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#### ARTICLE

# African Cultural Narratives and Dramatisation in Enhancing Linguistic **Identity: Language Acquisition through Modern Technology**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

African culture may be richly interwoven with narratives traditionally expressed through dramatic arts, serving both educational and entertainment purposes. The study seeks to understand the integration of African cultural narratives and dramatic arts with modern technology to enhance linguistic identity and language acquisition among Grade 10 learners. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research utilised a purposive sample of 20 Grade 10 learners and three teachers specialising in dramatic arts, which made a total of 23 participants. Guided by the African Oral Traditional Storytelling (AOTS) Framework, data were collected through structured interviews and analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes. The findings revealed that modern technologies, such as digital storytelling platforms, positively impact linguistic identity development and help bridge the educational disparities between urban and rural schools. Additionally, the study findings include that integration of dramatisation and cultural narratives was found to enhance learner motivation, cultural preservation, and overall educational outcomes. The study concluded that digital tools could play a vital role in preserving the vibrancy of African oral traditions while equipping learners with essential linguistic competencies. The study recommends that by making cultural narratives more accessible and interactive, technology could foster a deeper appreciation for African traditions while promoting effective language acquisition. Recommendations include the implementation of integrated curricula, the provision of teacher training for effective technology use, and further research on emerging technologies such as AI to deepen their impact on language acquisition and cultural preservation. The innovative approach to education demonstrates the potential to create engaging and culturally relevant learning environments that promote sustainable educational practices.

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Received: 23 August 2025 | Revised: 16 September 2025 | Accepted: 17 September 2025 | Published Online: 19 November 2025 DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i12.11779

Sincuba, L., 2025. African Cultural Narratives and Dramatisation in Enhancing Linguistic Identity: Language Acquisition through Modern Technology. Forum for Linguistic Studies. 7(12): 1331-1348. DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i12.11779

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Keywords: African Oral Literature; Cultural Narratives; Linguistic Identity; Language Acquisition; Modern Technology

### 1. Introduction

In many traditional African homes, storytelling was an important daily ritual that brought children together around the fire on warm summer evenings<sup>[1]</sup>. After completing all their daily chores and activities, children would gather eagerly to listen to stories narrated by an elder woman, most often the grandmother, who was respected for her wisdom and experience<sup>[2]</sup>. These stories were an important part of the family and community life, as they were repeated multiple times, particularly the most captivating ones, allowing children to become familiar with the narratives and their lessons<sup>[3]</sup>. The stories often centred on familiar themes, such as a young girl who finds happiness through marriage or a boy who rises to become the village king [4]. Each tale usually concluded with the phrase "they lived happily ever after," highlighting the positive outcomes that come from perseverance and good character<sup>[5]</sup>.

The purpose of these stories extended beyond simple entertainment [6]. They served as a means to teach children valuable life lessons, emphasising that overcoming difficulties leads to personal satisfaction and happiness [2]. Storytelling was deliberately scheduled at night, following a long day of hard work, to reinforce the idea that rest and reflection come after effort and diligence [6]. This practice also promoted moral development, as the stories often contained lessons about courage, kindness, and responsibility [1]. Additionally, the storytelling sessions helped sharpen children's listening skills and improve their ability to concentrate, as they were fully engaged and attentive to every word [4]. These gatherings were more than just passive listening experiences [1,5]. They were lively and interactive occasions, where children were encouraged to participate by singing or repeating choruses together<sup>[6]</sup>.

The storyteller might skilfully adapte their voice to portray different characters and provide animal sounds when necessary, bringing the stories to life in vivid ways<sup>[2]</sup>. Objects and animals were frequently given human-like characteristics and names, which stimulated the imagination and made the stories more relatable to young listeners<sup>[1]</sup>. Building on the rich tradition of African storytelling, the incorporation of

modern technology presents new opportunities to enhance linguistic identity and language acquisition among young learners <sup>[6]</sup>. While traditional storytelling relied heavily on oral transmission within intimate community settings, technology enables these narratives to transcend physical boundaries and reach broader, more diverse audiences <sup>[1]</sup>. Digital media such as audiobooks, animated stories, and interactive applications provide engaging platforms where children can access cultural content outside the confines of their homes or villages <sup>[5]</sup>.

The technological tools not only replicate but also expand the features of traditional storytelling by introducing multimodal elements such as visuals, sounds, and interactivity that cater to different learning styles <sup>[1,5,6]</sup>. The variation helps capture learners' attention and supports deeper engagement with language. Importantly, interactive features allow children to participate actively, for example, by repeating phrases or choosing story outcomes, echoing the communal and participatory nature of traditional storytelling sessions <sup>[2]</sup>. Moreover, modern technology may play a vital role in preserving indigenous African languages such as isiXhosa and isiZulu, isiNdebele, Nguni and many of which face challenges due to globalization and diminished use in formal education <sup>[7]</sup>.

Digitally archiving stories in native languages may ensure that cultural and linguistic knowledge is maintained and accessible [4]. The study wished to strengthen linguistic identity by encouraging pride and ongoing use of heritage languages in daily life. Technology also offers teachers innovative methods to integrate cultural narratives into classroom practices, combining drama and storytelling with digital resources that enrich learning experiences and build language proficiency [1,2,4]. Through dramatisation and roleplay supported by multimedia, students develop communication skills in contexts that respect and celebrate their cultural backgrounds<sup>[4]</sup>. In essence, modern technology complements traditional African storytelling by preserving its core values while adapting to contemporary educational needs [1]. The synergy fosters a meaningful connection to linguistic heritage, enhancing language acquisition and strengthening cultural identity in a rapidly changing world [2,6]. Through

the rich and informal cultural practice, important traditions and values were passed down from one generation to the next<sup>[6]</sup>. Storytelling in the home thus became a foundational tool for learning, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering a sense of community and belonging among the children<sup>[2]</sup>.

The research study seeks to understand how integrating African cultural narratives into the education system through practical engagement and dramatisation can significantly enhance linguistic identity among learners. Traditional storytelling, when combined with interactive dramatisation, offers an immersive and culturally relevant approach to language learning that fosters a deeper connection to indigenous languages and cultural heritage [2]. By embedding these narratives into educational practice, learners gain not only linguistic skills but also a sense of identity and belonging rooted in their cultural contexts. The utilisation of modern technological software in the process may provide innovative avenues for language acquisition. Digital tools and multimedia platforms can amplify the reach and impact of cultural storytelling by making it more accessible, engaging, and interactive. Technology supports diverse learning styles and allows for the creation of dynamic, multimodal experiences that reinforce language skills through listening, speaking, and dramatisation activities. The fusion of tradition and technology helps to preserve endangered African languages while adapting to the needs of contemporary education.

The originality of the study research lies in its focus on the synergy between cultural heritage, performative learning strategies, and digital innovation as a holistic model for enhancing linguistic identity. It moves beyond conventional language teaching by positioning African narratives and dramatisation at the core of language acquisition, mediated through technological applications. The interdisciplinary approach could offer a fresh perspective on sustaining indigenous languages and help in fostering multilingual competence in an increasingly digital world.

The study was guided by these research questions:

- 1. How do African cultural narratives and dramatisation, when integrated with modern technology, impact the development and reinforcement of linguistic identity among young learners?
- 2. In what ways can modern technological tools enhance the effectiveness of traditional African storytelling and dramatisation in supporting language acquisition and

preservation?

#### 2. Literature Review

# 2.1. The Role of African Cultural Narratives in Preserving Indigenous Languages

African cultural narratives have long played a vital role in preserving indigenous languages by serving as a medium for transmitting linguistic knowledge and cultural values across generations<sup>[7]</sup>. These stories, often rich in local idioms, proverbs, and traditional expressions, help maintain the unique features of indigenous languages that might otherwise be lost due to globalisation and language shift [8]. Through oral storytelling, children and community members internalise vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation specific to their mother tongues [6]. Narratives foster a strong connection to cultural identity, encouraging speakers to value and use their indigenous languages in daily life [9]. Scholars highlight those cultural narratives are not only tools for entertainment but also for education, socialisation, and cultural continuity<sup>[7]</sup>. As oral traditions face threats from modernisation and dominant languages, the preservation of such narratives becomes crucial in language revitalisation efforts [6]. Integrating these narratives into educational and technological platforms may strengthen their role in sustaining indigenous languages for future generations [7].

# 2.2. Dramatisation as a Tool for Language Learning and Identity Formation

Dramatisation has been widely recognised as an effective tool for language learning and identity formation, particularly in culturally rich environments [10]. By engaging learners in role-play and storytelling, dramatisation encourages active use of language in meaningful contexts, which enhances vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and conversational skills [2]. In African settings, dramatisation often draws on traditional stories and cultural themes, providing learners with a deeper connection to their linguistic heritage [7]. The immersive approach not only improves language proficiency but also strengthens cultural identity by allowing learners to embody characters and experiences that reflect their own communities and histories [4]. Research indicates that dramatisation fosters confidence, creativity, and emotional expres-

sion, all of which contribute to a stronger sense of self and belonging through language <sup>[1]</sup>. Moreover, dramatisation supports social interaction and collaborative learning, further reinforcing linguistic skills and cultural awareness <sup>[8]</sup>. Consequently, integrating dramatisation within language education helps sustain indigenous languages and cultural identities in contemporary learning environments <sup>[9]</sup>.

### 2.3. Importance of Dramatic Arts Education

Dramatic arts education plays a vital role in fostering creativity, communication skills, and cultural awareness among learners [11]. It provides a platform for students to explore human experiences, emotions, and social issues through performance, which enhances their empathy and critical thinking abilities<sup>[3]</sup>. Research shows that engaging in dramatic arts improves language skills, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and expressive abilities, making it a valuable tool for language acquisition<sup>[4]</sup>. Moreover, dramatic arts encourage collaboration and teamwork, as students work together to interpret and present stories, strengthening social interaction and confidence<sup>[10]</sup>. In many cultural contexts, including African societies, dramatic arts serve as a means of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage and identity [8]. By integrating traditional narratives and performance techniques into education, dramatic arts help sustain indigenous languages and customs<sup>[5]</sup>. Dramatic arts education enriches the learning environment by combining academic, social, and cultural development, making it essential for holistic education and lifelong personal growth<sup>[1]</sup>.

# 2.4. Language Acquisition Relevant to African Contexts

Language acquisition in African contexts is shaped by the continent's rich linguistic diversity and multilingual realities [10]. Many learners grow up in environments where multiple languages are spoken, including indigenous languages, regional languages and colonial languages such as English or French [12]. Research on language acquisition in Africa highlights the importance of social interaction and cultural context in learning languages, aligning with interactionist and sociocultural theories [13]. Children acquire language not only through formal education but also through oral traditions, community engagement, and daily communication [14].

Code-switching and translanguaging are common practices that facilitate understanding and learning across languages, reflecting adaptive and dynamic language use<sup>[15]</sup>. Studies emphasised the need for language education policies that recognise and incorporate indigenous languages alongside major languages to support effective learning and cultural identity preservation<sup>[14,15]</sup>. Tailoring language acquisition approaches to African sociolinguistic realities promotes inclusivity, cognitive development, and respect for linguistic heritage, which are essential for educational success and cultural continuity<sup>[1]</sup>.

# 2.5. Influence of Modern Technology on Language Learning and Cultural Transmission

Modern technology has significantly transformed language learning and cultural transmission, offering new opportunities to preserve and promote indigenous languages and traditions [8]. Digital tools such as mobile applications, interactive websites, and multimedia platforms allow learners to access language resources anytime and anywhere. making language acquisition more flexible and engaging [8,9]. Technology also facilitates the recording and sharing of oral narratives, songs, and dramatisations, helping to document cultural heritage that might otherwise be lost<sup>[9]</sup>. Studies show that multimedia storytelling and virtual dramatisation enhance learners' motivation and improve linguistic skills by providing immersive and interactive experiences [11]. Additionally, social media and online communities create spaces for speakers of indigenous languages to connect, practice, and celebrate their cultural identities [14]. However, while technology opens doors for cultural transmission, challenges remain, such as limited access to digital devices in some regions and the risk of cultural dilution [9]. Integrating modern technology with traditional language learning methods may hold great potential for sustaining linguistic diversity and cultural heritage in African communities [2].

## 2.6. Challenges and Opportunities in Integrating Traditional Narratives with Technology in Education

Integrating traditional African narratives with modern technology in education presents both significant challenges and notable opportunities<sup>[8]</sup>. One key challenge is the lim-

ited access to technological resources in many rural and underserved communities, where indigenous languages are most commonly spoken<sup>[16]</sup>. This digital divide could prevent equitable participation in technology-enhanced learning programs. Additionally, there is a risk of cultural misrepresentation or dilution when traditional stories are adapted for digital platforms without sufficient community involvement and sensitivity to cultural contexts [17]. Technical challenges, such as a lack of trained personnel to develop culturally relevant content, also hinder effective integration<sup>[14]</sup>. Despite these challenges, the opportunities offered by combining storytelling with technology are compelling [8]. Technology facilitates the preservation, documentation, and wider dissemination of indigenous narratives, reaching younger generations who are more digitally inclined<sup>[12]</sup>. Multimedia presentations and interactive storytelling apps can make language learning more engaging, promoting active participation and retention [6]. Incorporating audio-visual dramatisation enhances comprehension and stimulates imagination, fostering deeper cultural understanding [8]. Strategies to overcome challenges include community collaboration in content creation, ensuring authenticity and respect for cultural values<sup>[15]</sup>. Teacher training on using technology effectively alongside oral traditions is essential [16]. Developing affordable and accessible digital tools tailored to local languages and contexts could bridge the digital gap [13]. Thoughtfully integrating traditional narratives and technology holds great promise for enriching language education and preserving cultural heritage<sup>[9]</sup>.

#### 3. Theoretical Framework

The African Oral Traditional Storytelling (AOTS) Framework is a culturally grounded approach that centers African oral storytelling traditions, philosophies, languages, and worldviews as essential tools for understanding African peoples' experiences [18]. The framework works effectively because it aligns with the communal, interactive nature of African societies, where knowledge is shared orally in collaborative settings [8]. Unlike conventional research or learning methods that may treat participants merely as sources of information, the AOTS Framework views participants as cocreators in the storytelling and meaning-making process. The approach respects and preserves indigenous ways of knowing

and transmitting knowledge, which is vital for maintaining linguistic identity and cultural heritage<sup>[18]</sup>.

Its relevance for the study lies in its emphasis on the integration of indigenous languages, storytelling, and cultural expression as foundational elements of language acquisition<sup>[2]</sup>. By using AOTS, language learning is positioned not just as a mechanical process of acquiring vocabulary and grammar but as an immersive cultural practice [13]. The framework supports the decolonisation of education by valuing African linguistic and cultural identities, resisting the dominance of Western paradigms that often marginalise indigenous knowledge [8]. The study findings and participants' responses reflect the importance of the AOTS, and the recommendations enhance its effectiveness. The AOTS Framework fosters identity formation and cultural resilience by encouraging learners to engage with stories that reflect their histories, experiences, and values [9]. This makes it especially suitable for exploring how African cultural narratives and dramatisation can be enhanced using modern technology, ensuring that language acquisition remains authentic and linked to cultural roots [18]. The AOTS Framework offers a respectful, participatory, and culturally meaningful method that enriches both research and educational practices involving African languages and storytelling [9]. By using AOTS, language learning is positioned not just as a mechanical process of acquiring vocabulary and grammar but as an immersive cultural practice<sup>[11]</sup>. The framework supports the decolonisation of education by valuing African linguistic and cultural identities, resisting the dominance of Western paradigms that often marginalise indigenous knowledge [1]. AOTS Framework fosters identity formation and cultural resilience by encouraging learners to engage with stories that reflect their histories, experiences, and values [18].

## 4. Method

#### 4.1. Research Approach

The case study research method was chosen for the study to allow an in-depth understanding of the impact of African cultural narratives and dramatisation on linguistic identity within a real-life educational setting <sup>[19]</sup>. The method facilitates a comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena by focusing on a single, bounded system — in this case, one school <sup>[20]</sup>. The decision to use only one school

is justified by the fact that it is the only school in the district offering Dramatic Arts as a subject. The uniqueness provides a specialised context where the integration of storytelling and dramatisation could be observed directly and meaningfully [21].

In this study, three teachers were utilised. One teacher is responsible for delivering the Dramatic Arts content, guiding the learners through the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. The other two teachers support the process by filming the practical components of the course, capturing learners' performances for analysis and reflection. The approach not only documents the learning process but also provides rich visual data for understanding how dramatisation influences language acquisition and cultural identity [22]. The school had an enrolment of 20 learners in Dramatic Arts. all from grade 10, who will continue the course through to grade 12<sup>[23]</sup>. The consistent cohort allowed for a detailed study of language acquisition and cultural engagement over time<sup>[24]</sup>. Utilising the single case with focused teacher roles enhanced the richness and relevance of the findings, making it a practical and focused research approach [25].

#### 4.2. Population and Sampling

The study's population comprised of 20 learners who had chosen Dramatic Arts as a subject, enrolled from grade 10 and continuing through to grade 12. These learners represent the entire cohort taking Dramatic Arts in the school, making them a focused and relevant group for examining the impact of African cultural narratives and dramatisation on language acquisition and linguistic identity [14]. Purposive sampling was employed to select these learners because they had chosen the subject under study, ensuring that the data collected is rich and pertinent to the research [26]. Among the learners, 6 were isiZulu speakers, 14 were isiXhosa speakers, while 2 teachers were isiXhosa speakers and 1 teacher was an isiZulu speaker. In addition to the learners, three teachers specialising in Dramatic Arts participate in the study, making a total of 23 participants. One teacher was responsible for teaching the theoretical and practical content of the subject, while the other two assisted by filming practical sessions for documentation and analysis. The purposive selection of teachers allowed for a comprehensive study of teaching methods, learner engagement, and the role of dramatisation in language and cultural learning within this unique educational context. The purposive sampling method ensured focused, meaningful insights. These learners constitute the entire cohort studying Dramatic Arts at the school, making them a relevant and focused group for investigating how the African cultural narratives and dramatisation on language acquisition and linguistic identity. Purposive sampling was used to select these learners because they are directly engaged in the subject under study, ensuring the data gathered was rich and directly applicable [27]. Three teachers specialising in Dramatic Arts were purposively selected. One teacher was responsible for delivering the subject content, while the other two assisted by filming the practical components of the course for documentation and analysis [28]. The selection of teachers enabled a comprehensive study of both teaching strategies and learner engagement through dramatisation. The use of purposive sampling ensured that the participants chosen provided meaningful and insightful data specific to the study's focus<sup>[29]</sup>.

#### 4.3. Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout this study involving 20 learners and three teachers to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being [30]. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with clear explanations provided about the study's purpose, procedures, and their voluntary participation [24]. For the learners, parental or guardian consent was also secured, given their age, ensuring that participation was both ethical and legal [31]. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with all personal information treated with strict privacy and data stored securely [32]. The study emphasised respect for participants' dignity, allowing them to withdraw at any stage without penalty<sup>[27]</sup>. Special attention was given to creating a safe and supportive environment during data collection, particularly for the learners, to encourage honest and comfortable communication<sup>[33]</sup>. Ethical approval was sought from relevant institutional authorities prior to beginning the research<sup>[24]</sup>. These measures ensured the study adhered to ethical standards while fostering trust and integrity throughout the research process [31].

#### 4.4. Data Collection

In the current study, data collection was conducted through structured interviews, which provided a systematic and consistent way to gather detailed information from participants [34]. Participants consent was given as indicated in Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C. Structured interviews involved a set of predetermined questions asked in a fixed order to ensure uniformity and comparability of responses across participants [35]. The approach was particularly useful in capturing the experiences, perceptions, and insights of learners and teachers involved in the Dramatic Arts program<sup>[10]</sup>. The structured format allowed for clear and focused data related to the impact of African cultural narratives and dramatisation on language acquisition and linguistic identity [36]. Interviews were conducted in a conducive environment to encourage open and honest communication [31]. The method facilitated efficient data analysis by producing comparable responses while allowing for some clarification and elaboration when necessary. Structured interviews were effective in collecting rich, relevant data directly aligned with the research structured questions within the specific educational context of the case study [37].

#### 4.5. Data Analysis

Thematic data analysis was employed in this study to systematically examine and interpret the qualitative data collected from structured interviews [38]. The method involved identifying, analysing, and reporting recurring themes and patterns within the data that related to the impact of African cultural narratives and dramatisation on linguistic identity and language acquisition<sup>[39]</sup>. The process began with familiarisation, where the researchers thoroughly reviewed interview transcripts to gain an overall understanding [20]. Initial codes were generated to organise data into meaningful groups. These codes were then examined to develop broader themes that captured key concepts relevant to the research questions [24]. Thematic analysis allowed for flexibility in exploring participants' experiences while providing a clear framework for interpreting complex data<sup>[20]</sup>. The approach helped to highlight significant insights about teaching methods, learner engagement, cultural connections, and the role of technology. Ultimately, thematic data analysis provided a rich, detailed understanding of how dramatic arts influence language learning within the African educational context [36].

#### 4.6. Data Treatment

Data treatment in this study involved organising, processing, and presenting the collected data to ensure clarity, accuracy, and meaningful interpretation. After data collection through structured interviews, responses were transcribed and coded to identify key themes and patterns. To enhance the presentation and facilitate analysis, tables and graphs were used effectively<sup>[20]</sup>. Tables provided a structured way to display categorised data, such as demographic information of learners and teachers, frequency of certain responses, and comparison of themes<sup>[21]</sup>. Graphs, such as bar charts and pie charts, visually represent quantitative aspects, including learner engagement levels and preferences related to storytelling and dramatisation activities [10]. These visual aids helped to simplify complex information, making it easier to identify trends and draw conclusions<sup>[22]</sup>. Using tables and graphs also supported transparent reporting of findings, allowing readers to quickly grasp significant data points. Overall, data treatment through systematic coding and the use of visual tools strengthened the reliability and comprehensibility of the study's results.

#### 4.7. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in this study was essential to ensure the credibility and reliability of findings on how African cultural narratives and dramatisation, combined with modern technology, enhance linguistic identity and language acquisition<sup>[10]</sup>. To establish trustworthiness, the study employs purposive sampling by selecting participants who had chosen dramatic arts as a subject from grade 10 to continue up to grade 12, ensuring relevance and depth of data<sup>[24]</sup>.

#### 4.7.1. Validity

The validity of this study was ensured through careful research design and data collection methods that accurately capture the impact of African cultural narratives and dramatisation on linguistic identity and language acquisition<sup>[10]</sup>. Using a case study approach within a unique school setting—where Dramatic Arts is offered—provides a contextually rich environment, enhancing ecological validity <sup>[20]</sup>. Structured interviews with purposeful sampling of relevant learners and teachers ensured that data reflected authentic experiences directly related to the research focus <sup>[21]</sup>. Triangulation

was achieved by combining perspectives from both learners and teachers as well as using observational data from filmed dramatisation sessions, which strengthened construct validity<sup>[24]</sup>. Additionally, member checking was employed, allowing participants to review and confirm the accuracy of their responses, further enhancing validity<sup>[22]</sup>. Clear operational definitions and consistent use of research instruments also helped to minimize bias and ensure that the findings genuinely represent the phenomena under investigation<sup>[22]</sup>.

### 4.7.2. Reliability

The reliability of this study was maintained by employing consistent and transparent procedures throughout all research stages. Structured interviews were conducted using a standardized set of questions, ensuring uniformity in data collection across all participants [10]. This consistency reduces variability and enhances replicability, which is essential for reliability [24]. The recording of practical dramatisation sessions by designated teachers provides objective documentation, supporting reliable data analysis [20]. Data coding for thematic analysis was conducted systematically, with careful attention to maintaining coherence in identifying themes, reducing the risk of subjective interpretation<sup>[21]</sup>. Moreover, detailed descriptions of the study context and participant characteristics allow for a clear understanding and potential replication by other researchers. Regular auditing and peer review of coding and analysis processes further ensured that the study's results are dependable and trustworthy<sup>[22]</sup>.

#### 4.7.3. Dependability

Dependability in this study refers to the consistency and stability of the research findings over time. To ensure dependability, the study employs a clear and systematic research design, with well-documented procedures for data collection and analysis [20]. The documentation allows for an audit trail, where external reviewers can examine the research process and confirm the findings' reliability [22]. Regular cross-checking of data and coding by the researcher or peers enhances the consistency of interpretations. Furthermore, the study accounts for any changes in the research context or participant responses, adapting methods accordingly to maintain accuracy [24]. Dependability also involves transparency in explaining methodological decisions, helping other researchers replicate and build upon the study [22].

Through these measures, the research findings were positioned as dependable, providing confidence that the results are trustworthy reflections of how African cultural narratives, dramatisation, and modern technology influence linguistic identity and language acquisition<sup>[10]</sup>.

#### 4.7.4. Confirmability

Confirmability in this study addresses the objectivity and neutrality of the research findings, ensuring that results are shaped by participants' perspectives rather than researcher bias [22]. The study achieves confirmability through a rigorous audit trail, documenting all decisions, data, and analysis steps, allowing others to trace the research path<sup>[20]</sup>. Reflexivity plays a critical role, with the researcher acknowledging personal biases and taking steps to minimize their impact on the data interpretation [10]. Triangulation of data sources, such as combining interviews, observations, and technological content analysis, also supports confirmability by cross-verifying information<sup>[24]</sup>. Member checking is employed, allowing participants to review and confirm that their contributions were accurately represented [22]. Together, these strategies provide transparency and accountability, assuring that the findings emerge clearly from the data and are grounded in the authentic experiences relating to African cultural narratives, dramatisation, and language learning through technology [21].

#### 4.7.5. Transferability

Transferability in this study relates to the extent to which its findings can be applied or generalized to other contexts beyond the specific setting. Although the research involves a purposive sample focused on a particular school and group involved in dramatic arts, detailed descriptions of the participants, research context, and methodological processes allow other researchers and teachers to evaluate the relevance of findings to their own settings [20]. Thick, rich descriptions of the cultural narratives, technological tools used, and learner experiences provide a comprehensive understanding, enhancing the potential for application in similar educational or cultural environments<sup>[21]</sup>. While the study's specific focus limits broad generalisation, its insights about integrating African cultural storytelling and modern technology offer transferable principles and strategies for linguistic identity development and language acquisition in diverse contexts where cultural preservation and technology intersect<sup>[24]</sup>.

#### 4.8. Limitations of the Study

In the study, only three teachers and twenty learners were purposively selected because they were actively involved in dramatic arts at the school. The small and specific sample size limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations or other educational contexts. The purposive sampling approach may introduce sampling bias, as participants were chosen based on specific criteria rather than randomly <sup>[21]</sup>. The limited number of participants restricts the depth and variability of perspectives captured, which could affect the study's comprehensiveness <sup>[24]</sup>. The study is also constrained by the specific focus on one school and one subject area, further limiting external validity <sup>[20]</sup>. Despite these

limitations, acknowledging them enhances the transparency and credibility of the research and highlights areas for future studies to expand the sample size and diversify the population to improve the applicability of the findings <sup>[22]</sup>. These constraints should be carefully considered when interpreting the results.

# 5. Findings

#### **Research Questions and Themes**

The analysis yielded themes and sub-themes that effectively addressed the study's research questions, aligning closely with the overall research topic. **Table 1** presents the specific research questions alongside their corresponding themes and sub-themes identified in the study.

**Table 1.** Research questions, themes and sub-themes for the study.

Research Questions	Research Themes	Sub-Themes
1. How do African cultural narratives and dramatisation, when integrated with modern technology, impact the development and reinforcement of linguistic identity among young learners?	Theme 1: Integration of African cultural narratives with modern technology	Sub-theme1:Impact on linguistic identity development among young learners
2. In what ways can modern technological tools enhance the effectiveness of traditional African storytelling and dramatisation in supporting language acquisition and preservation?	Theme 2: Enhancement of traditional African storytelling through modern technology	Subtheme 2: Support for language acquisition and preservation through technological tools

The study comprised 23 participants from a single high school (see Table 2). Among the participants, there were 7 males and 16 females, indicating a higher representation of female learners. The average ages of participants were varied, with 23 participants from the age of 15 years, 4, 16 years, 13, 17 years, 3, 36 years, 2 and 40 years, 1, demonstrating a range of adolescent learners within the typical high school age group. Participants were in grade 10. Additionally, 3 teachers participated in the study alongside 20 learners. For confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to interview participants, ranging from XX1 to XX23, to protect their identities throughout the research process. The demographic and participant information provided a foundation for understanding the impact of African cultural narratives and dramatisation on linguistic identity within the dramatic arts educational context<sup>[10]</sup>.

To answer the research question with theme 1:

Research question 1: How do African cultural nar-

ratives and dramatisation, when integrated with modern technology, impact the development and reinforcement of linguistic identity among young learners?

Theme 1: Integration of African cultural narratives with modern technology.

Theme 1 was central to the study as it sought to understand how combining traditional storytelling methods with contemporary digital tools could enhance linguistic identity among young learners. The theme highlights the innovative approach of using technology to preserve and promote African cultural heritage within educational settings. By integrating narratives rooted in African culture with modern platforms such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive media, the study demonstrates how learners engage more deeply with their linguistic roots [9]. The fusion not only revitalised interest in indigenous languages but also made learning more accessible and interactive. Technology served as a bridge that connects the past with the present, enabling

learners to experience cultural stories in dynamic ways that reinforce language skills and cultural pride. The integration facilitated a richer, more immersive learning environment that supported language acquisition and the reinforcement of linguistic identity among learners in the digital age. Participants responded by stating:

Table 2. Biographic Data.

Criteria	High School	Frequency	
Gender	Male	7	
	Female	16	
Average age	15 Years	4	
	16 Years	13	
	17 Years	3	
	36 Years	2	
	40 Years	1	
Grade	10	20	
Teachers	3	20	
Pseudonyms for interview participants	XX1, XX2, XX3, XX4, XX5, XX6, XX7, XX8, XX9, XX10, XX11, XX12, XX13, XX14, XX15, XX16, XX17, XX18, XX19, XX20, XX21, XX22, XX23		

"Integrating African cultural narratives with modern technology has made the learning process more engaging for the students. They connect better with their linguistic roots when they see their culture represented through digital storytelling and dramatisation" (Participant XX3: interview except).

"When we use technology alongside traditional storytelling and drama, learners show greater confidence in using their native language. It reinforces their linguistic identity because they feel proud and connected to their heritage" (Participant XX6: open-ended question excerpt).

"Modern technology offers a dynamic platform for African narratives. It not only helps preserve these stories but also enhances learners' participation, which strengthens their language skills and deepens their cultural understanding" (Participant XX9: interview excerpt).

The findings revealed that integrating African cultural narratives with modern technology made the learning process more engaging for students. Participant XX3 explained that learners connected better with their linguistic roots when they saw their culture represented through digital storytelling and

dramatisation. Similarly, Participant XX6 noted that combining technology with traditional storytelling and drama increased learners' confidence in using their native language. This integration reinforced their linguistic identity, as learners felt proud and connected to their heritage. Participant XX9 emphasised that modern technology provided a dynamic platform for African narratives, which not only preserved these stories but also enhanced learner participation. This increased involvement strengthened language skills and deepened cultural understanding. The use of technology positively impacted learners by enriching the storytelling experience, boosting their language abilities, and fostering a stronger sense of cultural identity.

Participants' responses were as follows:

"I felt more connected to my language when we used videos and recordings to act out African stories. It made learning fun and helped me remember the words better" (Participant XXI: interview excerpt).

"Using technology with our cultural dramas helped me speak more confidently in my language. I could see how the stories came to life, which made me proud of my heritage" (Participant XX4: open-ended question excerpt).

"The dramas we performed with the help of tablets helped me understand the meanings of difficult words in my language. It was easier to learn when I could watch and listen" (Participant XXI0: interview excerpt).

"Technology made our storytelling sessions more interesting. I enjoyed using audio and video tools because they helped me practice speaking and improved my pronunciation" (Participant XX12: open-ended question excerpt).

"When we combined our drama performances with digital tools, I noticed I was better at expressing myself in my language. It helped me remember cultural phrases" (Participant XX14: open-ended question excerpt).

"Seeing our traditional stories on the computer and acting them out helped me value my language more. It was different from just reading in a book" (Participant XX20: interview excerpt).

"The use of technology in learning cultural narratives helped me participate more actively. It made me feel confident speaking my language and proud of my culture" (Participant XX23: open-ended question excerpt).

The findings showed that learners felt more connected to their language when they used videos and recordings to act out African stories. Participant XX1 mentioned that the method made learning fun and helped with word retention. Participant XX4 noted that technology-enhanced cultural dramatic arts, which boosted their confidence in speaking and made them proud of their heritage. Participant XX10 explained that using tablets during dramas helped them understand difficult words better through watching and listening. Participant XX12 enjoyed audio and video tools because they improved pronunciation and speaking practice. Participant XX14 observed that combining dramatic arts with digital tools helped them to express themselves better and remember cultural phrases. Participant XX20 valued seeing stories on the computer and acting them out, finding it more engaging than reading. Participant XX23 said technology encouraged active participation, increased confidence in speaking, and strengthened cultural pride. Technology-enriched learning experiences and language development.

One sub-theme emerged from the theme, which was: Sub-theme 1: *Impact on linguistic identity development among young learners*.

The impact on linguistic identity development among young learners was evident in the study as learners actively engaged with African cultural narratives through modern technology. The approach fostered a stronger sense of pride and connection to their indigenous languages. By participating in dramatisation enhanced by digital tools, learners were able to express themselves confidently and internalise cultural values embedded in their language. The use of technology made traditional narratives more relatable and accessible, reinforcing learners' linguistic identities and promoting language retention. Consequently, the sub-theme highlighted how merging culture and technology supports the growth of young learners' linguistic self-awareness and cultural belonging.

Participants responded to sub-theme 1 as follows:

"Learning stories from my culture with the tablet helped me feel proud of my language. I like speaking it more now" (Participant XX2: open-ended question excerpt).

"When we acted out the stories using videos, I understood my language better and felt closer to my roots" (Participant XX5: open-ended question excerpt).

"Using the computer to tell our traditional stories made me more confident to speak my language with friends and family" (Participant XX7: open-ended question excerpt).

"I like how technology makes our culture come alive. It helps me remember the words and speak clearly" (Participant XX8: interview excerpt).

"Watching and acting in stories on the screen made me love my language more. I want to use it every day" (Participant XX13: open-ended question excerpt).

"The digital stories showed me how important my language is. It made me feel special and connected" (Participant XX15: open-ended question excerpt).

"Using mobile phones for our plays helped me learn new words. I feel proud when I speak my language now" (Participant XX16: openended question excerpt).

"Learning stories from my culture with the tablet helped me feel proud of my language. I like speaking it more now" (Participant XX2: interview excerpt).

"I like how technology makes our culture come alive. It helps me remember the words and speak clearly" (Participant XX8: open-ended question excerpt).

"The digital stories showed me how important my language is. It made me feel special and connected" (Participant XX15: openended question excerpt).

"Using mobile phones for our plays helped me learn new words. I feel proud when I speak my language now" (Participant XX16: interview excerpt).

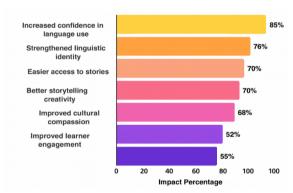
Research Question 2: In what ways can modern technological tools enhance the effectiveness of traditional African storytelling and dramatisation in supporting language acquisition and preservation?

Theme 2: Enhancement of traditional African storytelling through modern technology.

Focused on how digital tools enrich the age-old practice of storytelling. The study highlights that technology such as audio-visual media, interactive platforms, and digital recordings made African stories more engaging and accessible to young learners. The enhancement not only preserves cultural heritage but also improves language skills by providing immersive and dynamic learning experiences. Technology amplified creativity and participation, encouraging learners

to actively connect with their linguistic roots. The integration of modern technology revitalised traditional storytelling, making it a powerful tool for cultural education and language acquisition in contemporary settings.

Figure 1 shows that modern technology significantly enhances traditional African storytelling in various ways. Learner engagement increased by 55%, indicating that students were more interested and involved when technology was integrated. Language comprehension improved for 73% of learners, demonstrating a better understanding of linguistic content. Cultural preservation was enhanced for 59% of participants, highlighting technology's role in maintaining cultural heritage. Greater learner participation was observed at 40%, showing more active involvement in storytelling activities. Storytelling creativity improved by 70%, reflecting enhanced expression and innovation. Easier access to stories was the highest benefit, with 83% of learners finding it simpler to reach and interact with traditional narratives. Linguistic identity was strengthened for 76% of learners, fostering a deeper connection to their language. Finally, 55% of learners reported increased confidence in using their language, showing a positive impact on language use skills.



**Figure 1.** Enhancement of Traditional African Storytelling through Modern Technology: Key Benefits for Language Learning.

Subtheme 2: Support for language acquisition and preservation through technological tools.

Figure 2 reveals the significant role of technological tools in supporting language acquisition and preservation. Preservation of indigenous languages emerged as the most prominent benefit, with 94% recognizing technology's critical role in maintaining linguistic heritage. Audio-visual storytelling closely followed at 91%, highlighting how multimedia enhances learners' connection to language and culture. Language practice and reinforcement were highly supported by 90% of respondents, indicating technology's effectiveness

in strengthening language skills. Engagement and motivation were also high at 85%, showing that interactive tools capture learners' interest and encourage active participation. Access to cultural content was affirmed by 80%, emphasising the ease with which technology provides in exploring traditional knowledge. Additionally, 73% acknowledged the value of interactive learning tools, which facilitate immersive and practical language experiences. Together, these factors demonstrate how technology robustly supports both language learning and cultural preservation [14].



**Figure 2.** Role of Technological Tools in Language Acquisition and Preservation.

# 6. Discussion

The findings revealed that integrating African cultural narratives with modern technology significantly enhanced learners' engagement and connection to their linguistic roots [9]. Participant XX3 revealed that digital storytelling and dramatisation made learning more engaging, helping students connect better with their culture [10]. Participant XX6 noted that the combination boosted learners' confidence in using their native language, reinforcing their linguistic identity and pride in their heritage [11]. Participant XX9 emphasised that technology provided a dynamic platform for preserving African narratives, increasing participation, improving language skills, and deepening cultural understanding [14].

Participants echoed these sentiments, stating that videos and recordings made learning fun and improved word retention (XX1)<sup>[9]</sup>. They felt more confident speaking their language and proud of their heritage through technological support in cultural dramas (XX4, XX23)<sup>[10]</sup>. Tablets helped them understand difficult words and practice pronunciation (XX10, XX12)<sup>[8]</sup>. Digital tools enhanced their expression and recall of cultural phrases (XX14). Seeing stories on computers made the experience more engaging than traditional reading (XX20)<sup>[4]</sup>.

The sub-theme on linguistic identity showed that learners felt proud and connected to their language [1], gaining confidence and motivation through technology (XX2, XX5, XX7, XX8, XX13, XX15, XX16). Technology-enriched storytelling facilitates language acquisition and cultural preservation [3]. Data indicated increased learner engagement (55%), improved comprehension (73%), and stronger linguistic identity (76%) [3,8]. Technological tools notably supported language practice (90%), audiovisual storytelling (91%), and indigenous language preservation (94%), highlighting their vital role in contemporary language education and cultural retention [9]. The study demonstrated that combining traditional African storytelling with modern technology revitalised cultural narratives, enhanced language skills, and fostered cultural pride among young learners [13].

#### 7. Conclusions

The study concluded that integrating African cultural narratives with modern technology significantly enhanced language acquisition and cultural preservation among young learners. The use of digital storytelling, audio-visual tools, and interactive platforms made traditional African stories more engaging, accessible, and relatable. This integration fostered stronger linguistic identities, increased learner confidence, and deepened cultural pride. Technology not only preserved indigenous languages but also enriched learners' participation and creativity in dramatisation activities. The findings highlighted that learners connected more deeply with their linguistic roots and demonstrated improved language comprehension and expression when technology was combined with cultural storytelling. The study affirmed that modern technological tools are valuable resources for revitalising traditional African narratives, supporting language development, and promoting cultural continuity in educational settings. This approach offers a promising pathway to empower young learners to embrace their heritage while developing essential language skills in a dynamic and interactive learning environment.

# 8. Recommendations

The study recommends the maximisation of the benefits of integrating African cultural narratives with modern technology. Schools could invest in digital tools like tablets and audio-visual equipment to facilitate interactive storytelling and dramatisation. The study recommends that teachers may need training to effectively combine traditional narratives with technology, ensuring meaningful learning experiences. Curriculum developers could incorporate culturally relevant content supported by technology to strengthen linguistic identity and cultural pride. The study recommends that community involvement may need to be encouraged to help preserve authentic stories and support cultural continuity. Educational policymakers may need to prioritise funding for technology integration in language education to widen access and resources. To build on strategic recommendations, it is essential for educational policymakers and curriculum developers to formally incorporate African cultural narratives and dramatisation into language teaching frameworks. The inclusion could not be limited to supplementary activities but integrated as core components of language learning curricula. The study recommends teacher training programs at the university level so as to equip educators with the skills to effectively use storytelling and dramatic techniques alongside digital tools, ensuring that culturally responsive methods are applied with authenticity and pedagogical competence. Additionally, the study recommends collaboration between teachers, cultural practitioners, technologists, and community members, which could be encouraged to co-create content that reflects diverse African linguistic and cultural contexts. Such partnerships may enrich educational resources by combining scholarly knowledge, traditional expertise, and technological innovation. The collaborative approach might promote community ownership of language preservation efforts and foster intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

Investment in accessible technological infrastructure is also recommended as a critical, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Without reliable access to digital devices and the internet, the potential of modern technology to support language acquisition remains limited. Governments and stakeholders are recommended and encouraged to strategically prioritise funding for educational technology tailored to indigenous languages and contexts to bridge these linguistic divides and inferior and superior language gaps. The study recommends that educational schools that offer dramatic arts as part of their curriculum could actively foster a sense of pride within their communities by emphasizing the use of indigenous languages in instruction. Schools may consider organizing dramatic arts live performance events, such as

open days, where parents and community members can witness first-hand the learners' engagement and proficiency in their heritage languages through performance. These events provide valuable opportunities for cultural affirmation and community involvement, strengthening the connection between classroom learning and cultural identity. Furthermore, schools could leverage social media and other digital platforms to livestream and share recordings of the performances, thereby amplifying their reach and impact. The visibility not only elevates learners' confidence and motivation but also promotes broader community appreciation of indigenous language arts. By integrating such public and digitally mediated showcases into the school calendar, educational institutions could create sustained platforms for celebrating linguistic heritage and artistic expression.

In addition to cultural benefits, as shown by the theoretical framework (AOTS) of the study recommends that, the practical, live dramatisation experiences might serve as foundational training for learners aspiring to pursue careers in acting and the performing arts. Consistent opportunities for public performance might equip learners with critical skills such as stage presence, voice modulation, and audience engagement, thus preparing them for future professional pathways. Ultimately, the approach aligns educational practices with cultural preservation and career development, reinforcing the value of indigenous language instruction within the dramatic arts. Moreover, ongoing research and monitoring are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of combining cultural narratives, dramatisation, and technology in language acquisition. Evidence-based insights will inform best practices, pedagogical refinements, and scalability. Promoting awareness among learners and communities about the value of their linguistic heritage will help sustain motivation and engagement, ensuring that language learning is both meaningful and empowering. The study recommends that ongoing research could monitor the long-term impact of technology-enhanced storytelling on language retention and cultural preservation.

Together, the recommendations advocate a comprehensive, culturally grounded, and technologically enhanced approach to revitalizing African languages through education. The recommendations collectively aim to create an engaging, culturally rich, and technologically supported learning environment that fosters language development and deep cultural connections among young learners.

# **Funding**

No funding was done for this manuscript.

#### **Institutional Review Board Statement**

The research programme has obtained ethical clearance from Walter Sisulu University as well as from the Provincial Department of Education. Dr CD Mantlana is the supervisor of the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the Department of Basic Education at Walter Sisulu University and under the supervision of Dr CD Mantlana. The approval date was 12 July 2019. The Research Board issued the certificate EREC31-01-19.

#### **Informed Consent Statement**

This study involves humans. Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. Written informed consent for publication is attached to the article as was obtained. Informed consent was obtained on 12 July 2019 from schools, the Department of Basic Education, and participants: "Written informed consent has been obtained from the patient(s) to publish this paper".

# **Data Availability Statement**

The collected data may be found on request from the Research Office at Walter Sisulu University and the repository of the university, as it is kept for confidentiality.

# Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my husband, my sons, Olwethu Solundwana, and Mvuyisi Maseti. My dearest cousin Mveleli Manitshana for sitting during the day and night with me while doing this work. I thank God for the strength in this family.

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

I, Dr. Limkani Sincuba, declare that I have no conflicts of interest and state that on this manuscript.

# Appendix A

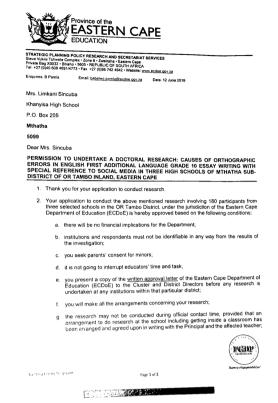


Figure A1. Department of Basic Education Permission to Conduct Research

# Appendix B

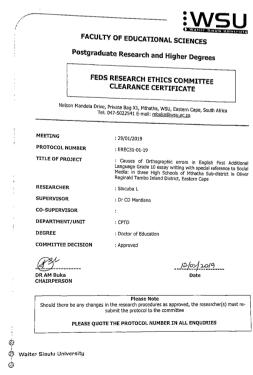


Figure A2. Ethical Clearance Certificate.

# **Appendix C**

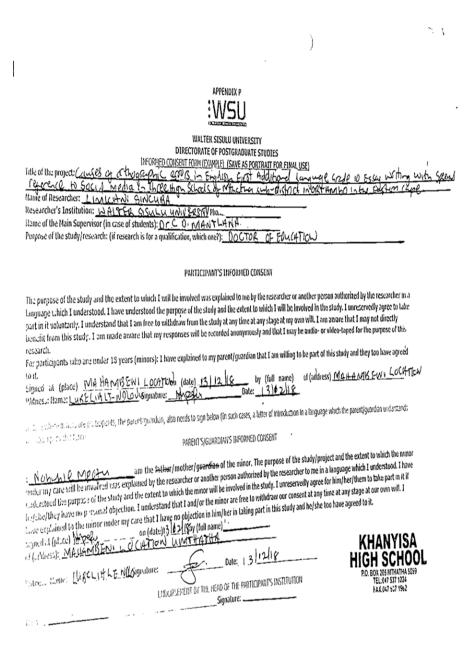


Figure A3. Participant Consent Form.

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