examinations, out of 25 marks on the essay questions based on the novel, it was only in June 2023 where the essay question incorporated the IKS. One could argue that the essay question in 2023 came up inadvertently, as the Examination Guidelines on the novels do not prescribe the setting of questions based on IKS. This is the evidence of what was mentioned earlier that the CAPS document which stipulates the valuing of IK in the process of teaching and learning is silent in the Home Languages' curricula concerning the teaching of IKS (CAPS, 2011).

Additionally, this aligns with what is identified as the lack of explicit policy and monitoring scheme in the curriculum, teaching strategies and pedagogies as impeding the integration and development of IKS (Banes & Cruz, 2021).

IKS Paper 2 IsiXhosa HL contextual questions on novel from 2019 to 2023:

Concerning the contextual questions, from the year 2019 to 2021 in November and June examinations, not a single question in the novel addressed IKS. It was only in 2022 and 2023 where there was only one question in each of these years, comprising two marks, which dealt with IKS. The truth that teaching informs assessment cannot be refuted. One could argue that these results are also a reflection of the fact that, concerning literature, CAPS encourages Eurocentric ideas, focusing mainly on the structure, themes, and literary devices, to the exclusion of IKS and traditional knowledge in the analysis of literature in the HL syllabus in the FET phase. These results are in accord with what Kelkay et al., (2023) has mentioned as the little attention given to IK in the textbooks and inaccessibility of well-documented indigenous values as one of the challenges in the inclusion of IK by teachers in the classrooms.

IKS Paper 2 IsiXhosa HL essay questions on folklore from 2019 to 2023:

The results on IsiXhosa HLP Paper 2 November and June examinations essay questions based on folklore, show that folklore and IKS are inseparable. The results underscore the fact that folklore forms an integral part of IKS. Contrary to the essay questions on the novels, all the essay questions that were based on folklore, incorporated IKS. For example, the question would ask the learners to use their understanding of a certain cultural object and use that knowledge to interpret and analyse a praise poem. Some questions required the learners to compare the features of a certain folktale heroic character or their setting to a South African historical figure in a prescribed praise poem. In some cases, the learners were instructed to use any folksongs they knew and demonstrate how those folksongs were related to the themes of a certain prescribed folktale, a proverb, or a praise poem. This constitutes what Mashoko (2014), Msila (2014), and Nomlomo and Sosibo (2016) refer to as the centralisation of the IKS in the curriculum. Moreover, these results also confirm what is noted by Matthee and Turpin (2015) and Shava and Manyike (2018) that indigenous languages capture and transmit the knowledge and wisdom of indigenous communities through stories, proverbs, folktales, myths, poetry, and songs that convey meanings about individuals, society, culture, and nature interaction. Therefore, the teaching of IKS through folklore is about inserting the HL education into the context of a learner's culture, as we have seen in the examples of the IsiXhosa HL essay questions.

IKS Paper 2 IsiXhosa HL contextual questions in folklore from 2019 to 2023:

Scrutinising the inclusion of questions based on IKS in the contextual questions on folklore, it becomes evident that, although minimal, the incorporation of IKS-based questions is far better than in the novel. One can argue that the ameliorated inclusion of IKS in folklore could be the result of the stipulations of the DBE Guidelines of 2017 and 2021. One could even further argue that, even in the folklore section, not much justice is done concerning the assessment of IKS in

HL in the FET phase, since from the year 2019 to 2023 in both November and June examinations, IKS questions comprised less than five marks, except for the 2023 examinations (see Table 1). However, it must be noted that, since folklore is presented as an alternative genre for the novel, that hampers not only the fair assessment of the folk genres but their teaching too. What I noticed when scrutinising the IsiXhosa HL Grade 12 Paper 2 November and June examination papers was that the contextual questions based on the novels and those based on folklore were identical, except for the few that dealt with the features that were particular to folklore subgenres. In some questions this “identity” of the questions seems to be enforced to the extent that the distinctness of folklore as a genre from the novel, seems to have been disregarded. Nevertheless, the fact that in five years, in isiXhosa HL Paper 2 examinations papers, novels comprised only 33 marks in both June and November examinations, while in folklore there was a total of 243 marks, indicates clearly that folklore is the useful resource in teaching IKS.

In conclusion, the assessment reflects or is supposed to reflect what was taught in the classroom. The fact that the number of questions based on IKS in the novel’s essay questions clearly indicates that IKS is not considered in the teaching of literature, and in the novels, to be specific. In fact, this is the case even with other genres such as drama and poetry, as was discovered in the analysis of the above-mentioned DBE Diagnostic reports for languages. Additionally, the fact that the Examination Guidelines from 2017 to 2021 only mentions IKS under the folklore genre only exacerbates the disregard of IKS when the teachers are teaching other genres that are not folklore. This is detrimental to the learning of IKS by FET phase learners as folklore is presented as an alternative to the novel.

Considering that contextual questions test a variety of skills, such as to recall, to analyse, and to infer as well as questions that need learners’ opinions and experiences; chances of integrating IKS-based questions are minimal. Nevertheless, from 2019 to 2021 there were no questions based on IKS, according to Table 1 findings. This is partly due to CAPS being silent about IKS in other genres and the Examination Guidelines only considering IKS for folklore. Yet, folklore is not a fully prescribed genre but is offered as an alternative. One would argue that our African literature revolves around IK by virtue of the fact that you cannot separate the writers from their background. This means that, as writers in their writings write from their knowledge and experiences of which IKS is a part, naturally, their writings such as novels, drama and poetry do entail IKS. Based on that, they can therefore argue that the other genres that are prescribed do entail IKS and, thus, there is no need to use folklore. Without refuting that fact, as revealed in Table 1, it can never be denied that folklore is not only the custodian of IKS but is part of IKS. Therefore, if folklore can be prescribed as a compulsory genre, that could ensure that IKS are part of the formal curriculum.

The teaching of folklore in HLs’ curricula does nurture the teaching of IKS. This is evident in the results in Table 1. The essay questions based on folklore indicate that folklore is a component of IKS and, as such, it does encapsulate IKS, intrinsically. It is only in the contextual

questions where the de-emphasis on IKS in the curriculum becomes evident, as the questions based on folklore mostly seem to be intentionally made to be identical to those of the novels in IsiXhosa HL. In the essay questions, the forced similarity between the novels' essay questions and folklore seems not to totally overthrow the uniqueness of folklore features as IKS. The findings indicate the need for the prescription of folklore as compulsory not only in IsiXhosa HL but in all the HLs in the FET phase to enhance the formal teaching of IKS that CAPS itself advocates for its valuing as the bedrock of teaching in the FET phase.

CONCLUSION

The importance of the formal teaching of the IKS in the HLs' curricula in the FET phase is imperative, as it encourages the consideration of learners' experiences and cultural knowledge. Furthermore, it can foster the embracing of diversity whilst bridging the gap between formal curricula and learners' socio-cultural backgrounds. Inasmuch as our African literature does encapsulate IKS, folklore, in all its subgenres, can be regarded as the curator of IKS. If folklore is not given high regard in the HLs' syllabus in schools in the FET phase, this can result in a limited inclusion of IKS in the language curricula, thus hindering the principles and values of the South African curriculum. The education that promotes the exclusion of IK is doing an injustice to learners, who will grow up thinking that IK is worthless and inferior. Also, it may hinder their academic performance and their critical thinking abilities. Pedagogy that is culturally relevant to the learners, boosts their confidence and that may have a positive impact on their academic performance.

Recommendations and Limitations

The teaching of IKS at FET level in the HLs should be revisited and emphasised and closely monitored by the DBE's curriculum section. The fact that in the Grade 12 examination papers very few questions address IKS is a reflection that it is not taught well in the classrooms. This disregard of IKS is evident in the examination papers, specifically in the contextual question of Paper 2 IsiXhosa HL. One can argue that, even with the essay questions, IKS comes up fortuitously. The DBE should not only mention or emphasise the teaching of IKS in the Examination Guidelines, but it should develop a supplementary chapter for the HL FET phase CAPS, that speaks on the teaching of IKS, proposes teaching approaches, and trains home language teachers on how to formally incorporate IKS in language teaching. Folklore should be prescribed and studied as a standalone genre for literature in one of the FET **grades** and should not be offered as an alternative to a novel. All FET schools should be mandated to include folklore as part of HL literature.

Limitations

The research focused on Grade 12, scrutinising only isiXhosa HL examination papers and HLs' DBE Diagnostic Reports on Grade 12 results and not all FET phase grades. In other languages such as IsiZulu, Siswati, and IsiNdebele, only November Grade 12 examination question papers from 2019 to 2022 were studied and no in-depth analysis of the questions was done as was the

case with IsiXhosa HL. This study focused on one language—IsiXhosa Home Language—to allow a more detailed examination of the integration of IKS through folklore, offering nuanced insights into pedagogical practices, challenges, and opportunities within that specific linguistic context. However, I do acknowledge that a multi-language examination could offer a broad and inclusive perspective but that would require a lot of time. Follow-up research is recommended

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