

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context of the research

This study investigates the role of folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge in the education of children in Bhutan today. It explores the rich traditions of oral and written culture and examines the contribution that these traditions make to the education of students in secondary schools in Bhutan. In doing so, the research explores issues surrounding the preservation and promotion of culture in the context of education focussing especially on curriculum policy, curriculum content, teaching, learning and assessment. The study focuses on the English curriculum because this is where the study of folk literature is currently situated.

In this introductory chapter I present the context of the study, the research problem, the research questions, the key elements of the methodology, the definition of key terms used in the study, the scope and limitations of the study, and an outline of the dissertation. Since the study was conducted in the context of the educational system of Bhutan, I describe the context briefly. Accordingly, 1.1.2 describes the impact of globalization on languages and cultures in Bhutan and shows how it necessitates the need to save the oral literatures from disappearing. I then describe briefly the importance attached to culture in the secondary English curriculum. Based on the key issues that arise from the research problem stated in 1.2, in 1.3 I state the research questions. In 1.4, I describe briefly the research methodology employed in the study. In 1.5, I define the key terms used in the study. In 1.6, the scope of the present study is outlined and I point out its limitations. And finally in 1.7, I present an outline of each of the seven chapters of this dissertation.

1.1.1 A brief introduction to the country

Situated in the eastern Himalayas and landlocked between the extensive borders of China and India, Bhutan is one of Asia's smallest nations with a land area of 38, 394 square kilometres and a population of 671,083 people (NSB, 2009, p. 5; PPD, 2003, p. 3). Never colonized by any country, Bhutan is a constitutional monarchy and a member of the United Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and many other regional and

international organizations. Required by article 5 of its constitution to maintain a minimum of 60% of the country's total land under forest cover for all time, Bhutan's unique approach to environmental conservation is underpinned by the need to ensure intergenerational equity and, therefore, to ensure sustainable use of its natural resources. Bhutan's development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) is underpinned by its emphasis on the need to balance sustainable economic growth with environmental conservation, promotion of cultural heritage, and good governance (see also MOE, 2009, p.10). Guided by this goal, the process of development - social, economic, environmental and political - is hinged on the need to create positive conditions that enable and maximize the experience of happiness (DPT, 2008, p. 13; PDP, 2008, p. 4; RGOB, 1999, p. 45). Culture and education, the wider context of this study, are among the nine principal domains of GNH, the others being psychological well-being, health, time use, good governance, ecology, living standards, and community vitality (Ura, 2009, pp. 32-53). Significantly the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage is the third of the four pillars that support GNH.

While culture is a highly contested term, in this study it is relevant to consider it in the context of policy. Viewed from the policy perspective, cultures manifest in two forms, the physical form and the abstract form, often known as 'tangible' and 'intangible' cultures respectively. While the tangible forms are to be seen in terms of customs, crafts, rituals, symbols, traditional sports, astrology, folklore, myths, legends, poetry, drama, to mention a few (RGOB, 1999, p. 65), the intangible forms include values, norms, attitudes, worldviews, moral and ethical choices, sense of right and wrong, among others (RGOB, 1999, p. 65). Although not very different from the tangible-intangible mode of differentiation, Ura (2009, p. 53) considers two categories of culture within the culture domain of GNH. He classifies the more physical ones as 'actions and practices', including in it dialect proficiency, arts and architecture, traditional games and sports, *Tshechus* (festivals), and artisans, and the more abstract ones as "values" and includes in this category notions of identity, dignity, non-alienation, and diversity.

In spite of the overarching emphasis on culture, like all small societies, Bhutan faces the many challenges and tensions that come with the advantages of globalisation. The ability to maintain and assert a unique cultural identity is considered imperative for Bhutan's continued existence as a nation. In fact, cultural heritage is considered the very "foundation upon which the identity of the people and the country as a sovereign and an independent nation is built" (Planning Commission, 2002, p. 28; RGOB, 1999, p. 44). Since it is in the nature of globalization to displace and homogenize cultures, especially small cultures with small populations, the Bhutanese government emphasises cultural diversity (see RGOB, 1999, p. 35). Implied is the acknowledgement that in spite of its smallness, Bhutanese society has a rich diversity of cultures (see GNHC, 2009a, p. 161). For example, the government's main policy document *Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness* (RGOB, 1999, p. 66) says, "Although we share a common world view and sense of purpose, cultural differences within the nation are considerable, with each ethnic group making its own

distinctive contribution to our living past”. Politically, diversity is recognized. Thus, the present governing party’s manifesto (DPT, 2008, p. 44) says, for example, “In spite of our small size, our country is rich in a variety of cultures, languages, dialects, religions, customs and traditions ... We pledge to honour and promote this diversity for all times to come”. But globalization impinges upon this diversity of language and culture.

1.1.2 Globalization and its pressure on languages and cultures in Bhutan

The positive impact of globalization is evident in all imaginable spheres of growth and development, including science, technology, culture, education, international relations, trade, travel, and communications. But the forces that accompany it also especially impinge on small and vulnerable cultures and languages in different parts of the world, including Bhutan (GNHC, 2009b, pp. 161-162). Bhutanese cultures and languages are not immune to the insinuating and homogenizing effects of globalization. Lo Bianco (2001, p. 469) says, “Globalisation is making nations porous. The boundaries are being lowered and the content is being transformed”. So the challenge of keeping languages and cultures alive is by no means small (see also GNHC, 2009a, p. 161). Given its geographical location between two of the world’s cultural giants - India and China, each with a population of over a billion people, the challenge is even bigger. Moreover, exposure to the outside world influences people’s worldviews and their perceptions about language and culture. Bhutan is a multicultural and multilingual society. In spite of its smallness of size and population, the country has a “diverse linguistic heritage” consisting of nineteen different languages spoken in different parts of the country (Gyatso, 2004, p. 265; van Driem, 2004, pp. 294-295). Unlike the major languages of the country, Dzongkha, English, and Lhotshamkha or Nepali (the language used predominantly in the southern regions of Bhutan), all the other languages are exclusively oral. These languages carry a rich and diverse tradition of oral literature such as folktales, poetry, epics, myths, legends, ballads, proverbs, beliefs and superstitions, spiritual songs, heroic tales (RGOB, 1999, p. 65), all of which enrich the Bhutanese cultural tapestry. From the policy perspective, Dzongkha, the national language, is a “unifying language”, an “instrument for fostering national identity” and therefore promoted actively by the Dzongkha Development Commission (DDC, 2002, p. xv; RGOB, 1999, p. 8). Despite its role and status as the national and official language, there have been concerns that promoting people’s interest in it is by no means easy. Dzongkha’s inability to spread as quickly as English is often attributed to its complexity, the growing popularity of English because of its pragmatic advantages, the proliferation of mass media, and lack of career opportunities related to qualifications in Dzongkha (e.g., see Gyatso, 2004, pp. 271-272; Namgyel, 2009a, pp. 1-2; 2009b, pp. 1-2; Palden, 2009, pp. 1-2;). English, on the other hand, is spreading rapidly without the need to promote it, and going by global trends in the spread of English in smaller nations, in all likelihood its growth and influence will continue to rise. The need for education, training, travel, exposure, and economic opportunities require the Bhutanese to acquire proficiency in

English. Van Driem (2004, p. 322) argues that while the influence of Dzongkha continues to be the greatest in government and jurisprudence, in many other domains “the role of English is increasing in Bhutan with more rapidity, widespread currency and greater proficiency than in any other Asian country with the possible exception of the city state Singapore”. In Bhutan, as this study will show, English is also a language of prestige and status.

1.1.3 Preserving the oral traditions of Bhutanese culture

While English continues to grow rapidly and Dzongkha continues to be promoted vigorously as the national language, the “lingua franca of the country” (DDC, 2002, p. xv), Bhutan’s many oral languages and the rich literary and cultural heritage they embody will likely disappear if they are not documented and disseminated. The key point is that the oral folk literatures in these languages are rich repositories of cultural knowledge and values (RGOB, 1999, p. 35). Moreover, their loss will mean the loss of the depth and diversity of Bhutanese culture as a whole. Thiong’o (1986, p. 205) says, language “carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world”. Referring to what she calls the “health situation of the world’s languages and the prospects for them during the next few generations”, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, p. ix) warns that “if things continue, we may kill over 90 percent of the world’s oral languages in the next 100 years”. Similarly, Crystal (1997, p. 18) says:

If this happens, it will indeed be an intellectual and social tragedy. When a language dies, so much is lost. Especially in languages which have never been written down, or which have been written down only recently, language is the repository of the history of a people. It is their identity. Oral testimony, in the form of sagas, folktales, songs, rituals, proverbs, and many other practices, provides us with a unique view of our world and a unique canon of literature. It is their legacy to the rest of humanity. Once lost, it can never be recaptured. The argument is similar to that used in relation to the conservation of species and the environment.

It is not only linguists who are aware of this potential loss. The Bhutanese government regards preserving the oral tradition as important and it recognizes the danger of losing the country’s “many cultural traditions, particularly oral traditions” and the challenge of conserving the heritage through research and documentation (GNCH, 2009a, p. 161; see also PDP, 2008, p. 23). Politically, linguistic diversity and the need for preservation and promotion of languages are recognized and there is a commitment to “allocate adequate resources to document and promote the use and survival of all other languages and dialects” (DPT, 2008, p. 44) besides Dzongkha. Government policy recognizes that the oral literatures are part of the country’s intangible cultural heritage and “There are differences in folklore, myths, legends ... poetry ... that together add richness to the nation’s cultural tapestry” (Planning Commission, 2002, p. 29; RGOB, 1999, p. 66). Significantly, the government states explicitly that “These

must be inventoried and recorded before they are lost for forever" (Planning Commission, 2002, p. 29; RGOB, 1999, p. 66).

One way of saving the oral literatures from disappearing can be by writing them down in a language that has both local and international influence and making published materials available to the Bhutanese people and to the world. Since government policy considers the role of teachers and students vital in keeping the diversity of Bhutanese cultures alive (see page 7), making the oral traditions available to children through the schools' formal and informal curricula and classroom practices can support efforts to preserve culture. In the Bhutanese context, the positive role of English has generally been acknowledged. In the language of curriculum policy (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix; CAPSD, 2006d, p. x; CAPSD, 2005d, p. xi):

The flexibility, versatility, and richness of English allow it to be used in a variety of circumstances and to be used by the Bhutanese people to meet their own goals ... The cultural and intellectual resources of the English-speaking world and the formulations of philosophy, jurisprudence and economics, to mention a few, have been opened to the Bhutanese people directly. In return, Bhutan has been able to share with the international community its rich cultural and spiritual heritage and, in the ensuing dialogues, enrich the intellectual resource of the world.

Given the global reach of English, its literary richness, and its increasing popularity and accepted status as the "language of international relations" and "modernization" (DDC, 2002, p. xv) in Bhutan, this study assumes that translating the diverse oral literatures into English would ensure their survival. In fact, some of the oral literatures have been written down in English since the 1990s. Table 1.1 shows five different genres of Bhutanese folk literature that have been translated into English, some of which have also been included in the secondary English curriculum for schools in Bhutan.

Table 1.1 Bhutanese folk literatures in English (1994 – 2008)

Genre	Title of folk literature & year of publication		Writer
Folktale	1	Folktales of Bhutan (1994)	Kunzang Choden
	2	Bhutanese Tales of the Yeti (1997)	Kunzang Choden
	3	Tales from Rural Bhutan (1997)	Kinley Wangmo
	4	Bhutanese Folk Tales: From the East and the South (2004)	Gopilal Acharya
	5	The Helpful Frog and Other Stories (2005)	Dechen Zagmo
	6	Jangchusey and the Black Serpent (2007)	Yeshey Choeki
Traditional Ballad	7	The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi: A Wind Borne Feather (1996)	Karma Ura
	8	Gaylong Sumdar Tashi: Songs of Sorrow (1998)	Sonam Kinga
Proverb	9	Sayings and Proverbs from Bhutan: Wisdom and Wit in Dzongkha Idiom (1999)	Per K.Sørensen & Tsewang Nidup
Beliefs & superstitions	10	Ta She Gha Chha: The Broken Saddle and Other Popular Bhutanese Beliefs (2005)	Karma Pedey
Rural Stories	11	The Talisman of Good Fortune and Other Stories from Rural Bhutan (2002)	Rinzin Rinzin

While Dzongkha is a well regarded language of “national identity and unity of the country” (DDC, 2002, p. xv), its ability to keep the culturally diverse oral literatures alive may be limited by a number of factors. First, it faces the same onslaught of globalization as any other language in Bhutan, which will necessitate its promotion as the most important language in the country. Second, in the effort to promote Dzongkha and to build Dzongkha literature, it is possible in the future that the rich, unique and diverse oral literatures that exist in the smaller languages may be documented, absorbed into and called “Dzongkha literature”, which will be a loss of diversity.

Owing to the possibilities that English offers the position taken in this study is that the best way to keep the diverse oral literatures and the rich cultures they embody alive is by including them in the English curriculum, for which good quality English translations of these literatures will be necessary. Children, as “custodians” of culture (GNHC, 2009a, p. 20), are then exposed to a wide variety of folk traditions in prose and verse, and through these, to a diversity of cultures, represented in a language they are generally interested in. But as the study has shown, while English translations of Bhutanese folk literature can be used as cultural and pedagogical resources in the English curriculum, those translations can also cause linguistic and cultural loss and may in fact hasten the decline of oral languages and their cultures.

1.1.4 Cultural underpinnings of the English curriculum

Modern secular education began in Bhutan in the 1960s when the country opened itself up to the outside world, introduced social, political and judicial reforms, and launched its first economic development plan. To implement these effectively, it was necessary to build an adequate pool of skilled and knowledgeable people who were able to run projects, take care of administration and communicate with the outside world. So public schools based on Indian models of Western education were established and English was introduced as a medium of instruction. Since then, unlike in some other developing countries where English is often portrayed derogatively, owing to the positive circumstances under which it was introduced into Bhutan (see Chapter 2, page 46), the role and status of English have generally been perceived positively in Bhutan. Although there are at the moment no academic discourses on the role of English in Bhutan, according to the Curriculum and Professional Support Division (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix; CAPSD, 2005d, p. xi) of the Ministry of Education, English has helped Bhutan in many ways:

Like many other happy developments, the advent of the English language to Bhutan was a matter of choice. When the veil of self-imposed isolation was lifted, Bhutan looked beyond its borders and began to prepare itself to modernize and join the community of nations. Which language to use to interact with the international community was one of the many decisions that had to be made.

Owing to the positive role it has played in Bhutan's modernization and interaction with the outside world, English is taught as a compulsory subject from pre-primary (PP) through class 12 and in university. Apart from the study of Dzongkha as the national language and with the exception of a few subjects such as environmental studies and social studies which are taught in Dzongkha at the primary levels, English is the predominant language of the curriculum for all the other subjects at all levels. In this study the role of Bhutanese folk literature is explored in the context of the secondary English curriculum (class 7 to 12), teaching practice, and student learning experience, and thus it is relevant to provide a brief background to the curriculum.

Until 2005, the English curricula for secondary schools (classes 7 to 12) in Bhutan were either influenced or administered directly by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) in Delhi, India. For example, the class 11 and 12 English curricula and public examination until 2005 were administered by CISCE (PPD, 2004, p. 9; PPD, 2003, p. 19). As a result and because of the pressure of external examinations, there was little scope for teachers to introduce into the curriculum or their classroom practice, materials that reflected Bhutanese culture and values. For example, until 2005, although the class 9 and 10 curricula were not administered by CISCE, their content and pedagogical approaches were influenced by the CISCE model for class 11 and 12 with its emphasis on study of British canonical literature, teacher talk, and mastery of content that comprised a full-length Shakespearean play, short stories and poems from the Romantic, Victorian and post-war periods. The old secondary English curricula for class 7 and 8 were replaced in 2006 with revised ones. For the sake of convenience I call the curricula taught until 2005 the 'old' curricula. The old curricula have been replaced gradually by 'new' ones since February 2006 (BBE, 2010, p. 1; PPD, 2004, p. 9; PPD, 2003, p. 19). Although the new curricula's main emphasis is on the development of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (CAPSD, 2005c, p. v; CAPSD, 2005h, p. x), they also place much emphasis on, and have greater clarity about, the importance of culture than the old curricula. This is taken up in greater detail later in Chapter 2 (see page 48).

I have already noted that culture and language are inextricably linked. As stated in *Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness* (RGOB, 1999, pp. 20 & 36), government policy recognizes children and teachers as the custodians of culture and the catalysts of cultural transmission respectively. They are therefore the key to addressing the cultural consequences of globalization and ensuring intergenerational continuity and influence of the Bhutanese cultural heritage. Policy envisages that the "country's rich traditions, values, ideals and beliefs must ideally live on in the minds of Bhutanese youths [youth]", so that these traditions continue to inspire their thoughts and actions and enable them to make "ethical and moral choices" in their lives (GNHC, 2009a, p. 20). Since teachers' influence has a direct bearing on the students' lives, their role is considered vital for "inculcating in our children and young people an understanding and appreciation of our culture and heritage" (RGOB, 1999, p. 20).

These overarching policy visions influence the new English curriculum. For example, the curriculum states that materials selected for “reading and literature” (including short stories, essays and poetry), listening and speaking, and writing should be based on “Bhutanese culture”, encompassing “examples”, and the “values of Bhutanese culture” (CAPSD, 2005g, pp. 101-102; CAPSD, 2005h, pp. 33-34). Also, in the new curricula some materials from Bhutanese folk literature have been included (see Table 2.6, page 49).

Thus, it may be said that the new English curriculum for class 7 to 12 is set against the backdrop of “globalization and its attendant pressures and impact” and the increasing emphasis placed on the role of the tangible and intangible forms of culture in the education of children, including the values of identity, diversity (GNHC, 2009a, p. 161), and recognition of and respect for “cultural differences” (RGOB, 1999, p. 66). Against this backdrop, this study explores how the role and status of Bhutanese folk literature (both in its written and oral forms) are reflected in the secondary English curriculum, teachers’ pedagogical practices, assessment, the schools’ extracurricular activities, and the students’ learning experiences. Although the secondary English curriculum includes selections from contemporary Bhutanese writing in English, in the context of this study, Bhutanese folk literature was the most appropriate site for understanding the contesting imperatives of culture in the curriculum for two reasons. First, Bhutanese writing in English began in the 1990s with English translations of folk literature. Their impact in the context of curriculum, teaching and learning has never been studied. Second, these literatures have evolved and existed in the oral form for hundreds of years and, in the absence of written literature, have been the mainstay of people’s literary aspirations and expressions. Hence, owing to the depth and diversity of cultural meanings, concepts and values they represent, these genres presented greater possibilities of exploring cultural issues than did the other forms of Bhutanese in writing in English included in the secondary English curriculum.

1.2 Research problem

The primary problem explored in this study is the challenge many of the languages other than Dzongkha and English face for survival seen against the backdrop of globalization. It may not be long before the diverse oral literatures and the cultural values that exist in these languages disappear forever. English, because of its positive role in the modernization and development of Bhutan, is an indispensable language and is spreading rapidly. And Dzongkha, because of concerns about its inability to grow as much as desired, will continue to be promoted vigorously through the schools’ formal and informal curricula and through other strategies adopted by the Dzongkha Development Commission. In the process, the vitality and usage of the oral and lesser known languages that do not have much utilitarian value in the world of business, commerce and economic opportunities will more than likely diminish quickly as the

older generations die and the young flock to towns and stop using their home language. With the gradual disappearance of these languages the intangible culture they carry in the form of diverse oral literatures and the diverse cultural and aesthetic values they embody will be lost forever. Although the role of the intangible forms of culture in children's education is emphasized in policies and children are in fact considered the custodians of culture (see above), without evidence of school-based studies it is not known how the policy aspirations translate into formal and informal curricula, teachers' beliefs and perceptions, their classroom practices, student learning experiences, and assessment. Although some of Bhutan's diverse oral literatures have been saved from extinction through documentation in English and some of these have been used in both the old and new secondary English curricula, their cultural and pedagogical values have not been studied. For instance, no study has been done, as the literature review in Chapter 2 will show, on how English teachers use their and their students' knowledge of oral literatures in their own languages as cultural and pedagogical resources to support the students' learning of English. Although policy emphasises notions of identity, knowledge of dialect, attitudes, diversity, moral and ethical choices, and other intangible aspects of the Bhutanese cultural heritage, it is not known how the English teachers' and students' knowledge, perceptions and attitudes in relation to these values influence the way they are taught and learnt in school. That is what this study will undertake to investigate.

1.3 The research questions

The stance taken in this study is that these diverse cultures can be honoured and enlivened through the study of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum. Therefore, it is assumed that one way to keep folk literatures - in their oral and written forms - is by using them as cultural and pedagogical resources to support the learning of English. To gain a fuller understanding of this assumption, it is necessary to understand teachers' and students' understandings of culture in general and Bhutanese folk literature in particular. Thus, based on the key issues raised in the research problem and gaps identified in knowledge related to the interaction of culture, folk literature and the English curriculum, teaching practice, and student learning in the local context and in the literature generally, five research questions were asked:

- 1) How do secondary English teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature influence their teaching practices?
- 2) How do the literary and cultural influences in the schools support students' learning of Bhutanese folk literature?
- 3) How do secondary English teachers perceive the long-term role of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge in the English curriculum?
- 4) What knowledge and attitude do secondary students show following three months of learning about Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum?

- 5) What strategies work in developing knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literatures and their cultural values in a secondary classroom?

The central issues raised by the research questions were investigated in the context of the secondary English curriculum - official and enacted - teaching practice, and student learning experiences. Since the study, especially the action research, was based on work with students in a real classroom context, and it explored teachers' and students' knowledge, perceptions and attitudes in the context of their experiences, it is intended that the study will contribute significantly not only to evidence-based educational research in Bhutan but will also add to the much needed effort to bridge the gap between policy expectations and practice as it exists in the field.

1.4 Methodology

Since the study involves understanding teachers' and students' perceptions about the role of folk literature in the context of the English curriculum, pedagogical practices, and students' learning experiences, the research paradigm adopted for the study is constructivism. The epistemology behind the constructivist paradigm assumes that research participants construct their worldviews based on their unique experiences and the researcher's role is to interact with the subjects and interpret meanings as they emerge from the interaction of data, theory and the researcher's own intuitions and experience. The policy environment for this study was developed from an analysis of all relevant policy and related documents and is presented in Chapter 2. To gain a holistic understanding of the perceptions of all secondary English teachers in Bhutan, mail questionnaires were used to gather data followed by in-depth interviews with six teachers purposively sampled from among the questionnaire respondents. While the questionnaires were analysed using simple content analysis techniques, the interviews were analysed thematically. Student perceptions were gathered in the context of an action research study conducted with a group of twenty four Class 11 students in a secondary school in south Bhutan. This latter project investigated how these students responded to Bhutanese folk literature in the oral and written forms using a series of intervention activities focussed on the folk genres. Data in this project were gathered through two rounds of questionnaires administered to the whole Class, one each at the beginning and end of the intervention project, and three rounds of interviews with six students selected from the Class, one each at the beginning, middle and end of the project. As with the teacher data, the responses to the questionnaires and interviews were analysed using content and thematic analysis techniques respectively. Finally, policy perspectives, findings from the teacher data, and findings from the student data were examined in relationship to one another to see what thematic patterns emerged from the triangulated discussion of the data sets.

1.5 Definitional clarifications

In this section, while clarifying useful distinctions between concepts surrounding folklore and folk literature, I focus on three issues. Firstly, the need to find and use a term that will cover adequately all the types of folk traditions studied here is explained. Secondly, I make a distinction between literary and non-literary forms of folklore and classify the literary forms as ‘folk literature’, the key concept used in this study. Thirdly, with ‘folk literature’ defined, I make a distinction between its oral and written forms and between its prose and verse forms.

Although the need to document Bhutan’s rich and diverse oral traditions as sources of cultural heritage is emphasized in policy (e.g., see GNHC, 2009a, p. 161; Planning Commission, 2002, pp. 28-29; RGOB, 1999, p. 66), there has been no study to classify and define the different genres and subgenres in which these traditions exist. In this study I use the term ‘folk literature’ (oral or written) as it is commonly used in the research literature on folklore studies. Since ‘folk literature’ is often used synonymously with ‘folklore’ and ‘oral tradition’, here I make their conceptual distinctions clear. In the research literature, ‘folklore’ is used as a mother concept, the overarching concept. For example, Baldick (1999), Drabble (2000) and Evans (1981) include in folklore sub genres such as customs, rites, ceremonies, architectural forms, agricultural techniques, charms, medicine, and literary forms such as folktales, proverbs, ballads, fairytales, drama, beliefs and superstitions, among others. In addition to these, Abrams (1993, p. 70) includes legends, riddles, pseudoscientific lore about the weather, plants, and animals, customary activities at births, marriages, deaths, and traditional dance (see also Smolen and Ortiz-Castro, 2000, p. 568). Table 1.2 illustrates the distinction between literary and non-literary folklore based on definitions examined in this study.

Table 1.2 Illustration of folklore and folk literature

FOLKLORE	Literary (Folk literature)	PROSE: Folktales, beliefs & superstitions, myths, legends, drama, riddles, sagas imprecations, lullabies, fairytales, fables, jokes, anecdotes, charms, humour ...
		VERSE: Poetry, folksongs, ballads, work songs, proverbs, spiritual songs, love songs, historical songs ...
	Non-literary	Medicine
		Rites
		Crafts
		Music
		Architectural forms

While very little attention has been paid in current research literature in the Bhutanese context to classification and definition of Bhutan’s diverse forms of folk literature, policy documents mention examples of folklore forms such as customs, beliefs, traditions, art, music, myths, legends, proverbs, fables (e.g., see Planning Commission, 2002, p. 29; RGOB, 1999, pp. 65-

66), which is similar to the preceding conceptual understanding of folklore. From these definitions, two kinds of folklore can be derived - literary folklore and non-literary folklore. Folk literature or literary folklore is known by other terms such as “folkloric literature” (Lopatin, 1951, p. 544) and ‘folk literary genre’ (Dorji, 2005, p. 262). Since the focus of this study is folk literature, I do not consider the other folkloric forms such as rituals, music, craft, and so on. Instead I adopt the term ‘folk literature’ for my purposes and it is explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

Although the term ‘folk literature’ is sometimes referred to as the oral expressions of uncivilized people or the creation of “primitive and illiterate people” (Cuddon, 1999, p. 322) or condemned as “heathen” (Abarry, 1994, p. 308), in this study I use it to refer to the literary expressions of people (folk). Understood thus, it is “literature of the folk” (Jason, 1992, 110). I prefer to use the term ‘folk literature’ consistently for two reasons. First, it is commonly and frequently used in folklore studies and studies in ESL and literacy education (e.g., see Bagg, 1991; Cuddon, 1999; Jason, 1992; Mallikarjun, 2003; Perez-Stable, 2005; Smolen & Ortiz-Castro, 2000). Second, the term is not encountered in folklore discourses in the Bhutanese context, so it is hoped this conceptual definition both clarifies and contributes to local knowledge and understanding of the genres in general. The definition of folk literature I use in this study is illustrated in Table 1.2 (see above). It has been drawn from definitions used in the literature. For example, Smolen and Ortiz-Castro’s (2000, pp. 566-567) definition of ‘folk literature’ includes genres such as “folksong, ballad, fable, folktale, proverb, riddle, and charm” (see also Perez-Stable, 2005, pp. 86-92). Similarly, Cuddon’s (1999, p. 322) and Bagg’s (1991, p. 2) definitions include genres such as fairytales, drama, legends, myths, local legends, saints’ legends, children’s legends, sagas, jokes and anecdotes. In the Bhutanese context, Penjore’s (2005, p. 262) definition includes “*srung* (folktale), *glu gzhas* (folksong), *dpe gtam* or *dpye gtam* (proverb), *gtam rgyud* (legend), *blo ze* (ballad), *tsang mo* (western [Western] equivalent of quatrain?), *gab tshig* (riddle), and *dgod bra* (joke)”.

Since this study explores both oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature with teachers and students, their distinction needs to be stated. Written forms of folk literature include all the genres mentioned in the top two rows of Table 1.2 and which have been collected from their oral sources and written down in English and which are illustrated in Table 1.1 (see above). Folk literatures in the oral form (oral literature or orature) also include all the genres mentioned in Table 1.2 but which currently exist orally and not in print. The conceptualization of oral literature or orature used in the study is consistent with definitions available in the literature (e.g., see Dorji, 2002, pp. 5 & 18; Na’Allah, 1997, pp. 125-142; Penjore, 2005, pp. 57; Saxby, 1993 in Linning 2000, p. 105). While I use folk literature as the key term that includes both its oral and written forms, I use ‘oral literature’ for convenience in the study to refer especially to the forms that are alive in their oral forms.

Since this study explored both prose and verse forms of Bhutanese folk literature with teachers and students, their distinction is also illustrated in Table 1.2. Thus, folktale, beliefs

and superstitions, myths, legends, riddles, and fables represent folk literature in prose, while folksong, ballad, work songs, ritual songs, spiritual songs, and ballads, represent folk literature in verse (see also Bagg, 1991, p. 2). Although the term ‘oral tradition’ is used quite commonly in the literature (e.g. Choden, 2002, p. xi; Cohen, 1989, pp. 9-18; Kalu, 2008, pp. 2-17; Kellogg, 1977, pp. 531-534; Penjore, 2005, pp. 47, 52 & 56; Scheub, 1985, pp. 1-72), I do not use it synonymously with folk literature because ‘oral traditions’, like folklore, are either literary or non-literary. It is similar to Crystal's (1997, p. 18) ‘oral testimony’ which includes both literary and non-literary forms.

Thus, as the present study’s overarching concept, ‘folk literature’ is used consistently to refer only to the literary genres of folklore in prose and verse and it includes oral literature and oral literature that has been written down.

1.6 Outline of scope and limitations

The definitions of ‘literature’ in policy discourses in Bhutan often include mainly Buddhist writings from the past, such as ‘Pechas’ or religious scriptures and ‘Namthars’ or spiritual biographies (e.g. see RGOB, 2005, p. 72). This study includes in its scope only the secular genres of Bhutanese folk literature in the oral form and in English translations. The oral genres were explored, first, because of their rich cultural values, including the diversity they represent, and the challenge they faced for survival; and second, because exploring the oral genres enabled the study to encompass oral literatures in the many languages that students and teachers brought to school. Bhutanese folk literature that exists in written form - in English translations (see Table 1.1) - also represents cultural diversity but their cultural and pedagogical values have not yet been studied in the context of school. So, oral literatures available in English translation were also explored. Thus the study was limited to the secular forms of Bhutanese folk literature that exist orally and in English translations.

There were methodological limitations to the study. First, the teacher interviews covered only a small number of secondary English teachers (N=6) selected from among the questionnaire respondents using the principle of purposeful sampling (see page 65). Aware of this limitation, I ensured that this small sample represented the three levels of secondary education in Bhutan - lower secondary (class 7-8), middle secondary (class 9-10), and higher secondary (class 11-12). Part of this limitation was addressed by my careful use of coding procedures in building thematic categories from the interview data and by attending to multiple perspectives, complementarity and contrast of views, surprises and paradoxes in the analysis of the categories. Also, to strengthen the quality of interpretation, the interview data were triangulated with data from the questionnaires which covered a large sample of English teachers. Another limitation of the study pertained to the action research project in which I

taught the lessons, administered the questionnaires to the class (N=24), and interviewed the six students (N=6). Since the data were gathered to see evidence of knowledge and attitude changes over time as a result of the pedagogical experiences and opportunities I created for the class, I was aware of the propensity of the class, especially the interview informants (since the interviews were face to face), to say things they thought would be “the right answer” I would want to hear. Gathering data at two different times through the questionnaires and at three different times through the interviews during the action research period helped to focus on thematic patterns and recognize elements of possible bias in the data. Since the interviews were held with only six students, it was necessary to ensure depth of data analysis and credibility of interpretation. Again, purposive and stratified sampling of interview participants (see page 76), careful use of coding procedures (see page 77), consistent application of criteria for selecting data segments for analysis (see page 79), triangulation of interview and questionnaire data, and use of the collaborating teachers’ diary notes, helped to minimize the limitations. In particular, the four Guba and Lincoln quality criteria that I discuss in Chapter 3 (see page 80) helped to address these limitations consciously.

1.7 Outline of the dissertation

The dissertation is presented in the form of seven chapters, the major themes of which are outlined here. Chapter 2 presents five categories of literature related to the study. First, it describes the wider context of folk literature and cultural values, which enables the present study to be positioned in current debates in folk literature, culture, curriculum and the English language. Second, it relates the study to the context of folk literature studies in Bhutan and highlights the main debates in existent literature focussing mainly on cultural values and notions of preservation and continuity. Third, the chapter discusses the role and status of English in the international context, and current debates on questions of ‘standard’. Fourth, it presents common strands from current debates on the interaction of culture, curriculum and pedagogy in the international context. This helps to examine teachers’ and students’ perceptions about the role of Bhutanese folk literature in relation to curriculum, teaching and learning in light of these debates. Finally, the chapter examines the role attributed to Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum. It describes the role and status of English as portrayed in the curriculum documents, cultural underpinnings of the secondary English curriculum, and the status of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum as reflected in the proportion of content included in it. It also explores whether what is taught is also assessed.

Chapter 3 describes the constructivist paradigm and the epistemological justification for choosing it, the research design and the three primary methods employed for gathering the

data, and the procedures and techniques used to analyse the data and report the findings. The chapter highlights the ethical issues relevant to the study and shows how these issues were addressed both at the institutional level and at the practical level of data collection, analysis and reporting. The chapter also explains how quality issues were addressed.

Chapter 4 presents the data gathered from secondary English teachers through questionnaires and interviews. It describes the main findings from the questionnaire data as a result of content analysis and data from the interviews as a result of thematic analysis. The findings are presented as results of triangulated data and they are grouped to provide answers to the three research questions separately.

Chapter 5 presents the data gathered from the students in the context of the action research study conducted in a secondary school. It also describes the findings from the two main sources of data (1) questionnaires through content analysis and (2) interviews through thematic analysis. Again, the findings are presented in terms of how they answer each of the three research questions, in order to maintain consistency and clarity.

Chapter 6 correlates policy context presented in Chapter 2, and the main findings from Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The purpose of this chapter is to see linkages and gaps between policy, curriculum, teaching practice, and student learning. This chapter is the most significant of the study because it points out the deeper and wider meanings and implications of the findings. New findings are highlighted that will make important contributions to knowledge in the field. The chapter compares the findings reported in the preceding chapters with the major concepts and debates in the literature.

Chapter 7 briefly summarises significant findings from the study and answers each of the five research questions separately. Implications of these findings are drawn for educational policy and practice, folk literature education, and folk literature studies in Bhutan. Based on gaps identified by the present study, the chapter then shows possible areas of future research.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING FOLK LITERATURE, CULTURE AND CURRICULUM

A Review of Literatures

The fundamental question is not merely whether to have textbooks, but to ask continuously what should be done and why it should be done - with or without textbooks ... This means that no text or policy or written curriculum is the final answer. Good answers lie in continuously asking what knowledge and experiences are most worthwhile now, and now, and now ... throughout the whole panoply of situations that lie ahead. Moreover, such asking must be done by all who are affected by the consequences of that asking, including students who have the greatest vested interest, yet are too often left out of the process of considering matters of purpose that affect them so dearly (Schubert, 2006, p. 26).

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I relate the central issues dealt with in the present study to disciplinary discussions on culture and the English curriculum. The chapter presents five categories of literature related to the research problem. The first category, discussed in 2.2, deals with folk literature in the wider international context and here I position the study in current debates in folk literature and cultural values. The second category, presented in 2.3, sketches out the context of folk literature studies in Bhutan and relates this study to the main threads in current debates in the local context. In the third category, presented in 2.4, in contrast to the generally defensive stance adopted in studies of English in developing countries, I discuss the literature mainly to build a pro-English stance and I argue my position from four closely interrelated perspectives. English can be seen as an opportunity to develop a strong cultural identity in Bhutan, to preserve the oral literatures in lesser known languages through documentation and dissemination, and to facilitate intercultural communication and understanding. But, of course, the conditions of this strengthened cultural identity must be elucidated and must emerge from the research study here. Since the study attends to the question of standard of English used in translations of Bhutanese folk literature included in the secondary English curriculum, and since 'standard' of English has been a concern in Bhutan for a while now (CAPSD, 2006b, p. v; CAPSD, 2006c, p. v; PPD, 2006, p. 14), I then relate the study to current debates on 'standard' of English used in local literatures. The fourth category, presented in 2.5, relates the present study to discussions on folk literature in the context of

school curriculum and pedagogy in the international context. And the fifth category, presented in 2.6, examines the role attributed to culture in general and folk literature in particular in the secondary English curriculum for schools in Bhutan.

2.2 Positioning the study in the field of folk literature studies

In this section I discuss the role of folk literature as a form of cultural expression, mainly as a society's sense of cultural identity. I pull together perspectives from literature and question the view that folk literature is low status literature or the creation of primitive people and describe how folk literatures contribute to the enhancement as well as enrichment of national literatures. Based on the literature I then build an argument that language loss is culture loss.

2.2.1 Cultural independence and identity

Folk literature was viewed differently by colonizers and postcolonial writers. According to Kalu (2008, p. 4), while African oral literature was dubbed by the European colonizers as “quaint, primitive, and esoteric” and “not capable (or worthy) of being understood by non-Africans”, later African writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Flora Nwapa, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and others employed distinct “narrative techniques and themes” of the African oral tradition in their literary works to build the African literary identity by resisting “colonizers’ efforts to denigrate African cultures and traditions”. For example, Achebe uses in his novels the traditional proverbs not simply to “add touches of local colour but to sound and reiterate themes, to sharpen characterization, to clarify conflict, and to focus on the values of the society he is portraying” (Lindfors in Innes & Lindfors 1978, p. 50). Dorson (1963, p. 96) says, unlike “powerful, aggressive nations” that often used folk literature as a tool of propaganda, smaller nations assert their cultural identity and independence by “reviving their original tongues”. The revival and revitalization of native oral literatures thus helped not only to assert African cultural identity but also to gain political mileage through portraying their culture as being different but not inferior to that of the colonial masters. Since Bhutan has never been colonized, the African approach - using the country’s traditional literatures and their cultures for political mileage - is not directly relevant. Nevertheless, as a small country that faces the onslaught of globalisation and its homogenizing effects, preserving and promoting culture, including the rich oral traditions, is imperative for promoting its identity in the global community.

Thus, while the colonizers considered indigenous literature as “low” status, post-colonial writers exposed their culture-imbued works to assert their cultural identities. The former view is evident even in the works of contemporary scholars. Cuddon (1999, p. 472), for example,

limits his definition of 'literature' to "works which belong to the major genres" such as the epic, drama, lyric, novel, short story, and the ode. He argues that a written piece of work can be called 'literature' only if it manifests "superior qualities" of "excellence", "originality" and "general aesthetic and artistic merits" that put it "well above the ordinary run of written works". Representing the latter, more positive, view, Abarry (1994, pp. 1- 2) not only recognizes the "intellectual, educational, and artistic values" of folk literature, but goes on to say that "This literature [folk literature] teaches life at the traditional level and provides the foundation for a sense of cultural identity, group awareness, and solidarity". Achebe (as cited in Lindfors in Innes & Lindfors 1978, p. 50) considers proverbs - a popular genre of African folk literature - "the palm-oil with which words are eaten". Similarly, Lopatin (1951, p. 543) argued that "All Russian writers, especially Pushkin, Turgenev, and Gorky, were fond of Russian literary folklore and were of the opinion that it was necessary for the further development of Russian language and literature".

Because of the prevalence of stereotypic portrayal of folk literature and its cultures in scholarly discourse, Oring (1994, p. 211) is of the opinion that "Before the 1970s, the term *identity* was largely absent from the discourse of folklorists". This was partly because folk literature had hitherto been for the most part considered the creation of "primitive and illiterate people" (Cuddon 1999, p. 322). Scholarly perspectives have changed since then. Oring (1994, p. 211-233), for example, argues that the notion of identity has always been "central to folklore studies" and folklorists should therefore give the concept increased attention. In the Bhutanese context, apart from policy statements about culture and national identity (e.g., see PPD, 2003, p. 3; RGOB, 1999, p. 13) and personal opinions about identity and folk literature expressed by writers and researchers, there are no studies that attend to the relationship between folk literature and identity.

To help fill this knowledge gap, this review draws upon two different conceptions of identity that Oring (1994, pp. 212-213) and Gee (2000-2001, p. 99-105) proposed. Table 2.3 shows the three forms of identity that can be used for "articulation with folklore forms and processes" (Oring, 1994, pp. 211-233). As Oring's concepts of individual, personal, and collective identities were proposed especially for use with folklore forms (e.g. folk literature), they provide a good theoretical lens with which to examine English teachers' and students' perceptions of identity in relation to Bhutanese folk literature. Moreover, in Bhutan's oral societies, the different oral literary traditions have served as a "link to who I am and where I come from" (Choden, 2002, p. xiii) and a person's reconnection with "collective memory" (Dorji, 2002, p. 7). So these conceptualizations were useful in identifying teachers' and students' statements in the interviews that reflected the individual and collective dimensions of identity as may be evoked by the characters, events, linguistic nuances, and social, cultural and religious representations used in folk literature.

Table 2.3 Three Interrelated Concepts of Identity

Individual Identity	Sense of space-time connection with the individual's states, thoughts, and actions from the past, which allows the individual to recognize the self (Oring, 1994, p. 212).
Personal Identity	Particular mental dispositions and contents, which allow the individual to distinguish the self in terms of "what one is and where one stands in the world" (Lynd, 1961, p.14-15).
Collective Identity	Those aspects of the personal identity that are derived from experiences and expressions common to a group, which allow "a deep sense of identification with others - the consciousness of kind" (Thorat, 1979, p. 66).

Source: Adapted from Oring, 1994, pp. 212-213

While it is true that in small societies social perceptions, beliefs and assumptions about the world influence those of the individual, this study also considers it important to understand how the individual constructs her or his sense of identity.

Identities may also change and shift according to forces that influence a person's conception of self and the world. In a globalized world, the fluidity is even greater. According to Lo Bianco (2003, p. 32), "In the intensified complexity produced by globalising economies, language education and national identity, in their separate ways, are under considerable challenge". While Oring's conception of identities provides a useful framework for understanding teachers' and students' notions of individual, personal and collective identity in relation to Bhutanese folk literature, it is not adequate to cover the other dimensions of identity identified by Gee. Therefore, this review draws upon the four ways of looking at identity that Gee (2000-2001, p. 99-105) proposed. Table 2.4 shows Gee's four ways of understanding identity each of which is different from the other in terms of the factors that influence it.

Table 2.4 Four Ways to View Identity (Gee, 2000-2001, p. 100)

		Process	Power	Source of Power
1.	Nature-identity: a state	developed from	forces	in nature
2.	Institution-identity: a position	authorized by	authorities	within institutions
3.	Discourse-identity: an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/ dialogue	of/with/"rational" individuals
4.	Affinity-identity: experiences	shared in	the practice	of "affinity groups"

The 'nature perspective (or N-Identities)' is conditioned by forces beyond the individual's control (e.g. a certain trait in one's personality being a genetic inheritance). The 'institutional perspective (or I-Identities)' is shaped primarily by one's allegiance to an institution (e.g. a corporation or government) that assigns the sense of identity through investment of power, prestige and privileges. The 'discursive perspective (or D-Identities)' is determined by a

person's acquiring recognition through active discourse or dialogue with other rational people. And 'affinity perspective (or A-Identities)' is acquired through a person's participation in an "affinity group" characterized by a common set of goals, values or traits (Gee, pp. 2000-2001, p. 100).

Thus, Oring's (see Table 2.3) and Gee's (see Table 2.4) models provide two alternative ways of looking at identity. While the former relates specifically to folk literature studies, Gee's doesn't. Moreover, while Oring's "collective identity" is related to Gee's "A-Identities", and the former's "individual" and "personal" identities" are different from any of Gee's identity types, Gee's concepts of "nature-identity" and "discourse-identity are very unique and different from any of Oring's. Since the two conceptualizations have only one identity type in common, each framework provided a different theoretical lens with which to examine teachers' and students' perceptions about folk literature and how it evokes a sense of identity.

2.2.2 Language Loss is Culture Loss

The cultural values embodied in folk literatures that exist mainly in oral languages and dialects, such as my own, the Mangdekha, now spoken by not more than 10,000 people (Gyatso, 2004, p. 265), will depend for their survival on how the cultural and literary resources they embody are kept alive through publication in a language that is rich, versatile and has both local and international audience. In the Bhutanese linguistic situation where Dzongkha as the national language is considered "an instrument for fostering national identity in ways that promote sovereignty and security" (DDC, 2002, p. xv; RGOB, 1999, p. 41) and English is rapidly becoming a lingua franca, the fate of oral languages, like Mangdekha, and their cultures looks grim. There are currently six thousand languages spoken around the world which by the turn of the century might come down to two hundred, and most of these languages are "actually moribund, now spoken only by older people and being learned by few, if any, children" (Diamond, 2001, p.1). With the death of the speakers of a 'moribund' language a cultural heritage may be lost forever if no means are employed to keep its cultural and aesthetic values alive, if not the language itself. Likewise, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, p. ix) considers the "health situation of the world's languages and the prospects for them during the next few generations" "grim" and says "if things continue, we may kill over 90 percent of the world's oral languages in the next 100 years". The national language policies in many countries seem to contribute to the marginalization and loss of minority languages, especially the oral languages (Diamond, 2001, p. 1; see also Joseph, 2001, p. 237). The situation is worse in countries where, because of their colonial past, the national or official languages are promoted aggressively to assert national identities through language. According to UNESCO (2007a, p. 2007, p. 8) Bangladesh has 39 living languages with only 2 official languages, Cambodia has 21 living languages with only 1 official language, China has 235 living languages with only 1 official language, Nepal has 123 languages with only one official

language, Thailand has 74 languages with only 1 official language, Indonesia has more than 700 languages with only one official language (UNESCO, 2007b, p. 1), and Bhutan has 18 languages with only 1 official language (UNESCO, 2007b, p. 5).

Efforts have been made in the Asia-Pacific region to address the issue by promoting mother tongue-based education. UNESCO's (2007a, pp. iii-159) mother tongue-based literacy programmes in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and Thailand, report "promising results" following work on orthographies for minority languages, and creation of "socio-cultural specific curriculum and teaching-learning materials". The report claims that "The country experiences from the projects show that the classes are very effective in transferring knowledge, skills and attitude to learners and the learner can learn desired skills faster in their mother tongue" (UNESCO, 2007a, p. iii). While mother tongue-based education may have advantages for some countries, it may not be advantageous for others, hence not a policy priority.

As my study of documents in the Bhutanese context has shown, perspectives on mother tongue-based education are not yet visible in the language of education policy in Bhutan. In fact, the policy stance is that "English and Dzongkha are preeminent and exclusive. However, other languages and dialects are likely to occupy a more equivocal position in the day-to-day workings of schools" (CERD, 2007, p. 13). The literature shows that when lesser known languages disappear, with them their literary and cultural heritages also disappear (see Crystal (1997, p. 18). This makes it necessary for the present study to explore English teachers' and students' perceptions about the survival of these heritages through documentation and dissemination in a language that has the ability to revitalize the literary, aesthetic and cultural aspects of languages without absorbing them into the culture of the dominant language. The other implication of this scenario for this study is that while the promotion of mother tongue-based instruction may not be a policy priority for Bhutan, it is necessary to inquire into how within the scope of the schools' formal and informal curricula and pedagogical practices, the cultural and literary resources of the students' and teachers' home languages (mother tongues) are used to create opportunities and experiences for learning English in a meaningful context. These understandings also enable the study to understand how the use of folk literatures in the students' and teachers' home languages not only help to keep the literary, aesthetic and cultural values that these languages embody alive but can also create a culturally familiar context for meaningful acquisition of English. Owing to the values folk literature carries with it, its loss would be tantamount to loss of language and then of culture.

2.2.3 Summary and implications

Small nations have used their oral traditions to assert their unique cultural identities. The value of folk literature has been viewed differently by colonizers and postcolonial writers. While the former generally considered it primitive art, the latter portrayed the unique literary

styles, techniques and themes of their oral narratives to build their literary identities. They have asserted their cultural identities by bringing out the distinct narrative techniques, reiteration of themes and values, and characterization and touches of local colours unique to the oral traditions. In countries where the national or official languages are promoted aggressively, the threat to the survival of folk literatures in minority languages and dialects is great, even greater with the onslaught of English. Loss of folk literatures would lead to loss of language and then of culture. Literature generally advocates mother tongue-based instruction, but it may not be an option for all societies.

2.3 The context of folk literature studies in Bhutan

There is at present not much written about Bhutanese folk literature mainly because the documentation and writing into English of Bhutanese oral literatures began only in the 1990s. Evans (2006, p. 97) says, “The collection, compilation and publishing of Bhutan’s folktales began only in the mid-1990s and there are only a few dozen books or so in the market”. The paucity of studies notwithstanding, in order to establish a contextual ground for the study, this review focuses strategically on the few published journal articles and general commentaries in introductions and prefaces to English translations of folktales. Since there is nothing in the literature that attends to genres other than folktales, I draw upon the folktale commentaries to build the context of this study. Accordingly, in this section I sketch out briefly the context of folk literature studies in Bhutan and discuss the values alluded to most commonly in the literature, focussing mainly on notions of identity, and different kinds of values - cultural, affective and universal. I then discuss notions of cultural continuity through the curriculum. It is evident that although there exists a rich tradition of oral literatures in many different forms in many languages and dialects in Bhutan, current discourse focuses exclusively on folktales. Nor do current debates attend to oral literatures in languages other than Dzongkha and the need to revitalise and promote the diversity of cultures that these oral traditions embody.

2.3.1 Culture and identity: ‘institution’ and ‘affinity perspectives’

Some attempts have been made to introduce the notion of cultural identity into the discussion of Bhutanese folk literature. For example, Dorji (2002, p. 18) says folktales “can be said to be an element that represents the identity of a society” (see also Acharya, 2004, p. ix). Zam (1991, pp. 34-35) says, “Folktales are very much a part of our daily lives, of the way we see ourselves and the way we order the world around us”. Another Bhutanese, Choden (2002, p. xiii), regards stories as “a link to who I am and where I come from”, and further a “cultural base” by which people “may better understand and appreciate their own lives”. Therefore, the act of producing or performing folk literature (e.g., telling a story or saying a folk proverb) is recognized as a vital process of connecting and reconnecting oneself to one’s own cultural

roots, a reminder of one's sense of belonging or identity shaped by culture. Dorji (2002, p. 7) remarks, the Bhutanese folktales are "tied or attached in the collective memory of the Bhutanese". Through such commentators, the importance of cultural roots and intergenerational continuity is identified (e.g. see Choden, 2002, p. xi; Dorji, 2002, p. 5; Evans, 2004, p. 131; Penjore, 2005, p. 56). For example, Choden (2002, p. xiii) explains:

As I realize the importance of the stories as a link to who I am and where I come from, I also realize how important they will be to my children. It is for them and others of their generation that I write these stories with the hope that they will be of some value in their lives to link up with their cultural base so that in knowing their base they may better understand and appreciate their own lives.

In small societies particularly, social or political constructs of identity influence the way an individual constructs her or his notions of it. So apart from what Bhutanese folklorists and researchers say, it is important to see how the concept is constructed in policy language since policy will both reflect and lead social discourse. In the language of government policy the articulation of "an unambiguous cultural imperative" and promotion of cultural heritage are key factors for maintaining a "distinctive Bhutanese identity" (RGOB, 1999, p. 8). This again represents Oring's "collective identity" (see above) and Gee's "affinity-identity" (see above), and perhaps also Gee's (see Table 2.4) "institution-identity" since the "source of power" for this type of identity is within institutions (e.g. a corporation or government). Cultural heritage is viewed as the "foundation upon which the identity of the people and the country as a sovereign and an independent nation is built" (Planning Commission, 2002, p. 28; see also PPD, 2003, p. 3). Also from the policy perspective,

Our independence, sovereignty and security will continue to be dependent upon the assertion of our distinctive Bhutanese identity. This has provided the key to our survival as a nation state in the past and it will continue to be so in the future. This requires us to continue to articulate an unambiguous cultural imperative in all that we do and to actively promote an awareness and appreciation of the continued relevance of our cultural heritage (RGOB, 1999, p. 8).

In summary, two perspectives emerge from the literature. The first one, a bigger-than-self social or national policy perspective emphasizes preservation and promotion of culture as being vital for Bhutan's survival as a nation (RGOB, 2005, p. 70) and for maintaining its unique identity. The second perspective is one that emphasizes the identity of the self and a desire to pass it on to the future generation. The two views reflect what Oring (1994, pp. 212-213) calls "collective identity" (Gee's "affinity-identity") and "personal identity" (see Table 2.3) respectively. In the context of this study, it was necessary to see how teachers' and students' understanding of identity influenced their understanding of oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature.

Since the Bhutanese perspectives on cultural identity are either policy-based or are statements by writers and researchers based on their knowledge of folktales and are not generated from evidence based studies, a conception of identity such as Oring's and Gee's helped this study

to adopt a theoretical perspective to teachers' and students' perceptions about identity in relation to English translations of Bhutanese folk literature and their distinctive qualities - literary, cultural and aesthetic.

2.3.2 Values in Bhutanese Folk Literature

The review of literature reveals a pattern of themes related to folk literature and its cultural values. Penjore (2005, p. 56) calls Bhutanese folktales “repositories of culture and values” which embody historical insights, knowledge of people’s habits, customs, and beliefs, and affective values like happiness, sense of belonging, and patriotism. Zam (1991, p. 34) includes also “morality”. Evans (2004, p. 653) refers to the unique cultural aspects of Bhutanese folktales such as the cause and effect of actions, and the notions of interdependence among human beings and between human beings and the environment, hence the need for peaceful and harmonious coexistence. Choden (2002, p. xii-xiii) mentions the “universal virtues of compassion, humility, kindness, and integrity”, the evils of “cruelty and crude and deceitful acts”, and the theme of good triumphing over evil (see also Acharya, 2004, p. x). The element of universality is evident in the similarity between the categories of values attributed to Bhutanese and African folk literatures. For example, Kalu (2008, p. 4) mentions the common issues of “life, death, the value of kindness, courage, love, honesty, the place of justice in society” that African oral literature mirrors. Since these perspectives are not based on empirical studies, they are useful to the study only to the extent of confirming certain assumptions I have about the cultural value of Bhutanese folk literature. As mentioned earlier, current debates on folk literature in the Bhutanese context are focussed predominantly on the folktale genre and its values. Apart from a few commentaries on the *dpe-gtam*, the Bhutanese proverb (e.g. see Powdyel, 2005a), and beliefs and superstitions (e.g., see Powdyel, 2005b, p. iv) there is nothing published on genres other than the folktale in Bhutan. Therefore, in this study both the teacher interviews and action research case study explore knowledge and perceptions about the other genres like the ballad, oral poetry, *tsangmo* (verse exchanged orally between competing teams), proverbs, beliefs and superstitions, imprecations, and so on.

As this study is centred mainly on the third pillar of Bhutan’s four-pillar development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), namely the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, it is necessary to understand how current studies relate folk literature to happiness. As evident in policy language, the maximization of Gross National Happiness (GNH) is Bhutan’s “central development concept”, the single unifying vision for development (RGOB, 1999, p. 10). The policy perspective on happiness, for example, considers the preservation and promotion of culture as imperative for meeting the “spiritual and emotional needs of our people and in cushioning ourselves from some of the negative impacts of modernization” (RGOB, 2005, p. 70). Outside policy perceptions, there are emerging signs of interest to correlate Bhutanese folk literature and happiness. For example, Evans (2006, p. 84;

see also Penjore, 2005, p. 47) claims that ‘Meme Haylay Haylay’, a Bhutanese folktale, “reflects the very psyche of Bhutan”. Meme Haylay Haylay, the central character in the story, finds a turquoise and exchanges it with a horse, the horse with an ox, the ox with a sheep, the sheep with a goat, the goat with a rooster, and in the end the rooster with a song. Evans (2006, pp. 88-89) provides a symbolic interpretation of Meme Haylay Haylay the folk hero’s journey in the story:

On his journey - his road to happiness - Meme Haylay Haylay encountered helpers who guided him along the way - not pointing out the direction, but presenting him with various material and/or physiological options. He always bartered for something of lesser material value, but his happiness is increased with each trade. Finally, Meme Haylay Haylay encounters the divine bearer of happiness, encapsulated within a song, who bestowed this ‘inner wealth’ of ultimate, extreme and renewed happiness upon him, dispensing of any material satisfaction he had been receiving or any physical rejuvenation that might have been implied.

Evans’ interpretation of Meme Haylay Haylay’s journey and his exchanging of a material object with another object of lesser value along the way as a symbolic journey of the spiritual experience of happiness provides a unique way of understanding the cultural meanings of folk literature in Bhutan. Yet, seen in the context of the multicultural character of Bhutanese society and also because human beings pursue their own unique ways of experiencing inner happiness, it is unclear on what basis Evans claims that the story reflects the “very psyche of Bhutan”. Evans’ interpretation perhaps represents an outsider’s understanding of the Buddhist concept of happiness. While it may be true that the physical (e.g. the environment) and psychological conditions (e.g. trust in leadership) that exist in a society or culture at a given time may influence the quality of a person’s life, from the Buddhist perspective, inner wellbeing or spiritual happiness depends fundamentally on the individual’s own quest for it, and therefore, the right kind of positive effort she or he makes consciously and consistently to recognize and experience the inner potential of the mind. Nevertheless, apart from Evans’, there has been no study that considers the happiness dimension of folk literature. And it is assumed that there may be alternative ways of approaching happiness in terms of Bhutanese folk literature’s representations of the concept.

2.3.3 Preservation and continuity through the curriculum

Various writers suggest the need for preserving the oral traditions and passing them on to futurity (Acharya, 2004, p. ix; Choden, 2002, p. xv; Dorji, 2002, p. 20; Powdyel, 2005b, p. 4). Bhagwati (2008, p. 116) in ‘In Defense of Globalization’ (2008) concludes that indigenous cultures cannot be impervious to the forces of globalization and argues that “Only active nurturing of the collective memory and a selective preservation of cultural artifacts can be a response, not the impractical fossilization of traditional attitudes and values”. Literature in the Bhutanese context, though limited, presents alternative perspectives that are quite different from Bhagwati’s. Choden (1997, p. ix), for example, says:

It is unfortunate that the modern world must always have tangible and empirical evidence. As a result of this it misses the opportunity to share much of the folklore and mystery that are as old as the Himalayas. Today, we are caught at the crossroads of traditionalism and modernity; we must not sacrifice our fields of experience for fear of exposing ourselves as backward under the scrutiny of the modernists' glare.

Similarly, Powdyel (2005c p. iv), writing about a book on Bhutanese beliefs and superstitions, says that its publication happens at a time “when the tide of modernization is sweeping across our country, often dislodging the inherited wisdom” and the “myriad strands of our beliefs and practices” are “taken for granted”. Seen from Choden’s and Powdyel’s perspectives, the meaning of culture goes beyond ‘artifacts’ and fossilized attitudes and values and encompasses non-material and non-measurable values such as “inherited wisdom”, “beliefs and practices”, “folklore and mystery”, and “our fields of experience”. Unlike Bhagwati, Pennycook (1998, p. 217) advocates the need for a genre of postcolonial writing that articulates “both counterdiscursive arguments and alternative realities” and shows “alternative representations, alternative stories, alternative possibilities” made available in ESL classes and teaching materials.

From the Bhutanese government policy perspective, cultural preservation and promotion best happens in the school through what children learn (GNHC, 2009a, p. 20; RGOB, 1999, p. 36). It says:

If our culture and heritage is to continue to survive and flourish, our young people must understand and accept their role as custodians of a distinctive culture and the values and principles on which it is founded.

Consistent with this view, both Dorji (2002, p. 20) and Penjore (2005, p. 67) recommend inclusion of Bhutanese folk literature in the school’s curriculum. Zam (1991, p. 144) considers folktales “legitimate material” for use in Bhutanese classrooms as they can stimulate the learner’s enthusiasm and passion better than culturally unfamiliar materials. Also from the policy perspective, the role of teachers and students is considered crucial for preserving and promoting the cultural heritage (see RGOB, 1999, p. 20). Paradoxically, as Bhutanese writers generally point out, children are not exposed adequately to Bhutanese folk literature. The ‘Foreword’ to Kunzang Choden’s ‘Folktales of Bhutan’ says that “children are reared on folktales from distant places at the expense of local ones, which could begin a process of alienation from the local culture” (Choden, 2002, p. vi). Penjore’s (2005, pp. 68-69) study of the values education syllabus for class 7 and 8, ‘Teaching Learning to Be: Suggested Values Education Lessons’ (CAPSD, 2001a) illustrates this. Penjore calls the syllabus ‘deficient’ because all of the texts included in the syllabus for teaching the target values - honesty, responsibility, loyalty, unity, and obedience/respect - were from Indian and European literature and not a single one was from Bhutanese writing in English (see CAPSD, 2001a, pp. 68-91). Interestingly, as Penjore argues, English translations of Bhutanese folk literature were already available in print in the 1990s whereas the values education syllabus document was published only in 2001.

I assume that the ability to preserve and promote cultural values via English translations of folk literature will depend on the quality of the latter and of the translations Bhutanese folklorists and scholars produce. Critical literature shows growing interest in cultural authenticity of translations. For example, Acharya (2004, p. xi) admits that in translating oral folktales into English he had often played “a traitor’s role”. Gyaltshen (2005, pp. 393-408) illustrates how even the basic concepts in a Bhutanese folk story when translated into English by a non-Bhutanese writer (e.g., ‘Folktales of Bhutan’ by Rita Thomas, 1998) have been adapted to suit the writer’s own cultural understanding. In the English version of this folktale, for example, “There are big chunks of sentences that do not exist in the original story”. For example, the concepts of “dusting the floor”, “removing the waste paper with her beak”, and “tables and chairs” did not exist in the original story and are the writer’s own addition, which affects the “traditional flavour of storytelling” (Gyaltshen, 2005, pp 398-401). Both Acharya’s and Gyaltshen’s concerns reflect the need to attend to “cultural authenticity” and “cultural detail” that Smolen & Ortiz-Castro (2000, p. 568) advocate. These understandings help this study to see what English teachers think about the quality of translation, especially in terms of cultural authenticity and cultural detail. Moreover, how teachers perceive the quality of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature, especially the standard of English used in them, will influence the way they perceive the cultural and pedagogical value of these translations, hence their classroom practice in relation to these cultural materials.

Apart from policy statements and views expressed by a few writers and researchers, there has been no classroom-based study that explores stakeholders’ perceptions about culture maintenance and continuity. This study therefore tried to find out how students and teachers constructed their understandings of cultural preservation with particular reference to folk literatures in their own languages and dialects.

2.3.4 Valuing cultural diversity in curriculum and pedagogy

While current debates in Bhutanese scholarship in folk literature seems generally to approach the subject from a monocultural perspective, there has been little attention paid to the values of cultural and linguistic diversity that Bhutanese folk literature can promote. For example, Dorji (2002, pp. 20-21) considers folktale narration a “vehicle of transmission of religious, social, and moral values, philosophies” unique to the Bhutanese society and recommends its documentation and popularization by the Dzongkha Development Commission (DDC). The assumption is that this would lead to a “renaissance of this beautiful tradition among the Bhutanese youths” (Dorji, 2002, pp. 20-21). While such an approach to folk literature would certainly help to promote the interests of the national language and the mainstream cultures associated with it, viewed in the context of Bhutan’s multicultural and multilingual society (van Driem, 2004, p. 294), the approach could also have implications for smaller languages and their cultures. I had assumed that current debates in the field of Bhutanese scholarship

would allude to the oral folk literatures that exist in different languages and dialects in Bhutan which would enhance the multicultural character of Bhutanese society. According to government policy:

Part of the nation's rich cultural traditions are to be found in the diversity that exists within the Kingdom. Although we share a common worldview and sense of purpose, cultural differences within the nation are considerable, with each ethnic group making its own distinctive contribution to our living past. There are differences in folklore, myths, legends, dance, poetry and crafts that together add richness to the nation's cultural tapestry. If the process of inventorization is to be complete, it must penetrate into the most inaccessible valleys of our mountain Kingdom (RGOB, 1999, p. 35).

Despite this call of a decade, no empirical studies in Bhutan have been found on issues of cultural diversity. However, some academic perspectives are beginning to emerge. For example, stressing the importance of cultural education, Powdyel (2005b, p.257) underscores the elements of “respect”, “humanity”, and “cultural responsibilities” which enable a person to recognize the “sanctity and sensitivities of other cultures”. Powdyel (2007, p. 51) regards cultural education “essential” for the “process of democratization and rapidly changing life of the nation”. Ura (2009, p. 53) adds cultural “diversity” to the cultural domain of Gross National Happiness and says “The members of a cultural group add diversity to the otherwise imploding and homogenising world”. The limitation in current literature is that these perspectives are either government policy stance or opinions stated by individual scholars, and not based entirely on research. This study will try to fill in the gap by exploring students’ and teachers’ perspectives on ‘diversity’ in relation to folk literatures in their languages and dialects in the context of curriculum and pedagogy.

2.3.5 Summary and implications

The discussion of the context of folk literature studies in Bhutan has shown that folk literature carries culture and in culture is rooted a sense of identity. While the few academic commentaries on Bhutanese folktales by Bhutanese writers point out two kinds of identity - a person's sense of affinity with others, and a larger-than-self, political view of identity, other conceptualizations of identity have been identified and discussed in this chapter. Oring's and Gee's (see above) conceptualizations will be used in the analysis of teachers' and students' perceptions of folk literature in relation to identity.

Literature in the Bhutanese context generally lacks illustrative examples of values identified in Bhutanese folk literature but references are made to the presence of cultural and historical knowledge, affective values such as happiness, sense of belonging, patriotism, and universal values such as compassion and kindness. In the absence of analytical studies, it is assumed that these values are represented through the motivations and actions of the characters, themes and situations represented in the stories, and through the narrative styles and techniques used in the stories. Owing to the challenge these oral traditions and their literary and cultural values

face for survival in a globalised world where homogenization of languages and cultural appropriation occur at an increasing rate, key writers in the field generally advocate the preservation of minority languages and their promotion through documentation and inclusion of their literatures in the curriculum. However, there are certain aspects of folk literature relevant to this study that have not been attended to in the discourse of Bhutanese writers and researchers. First, current discourses focus almost exclusively on folktales, and the many other genres of Bhutanese folk literature such as the proverb, the traditional ballad, oral poetry, and beliefs and superstitions, to name a few, have not yet been studied. Second, attention is not yet drawn to the cultural resources that are available in the oral literatures of many other languages and dialects in Bhutan. Third, the potential of oral folk literatures in different languages and dialects to enhance the multicultural character of Bhutanese society has not been considered. These knowledge gaps created the scope for this study to pursue these questions with teachers and students in the context of school.

2.4 Perspectives on the role of English

There is a significant body of literature on English as used in South Asian countries, where there is, as Kachru (1996, p. xi) puts it, an “ongoing love-hate relationship with English” which is often known by derogatory metaphors such as “Trojan horse”, “the other tongue”, or ‘language of imperialism’. It is also often argued that the domination of English through the English curriculum makes it “a language of the elite” in many developing countries and “perpetuates the social stratification in the community” (Lie, 2002, p. 59). Thiong’o (2007, p. 149) calls the “English language credit card ... the magic formula” to the world of economic success or survival. Referring to the status of English in colonial Kenya, Thiong’o (1986, p. 202) says, “The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture ... In Kenya, English became more than a language: it was the language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference”. Thus, Baily (1996, as cited in Greenbaum, 1996, p. 245) calls English a language of the “powerful few at the expense of the powerless many”.

There are views that challenge these anti-English positions and depict English more positively. For example, Joseph (2001, p. 237) says, these theories may need to be “brought seriously into question” because the facts behind the negative portrayals are often not checked. Theories often fail, as Joseph (2001, p. 237; see also Diamond, 2001, p. 1) says, to consider the role of other languages, “either European ones or indigenous regional and national languages”, in the marginalization of minority languages and cultures. In Bhutan, with the exception of a few statements made in secondary English curriculum documents that generally portray English as an agent of positive change, there is a paucity of literature on its role and status. Given the rapid growth of English in Bhutan since the 1960s, this lack is surprising. Although there is no research to indicate this, based on my personal beliefs,

intuitions and experience as a teacher educator, I assume that English plays a positive role in Bhutan. I argue my position from four closely interrelated perspectives, which are discussed next.

2.4.1 Discursive possibilities of English

Language is a powerful carrier of culture and there are strong reasons for and against its use as a preserver and transmitter of culture. Thiong'o (1986: 205) says, it "carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world". Asian and African writers like R.K. Narayan of India, Chinua Achebe of Nigeria, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o of Kenya used the English language as a powerful tool not only to explore the richness of the literary traditions of their lands, but also to present their own cultures to a global audience. Using the global advantages of English to effectively represent the native cultures prevents what Achebe (2000, p. 43) calls "the colonization of one people's story by another". The emergence of English translations of oral folk literatures in the 1990s in Bhutan set the motion for Bhutanese writers to use the rich resources of the English language and its global status to expose the rich oral traditions to local and international audience. An assumption behind this study was that English translations are not only effective bearers of Bhutanese culture but are also a powerful means of articulating Bhutanese cultural values and identity to the outside world. At the same time, as Koh (as cited in Talib, 1994, p. 160) cautions, a sense of national identity through literature may also be "propagandistically conveyed at the expense of aesthetic considerations".

It is important for this study to also consider contrasting perspectives on English in relation to cultures. There is a significant body of literature that portrays English as a cause of language and culture loss. Seen from this perspective, the English language promotes and perpetuates, particularly through the language curriculum, linguistic and cultural imperialism (Muhlhausler, 1994; Nandy, 1983; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). For example, Pennycook (1998, p. 14) says:

When English becomes the first choice as a second language in which so much is written and in which so much of the visual media occur, it is constantly pushing other languages out of the way, curtailing their usage in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

Yet Crystal (1997, p. 114) believes that "It is inevitable that, in a post-colonial era, there should be a strong reaction against continuing to use the language of the former colonial power, and in favour of promoting the indigenous languages". Thiong'o calls English, the language of his childhood education in Kenya, "the language of our daily humiliation and punishment". So, two distinct views emerge from the debates - a pro-English view and an anti-English view.

As said earlier, in this study I take a pro-English stance because of its ability to articulate diverse Bhutanese cultures within and outside the country and its ability within the country to facilitate intercultural communication, understanding and empathy. I therefore discuss its role and status from the perspective of its advantages for Bhutan. As Baily (1996, p. 43) says, the “paradox of writing *against* English *in* English has been a source of anguish among South Asian writers”. For example, the Sri Lankan poet, Lakdasa Wikkramasinha (1940-78) who declared that “To write in English is a form of cultural treason” actually wrote all his six volumes of poetry in English” (Baily, 1996, p.43). Calling it a case of the “erosion of self-esteem”, a common symptom of “dispossession”, Achebe (2000, pp.81-82) refers to how a certain Nigerian writer writing in London “seems to make every effort to minimize her “Africanness” so that her books can pass in British bookstores!” Yet, Achebe (as cited in Crystal, 1997, pp. 135-136) says, “English will be able to carry the weight of my African experience” and that African writers must aim to craft a variety of English that is both “universal” and able to express the “peculiar African experience”. Rushdie (as cited in Crystal, 1997, pp. 135-136) takes a more moderate stance:

I don't think it is always necessary to take up the anti-colonial - or is it post-colonial? - cudgels against English. What seems to me to be happening is that those people who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly remaking it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it. Assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its front ... The children of independent India seem not to think of English as being irredeemably tainted by its colonial provenance. They use it as an Indian language, as one of the tools they have to hand.

Owing to the different, and positive, historical and political circumstances in which English was adopted by the Bhutanese in the 1960s, its choice by the first Bhutanese writers writing in English in the 1990s, I assume, was not a matter of shame or guilt, but a pragmatic choice and decision to carve out a distinct territory for Bhutanese writing in English. Bhutanese writer Kunzang Choden published her first two books, as well as all the ones that followed, *Folktales of Bhutan* (1994) and *Bhutanese Tales of the Yeti* (1997) in English in Bangkok. Similarly, Karma Ura's first two books *The Hero With a Thousand Eyes* (1995) and *The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi: A Wind Borne Feather* (1996) were published in English in Bangkok. So, as presented in English curriculum documents, English is a language of conversation with the international community and for sharing Bhutan's “rich cultural and spiritual heritage” with the world (CAPSD, 2006c, p. xi; CAPSD, 2006d, p. x), not a ‘Trojan horse’ or a language of class stratification. However, in this study, in the absence of prior research, it was necessary to explore the role of English as perceived by teachers and students based on their everyday experience with English in the context of school. Again in the language of policy, Dzongkha is a powerful unifying factor, a “*lingua franca* among diverse ethnic groups” and an important factor of national identity (RGOB, 1999, p. 41). In this study, it was surmised that English could have been an equal factor, if not more, of national identity. While this study acknowledges the implications of policy views on English, in the absence of

research, it is necessary to find out the perceptions of people whose lives are impacted by the language - English teachers and students.

2.4.2 Growing popularity of English

Crystal (1997, p. 50) calls English the “prestige lingua franca”, the “language of opportunity” (p.50), the language of success. Although there are no empirical studies that show the status and popularity of English in Bhutan, as a language of modern secular education, employment, commerce, and global opportunities, its popularity is growing very rapidly (see also Gyatso, 2004, p. 8; van Driem, 2004, p. 29). According to Lo Bianco (2008, p. 1), there is “immense international investment in English, whose dispersion and status worldwide is probably unassailable ... close to 2 billion people could be learning or know English by 2010”. Crystal (1997, pp. 78-110) mentions six areas where the influence of English is the greatest: international relations, the media, international travel, international safety, education, and communications. Bacchus (1990, as cited in London, 2003, p. 287), says that in Trinidad and Tobago during the colonial rule, the status of English was such that “school was English and English was school”. Hohenthal’s (2003, pp. 24-42) survey of university students across nine states of India and its findings related to different domains of English helps to illustrate this trend. For example, in the domain of use, 67% of the informants said English served as a “link language”, 93% said English was the most dominant language in government, and 100% said job interviews were invariably held in English. In the affective domain, 53% viewed English as a medium of aesthetic expression. And in the pragmatic domain, 93% viewed “speaking English” as an advantage, 93% viewed it as useful for gaining access to employment opportunities, and 76% thought that lack of knowledge of English was an obstacle to finding a job. The study’s other findings include 90% of the informants agreeing that English is important in India and 63% agreeing that “English carries higher status than Hindi in India”. These figures reflect English’s growing popularity in Bhutan.

English is clearly important in Bhutan. An analysis of different policies in Bhutan shows that English is a “language of instruction”, a language of importance alongside Dzongkha the national language (CAPSD, 2006a, p. ix; CAPSD, 2005h, p. v; CAPSD, 2002a, p. i; Sinha, 2001, p. 196), a language of “advantage” for Bhutan as it is “in fact the international language - the language of the sciences, technologies, trade, and international relations (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix). The Bhutanese perspective parallels the Malaysian perspective. According to Abdullah (2001, p. 346), by 1979 English was already recognized as a language that was meant to “serve the pragmatic needs of the nation” and by the 1990s, the decade of globalization and internationalization, English in Malaysia received a “renewed emphasis” as a language of “international commerce, technological advancement and global interaction”, as a language of “access to science and technology” (Abdullah, 2001, p. 350). Similarly, the growing popularity of English in Singapore reflected the ever increasing preference for English and its status in Bhutan. For example, in 1980 only 10% of Singapore’s Chinese

population spoke English at home but by 1990 already 20.6% of this ethnic group spoke English at home. Similarly, in 1980 only 24.3% of its Indian community spoke English at home, while in 1990 34.8% of the community spoke English at home (Ayyub, 1994, pp. 211-212). Ayyub (1994, pp. 211-212) says, “The increase in literacy in English has made the English language the lingua franca, and since it is acquired through the medium of education, it has more prestige than Malay”.

In the Bhutanese context, while the status and popularity of English are growing rapidly, the implications of using English as a language of access to the oral literatures and their cultural and aesthetic values have not been attended to. Since this study dealt with English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in the context of the English curriculum, it was important to explore English teachers’ and students’ perceptions about the status of English in the context of their curricular and pedagogical experience with these materials. Moreover, English teachers’ and students’ perceptions about the English language would influence the way they perceive the status of Bhutanese folk literature in English.

2.4.3 Intercultural communication

As much as there are defensive stances on English as impinging on cultures, the literature also reveals that English translations of literatures produced in non-English speaking countries have facilitated intercultural communication, understanding and empathy. Gopinathan and Saravanan (as cited in Talib, 1994, p. 170) argue that “Singaporean English literary texts may serve the integrative function of enhancing the students’ socio-cultural empathy with, and their awareness of, their place in the community at large”. Although there are no studies to show it, it is possible that English translations of oral folk literatures that exist in many languages and dialects in Bhutan may have facilitated communication, understanding, respect and empathy among cultures. As a matter of fact, already the emerging body of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature, limited though at the moment, has brought to light the diversity that exist in oral traditions of folktale in Bhutan. For example, Kunzang Choden’s *Folktales of Bhutan* (2002) and *Bhutanese Tales of the Yeti* (1997), and Sonam Kinga’s *Speaking Statues, Flying Rocks* (2005) embody the cultural nuances of the central and eastern parts of Bhutan. Gopilal Acharya’s *Bhutanese Folk Tales: From the East and the South* (2004) represent those parts of the country. To illustrate, firstly, Choden’s *Bhutanese Folktales* and *Bhutanese Tales of the Yeti* evoke cultural themes, beliefs and superstitions presented through characters and their actions, events and situations, maintaining as much as possible, their original oral flavours. Secondly, Karma Ura’s *The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi: A Wind Borne Feather* (1996) is a fine example of Bhutanese oral poetry of western Bhutan that blends themes of culture, spirituality, politics, and the values of faith, loyalty and dedication to duty and authority. Thirdly, the characters, situations and cultural representations in Acharya’s stories from southern Bhutan are unique and different from

either Choden's or Ura's. Choden' and Acharya's stories indicate the possibility that rich oral traditions exist in the many other languages of Bhutan besides those in Dzongkha the national language.

The English translations of Bhutan's oral literatures that have appeared since 1994 have demonstrated the ability to enrich the multicultural and multilingual character of Bhutanese society simply because they have become more accessible. Without English translations, much of the folk tradition that exists in the oral form would not have been known by many and perhaps even lost by now. The loss will be heavy not just for the people and the culture of their origin but also to the world's literary heritage, which as Crystal (1997, p. 18) says is a "legacy to the rest of humanity". As Michailovsky (1986, p. 7) says, "far from detracting from Dzongkha, this will contribute to the general development of indigenous Bhutanese culture. All of Bhutan's languages belong to the heritage of the country".

Hence, in this study I was also interested to explore students' and teachers' perceptions about the facilitative role of Bhutanese folk literature in a multicultural society. While documenting the oral traditions in the smaller languages in Dzongkha may have many advantages, it is also possible that the distinctive literary and aesthetic qualities and cultural nuances of these oral traditions may be absorbed into the language of mainstream culture and assimilated beyond recognition if, in the interest of promoting Dzongkha, Dzongkha translations of these oral traditions are aggregated as 'Dzongkha literature'. While this may be the case, writing the oral literatures in English also has implications for these languages. In fact, English may be a "Trojan horse" for minority languages and their cultures. While, because of the popularity and status of English, translated works may become widely read and accessible to people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, overreliance on English as a language of access to the oral literary forms in smaller vulnerable languages may in fact hasten the disappearance of these languages and their cultures. Both ways, the implications cannot be overlooked. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, p. 314) "linguistic genocide" is a situation where the dominant language is so powerful that "indigenous and minority languages have been invisibilised" and "linguistic genocide itself has been invisibilised" (p. 314). This study will, therefore, explore teachers' and students' perceptions about the documentation of the oral literatures in smaller languages of Bhutan in English or Dzongkha and the cultural implications of doing so.

2.4.4 Standard of English in the writings of non-native authors

Since some English translations of Bhutanese folk literature have been included in the secondary English curriculum, it was necessary to understand perceptions about the kind of English used in these texts. So here I discuss common strands from debates on 'standard' of English. In relation to 'standard' of English used in literatures produced in non-English speaking countries, emphasis is generally placed on principles of comprehensibility or

intelligibility, not on 'best models'. For example, Baumgardner (1996, p. 3) suggests the need for users of English to break the myth around the native "exonormative British or American model" and non-native "indigenized varieties of English" and emphasizes an "international standard" for the sake of "global intercomprehensibility". Similarly, Achebe (as cited in Crystal, 1997, pp. 135-136), while acknowledging the inevitable fact that English as a world language must accept different kinds of use, suggests that non-native users must not alter the language to the extent that English's "value as a medium of international exchange will be lost". On the other hand, Clausen (1994, p. 63) argues that intelligibility should not be a concern since "a writer in English is accessible to the international audience that reads English and not, except in translation, to any other".

According to Kachru (1983, pp. 50-51) since English is a universal language native users of English must give up their attitudes of "reluctance, condescension, or indifference" towards non-native varieties of English as "deficient Englishes", while the non-native users of English for their part must renounce their embarrassments with local varieties of English.

Yet the linguistic cringe is still evidenced in South Asian countries. Thus, Rahman (1996, pp. 191-205) says, "Nineteenth-century literary English, however, is still held in high esteem by a large section of educated persons in Bangladesh" and that "People have negative attitudes toward nonnative models". Desai (as cited in Baily, 1996, pp. 47-48) says, "'Indian English' is laughed at by the purists, but so was 'American English' a hundred years ago". The alternative view is, as Greenbaum (1996, p. 243) suggests, that "Speakers of English in South Asian countries have to become sufficiently self-confident and assertive about their own national varieties. They do not require - and they will not receive - legitimization by outside bodies". Conversely, Kramsch (2000, p. 16) asserts that although the desirable goal of teaching English is to allow students to "find their own style in language", the task must be to enable the learners to "use English language in ways that are recognizable, acceptable, and legitimized by native speakers". So Lam (1999, as cited in Kramsch, 2000, p. 16) asserts:

Our responsibility as language teachers is to help students not only become acceptable and listened to users of English by adopting the culturally sanctioned genres, styles, and the rhetorical conventions of the English speaking world, but how to gain profit of distinction by using English in ways that are unique to their multilingual and multicultural sensibilities.

In relation to 'standard' of English, two perspectives are relevant to this study. First, the notion of a 'best model' or a single acceptable 'standard' of English as used in literatures produced in non-English speaking countries is more a myth than reality. With the rapid globalization of English, assuming the existence of an exonormative British or American standard is not a realistic way of understanding the dynamic nature of language and culture. Instead, the focus is on an international standard based on the principles of intercomprehensibility. Second, while English may assume different colours according to the unique cultural and literary contexts in which it is used, it cannot be indifferent to the long

accepted conventions of language use that make English recognizable and acceptable by the English speaking world. Thus this study sought to explore teachers' and students' perceptions of what constitutes standard English and its role in the curriculum.

2.4.5 Summary and implications

As much as English is portrayed disparagingly in postcolonial discourse, many writers in Asia and Africa have also used English as a powerful tool not only to document and expose the rich resources of their cultures but also to present these cultures to a global audience. So the paradox is one of "writing against English in English". While on one hand, English continues to be portrayed as an agent of cultural and linguistic genocide, on the other hand, non-native writers express the need to discard their anti-colonial cudgels against English. This shift in stance owes mainly to English's ability not only to carry the weight of non-native writers' cultural experience but also to reach out to a global audience to assert their cultural identities. Studies indicate that English continues to be the "prestige lingua franca" (Crystal, 1997, p. 50) in many countries, including former colonies. In the full flood of anti-English invectives, there is sadly not much written about the intercultural bonding that English facilitates in many societies, particularly in multilingual and multicultural societies. In Bhutan for example, if the oral folk literatures that exist in different languages and dialects were not documented and translated into English, a lot of these would have disappeared by now. The role of English translations as a facilitator of intercultural communication, empathy and cross-cultural understanding, and as a language that facilitates the preservation and promotion of cultures, has not yet been studied. Therefore, this study attempts to attend to these issues, as well as the problem of identifying an appropriate 'standard' of English for use in the secondary curriculum.

2.5 Role of folk literature in curriculum and pedagogy

While there is considerable scholarship that normally makes normative prescriptions about the values of culture, there is a dearth of classroom-based investigations of the "interaction of culture and curriculum in school contexts" (Chan, 2006, p. 161). This is especially true of the Bhutanese situation. Therefore, in this section I discuss the role of folk literature in relation to two interrelated areas of my professional interest - curriculum and pedagogy. Drawing upon Posner's (2004, pp. 12-14) definitions of concurrent curricula, I frame the discussions mainly in the contexts of 'official curriculum', the curriculum "described in formal documents, and 'extra curriculum', the "planned experiences outside the formal curriculum". In consonance with the constructivist paradigm I chose for this study, I discuss pedagogy in terms of

teaching beliefs and practices that recognize learning as an active process and the learners as “active constructors of meaning” (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999, p. 1). Next I will focus particularly on the cultural and pedagogical advantages of including folk literature in the English curriculum.

2.5.1 Status of folk literature in the curriculum

Pennycook and Coutand-Marin (2003, p. 350) believe that “Any good critical approach to ELT must start from a position of respect and engagement with students’ cultures and ideas”. Sawyer and Comer (1996, p. 88) assert that “tales are often the vehicle for teaching a society’s value system” and are “now enjoyed for the stories themselves”. In the African context, Kalu (2008, p. 4) believes that African oral literature is “used to entertain, inform, and teach not only children but the rest of society as well”. The rationale for teaching folkloric literature is therefore its ability to teach cultural values, enjoyment, and provide cultural knowledge. Yet, Mallikarjun (2003, pp. 1-2) observes that although folk literature is “part and parcel of the language and culture” of Indian society, “We are yet to recognize the pedagogical potential folk literature offers” for curriculum, particularly language, history and civics, as well as for learning the values of socialization. Mallikarjuan (2003, p. 1) believes that although the “collection, preservation, analysis, and study of folk literature” in India have received attention since the country’s independence in 1947, the “use of materials from folk literature for purposes of instruction at various levels of education is rather minimal”. In a study conducted on the 1994 English curriculum for senior secondary schools in Indonesia, Lie (2002, p. 67) found that the inclusion of inter-cultural materials in the curriculum was poor and that “the frequency of passages with cultures outside Indonesia” was higher (161) than the frequency of passages related to Indonesian cultures, which was 159. The Russian experience, on the other hand, seems different. Not only is folk literature’s cultural value recognized, but it also occupies an important place in the curriculum. Lopatin (1951, p. 547) says:

Russian educators at home as well as the educational administration have for many decades been aware of the great educational value of Russian folklore which, under the name of Folk Literature (*Narodnaya Poezia*), has long occupied and even now occupies an important place in the curriculum of all types of schools.

Lopatin’s (1951, p. 544) recommendation of a folklore curriculum for East European countries includes genres such as folk poetry (e.g. folk lyrics and folk epics), folk prose (e.g. proverbs, riddles, fables, legends), folk beliefs (e.g. magic, superstitions), among others. The importance of folk literature in school curricula and instruction is also evident in more recent literature. For example, Hanzén (2007, p. 8; see also Abarry, 1994, p. 310) recommends proverbs as a “pedagogical resource” in EFL teaching. Similarly, Gilstrap and Evens (1996, pp. 1-7) recommend teaching of folktales in school curricula to develop literacy and expose children to moral values and “good role models”.

At present in Bhutan too, the proportion of Bhutanese folk literature included in secondary English curriculum is not substantive and this study aims to specifically quantify its role (see 2.6.3). In Bhutan, although there is a lot of emphasis placed on the need to preserve and promote culture especially through the education of children, no systematic study of folk literature in the context of curriculum and pedagogy has yet been done. Although the oral literatures exist in different languages and dialects, no classification has been done and definitions have not been seen in the literature. To illustrate, the few titles that have been included in the secondary English curriculum have not been categorized, as a result of which it is assumed that both students and teachers would merely know them as Bhutanese writing which is a reasonable but incomplete understanding. Since some English translations of Bhutanese folk literature are already used in the new secondary English curriculum for schools, it was necessary to explore students' and teachers' perceptions about the cultural authenticity of these translations. Smolen and Ortiz-Castro (2000, p. 568) propose four criteria (see Table 2.5) to benchmark quality of translation: literary quality, cultural authenticity, cultural detail, and language.

Table 2.5 Criteria for selecting Latino traditional literature

Literary quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the story well written? Does it capture the interest and imagination of readers from a wide variety of backgrounds? • Are the illustrations attractive and appealing to readers? Do they extend the narrative and provide the reader with a context for the story?
Cultural authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the text and illustrations represent the specific Latino culture accurately and nonstereotypically? • Are the time, place, architecture, artifacts, and people of the period represented authentically?
Cultural detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the author and illustrator provide rich details of the culture to help the reader form a picture of the culture? • Does the author provide information about the folktale and culture in the introduction or in notes at the back of the book?
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the dialogue in English representative of how people in the particular culture and region speak? • Is the language in the translation written in a fluent, rich, and natural way?

Source: Adapted from Smolen and Ortiz-Castro, 2000, p. 568

Since commentaries on English translations of Bhutanese folk literatures at the moment do not provide much theoretical insight into the processes of translation and issues of quality, it was necessary to draw upon literature to inform assumptions about translation. Chophel (2000, pp. x-xi) admits that in translating Tibetan folktales into English he was aware of the tendency among translators to infuse “much of their imagination and epigrammatical construction in between the main parts of the stories” which affects the element of ‘cultural authenticity’ (Smolen & Ortiz-Castro, 2000, p. 568). On the other hand, folklore scholars and translators have also shown ways to avoid flaws in translation and to ensure high quality translations. For example, one of the principles that Russian translators followed diligently when translating Japanese poetry was to retain the original structure of the Japanese stanzas and the unique flavour of Japanese poetry (Pinous, 1977, p. 236). In doing so, the translators would render the *tanka* into five-line and the *haiku* into three-line verse, and preserve the

“peculiar flavour of Japanese poetry, including the natural imagery”.

Again, Russian scholars followed two theoretical principles in their translation of Japanese literature. While the first principle required the translators to exclude “all haphazard and unscientific choice of works to be translated”, which required “a comprehensive knowledge of Japanese literature”, the second principle “called for translations to be made directly from the original Japanese and not through the medium of a European language” (Pinous, 1977, pp. 235-236). The second principle was relevant to this study as it pointed out the need to design activities in the action research project that encouraged the students to collect oral folk literatures from their own languages and translate them into English.

This study saw the potential advantages in using the four criteria that Smolen and Ortiz-Castro (2000, p. 568) propose (see Table 2.5). First, they can show teachers and curriculum developers an easy, practical way of selecting folk literature for the English curriculum. Second, they can help to minimize bias in the selection of texts that may stereotype certain cultures. Third, the criteria can help to select folk literature that can be used effectively in multicultural settings. And lastly, the inclusion of good folk literature in the curriculum made possible through a rigorous selection process can encourage the learners to think and feel positively of their own and others’ traditional literatures. As Choden (1997, p. ix) says, “we must not sacrifice our fields of experience for fear of exposing ourselves as backward under the scrutiny of the modernists’ glare” (Choden, 1997, p. ix).

2.5.2 Teaching and learning of folk literature

Cohen (as cited in Chan, 2006, p. 172) considers teaching practices and beliefs as “deep-seated dispositions, simmered over the years of a teacher’s experience and seasoned by cultural assumptions about the images of teaching and learning”. So it was assumed in this study that Bhutanese teachers’ knowledge and perceptions about the role of folk literature in the curriculum in particular, and the role of culture in general, were shaped by their own cultural backgrounds, teaching experience, and pre-service training. But it was also important to assume, as Kramsch et al. (1996, p. 99) say, that the reasons why language teachers are “reluctant” to go beyond “linguistic training and the anecdotal transmission of cultural facts” are because “non-native teachers often don’t know enough about the target culture, while native teachers often don’t know what their students don’t know, and both feel ill-prepared to teach culture in the same principled way they teach grammar and vocabulary”. Thus I was particularly interested to find out English teachers’ knowledge of the genres of folk literature and knowledge of teaching these, particularly the kinds of experiences and opportunities teachers created for the students. There has been no study in the Bhutanese context on classroom practices of folk literature. Therefore, the learning activities that Smolen and Ortiz-Castro (2000, p. 572-573) recommend for teaching students traditional literature are useful for

this study. Among others, they recommend “attractive background posters” to display folktales, myths, legends, “multimedia” to enrich student experience of literature, and “comparison charts”. They suggest the need to create learning experiences that allow students to reflect on their own cultural experiences and “empower” them to feel positive about their “sense of self-identity and self-confidence”. This study explored through questionnaires and interviews the kinds of activities related to folk literature that teachers used in their classroom practices and I developed my own practices in the action research study.

2.5.3 Acknowledging cultural diversity

Teaching culture in the language curriculum is difficult (e.g., see Byram & Kramersch, 2008, p. 21; Kramersch, 2000, p.18; Kramersch et al., 1996, p.100; Lie, 2002, p. 69). Chan’s (2006, pp. 161-171) study documented the “experiences of two middle-school teachers as they attempt to acknowledge the ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of their students in their curriculum and teaching practices”. These teachers were trying to make their curriculum and teaching practices culturally-sensitive. Chan’s study supports the assumption in this study that although efforts might be made to create a “culturally-sensitive curriculum and school context”, failure to consider the varying cultural backgrounds that students bring to the class can create great gaps between intent and reality (see also Lie, 2002, p. 69). Findings from a study Norberg (2006, pp. 189-201) conducted to explore the “relationship between school practice and democratic values endorsed in the Swedish national curriculum”, also illustrate this. The study reported that when teachers’ “pragmatic and individual values” which influenced their “actions in the here-and-now practice” conflicted with the broader moral mission of the national curriculum, discrepancies occurred between the national *läroplan*’s (curriculum’s) ethical values and guidelines and their realization on the ground.

Smolen and Ortiz-Castro (2000, p. 566) argue that one of the greatest challenges for teachers in the 21st century is preparing students to deal with cultural diversity. According to Cangemi and Aucoin (as cited in Smolen & Ortiz-Castro, 2000, p. 566), one of the ways of “dissolving borders and broadening perspectives” is through a curriculum and pedagogical approach that provides opportunities for children to read multicultural literature to develop “understanding, appreciation, and respect for differences and thereby combat racism and bigotry”. For example, Smolen and Ortiz-Castro (2000) argue that Latino literature with its rich expressive language, elements of magic, humor and adventure helps children in the Americas to broaden their understanding of each other’s cultures and learn to respect differences. Emphasis on cultural affiliation and identity must be accompanied with opportunities for children to make reasoned choices and decisions. In the context of this study, it was important to find out what notions of cultural diversity teachers and students brought to school that influenced their understanding of Bhutanese folk literature. Also in the context of the study it was necessary to be aware of what Kramersch et al. (1996, p. 100), for example, say:

Indeed, it is usually taboo to explicitly stress social and cultural differences in schools. Education systems are committed to erasing difference in the name of equity, at least within the four walls of the classroom. Highlighting cultural differences within the classroom raise real fears of reviving age-old ideological conflicts ... Multiculturalism raises the spectre of a moral relativism that teachers do not feel competent to deal with.

Yet, the reality, again as Kramersch et al. (1996, p. 105) acknowledge, is that “In practice, teachers teach language and culture, or culture in language, but not language as culture”. So teaching of English as a foreign or second language cannot be culture-free if the learning of it is to occur in a meaningful context. In the Bhutanese context, literature shows no evidence of any classroom-based study related to interaction among culture, the English curriculum and pedagogy especially in relation to cultural diversity. So the review of curriculum documents in this study (see 2.6 below) also focuses on how notions of cultural diversity are represented in curriculum policy for secondary English and reflected in the curriculum content that indicates its importance. These are discussed in 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 later in the chapter.

2.5.4 Difficulty of teaching cultural knowledges

Teachers teaching a culturally-sensitive English curriculum often face two kinds of difficulty. The first kind concerns the need to strike a balance between emphasis on developing the students’ communicative competence and emphasis on developing cultural knowledge and understanding. In the context of learning English in Bhutan, the difficulty is by no means less. For example, the curriculum expects the students to acquire high levels of competency in English, while there is also a great deal of emphasis placed on cultural knowledge in the curriculum. According to Byram and Kramersch (2008, p. 33), one of the imperatives in teaching a foreign language at present is to decide how the language teacher develops the students’ ability to communicate “accurately, appropriately, and effectively” and also to “foster their ability to reflect on language, culture, and communication”.

The second kind of difficulty that teachers face relates to the delicate task of creating a culturally-sensitive context of discourse in the language curriculum. Encouraging the students to reflect on language and culture can be a challenge for the teacher if it involves dealing with critical issues such as language and power or language loss and its cultural implications. A workshop that Kramersch (as cited in Byram & Kramersch, 2008, p. 23-24) ran for twenty-four Chinese teachers of German and German native speakers in 2004 found that the German teachers showed reluctance to discuss subjects they considered culturally delicate because the content of the discourse would evoke unpleasant feelings. In that workshop the Chinese teachers were equally reluctant to discuss subjects that were not culturally appropriate in their context. Kramersch (as cited in Byram & Kramersch, 2008, p. 23-24) observes that “The teachers are caught between the risks of discussing sensitive political and cultural differences and the equal risks of glossing over these differences”.

This study assumed that English teachers in Bhutan may not have much curricular experience to teach English in a multicultural setting and may be generally reluctant to discuss culture mainly because the curriculum documents are silent about notions of diversity within the Bhutanese cultural context. For example, the old class 7 English syllabus says the students will explore the “social and cultural environment of Bhutan” (CAPSD, 2002a, p. i) but is silent on what that ‘cultural environment’ is. Similarly, the English syllabus for the new class 7 to 12 curriculum expect the students to discuss the “cultural values of Bhutan” (CAPSD, 2006b, p. v; CAPSD, 2005a, p. 3; CAPSD, 2005b, p. 4) but does not explain the context, setting or environment in which cultural values will be learnt. Nor does it explain the kinds of cultural knowledge and attitude students would develop as a result of the English curriculum, and the kinds of knowledge and attitude teachers require in dealing with culture in the curriculum.

Studies in classroom practice, on the other hand, generally recommend a learning environment where respect for different cultures and ideas prevails. Pennycook and Coutand-Marin (2003, p. 35) suggest a model of teaching English that brings the learners to a “critical engagement with the ways in which their lives are constructed”, a model that integrates language and culture based on “a position of respect and engagement with students’ cultures and ideas”. I assume that ‘respect’ and ‘engagement’ would deepen understandings of and attitude towards one’s own culture and those of others as being dynamic, evolving, and basically constructed, and not static. Access to good pedagogical tools is necessary, in the absence of which culture and cultural values may tend to be presented as readymade items to be ingested by the students. The role of teacher training - pre-service as well as in-service - is vital here.

A lot of the difficulty that teachers face in creating culturally-sensitive learning experiences and opportunities for the students and dealing with cultural differences skilfully, especially in multilingual and multicultural classrooms, would be minimized if they receive adequate knowledge and skill in their pre-service training. For example, standards 9 and 10 of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and International Reading Association [IRA]’s (2010, p. 1) ‘*Standards for the English Language Arts*’ emphasize pedagogical knowledge and skills that are relevant to classroom situations where diverse cultures and languages are represented:

- Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
- Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

In the Bhutanese context, for example, the English programme in the two colleges of education does not orient teacher candidates to teaching in a multicultural context that will

enable them to deal skilfully with cultural materials in the students' first language as pedagogical catalysts. So, there is no visible connection between teacher training and GNH intentions. It is hoped that this present study will provide useful insights into how students construct their notions of diversity in the context of the curriculum they learn and how secondary English teachers deal with notions of diversity in their classroom practice, especially in relation to curriculum content that require them to bring the students to a critical engagement with cultural concepts and issues.

2.5.5 Analytical framework for cultural knowledge and attitude

Here I describe briefly the dimensions of knowledge and attitude that are relevant to this study. Four knowledge dimensions and three attitude dimensions are described. Owing to the gaps in the pedagogy of dealing with the interaction of culture and the English curriculum in Bhutan, the review sought relevant analytical tools in the literature that would provide a critical lens to understanding student knowledge and attitude in relation to folk literature in the context of curriculum and classroom practice.

Arguably, one of the most influential studies on classroom practice today is the 'Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study' (QSRLS 2001) conducted by Hayes et al. (2007, p. xiii). In their report on what was "One of the largest classroom-based research projects undertaken in Australia", covering a thousand primary and secondary classrooms, Hayes et al. (2007, pp. xiii - 71) proposed twenty 'productive pedagogies', each pedagogy type belonging to one or other of the four 'dimensions' - intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment, and working with difference. I describe briefly three productive pedagogies relevant to this study - 'cultural knowledges' from the 'Working with and valuing difference' dimension, and 'deep knowledge' and 'problematic knowledge' from the 'Intellectual quality' dimension of the pedagogies.

Based on their study, Hayes et al. (2007, pp. 68-69) conclude that indicators of 'cultural knowledges' are visible in teaching and learning situations where there is "explicit valuing in the classroom of the non-dominant cultures' beliefs, languages, practices and ways of knowing". Conversely, evidence of "only high-status culture" exists when the teachers and students show recognition or valuing of only the dominant culture (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 111). Indicators of 'deep knowledge' are seen in the students' ability to demonstrate "relatively complex understandings" of central concepts and discover relationships, solve problems, construct explanations, and draw conclusions" (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 43; see also QSRLS, 2001, pp. 7-8). Conversely, evidence of shallow knowledge exists when they are able to "recite only fragmented pieces of information" and "did not or could not use knowledge to make clear distinctions, or arguments, to solve problems" (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 43). Indicators of 'knowledge as problematic (knowledge as constructed)' are visible when

teachers and students understand knowledge as constructed or “contested, rather than as a fixed body of information; and as subject to political, social and cultural influences and implications” and they are able to explain multiple and “potentially conflicting forms of knowledge” (Hayes et al., 2007, pp. 43 & 91; see also QSRLS, 2001, p.4). Evidence of shallow knowledge, on the other hand, exists when they are “content” to treat knowledge as “given”, “static” and the curriculum as “a body of truth to be acquired by students” (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 43).

In addition to the productive pedagogies, I also find the concept of ‘metacognitive knowledge’ from the revised version of Bloom’s taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 214) useful to understanding knowledge of culture. Metacognitive knowledge includes “knowledge of cognition in general as well as awareness and knowledge of one’s own cognition” (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 214). In the context of teaching and learning, I assume that metacognitive knowledge as an analytical tool helps teachers to recognize the value of cultural knowledge that results from the students’ own critical engagement with and reflections on cultural concepts. According to Byrd (2002, pp. 247-248), “the revised Taxonomy provides a framework for determining what should and, perhaps, must be addressed if the desired cognitive processes and types of knowledge are to be acquired and constructed”.

As in the case of cultural knowledge, the English curriculum documents do not explain the context, setting or the environment in which cultural attitudes will be taught and learnt. Nor do they indicate the cultural attitudes that students would develop as a result of culture in the curriculum. I assume that creating an environment of ‘respect’ (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003, p. 35) where the students acquire positive cultural attitudes will be influenced greatly by the quality of the cultural environment that prevails in school as well as by the teachers’ pedagogical attitude towards culture. Owing to the gap in knowledge in the Bhutanese context, I consider three dimensions of attitude based on research - affect, judgment, and appreciation, in this study. The three dimensions are useful because they provide an analytical lens for understanding students’ attitudinal statements about Bhutanese folk literature and its values. Greenwald (1989, as cited in Olson & Zanna, 1993, p. 119) defines affect as a person’s emotional responses to an object. Generally indicators of affect will be visible in statements that express emotional responses such as feelings of excitement, interest, motivation, happiness, fear, diffidence, ambivalence, commitment, legitimizing feelings (Painter, 2003, p. 199) in relation to Bhutanese folk literature. Judgment is defined as a type of attitude that may “construe someone’s behaviour in positive or negative terms within a framework of social and ethical values” or evaluate the “worth” of “artistic, intellectual, sporting, professional or other products and processes” (Painter, 2003, pp. 189-199). Martin (2003, p. 173-174) calls the attitude of appreciation “affect recontextualized to manage taste (what things are worthy)”. Indicators of an attitude of appreciation are visible in expressions of admiration of aesthetic quality (e.g. beautiful, musical, elegant, poetic, soothing, etc.). These knowledge and attitude dimensions provided a useful analytical framework for

examining the students' interview data for evidence of knowledge and attitude changes over time as a result of the pedagogical strategies that I used in the action research lessons.

2.5.6 Summary and implications

Although, owing to its cultural values teaching of folk literature is generally advocated in the literature, in many countries (e.g. India, Indonesia and Bhutan), the importance given to it in terms of quantitative and qualitative presence in the curriculum is still negligible. Something not yet attended to in folklore discourse in Bhutan, as evident in 2.3 and 2.6, and relevant to this study, is the process of selecting folk literature for the curriculum to ensure that the material included in the curriculum does not stereotype and misrepresent the cultures and languages from where the materials have been drawn. Teaching English in a multicultural context is a delicate task especially if the teachers are ill-prepared to do the job but are required to perform the dual task of teaching English for competencies as well as teaching it in a cultural context. Dealing with materials that may not be culturally or politically appropriate in the given situation is a challenge that teachers face. Although the secondary English curriculum emphasizes the learning of Bhutanese cultural values in the curriculum, it does not explain the kinds of cultural knowledge and attitudes that the students will learn from the curriculum, nor does it outline the context, setting or environment in which cultural knowledge and attitudes will be learnt. Therefore, the dimensions of knowledge and attitude discussed in the literature provide useful analytical tools to understand perceptions better. It is evident from literature that often there are gaps between policy aims and what actually happens inside the classroom. What we don't know are the kinds of cultural sensitivities that Bhutanese teachers may find difficult to address in the classroom.

2.6 Culture and the secondary English curriculum: the Bhutanese context

In centralized education systems policy beliefs at the top have a direct bearing on beliefs, perceptions and practice on the ground. So in this study it was necessary to understand the cultural underpinnings of the curriculum as stated in the language of policy. The review of documents therefore focussed on the interaction of Bhutanese culture and the English curriculum, particularly in terms of how the role, status and standard of English is stated, how the importance of culture is heralded in the curriculum, teaching practice and assessment. Accordingly six categories of documents published by different agencies in the Ministry of Education, namely policies, curriculum frameworks, syllabus documents, teachers' guides, public exam papers, and education monitoring reports, as listed below, were reviewed. In order to capture significant statements and facts related to the study, the reading focussed

mainly on elements of documents such as prefaces, introductions, forewords, conclusions, and other relevant pages.

1. *Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness* (RGOB, 1999); *Education Policy Guidelines* (PPD, 2002); *Education Sector Strategy: Realising Vision 2020* (PPD, 2003).
2. *English Curriculum Framework: PP-XII: Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan* (CAPSD, 2005h).
3. *English Poetry Booklet for Class VII* (CAPSD, 2001b); *Druk English Series: Book 2 for Class VII* (CAPSD, 2002a); *English Poetry Booklet for Class VIII* (CAPSD, 2002b); *English Reading & Literature: Class VII* (CAPSD, 2006b); *Druk English Series: Book 3 for Class VIII* (2001); *English Reading & Literature: Class VIII* (CAPSD, 2006c); *Short Stories for Class 9 and 10* (CAPSD, 2000a); *English Poetry Booklet for Class 9 & 10* (CAPSD, 2000b); *BCSE English Reading & Literature: Class IX* (CAPSD, 2005a); *BCSE English Reading & Literature: Class X* (CAPSD, 2005b); *BCSE English Reading & Literature: Class XI* (CAPSD, 2005c); *BCSE English Reading & Literature: Class XII* (CAPSD, 2005f).
4. *English Curriculum Guide for Teachers: Class VIII* (CAPSD, 2006d); *English Curriculum Guide for Teachers: Class IX* (CAPSD, 2005d); *English Curriculum Guide for Teachers: Class X* (CAPSD, 2006a); *English Curriculum Guide for Teachers: Class XI* (CAPSD, 2005g); *English Curriculum Guide for Teachers: Class XII* (CAPSD, 2005i)
5. Board (public) exam papers for Class 8, 10 and 12 for the years 2003 to 2007.
6. Education monitoring officers' reports on school visits (EMSD, 2004-2005; EMSD, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c & 2005d; EMSD, 2006a & 2006b; EMSD, 2007).

In order to understand shifts in policy perspectives on the English curriculum in relation to the emphasis placed on culture, the old and new curricula were examined. The 'old' curriculum refers to the secondary English curricula for classes 7 to 12 taught till December 2005 and which have been replaced by revised ones since February 2006 (see Chapter 1).

2.6.1 Role and status of English as depicted in the documents

The review of documents focussed on understanding how the role of English was constructed in the language of curriculum policy. The documents generally attribute three roles to English in Bhutan. First, in the wider political context, English is the language of Bhutan's path to modernization and participation in the global community. For example, the class 7 and 8 curricula state:

Like many other happy developments, the advent of the English language to Bhutan was a matter of choice. When the veil of self-imposed isolation was lifted, Bhutan looked beyond its borders and began to prepare itself to modernize and join the community of nations. Which language to use to interact with the international community was one of the many decisions that had to be made (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix; CAPSD, 2006c, p. ix).

The English language enabled Bhutan to "participate more effectively and purposefully in the global community" (CAPSD, 2006b, p ix; CAPSD, 2006c, p. ix). For a small country whose identity and independence depend essentially on its unique cultural identity, English as a

global language can carry effectively its aspirations to the outside world and thus enhance its cultural identity globally. According to the new class 7 and 8 English curricula, English enabled Bhutan to articulate “its identity” and “profile” in the international community (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix; CAPSD, 2006c, p. ix). And the “identity” is expressed mainly through “its rich spiritual and cultural heritage” that it shares with the international community. Through this sharing Bhutan is able to contribute to the “intellectual resources of the world” (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix; CAPSD, 2006c, p. ix). Second, English is regarded as an official language alongside Dzongkha the national language (CAPSD, 2005h, p. xi). According to van Driem (2004, p. 322), “in many other domains the role of English is increasing in Bhutan with more rapidity, widespread currency and greater proficiency than in any other Asian country with the possible exception of the city state of Singapore” (see also Namgyel, 2009b, p. 1). Third, English is a tool for “thinking”, “learning”, and “expressing” (CAPSD, 2002a, p. i). For example, the old class 7 English literature curriculum states that “English, as a medium of instruction in our schools, is a key subject in the curriculum. Academic success depends to a great extent on a good command of English” and therefore the prescribed syllabus must aim to develop the students’ ability to “use English as a tool for thinking clearly, for learning, and for expressing themselves in appropriate ways” (CAPSD, 2002a, p. i).

Given the three vital roles assigned to English in Bhutan and the presence of some English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum, I assumed that ‘standard’ was bound to be a concern. So my review also focussed on policy statements related to standard of English as presented in the English curriculum documents. The documents show that the Ministry of Education is “particularly concerned over the declining standard in language especially English” (CERD, 2002, p. v; MOE, 2008, p. 1). The Ministry of Education acknowledged that “Particularly the competency of English in our schools and colleges has been questioned at various levels” (PPD, 2002, p. 8). Hence, the development of the new English curriculum for schools in Bhutan (PPD, 2006, pp. 5 & 14) undertaken by the Ministry of Education during the 9th five year plan (2002-2007) was in part a response to the “general perception that the standard of English in the country has declined over the years (CAPSD, 2006b, p. v; CAPSD, 2006c, p. v). As a result, it was acknowledged that efforts must be made to “promote and improve the standard of English in our schools and institutes” (CERD, 2002, p. v). However, unlike literature in the international context, the literature in the Bhutanese context, as discussed in 2.4 (see above), does not show any empirical studies related to the role and status of English in Bhutan. But I assumed that English teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the cultural and aesthetic values of Bhutanese folk literature produced in English and their perceptions of English as a language of access to the oral traditions would likely be influenced by their perceptions of English in Bhutan generally. The perceptions were thus explored through the interviews.

2.6.2 Culture and the secondary English curriculum

Both the new class 11 and 12 curricula emphasize students' understanding of "the notions of spirituality, love, understanding, impermanence, tolerance and patriotism", "ageing, self knowledge and language and culture" (CAPSD 2005c, p. 4; CAPSD, 2005f, p. 3). Apparently, the cultural emphases reflect the influence of Buddhist spiritual concepts (e.g. impermanence), notions of loyalty to country, and the importance of language and culture. The old and new English curricula recognize the cultural context of learning English. For example, the old class 7 English curriculum expects the students to "explore the social and cultural environment of Bhutan" and "to speak and write about their own experiences" (CAPSD, 2002a, p. i). Similarly, the old class 9 and 10 English curricula emphasize the need for the students to not only cultivate values that reflect Bhutanese way of life, to learn Bhutanese culture and "religious practices" (CAPSD, 2000, p. v) but also to develop understanding and appreciation of "their own culture as well as the cultures of others through the study of prescribed texts" (CAPSD, 1996, p. 74). The same emphasis is made in the new English curricula for class 7 to 10 (CAPSD, 2006b, p. xiv; CAPSD, 2006c, p. xiv; see also CAPSD, 2005h, p. xii). For example, the new class 9 and 10 English curricula state that:

Through their reading, graduates have studied and reflected on the cultural values of Bhutan and other countries, particularly the different ways in which people discover meaning in their lives; different expressions of fundamental values of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty (CAPSD, 2005a, p. 3; CAPSD, 2005b, p. 3).

In both the old and new curricula the importance of learning English in a cultural context is emphasized so that students are able to reflect on the "cultural values of Bhutan" as well as those of other countries. Implied here is that learning opportunities and experiences must be created in the enacted curriculum, especially in the teaching strategies that English teachers use in their classroom practice for students to develop these understandings. Also, both the old and new curricula emphasize the need for students to learn about "other cultures" or "different cultures". While it is clear that the "other" or "different" here refer to cultures outside Bhutan, it is not explicitly stated whether the terms used also refer to the diversity of cultures in Bhutan. Since it is not even implicitly stated I assumed that the emphasis placed on cultural learning in the English curriculum comes mainly from a monocultural perspective. So in this study it was important to find out how students and teachers perceived the notion of "different cultures", "other cultures" in relation to Bhutanese folk literatures. Since no classroom-based studies exist, it was important to find out how the presence of diverse folk literatures in the English curriculum and the importance attached to them in pedagogy and teaching practice helped to preserve cultural diversity.

2.6.3 Cultural emphasis and its status in the curriculum

Emphasis on culture in curriculum policy must be matched by the status given to it in the prescribed syllabus. Review of syllabus documents therefore considered the qualitative as well the quantitative dimension of folk literature in it. I assumed that quantitative presence is sometimes only a polite gesture to policy without any commitment, while qualitative presence, it is assumed, provides the valorisation of the content in question to be taught and assessed. Since the focus in this study is upon folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge, Table 2.6 shows the proportion of Bhutanese folk literature included in the old and new English curricula.

Table 2.6 Proportion of Bhutanese folk literature (BFL) in the secondary English curriculum (Number of titles)

Class	Total number of titles in the syllabus		Number of titles from Bhutanese folk literature (BFL)		BFL titles "Recommended"		BFL titles considered "Supplementary"	
	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
7	38	52	0	1 (2%)	All	0	0	1
8	46	52	1 (2%)	0	All	0	0	0
9	20	41	1 (5%)	0	All	0	0	0
10	16	38	0	1 (2.5%)	All	0	0	1
11	43	45	0	3 (6.7%)	n/a	3 (6.7%)	0	0
12	43	41	0	1 (2.4%)	n/a	1(2.4%)	0	0

From Table 2.6 it appears that there was little importance given to Bhutanese folk literature in the old English curriculum and there is no real shift in stance in terms of importance given to it in the new English curriculum. For example, of the total 38 titles in the old class 7 English curriculum (CAPSD, 2002a; CAPSD, 2001b), none were from Bhutanese folk literature. On the other hand, of the total 52 titles in the new class 7 curriculum, 1 title, *The Zah Collector* is a Bhutanese folktale (CAPSD, 2006b, pp.117-118) but it is considered "Supplementary Reading" and not part of the "Main Texts" (CAPSD, 2006b, p. viii), which means the folktale may or may not be actually read. Similarly, of the total 46 titles in the old class 8 curriculum, 1 title called *More proverbs* (CAPSD, 2001c, pp. 144-145) was from Bhutanese folk literature, while none of the 52 titles in the new class 8 curriculum is from this genre (CAPSD, 2006c, pp. 51-56). Interestingly, a Chinese folktale called *The Magic Brocade* is included in the syllabus (CAPSD, 2006c, pp. 51-56) whereas none from Kunzang Choden's *Folktales of Bhutan* or *Bhutanese Tales of the Yeti* has been included although these books had been published in 1990s (see page 5). In a similar pattern, of the total 20 titles in the old class 9 curriculum, 1 title, *Gaylong Sumdar Tashi* (CAPSD & BBE, 2003, pp. 29-30), a western Bhutanese traditional ballad was from the folk genre, while the new class 9 curriculum has none (CAPSD, 2005a) in it. Of the total 16 titles in the old class 10 curriculum, none was from Bhutanese folk literature, whereas of the total 38 titles in the new class 10 curriculum 1 title, *Not Even a Corpse to Cremate*, a folktale by Kunzang Choden, is

from the folk genre but is considered “supplementary reading”. And again, if it is not read, then the presence of Bhutanese folk literature in the new curriculum is equal to nothing. Since the English curriculum for class 11 and 12 until 2005 was administered by the Indian Council of Secondary Education (ICSE) in New Delhi (PPD, 2004, p. 9; PPD, 2003, p. 19) there was no scope for including any text from Bhutanese writing in English in the curriculum. In the new class 11 English curriculum taught since 2005, 3 titles are drawn from the traditional ballad *Gaylong Sumdar Tashi* (CAPSD, 2005c, pp. 67-69). Of the total 41 titles in the new class 12 curriculum, only 1 title *Why Must I Go to War?* (CAPSD, 2005f) drawn from the Western Bhutanese traditional ballad *The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi: A Wind Borne Feather* (Ura, 1996) is from the folk genre.

In general, while in both the old and new curricula some content, though negligible, has been included, in terms of cultural representation the titles included are mostly literature generated originally in Dzongkha. Not much attention has been paid to the need for diversity of cultural representation by using titles that represent or at least reflect the oral literary traditions of languages other than Dzongkha. Part of the reason for not including folk literatures from diverse languages and cultures is perhaps the unavailability of good English translations in the market. Hayes et al. (2007, pp. 68-69) remark, “Curriculum knowledge that is constructed and framed within a common set of cultural definitions, symbols, values, views and qualities - and thus attributing some higher status to it - stands in contrast to” the curriculum’s claims to valuing cultural knowledges. This study created a context in which the students and teachers were able to explore their knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in relation to the oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literatures, within and outside the context of the curriculum.

2.6.4 Status of folk literature in teaching practice and assessment

It is important for this study to see how Bhutanese folk literature in its oral and written forms as a source of cultural values is reflected in English teachers’ pedagogical practices and assessment, including exams. In understanding the role attributed to folk literature in the English curriculum I suspected that inclusion in the syllabus alone may not reflect the importance attached to its cultural values unless it is taught and assessed. Although no attention is yet paid to notions of cultural and linguistic diversity, unlike the old English curriculum, the new curriculum emphasizes the need to change from a culture of teacher talk and student passivity to one that emphasizes active, independent, and constructive learning (e.g., see CAPSD, 2006b, pp. xii-xiii; CAPSD, 2006c, pp. xii-xiii; CAPSD, 2006d, p. xii; CAPSD, 2005d, p. 1; CAPSD, 2005h, pp. x-xi). For example, the new class seven syllabus document emphasizes the need for teachers to design activities that “promote active learning while the students play a greater role in their own learning” (CAPSD, 2006b, p. v; see also EMSD, 2005a, p. 70). In fact, the new curriculum expects teachers to develop the students’ “thinking and valuing skills outlined in Blooms’ Taxonomy” (e.g., see CAPSD, 2005d, p. 1;

CAPSD, 2005e, p. 1) so that they are able to analyse, synthesise, and evaluate ideas (CAPSD, 2005d, p. 7, 2005e, p. 9). So the new curriculum assumes that an active, constructivist approach to learning is possible if teachers create activities or environments that stimulate intellectual inquiry and critical thinking (e.g. see CAPSD, 2005d, p. 6; CAPSD, 2005e, p. 9). The shift in thinking reflects what Hayes et al. (2007, pp. 91-92) call “problematic knowledge (construction of knowledge)” which recognizes the need to develop students’ ability to understand that knowledges are constructed” or “contested”. As such the change represents a considerable challenge for Bhutanese teachers which can be characterized as one from teacher-directed to student-directed learning.

Although the English curriculum emphasizes the cultural dimension of student learning and the need to create an autonomous, critical and constructivist environment where learning must occur, it is unclear where and how evidences of these will be visible. This issue is important for this study because what is reflected in the content of the syllabus will translate into learning experience only when it is taught and assessed. I address this issue by examining education monitoring officers’ (EMO) reports and public exam papers. Since EMO’s reports on their school visits focus mainly on areas of curriculum implementation, especially teaching and learning, assessment, co-curricular activities, among others (EMSD, 2003, pp. 25-41), this review tries to identify statements in the reports in relation to these areas to find out how cultural emphases in curriculum policy were reflected in teaching practice and student learning. For example, a monitoring report on a lower secondary school said, “There was no evidence of value-laden work being assigned to the students” (EMSD, 2005a, p. 59) and recommended co-curricular activities that could instil positive “values and attitude” in the students (EMSD, 2005a, pp. 61-82). Similarly, an EMSD report on a middle secondary school recommended that “Teachers of all subjects need to design and assign tasks that will help children develop values” (EMSD, 2005a, p. 98; see also EMSD, 2006b, p. 27).

In sum, the reports generally indicate lack of adequate opportunities for the students to learn values in school. On the other hand, if learning experiences are created for the students to interact with the rich cultural values that Bhutanese folk literature from different cultures embody, such as identity, diversity, dignity, ecological understanding and empathy, spirituality and compassion, policy emphases on cultural preservation and continuity through education will have a better impact upon the young. In fact, no statements were identified in the reports that related to teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature. To fill the gap in knowledge, the teacher and student questionnaires and interviews in this study explored perceptions about the role of oral and English translations of folk literature as resources for the English curriculum.

It is important for this review to see how the cultural dimensions of teaching and learning emphasized in the curriculum documents are actually reflected in assessment policy and exams. Hayes et al. (2007, p. 109) argue that “Cultural knowledges are valued in an assessment task when there is explicit valuing of non-dominant beliefs, languages, practices

and ways of knowing”. So this review examines policy statements about assessment to see connection between the English curriculum’s cultural intent and practice. The old English curriculum mentions end-of-year exams and continuous assessment methods such as discussions, project work that enable the students to explore the “socio-economic, cultural, historical relevance/background” of texts included in the syllabus, and “portfolio of all their literary attempts” (CAPSD & BBE, 2003, p. 31; CAPSS, 1996, pp. 39). Similarly, the new English curricula for class 7 to 12 emphasize a “movement away from the formal or examination oriented approach to informal or alternative assessment” (CAPSD, 2006b, p. 149; CAPSD, 2006c, p. 172) and recommends research. Thus, from the curriculum documents, it is evident that English teachers’ classroom practice, student learning and assessment practices are underpinned by the epistemological assumptions of constructivist pedagogy. Within the constructivist framework, it is important to see how students’ learning of English is supported by the cultural and pedagogical resources of folk literature that exist in their own languages and how these learnings are valued in assessment tasks, including annual examinations. Since “examinations have the most powerful influence on what is taught in the classrooms and what is considered important to be done” (CERD, 2002, p. 34), question papers from board (public) exams for English literature from 2003 to 2008 were examined. This analysis showed that no questions related to Bhutanese folk literature were asked in any of these exams (e.g. see LSSCE/Eng II/2003; LSSCE/Eng/2004; LSSCE/Eng II/2005; LSSCE/Eng II/2006; LSSE/Eng II/2007; LSSE/Eng II/2008; X/03/Dec/Eng II; BCSE/2004; BCSE/Eng/2005; BCSE/Eng II/2006; BCSE/Eng II/2007; BCSE/Eng II/2008; BHSEC/01II/2007; BHSEC/01II/2008). Since the curriculum mentions continuous assessment methods besides the final end-of-year exams, this study explores how within the scope of the formal and informal curricula, learning opportunities and activities are created for the students to learn cultural values through their folk literatures. The insights gathered from my analysis of these documents in part created the need for research question 5 (Appendix 3.1). They helped to design the pedagogical strategies that I used in the action research to provide positive intellectual and affective stimuli for the students to work with folk literatures in their own and other languages.

2.6.5 Summary and implications

Understood from the perspective of the secondary English curriculum, the role of English has three interrelated advantages for Bhutan: as a language of Bhutan’s path to modernization and relation with the outside world, an official language with equal status with Dzongkha, the national language, and the language of academic success for students. The ‘standard’ of English is a concern while the ‘standard’ of English used in Bhutanese folk literature included in the curriculum is not attended to in the curriculum documents. The curriculum expects the students to learn English in a culturally familiar context, although the intellectual and emotional advantages of doing so are not explained. A paradigm shift is recommended in terms of a movement from student passivity and rote ingestion of teacher-/textbook-fed

information to a more active, constructivist approach to learning, including the way learning is assessed. The curriculum expects that students will learn Bhutanese culture or “Bhutanese way of life and thinking” (CAPSD & BBE, 2003, pp. 28-29) and the values of “other cultures” (CAPSD, 2006b, p. xiv) in the English curriculum. But it doesn’t attend to the complex interaction of culture and curriculum in a multilingual and multicultural context, including the notions of cultural diversity. As evident in education monitoring officers’ reports, syllabus documents and public exams, a gap exists between the secondary English curricula’s positive cultural intent and its enactment in English teachers’ classroom practice.

Thus, it is evident that although policy emphasizes the preservation and continuity of Bhutan’s rich and diverse oral traditions, the literary, aesthetic and cultural values of folk literature in its oral and written forms have not yet been recognized, hence not reflected in teaching practice and assessment.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has described five categories of literature related to folk literature, culture, and the English curriculum. In 2.2 I presented contrasting views and contexts in relation to the status of folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge. Literature reveals that oral folk literatures in English can assert cultural and literary identities. Drawing on literature, I built an argument relevant to the present study that with the gradual disappearance of lesser known languages, the literary and cultural heritage that they embody are also lost. Literature also shows that English translation of folk literatures can facilitate intercultural understanding, and through documentation and dissemination, also the preservation of diverse cultures. In 2.3 I discussed the context of folk literature studies in Bhutan and presented the themes of identity, cultural values, and preservation as revealed by the literature. It is evident that although a rich tradition of oral literatures exists in many different forms in many languages and dialects in Bhutan, current debates in the Bhutanese context focus exclusively on folktales. Current debates also do not attend to oral literatures in languages other than Dzongkha and the need to revitalise and ensure the diversity of cultures these literatures embody. Nor does the literature attend to notions of cultural diversity that the folk literatures may promote. In 2.4, I presented contrasting views about the role and status of English in relation to culture. While on the one hand the discourse against English continues, on the other hand, its rapid spread as a global language, the language of opportunities, and the language of cultural identity, is acknowledged in the literature. There has been no study in the Bhutanese context on the question of standard of English used in Bhutanese writings. Commentators, on the other hand, generally advocate the principles of international intercomprehensibility, acceptability and recognisability by the English speaking world instead of advocating a British or American best model. As discussed in 2.5, the literature reveals that while there are plenty of normative

prescriptions about the advantages of including folk literature in the curriculum, there is a lack of classroom-based studies related to it. While the literature generally attends to principles and processes of translation in folk literature studies, these questions are not attended to in current debates on folk literature studies in the Bhutanese context. While there is need for schools and their teachers to create culturally sensitive learning environments, studies also show teacher predicaments in dealing with culturally sensitive material in the curriculum, especially in multicultural situations. In the Bhutanese context, while the cultural underpinnings of the secondary English curriculum are strong and the curriculum recognizes the need for students to learn English in cultural contexts, the kinds of knowledge and attitudes required for teaching and learning to occur in the context of a multicultural and multilingual society is not explained. So the study uses analytical frameworks for understanding cultural knowledge and attitudes found in the literature. Finally in 2.6, I discussed the cultural underpinnings of the secondary English curricula and described the status of folk literature in the old and new curricula. In these curricula, while the importance of culture is emphasized, the real question of teaching and learning in multicultural settings is not attended to. While they indicate concerns about the standard of English generally, they do not attend to the question of standard of English used in translations of Bhutanese folk literature included in the 7-12 English curricula.

The present study attempts to fill in some of the gaps in understanding the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the oral form and in English translations from the perspective of secondary teachers and students in Bhutan. The following chapter will discuss the methods used to collect, analyse and interpret the data required for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

From an interpretivist point of view, what distinguishes human (social) action from the movement of physical objects is that the former is inherently meaningful. Thus, to understand a particular social action (e.g., friendship, voting, marrying, teaching), the inquirer must grasp the meanings that constitute that action (Schwandt, 2000, p. 191).

3.1 Introduction

In order to explore the key research problem defined in Chapter 1 (see page 8), five research questions were identified. The central issue raised by the research problem concerned the need to understand how government policy emphasis on the cultural importance of Bhutan's rich tradition of folk literatures and the role of education in facilitating their continuity was reflected in the schools' formal and informal curricula, teaching practice, and the students' learning experiences. Understanding the interaction of culture, curriculum, teaching and learning in the context of school required a research design and methodological strategy that enabled situated understandings of the phenomenon through interaction with the actors in the field "where the action is" and where "active inquiry" was possible (Babbie, 2004, p. 199). This chapter builds on the brief introduction to the methodology provided in chapter 1 and describes the specific data gathering and analytical procedures employed in the study.

3.2 Choosing the research paradigm

Research methods "cannot" be *a priori* "neutral or a theoretical tools" (Brewer & Hunter, 2006, p. 54). The research design used in this study and the methods employed for collecting, analysing and interpreting the data were supported by the epistemological assumptions of constructivism, also called interpretivism, though, as the name suggests, there are different emphases. To explore the key issues raised by the research problem and the research questions it was necessary to understand teachers' and students' social constructions of Bhutanese folk literature in the context of their experience. I considered the two paradigm

theories most commonly adopted in educational research - positivism and constructivism – to see which one supported better the research questions which entailed situated understandings and interpretations. I draw upon Babbie's (2004, p. 33) definition of 'paradigm' as a "model or framework for observation and understandings, which shapes both what we see and how we understand it" (see also Usher, 1996, as cited in Glesne, 1999, p. 5).

Positivism and constructivism are distinguished by the difference in their epistemological views. As the "science of knowing" (Babbie, 2004, p. 6), epistemology deals with the way we look at the world and understanding "how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Positivism emphasizes the difference between what is observed and the observer and so leads to "measurement and quantification of observable events and a search for statistical regularities that can be understood as causal laws" (Seale, 1999, p. 20). Since it is a linear, theory-led understanding of the world, it doesn't create the scope for understanding human behaviour, intentions, motives and meanings through multiple perspectives and construction of meanings (Merriam, 1998, p. 4). Also, because of the linearity of approach and emphasis on prior theoretical assumptions, positivism does not allow the researcher's reflexivity to influence the development of insights and perspectives out of the data (see also Ball, 1990, as cited in Preissle & Grant, 2004, p. 175). Hence, it was not congruent with the nature of this study.

Unlike positivism, constructivism assumes that "reality is not fixed but constructed ... Knowledge and truth are created not discovered ... Meaning is socially, culturally, and historically situated" (Mutch, 2005, pp. 60-61). Constructivism "construes learning (knowing) as an interpretive, recursive, building process by active learners (knowers) interacting with the physical and social world" (Fosnot, 1996, p. 30). This epistemological view concurred with the present study's need to explore teachers' and students' understanding of and perceptions about Bhutanese folk literature in the context of school, curriculum, teaching, and learning. Thus, it supported the study's emphasis on interaction, talk, perceptions, participant learning, meaning generation and interpretation, and the role of researcher's intuition, hunches, insights and personal reflections about the meaning of the data. Constructivism is most closely associated with qualitative research though some quantitative research, such as questionnaires that obtain people's perceptions of phenomena, is possible. Creswell (2008, p.265) says that "qualitative researchers believe that ... personal views can never be kept separate from interpretations". In fact, the constructivist-interpretivist epistemology allowed data from the questionnaires and interviews to be examined for thematic categories and interpretation using my own hunches, insights, intuition, and "personal reflections about the meaning of the data" (Creswell, 2008, p. 265), which was not possible within the positivist view of knowledge. In view of these epistemological advantages, I was convinced by constructivism and chose it as the supporting paradigm theory for this study.

3.3 Research design

In order to understand the issues raised by the research problem and find answers to the research questions it was necessary to collect data from teachers and students differently, from different sample sizes, in different places, and at different times. Hence, a largely multimethod research design, implemented in three stages, was employed to conduct the study. I use ‘research design’ to mean the study’s methodological structure that includes the “plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p. 3; Creswell, 2008, p. 59; see also Babbie, 2004, p. 112). Research questions 1, 2 and 3 (see page 9) required exploring secondary English teachers’ perceptions at the national level and working with a smaller group of teachers to further explore the issues that emerged from the wider study. In order to explore these three research questions, the first stage of the study was designed as a cross-sectional study of secondary English teachers teaching in schools across Bhutan. In order to gather data sufficient to answer the research questions, a questionnaire with open-ended and closed items was sent to these teachers. The second stage in the research design was an ‘expert’ study which consisted of interviews with six informants selected from among the questionnaire respondents who showed some evidence of pedagogical knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature.

Since research questions 4 and 5 (see page 9) were primarily concerned with change in students’ knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature in the context of curricula and pedagogy, the third stage was designed as an action research project conducted in a secondary school in Bhutan over a period of 3 months. In order to understand change in knowledge and attitude, it was necessary to gather data over time from the action research class as a whole and from a select group of students from the same class. Thus, a questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed items was administered to the class once each at the beginning and at the end of the study. In order to pursue the emergent issues from the questionnaire more deeply, interviews were held with six informants selected from among the class. In addition to questionnaires and interviews, data were also gathered using a research diary that the collaborating teacher and I kept throughout the action research period.

While the research design provided the overall plan for pursuing the different elements of the study to achieve the research goal, a ‘research management matrix’ (Maxwell & Smyth, 2010, p. 407) was used to strategize the different elements of the research within realistic time goals (see Appendix 3.1). The matrix had a number of advantages for the smooth and efficient conduct of the study. First, since it included the main research question, it kept the study focussed on the central issues that the study was required to explore. Second, since the matrix included all the five research questions, it kept me reminded constantly of the main issues that needed to be explored and the specific data that were required to answer the research questions. Third, since the matrix aligned each research question with specific sources of data, the data gathering methods, and the data analysis procedures and techniques relevant to that

question, it provided a useful “snapshot in time of all research essentials” (Maxwell & Smyth, 2010, pp. 407-422) and helped me to save valuable time which otherwise would have been lost in matching the research questions with various other elements of methodology. Fourth, since the matrix also included dates for completing the data collection and analysis activities, it served as a reminder for periodic checks on the progress of the study and aim for “timely completions” (Maxwell & Smyth, 2010, pp. 407-422; Smyth & Maxwell, 2008).

3.4 Data gathering methods and analytical procedures

It was important that the selection of the methods was led by the kind of data that was required to answer the five research questions. ‘Method’ is used here to mean a “coherent strategy or set of strategies for gathering a particular type of data”, “a particular research technique or way to gather evidence about a phenomenon” (Mutch, 2005, p. 221). General considerations are presented in this section followed by specific sections on each method used as well as ethical considerations.

Research questions 1, 2 and 3 were focussed mainly on understanding secondary English teachers’ perceptions about the role and status of Bhutanese folk literature in relation to the schools’ formal and informal curricula, the teachers’ classroom practices, and student learning. In order to gain a holistic understanding of the role and status of folk literature in Bhutanese schools generally, a questionnaire aimed to gather short responses - open-ended as well as closed - from secondary English teachers in Bhutan was deemed necessary, and used accordingly. The questionnaires were administered nationally because this was the first study of its kind, and I wanted to discover what the English teachers in Bhutan thought about the role of oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum, and what they did in their classrooms. In order to explore more deeply recurrent themes that emerged from the questionnaire data, but could not be probed in a questionnaire, interviews were used. Proceeding from the constructivist position, the interviews were crucial for gathering a deeper understanding of perceptions and practices through close interaction with the actors in the field, “where the action is” and where “active inquiry” is possible (Babbie, 2004, p. 299).

Research question 4 focussed on how the students’ knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature changed following three months of learning in an action research situation. Research question 5 focussed on what pedagogical strategies worked in developing knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature. Since the two research questions required data that showed not only knowledge and attitude, but also change in knowledge and attitude over time as a result of intervention in the classroom context, an action research was conducted in a secondary school in south Bhutan. The action research

included a series of intervention activities related to Bhutanese folk literature that the students in the participating class carried out. As in the case of teacher data, recurrent themes that emerged from the questionnaire that required further probing were explored through interviews conducted in three stages during the action research project, one each at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the project. Thus, the constructivist-interpretivist design enabled the study to triangulate methods, data sources and data types (Creswell, 2008, p. 266).

The following sections describe the specific methodological procedures and techniques used in each of the three methods - questionnaires, interviews, and action research, for gathering and analysing the data and presenting the findings. The research procedures and techniques were guided by ethical considerations. First I describe briefly the ethical dimension of the study and then I describe the data gathering and analytical procedures used in each of the three methods separately.

3.4.1 Ethical considerations

Gregory (2005, p. 41) sums up the importance of the ethical dimensions of research:

Invoking the importance of consent on the part of those affected by our actions brings in its wake the invoking of such key morally-significant notions as autonomy, self-determination, privacy, the right to privacy, respect for persons, treating individuals as ends in themselves rather than as means, trust as an integral feature of human intercourse, and so on. Thus, consent should always be sought as a tribute to the autonomy of individuals ... if we ride roughshod over the wishes of others, we do damage to the fabric of trust that sustains human relationships.

The more specific ethical procedures and decisions that guided the important elements of the research design, especially data gathering, analysis and reporting, are described in the relevant sections of the chapter.

3.4.1.1 Institutional approvals for research

The study followed the University of New England's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Guidelines. Glesne (1999, p. 39) suggests that "If the study involves some sort of organization or agency, then you must first make contact with its *gatekeepers*, the person or persons who must give their consent before you may enter a research setting" and the "conditions of access" should be negotiated with them. Prior to collecting data, HREC approval was obtained via Committee Approval No. HE05/138 dated 8/06/05 (Appendix 3.2). Further, as the project entailed working closely with secondary English teachers and

secondary students in Bhutan, official permission was sought via an application printed on UNE letterhead (Appendix 3.3) and obtained from the Director of the Department of School Education, Ministry of Education (Bhutan) via his letter MoE/DSE-/2005/2153 dated 24/6/2005 for carrying out the project.

3.4.1.2 Informed consent and right to privacy

As Glesne (1999, p. 39) warns, “Starting anywhere but at the top of the hierarchy” or “gaining acceptance at the top” were both considered “risky” for the study if the consent of all those affected by it was not sought. This was obtained (as just outlined) and secondary English teachers’ consent for participation in the study, which involved responding to a mail questionnaire followed by voluntary participation in an interview, was sought via an Information Sheet and Consent Form printed on UNE letterhead (Appendix 3.4). Permission for the action research was sought from the school principal via an application printed on UNE letter head (Appendix 3.13). Students’ consent to participate in the programme was sought via an Information Sheet and Consent Form also printed on UNE letterhead (Appendix 3.14). Research participants “have a right to expect that when they give you permission to observe and interview, you will protect their confidences and preserve their anonymity” (Glesne 1999, p. 122). Thus, ethics in relation to privacy or confidentiality was pertinent during the “writing-up phase of the qualitative inquiry process” (Glesne, 1999, p. 123). Accordingly, ‘respondent codes’ were used for the questionnaire respondents, while pseudonyms were used for the interview participants. Anonymity of informants was ensured in the transcript files as well as in data segments quoted in the dissertations chapters. As required by the UNE HREC policy, all questionnaire and interview data gathered from the students and teachers - both in print and electronic forms - and their signed consent forms were stored in a secure location in my office. As a researcher it was also important for me to be aware of ethical limitations that affect choices in a specific cultural context. Gregory (2005, p. 40) says, “Given the extraordinary complexities surrounding the motivations of humans and their decision-making processes, if we are looking for so-called cast-iron guarantees that consent is fully informed and voluntary, probably none can be forthcoming”. In the context of this study, parental consent for Class 11 students’ participation in the intervention programme was not required as it was not customary for parent permission to be obtained in Bhutan. Also, seeking consent of parents, most of whom lived in distant villages and did not speak or write English, wasn’t deemed appropriate but the school principal and the collaborating teacher readily agreed and this is appropriate in the Bhutanese context.

3.4.2 Questionnaire

Koshy (2005, p. 86) says, “The use of questionnaires within a qualitative study often provides ideas for further exploration”. So prior to the interviews, data were gathered through a mail questionnaire sent to all secondary English teachers in Bhutan. As shown in the research planning matrix (Appendix 3.1), since research questions 1, 2 and 3 were focussed on secondary English teachers’ perceptions about the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the context of the English curricula, pedagogical practices and students’ learning experience, the sample included only secondary English teachers. The questionnaire had two main aims, first, to gather an understanding of the major issues related to Bhutanese folk literature at the secondary level in Bhutanese schools generally. This also helped to understand the context of the action research better. The second aim was to identify teachers among the questionnaire respondents whose knowledge and classroom practice indicated some use of folk literature and who were willing to be contacted for an interview later in the study. Also, since the study was based on the constructivist-interpretive view of knowledge, the questionnaire data were intended to provide alternative perspectives in the form of similarities, contrasting evidences, surprises and paradoxes. In qualitative research, one way of enhancing quality is by challenging the notion that “there is only one way of interpreting an event” (Janesick, 2000, p. 393) and ensuring adequacy of methods employed to investigate a phenomenon.

3.4.2.1 Designing and pretesting the questionnaire

The initial version of the questionnaire (Appendix 3.5) comprised 7 open-ended and closed questions. Questions 1b, 2, 4, 5a, b & c, 6 and 7 of the questionnaire were open-ended, “in which case the respondent is asked to provide his or her own answer to the question” (Babbie, 2004, p. 245), “views, opinions or even predictions” (Wellington, 2006, p. 106), while questions 1a and 3 were closed-ended, “in which the respondent is asked to select an answer from among a list provided by the researcher” (Babbie, 2004, p. 245). For example, item 1a asked the respondents to indicate which of the eight activities related to Bhutanese folk literature mentioned in the item were conducted in their school, while item 3 asked them to name three to four examples of Bhutanese folk literature that they knew and mention the language of their oral source, where and how they learnt it. The choice of categories in the questionnaire was based mainly on the conceptual categories that emerged from the literature, the knowledge gaps identified in related areas of this study (see Chapter 2), and my own beliefs and assumptions about the role of Bhutanese folk literature in relation to curricula, pedagogy and student learning. As mentioned earlier in the chapter (see page 57), the questionnaire also had the purpose to identify ‘expert’ teachers who were willing to be contacted for subsequent interviews. Therefore, in addition to the specific items, the questionnaire required the respondents to provide relevant biographical information and also provide their contact details if they were willing to be contacted for interviews later.

Gillham (2005, p. 79) says, “Questionnaires have to be filled in by the respondent without any assistance - which is why questionnaire design and development is so crucial”. Thus, the questionnaire was trialled among eight secondary English teachers who taught classes 7 to 10 in schools close to where I worked. Since the pilot respondents comprised a representative sample their feedback on the clarity, relevance and level of difficulty of the questionnaire helped me to improve it further. As a result, in the revised version of the questionnaire (Appendix 3.6) the introductory comment in the initial version was rephrased and shortened and it helped to “put the respondent in the proper frame of mind for answering the questions” (Babbie, 2004, p. 255). A sub question focussed on the language and frequency of folk literature events in the schools was added to item 1a. Similarly, item 1b and 4 were also modified as they tended to lead the respondents. In order to avoid confusion “Language to which it belongs” in item 3 was rephrased as “Bhutanese language/dialect to which it belongs”. Item 5b (“*How do you use your own knowledge and experience of Bhutanese folk literature, e.g., characters from folk stories, lines from Bhutanese proverbs, etc. in your lessons*”) was removed as it elicited similar responses as item 5a. For the sake of clarity and simplicity, item 6 was modified from “*Describe the differences you see between Bhutanese and non-Bhutanese texts (stories, poems, etc.) in the English curriculum in terms of student interest and motivation to learn*” in the initial version to “*What motivates students better in the English curriculum - Bhutanese or non-Bhutanese texts? Please give reasons for your answer*” in the revised version. The biographical section of the questionnaire was also improved. For example, ‘Lhotshamkha’ (the language spoken mainly in south Bhutan) was included as an example in item iii.

Mailing questionnaires to a large sample of participants scattered across the country involved some degree of uncertainty about getting a reasonable return rate (see Babbie, 2004, p. 259). Therefore, on the last page of the revised questionnaire, a request was made to the respondents to place the Consent Form and the completed questionnaire in the prepaid, self-addressed envelope and asked each to return them to me. The questionnaire after the trial (Appendix 3.6) was therefore improved in terms of the item content and clarity of language.

3.4.2.2 Data gathering and analytical procedures

The questionnaire was mailed to secondary English teachers in all the 132 secondary (24 higher secondary, 29 middle secondary, and 79 lower secondary) schools in the twenty districts of Bhutan in 2006. Since there was no data on teacher numbers in schools at that time, based on my knowledge of teacher deployment in secondary schools, I assumed that each school would normally have between 3 to 5 English teachers. A total of 473 questionnaires were mailed to the English teachers and 181 completed questionnaires (38% of total questionnaires mailed) were returned. This response rate would be quite conservative since there would have been some questionnaires that went to schools and were not used. The

response rate was adequate for gathering an initial understanding of the role of Bhutanese folk literature at the secondary level in Bhutanese schools generally.

3.4.2.3 Analysis of questionnaire

Each of the 181 completed questionnaires was assigned a respondent code ('R01', 'R02', up to 'R181'). The data were analysed using thematic and content analysis techniques focussing mainly on "how many people said this kind of thing" (Gillham, 2005, p. 73). While responses to the open-ended questions (1b, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7) were analysed for thematic categories and counted, responses to the closed questions (1a & 3) were counted using predetermined response categories in the questionnaire. Data from closed questions were entered on an Excel spreadsheet organized in the form of an analysis grid (e.g. see Appendix 3.7). The analysis grid shows the response categories along the top and the respondent codes (R01 to R181) down the side on the left. Responses to item 1a and item 3 of the questionnaire were entered in separate grids and arranged under three and four thematic categories respectively. The responses to items in all of the 181 questionnaires were read closely in turn and each respondent's statements that matched the thematic categories and their sub-categories were entered in the grid as a numerical value of 1. The numbers under each sub-category were then added to show the frequencies and percentages of response for each respondent. For example, the total number of respondents whose statements matched the sub category called "Folk riddles" was only 24 (13%), whereas the total respondents in respect of the sub category called "Folksong" was 113 (62%). This meant that according to secondary English teachers, activities related to folksongs were held more frequently in schools than those related to folk riddles, both of which influenced pedagogical beliefs and practices in relation to folk literature in schools.

Analysing responses to the open-ended items of the questionnaire involved a somewhat different technique. Specifically, the steps that Gillham (2005, pp. 71-75) recommends for content analysis of written interview transcripts were adapted and used as a framework for analysing the open-ended responses to the questionnaire.

1. Go through the first 50 (20%) of completed questionnaires in turn;
2. Read the responses to each question in turn highlighting substantive statements (those that really make a point);
3. Go back to these questionnaires and see if any substantive statements had been left unmarked;
4. Ask someone else to go through a set of unmarked questionnaires and highlight what s/he thinks were "substantive" statements as a check on the researcher's judgment;
5. Mark unique or unclassifiable statements as 'u.c.' (unclassifiable/unique categories);
6. From the highlighted statements compile a list of potential categories;
7. From the potential categories derive a final set of thematic categories and give each category a meaningful heading and assign a category code (e.g. C1, C2);

8. Go through the rest of the questionnaires putting the category code against statements which fit the category;
9. Create an analysis grid, with the questions and category codes along the top and the respondent codes down the side;
10. On the analysis grid, insert the matching statements as a numerical value of 1;
11. Add the numbers under each category (and their sub categories) to find out how many respondents have said a similar kind of thing; and
12. Transfer the numbers to their corresponding categories in the thematic categories table (Appendix 3.8).

Following Gillham's (2005, p. 71) view that "The essence of ... analysis is identifying substantive statements - statements that really say something" - responses to questions 1b, 2, 4, 5abc, 6 and 7 in the first 50 questionnaires were read and substantive statements were highlighted. From the highlighted statements a master list of potential categories was built, from which a final list of thematic categories for each of the open-ended items in the questionnaire was built (Appendix 3.8). In order to moderate my judgment in the process of coding the data for themes, an experienced secondary teacher went through at least 30 sets of unmarked questionnaires and highlighted what she thought were "substantive" statements. Each category was assigned a category code (e.g. C1 means category 1) and a title (e.g. category 4 [C4] of item 1b was "Students recognize the need to keep culture alive"). The rest of the questionnaires were then read and coded by placing the codes against each respondent's statements that matched the categories. An analysis grid (Appendix 3.9) was created for items 1b, 2, 4, 5abc, 6 and 7 together, with the codes for the questionnaire items along the top and the respondent codes down the side on the left. Each respondent's statements that matched the codes were entered in the grid as a numerical value of 1 to assist in counting.

Researching within a constructivist-interpretive framework, I believed it was important to consider the credibility of the study. In qualitative research, one way of addressing credibility is by triangulating methods, data sources and data types (Creswell, 2008, p. 266). Findings from the questionnaire data are presented in conjunction with the findings from the interviews. Triangulation helped to discern similarities, contrasts, surprises and paradoxes.

3.4.3 Interviews

A semi-structured interview comprising nine open-ended questions (Appendix 3.10) was used with the participants to "gather responses which are richer and more informative than questionnaire data" (Koshy, 2005, p. 92). The questions were generally intended to gather responses for thematic analysis. A semi-structured interview was a better option than a structured approach as the former gave me the flexibility to use pre-set questions as well as ask questions that emerged from the interviewer-interviewee conversation. Each of the eight

questions in the interview had a number of probes that captured issues that emerged from the literature and the questionnaire data as well as issues that were important for the study but about which not much has been said in the literature. Thus, for example, question 1 was important for the study as it explored the important issue of preserving the cultural values of the diverse oral traditions through the curriculum, teaching and learning in school, about which there has not been many classroom-based studies done in the international context, and not all, in the Bhutanese context (see page 36). Similarly, question 2 of the interview (Appendix 3.10) was designed to explore secondary English teachers' knowledge of oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature identified in Chapter 2 (see page 28). The questions were designed to explore more deeply the issues that emerged from the questionnaire data or address gaps identified in them. This enabled the study to understand the issues more deeply than questionnaire items normally allowed.

3.4.3.1 Purposeful sampling

Creswell (2008, p. 213) says that unlike in quantitative research where the informants are identified systematically through random sampling, in qualitative research, “we identify our informants and sites based on places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon”. Based on the principles of “purposive or judgmental sampling” (Babbie, 2004, p. 183), six respondents (3 male and 3 female secondary English teachers) were selected from among the 94 respondents who had in their completed questionnaires agreed to be contacted for interviews later. Criteria for selection included, first, the informants volunteered to be interviewed. Second, the completed questionnaires showed that they had taught the English curriculum for at least 3 years and they had some experience of using materials from Bhutanese folk literature in their teaching of English. Third, in order to gather perspectives from all levels of secondary school, sampling ensured that at least two informants each represented lower secondary (Class 7 & 8), middle secondary (Class 9 & 10), and higher secondary (Class 11 & 12) levels. Fourth, to gather perspectives from a wider cultural context, sampling ensured that the informants represented different cultural backgrounds. Thus, purposeful sampling enabled the study to interview informants who were information rich and enabled me to understand the key issues sought by the research questions.

3.4.3.2 Profile of interview participants

Based on the principles mentioned above, questionnaire respondents R04, R05, R06, R13, R16, and R20 were selected for the interviews. All the informants were assigned pseudonyms and are referred to in the findings chapter as Yuden, Lhazom, Tshoki, Gembo, Tashi, and Norbu. Care was taken not to create any resemblance between the pseudonyms and the informants' actual names. I considered it ethically right to ensure that the pseudonyms were socially acceptable Bhutanese names. Table 3.7 shows the profile of the informants.

Table 3.7 Informant profile

Informant	Home language	School	Class taught	Teaching experience
Yuden	Kurtoep	Higher secondary	12	4 years
Lhazom	Kurtoep	Middle secondary	8, 9 & 10	6 years
Tshoki	Lhotshamkha (Nepali)	Middle secondary	9 & 10	5 years
Gembo	Dzongkha	Middle secondary	8, 9 & 10	3 years
Tashi	Mangdekha	Lower secondary	7	3 years
Norbu	Lhotshamkha (Nepali)	Higher secondary	11	15 years

All the six informants taught in schools within 2-3 hours of driving distance from the researcher's place of work and they all spoke English as well as a number of other languages in most cases.

3.4.3.3 Data gathering and analytical procedures

All the interviews were held in the informants' respective schools and their signed consent, including permission to be tape recorded, was sought before they were interviewed. All the six interviews were recorded on a Sony Digital voice recorder as it enabled me to convert the audio recordings to audio files on the computer. The length of the six interviews ranged from 37 to 47 minutes (Yuden: 41 minutes; Lhazom: 47 minutes; Tshoki: 38 minutes; Gembo: 41 minutes; Tashi: 37 minutes; and Norbu: 44 minutes). After the interviews were converted to audio files on the computer they were all transcribed and converted to text documents using Express Scribe, a transcription software available free on the internet (see <http://express-scribe.en.softonic.com>). In order to be "Chronologically and linguistically faithful to the transcript" (Glesne, 1999, p. 184) responses to each question in the interview were placed under their corresponding questions in the transcript.

In transcribing the interviews I also attended to the procedural and ethical questions of who should transcribe the interview, how much of it should be transcribed, whether the interview should be transcribed verbatim, word by word, or the part that had little useful data should be simply summarized and rephrased, and whether the transcripts should be rendered into grammatically correct, formal written texts for the sake of the audience (Kvale, 1996, pp. 68-169). In order to capture all aspects of the informants' responses so that surprises and paradoxes hidden in the data became visible, the oral texts of all the interviews were transcribed entirely by me. Since "transcription is itself an interpretive process" (Kvale, 1996, p. 160) transcribing the interviews myself helped me to come to know the data well and to focus on the thematic details of the transcripts, which made thematic analysis easier later. Although the study did not require any complex sociolinguistic or psychological analysis of the data, repetitions, emotional expressions of laughter and sighing, and "hm"s, "aa"s and "um"s were transcribed verbatim. Also, the repetitive use of "like" (meaning 'for instance' in

Bhutanese use of English), “la” (a Dzongkha word used to indicate respect to the other person) and “Sir” were transcribed verbatim. Unclear expressions were indicated as “unclear” and pauses were indicated by three dots. However, for ethical reasons and also for the sake of clarity, these expressions were excluded from the text segments quoted in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of the dissertation. In the context of a small society where the identities of research participants may be known, I had to be “mindful that the publication of incoherent and repetitive verbatim interview transcripts may involve an unethical stigmatization of specific persons” (Kvale, 1996, pp. 172-173) or English teachers generally in the present case.

3.4.3.4 Preparing the data for analysis

All the six teacher interviews were analysed using coding categories (see below). Accordingly, all the interview transcripts were coded and thematic categories built. The first crucial step before coding the data was to organise all the interview transcripts in a form that allowed efficient and systematic coding. Although there are different ways of arranging the transcript data for coding purpose (e.g., Creswell, 2008, p. 253), in this analysis, Minichiello, Aroni and Hays’ (2008, pp. 233-235) format of a transcript file was modified and used. Accordingly, all of the six interview transcripts were arranged in the form of transcript files (Appendix 3.11). This format facilitated efficient coding of data, arranging the data segments in sub-files according to their thematic categories, and cross-referencing between quoted data segments in the dissertation and their original source in the transcript file. The transcript file was arranged in the form of a table with three columns and an information box on the top. Information related to the interview and the informant, considered useful in the data analysis process (see also Creswell 2008, p. 246; Minichiello et al., 2008, pp. 233-235), was presented in the information box. In the middle column called ‘Transcript Data’, the entire transcribed data (questions followed by their responses) was reproduced chronologically, in the order in which the questions were asked from beginning to end of interview. Response to each question asked was considered a data segment or paragraph and was numbered serially and attributed to the informant in the column on the left called ‘Para’. Thus, ‘Yuden 1’ means paragraph 1 of Yuden’s transcript and ‘Tshoki 5’ means paragraph 5 of Tshoki’s transcript. The code words or phrases were placed in the right hand column of the transcript file called ‘Themes/topics/issues/ideas (underlying meanings)’.

3.4.3.5 Building thematic categories

Qualitative researchers employ a number of techniques for analysing data such as iterative reading, case summaries, typologising, narrative analysis, and thematic analysis (Minichiello, 2008, pp. 265-280; see also Creswell, 2008, pp. 244-256). The coding process aimed to identify thematic categories in the transcripts by examining commonalities and unexpected

meanings, meanings that the “participants discuss most frequently, are unique or surprising, have the most evidence to support them, or are those you might expect to find when studying the phenomenon” (Creswell 2008: 252). In order to keep the coding process aligned with the research questions, the list of possible topics that Bogdan and Biklen (1998, as cited in Creswell, 2008, pp. 251-252) recommend - “setting and context”, “perspectives held by participants”, “participants’ ways of thinking about people and objects”, “processes”, “activities”, and “strategies” - was used as a general guide. Although “there are no set guidelines for coding data” (Creswell, 2008, p. 251) qualitative researchers agree on generic processes of data analysis. Combining and adapting the generic steps and procedures that Gillham (2005, pp. 71-75), Minichiello et al. (2008, pp. 281-283), Taylor and Bogdan (1998, pp. 142-148), and Tesch and Creswell (as cited in Creswell, 2008, pp. 251-252) recommend for analysing interview transcripts, these procedures were used to code the data.

1. After the data is prepared and organized in the form of a transcript file, read and reread all the transcripts carefully and get a sense of the whole;
2. Go through the transcripts of any two participants in turn and read the responses to each question highlighting substantive statements (those that really make a point);
3. Code the highlighted text segments by placing a bracket around them and assigning a code word or phrase in the transcript file that accurately describes the meaning of the text segment. (Sentences or paragraphs that relate to a single code are called text segments. Codes are labels used to describe a segment of text. Themes or broad ideas (also called categories) are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database);
4. Derive a set of categories from the highlighted text segments. Give the categories a meaningful heading and assign a category code (e.g. “CV” for Cultural values);
5. Go through the rest of the interviews and repeat step 3 and 4 - putting the category codes against statements that support the category codes. Identify any other meanings that fall outside the categories already identified and note these;
6. Assemble all the category codes (themes) from the transcript file and compile an initial master list of 25-30 category codes and reduce the list to a manageable number by collapsing similar codes and excluding redundant ones;
7. Mark unique, surprising or unclassifiable statements as ‘u.c.’ (unclassifiable/unique categories);
8. Group similar codes together and reduce the codes to a smaller number of five to seven themes; A small number of codes enables the researcher to produce substantive and detailed discussions on a few broad themes rather than general information about an unwieldy set of codes; and
9. Build possible relationships between the categories and subcategories.

To illustrate steps 1 to 9, the transcript files of any two informants (in this case, Tshoki’s and Gembo’s) were read in turn highlighting substantive statements (those that really make a point) in the responses to each question in the interview. The highlighted statements were assigned code words or phrases (Appendix 3.11). All the coded data segments from the

transcript files were examined closely and a master list of 42 statements was derived from these statements. The list was refined to a total of 24 statements from which were derived five thematic categories and subcategories by combining statements that were most closely related to each other (Appendix 3.12). Each of these categories was assigned a code (e.g. CD = Cultural diversity; SBFL = Status of Bhutanese folk literature). These codes were then applied to the rest of the transcripts by highlighting text segments that matched the categories and placing the codes in the right hand column of the transcript file (see Minichiello et al., 2008, p. 269). Data coded to each thematic category in all of the transcripts were then sorted and arranged under their thematic categories in the form of sub-files (see Minichiello et al., 2008, p. 269-270). Data now arranged thematically was read iteratively to build thematic descriptions in relation to each category and form answers to the research questions. The thematic descriptions focussed on patterns as much as regularities and irregularities, paradoxes and contrasts.

3.4.3.6 Presentation of the findings

Since the questionnaires and interviews were used to gather two different types of data from two different sources to answer the same research questions, the findings were triangulated and presented in the form of thematic descriptions to answer each research question separately in Chapter 4. Since some data from the questionnaires were analysed using simple content analysis techniques, relevant data were also presented in the form of comparison tables to show frequencies of informants' affirmation of thematic categories in the data. The findings from the interviews are presented mainly in the form of thematic descriptions with multiple perspectives, patterns, contrasting evidences, surprises and paradoxes, illustrated by informants' statements from the interviews. The research questions themselves provided the framework for presentation. The findings were further examined to look for deeper and "larger meanings" (Creswell, 2008) and implications for existent knowledge, policy and practice based on comparisons and contrasts with past literature and research and personal reflections about the data. These will be taken up in Chapter 6.

3.4.4 Action Research

The third stage of the design of this study was an action research conducted in a secondary school close to the teacher education college where I taught at the time this study was conducted. Data gathering in an action research context was necessitated by research questions 4 and 5 since they focussed primarily on change in secondary students' knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature in the context of curricula, pedagogy and student learning in a real classroom situation. The action research entailed working closely

with the students and the collaborating teacher for a considerable period in order to identify changes. The duration of the action research component was three and a half months from 22 July to 7 November, 2006. The participants comprised 24 students of Class 11 Science. The class was named this way as science was the organizational mechanism for class construction. It was selected by the collaborating teacher and approved by the principal. A teacher who taught English in this class was involved in the study and kept a research diary (of a sort) to record change in student behaviours and reactions as a result of the action research activities they engaged in.

The school-based curriculum reform of the 1960s influenced the growth of action research as a technique of research to improve pedagogical practice (Glesne, 1999; Elliott, 2001). The model was consonant with the constructivist-interpretive assumptions of theory-generation, insights and perspectives (see McNiff & Whitehead, 2006, pp. 63-67; Merriam, 1998, p. 4) that influenced this study. O’Leary (2004, as cited in Koshy, 2005, pp. 26-27) says that the purpose of action research is the “production of knowledge to produce change and the enacting of change to produce knowledge” (see also Greenwood & Levin, as cited in Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 94). The action research model with its emphasis on change, generation of knowledge and new understandings responded to the emphasis of research questions 4 and 5 on student knowledge, perceptions and attitudes. Hence, learning contexts were created in the action research where the students interacted with materials from Bhutanese folk literature, talked about and reflected upon them. The emphasis that action research places on new understandings and new meanings for the researcher as well as research participants (e.g. see Greenwood & Levin, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 94) helped to reinforce the idea of ‘improvement’ as a result of learning experiences and opportunities created for the research participants. Thus, the action research facilitated both learning and gathering of data.

The action research design was based on Kemmis and McTaggart’s (2000, p. 596; see also Elliott, 2001, pp. 70-71; Koshy, 2005, p. 4) model of an action research cycle. The model includes five important stages - identifying an initial idea, reconnaissance (situational analysis), leading to the specific action research question(s), planning, acting and observing, and reflecting (Elliott, 2001, pp. 70-71; Koshy, 2005, pp. 4-6). Each stage involves decisions and actions that determine and support those in the next stage. Figure 3.1 represents Kemmis and McTaggart’s model of an action research cycle with its spiral of activities. The first two stages of action research mentioned in this model are described below. The third stage - planning - was based on the information gathered through the situational analyses described below (see 3.4.4.1).

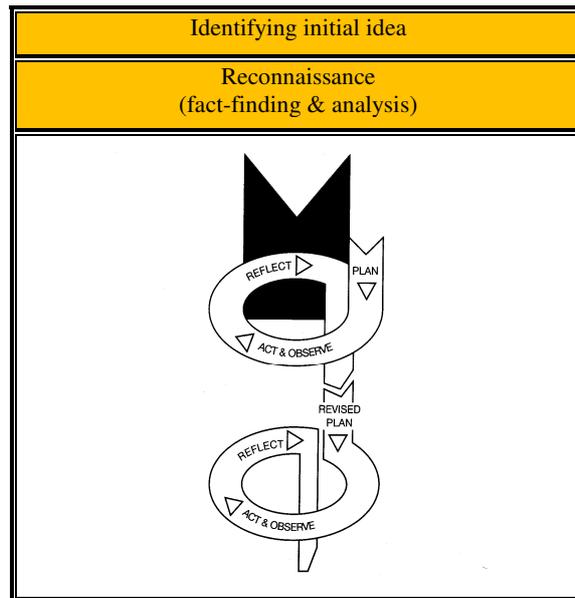


Figure 3.1 The action research spiral
 (Adapted from Elliott, 2001, pp. 70-71 and Koshy, 2005, pp. 4-6)

In the fourth stage - acting and observing - a series of lesson activities based on oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature planned for the students were carried out both inside and outside the classroom. Since the main aim of the research was to see improvement in the students' knowledge and attitude as a result of the learning experiences and opportunities created for them, data were gathered at different stages of the study using three different methods - questionnaires, interviews, and field diaries based on observation of students' responses to the lesson activities (see page 73).

The fifth stage in the present model of the action research - reflection - was important as it enabled me to assess the impact of the activities on students' knowledge and attitudes during and after the lessons so that the subsequent decisions and actions were improved. Donald Schon's (1995) concepts of 'reflection in action' and 'reflection on action' were especially useful. Since this was a classroom-based study with the aim to improve the students' knowledge and attitudes through relevant activities and pedagogical strategies, reflection in action or thinking about the impact of these activities and strategies on student learning, based on observation of classroom behaviour, helped to shape the lesson activities as they progressed. For the study as a whole, reflection on action was useful as it helped me to think back at the activities and strategies that I used in the action research and see how they impacted student learning in terms of change in knowledge and attitude as evidenced in the data.

Identifying an "initial idea" (see Figure 3.1) was the first crucial step in the action research model used in this study. The "initial idea" for this action research or the "state of affairs or

situation” that I wished to “change or improve on” (Elliott, 2001, p. 72) came from the literature as well as my beliefs and intuitions about the oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature as potential sources of cultural knowledge and their pedagogical advantages for teaching English in culturally familiar contexts. While the idea itself was significant to me in terms of how it would help to delve into the key issues raised by the central research problem identified in Chapter 1 (see page 8) and how I thought it contributed to knowledge in classroom-based action research in the Bhutanese context, it was important to consider the usefulness and viability of the study in light of theory and in the context of existing knowledge gaps in the Bhutanese context. Thus, in order to understand the nature of the initial research idea, a situational analysis (reconnaissance) was carried out. Classically the action research question is derived from the specific context of the workplace but in this case the situational analysis assisted in the refinement of understandings associated with the questions derived as set out above.

3.4.4.1 Situational analysis

The second stage of an action research process is the situational analysis or reconnaissance (see Figure 3.1). In order to understand how research questions 4 and 5 (see page 9) were going to be explored and what pedagogical strategies were required that would lead to positive learning experiences and opportunities for the students, external and internal situational analyses were carried out. The situational analysis helped to understand the wider and immediate contexts of the action research. For example, it was necessary to understand how far the importance of Bhutan’s rich oral literatures, emphasized much in government policy (see page 4), mentioned in several places above, was reflected in curricula, teaching practice and the students’ learning experiences. Thus, as part of the external situational analysis the information gathered from the teacher questionnaires and interviews from stages 1 and 2 of the study, secondary English curriculum documents and public exam papers helped to understand gaps in curricula, classroom practice and student learning and to determine what activities and pedagogical strategies were required to fill those gaps.

As part of the internal situational analysis, information was gathered from the school mainly from the principal, the collaborating teacher, the action research class, and the school library. The principal’s perspectives on the role of Bhutanese folk literature were valuable as they assisted me in designing the activities as well as in revising the items in the student questionnaire and interview questions. The action research design was also informed by the collaborating teacher’s perspectives on Bhutanese folk literature, especially in relation to curriculum and teaching practice that had gone before. In order to understand how the library resources supported the students’ knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese folk literature, information was also gathered from there to see what kinds of books in Bhutanese folk literature were available that supported the development of the students’ knowledge and

attitude. Preliminary information gathered from the students in my first meeting with them also helped me to design learning activities according to their existent knowledge and interest. Finally, to gain a closer understanding of what knowledge and attitudes students brought to class and how these could be reinforced, or improved over time, information was also gathered from the students through a questionnaire (Appendix 3.15). Thus, findings from the external and internal situational analyses enabled me to create relevant learning experiences and opportunities for the students in the form of a series of lesson activities that they participated in during the 3 months of action research in their school.

3.4.4.2 Planning data gathering and analytical procedures

Here I summarise the strategies followed by sections on each with more detail. Action research uses different methods of gathering data, such as questionnaires, interviews, document study, field diaries, checklists, inventories, systematic observations (Elliot, 2001, pp. 77-82; Koshy, 2005, p. 87-107) depending upon the question(s) being asked. In this project, I used questionnaires, interviews and research diary. Although as Richards (2005, p. 21) says, “Designing a project to address the same question with a variety of data is challenging”, the model allowed triangulation of data, methods and sources. The questionnaire (Appendix 3.15) was administered to the class once at the beginning and once at the end of the project. While the first one was aimed to gather baseline information on students’ knowledge and attitude, which was used in the situational analysis described above and to contribute to research question 4, later explored further through the interviews, the second one was aimed to gather data that was compared with data from the first one. Interviews were conducted three times with six students selected purposively from the action research class, once each at the beginning (contributing to the situational analysis), in the middle and at end of the project, retaining the same focus in questioning in all the three. So a total of eighteen interviews were held (six informants x three interviews). The interviews aimed to gather data that were compared in terms of change in the level of knowledge and attitude over time as a result of the intervention activities. In addition to the questionnaires and interviews, the collaborating teacher and I also used a field diary as “a valuable alternative way of gathering data and triangulating” (Wellington, 2006, p. 120). As Elliott (2001, p. 77) says, “Anecdotes; near-verbatim accounts of conversations and verbal exchanges; introspective accounts of one’s feelings, attitudes, motives” enabled the researcher and collaborating teacher to “reconstruct” impressions of the action research project. Although not written in any particular format, both the researcher’s and collaborating teacher’s handwritten diaries were converted to text documents and read closely (Alaszewski, 2006, p. 95) to identify significant statements that complemented or contrasted data from the questionnaires and interviews. The collaborating teacher’s diary and my (Dorji Thinley’s) diary are cited in the dissertation as “CT diary” and “DT diary” respectively.

3.4.4.3 Questionnaires

The questionnaire (Appendix 3.15) comprised 13 open and closed-ended questions aimed to gather basic information on the respondents' knowledge of and attitude towards Bhutanese folk literature. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10 were closed, while questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12 were a combination of both. Question 13 asked the respondents to write "Any other information or comment". Since the action research questions focussed on exploring change in knowledge and attitudes, the questionnaire items generally had knowledge or attitude orientations. The questions were focussed on either knowledge or attitude. Hence questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, and 12 were generally, but not strictly, knowledge oriented, while questions 7, 8, 9, and 11 were attitude oriented. Question 13 was aimed to gather both knowledge and attitude related responses.

3.4.4.3.1 *Designing and pretesting the questionnaire*

The questionnaire was pretested to make sure that the items were constructed accurately in terms of clarity and level of difficulty and comprehended without difficulty by students of Class 11. Thus the questionnaire, the 'Information sheet' and 'Consent form' were trialled with five randomly selected 1st year students (two women and three men) of the College of Education where I held a position. The questionnaire was trialled with this group because they were close to the action research participants in terms of age and level of educational experience, that is, "close to the realities of your actual study as possible" (Glesne, 1999, p. 38). As a result of the pretest, four out of the five respondents said the questionnaire was appropriate for Class 11 students while one respondent said it would be "slightly difficult" for the students (DT diary, 21/8/06, p. 7). Apart from these, the pretest respondents, although asked to do so, did not write any specific comments on any of the questionnaire items. The questionnaire was also given to the collaborating teacher for feedback. She commented that students of Class 11 would have no difficulty comprehending the items in the questionnaire and made no specific comments on any item in the questionnaire (DT diary, 15 August, 2005, p. 5).

3.4.4.3.2 *Analysing questionnaire data*

The questionnaires completed by the action research class at the beginning and at the end of the project were analysed separately so that beginning and end data were differentiated and compared. Each of the 24 completed questionnaires was assigned a respondent code ('R01', 'R02', 'R03' up to 'R24'). Responses to closed questions were simply counted. To illustrate, responses to each of the 13 items were analysed (e.g. number of respondents and percentage) separately on separate sheets for the beginning and end questionnaires. The counted responses were then transferred to a comparison table where the beginning and end data are presented in two columns (Appendix 3.16). This enabled comparison of beginning and end data in one

view. Since the total number of participants in the project was only twenty four, while percentages are indicated to provide some information on change, it is recognized that “making claims in percentage terms” based on a small number “does not make much impact” (Koshy, 2005, p. 110).

Responses to the open-ended questions were examined closely and significant statements that added to the findings to the research questions were highlighted. The steps that Gillham (2005, pp. 71-75) recommends for content analysis of transcripts were adapted and used to analyse the open-ended questions.

1. Go through the completed questionnaires in turn;
2. Read the responses to each question in turn highlighting substantive statements (those that really make a point);
3. Go through the highlighted statements and try to derive a set of emergent themes for each question;
4. On an analysis sheet, show their recurrence (e.g. indicate number and percentage of respondents who said similar kinds of things or assign tally marks /// to the statements); and
5. To see trend, present the findings (from step 4) in a comparison table with two columns (Appendix 3.16). Present data related to knowledge and attitudes from the first questionnaire in the left hand column and data from the second questionnaire in the right hand column.

The analysed responses presented in the comparison table (Appendix 3.16) enabled comparison of beginning and end data in one view and display of summarised findings to the research questions (Creswell, 2008, p. 261).

3.4.4.4 Interviews

These data were also collected to see change in knowledge and attitude over time (see above). While the questionnaires administered twice during the action research period were meant to see how the class as a whole responded to the action research activities and compare the data, the interviews were aimed to gain an intimate understanding of change over time as evident in responses to similar questions asked at three different times. Hence, the semi-structured interviews, which comprised nine open-ended questions and probes (Appendix 3.17), were aimed to gather responses which were “richer and more informative than questionnaire data” (Koshy, 2005, p. 92) and which generated thematic categories for interpretation. Since all the questions were open-ended, the possibility of digressions was foreseen. Hence, each question was supported by a number of probes that captured the key issues raised by the central research problem and the research questions (Appendix 3.1). For example, the probes in question 1 (“What Bhutanese folk literatures do you know”), explored related issues such as the language of these folk literatures (including English), their opinions about the level of their knowledge at that time, and the factors that influenced their knowledge.

The thematic categories covered by the questions (e.g., Bhutanese folk literature and cultural values, and the status of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature) were influenced by the knowledge sets that emerged from the review of literatures (see Chapter 2). Also, the knowledge gaps indicated by data from the teacher questionnaires as well as those from the students' first questionnaires (which preceded these interviews) helped to include probes to explore emergent issues such as the cultural and pedagogical advantages of Bhutanese folk literature (e.g., question 4 and 6). Each of the nine questions was meant to seek answers to one or the other of the two research questions. Therefore, although they were not intended to be rigidly knowledge or attitude oriented, generally questions 1 and 2 aimed to gather knowledge-oriented responses, questions 5 and 6 attitude-oriented responses, and questions 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 a mix of knowledge and attitude-oriented responses.

3.4.4.4.1 Selection of participants

The selection of the six interview participants was based on the principles of stratification and purposive sampling. Hence, based on stratification, three factors - gender, language, and home district - were considered to ensure representativeness. Thus, a boy and girl each from east, west and south Bhutan were selected. Purposive sampling enabled me and the collaborating teacher to use our judgments about who will be the "most useful" (see Babbie, 2004, p. 183) for the interviews in terms of the informants' ability to talk with clarity. To maintain anonymity, the six informants were each assigned a pseudonym (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8 Selection of participants

Informant (Pseudonym)	Gender	Home Dzongkhag/District	Home language
Khandro	Girl	Samtse	Lhotshamkha (Nepali)
Selki	Girl	Chukha	Dzongkha
Chonyi	Girl	Pemagatshel	Shar chopkha (Tshangla)
Rabsel	Boy	Dagana	Dzongkha
Jigdrel	Boy	Lhuntse	Kurtopkha & Shar chopkha
Wangyal	Boy	Samtse	Lhotshamkha (Nepali)

3.4.4.4.2 Data gathering and analytical procedures

As in the teacher interviews, all the 18 interviews were recorded on a Sony digital voice recorder and an audio file for each interview was created on the computer. The informant's permission was sought for tape-recording the interview. Koshy (2005, p. 94) says, "Interviewing may not always be a suitable method for use with children who are not confident speakers and those with language problems" and that "The use of tape recorders may intimidate some students". Therefore, efforts were made to minimize feelings of anxiety in the informants. For example, all the interviews were held in a familiar setting in the school and I refrained from stating my opinions or being judgmental at the interviews and tried to

create a warm, welcoming and informal atmosphere. The informants were told that segments from their transcripts would be used in my dissertation and that they would be quoted anonymously. In the context of an action research involving students, Koshy (2005, p. 92) suggests that the researcher must “Make sure that the interviews are not too long” and that “About half an hour to 40 minutes is about right”. The three interviews with each student averaged less than 30 minutes ranging from 15-22 minutes. Following the same procedures and methods that I used to transcribe the teacher interviews, all of the eighteen audio recordings (six informants x three interviews) of the student interviews were converted to word documents, which were then organized in the form of transcript files as described earlier in the chapter.

3.4.4.4.3 Examining data for evidence of knowledge and attitude

All the eighteen interviews were arranged in the form of transcript files using the same format as the one used for the teacher interviews described earlier, with three columns and an information box on the top of the table (see Appendix 3.11). In the “Para” column on the left hand side, R2.2 means paragraph 2 of Rabsel’s 2nd interview, K1.1 means Paragraph 1 of Khandro’s 1st interview, and S3.3 means paragraph 3 of Selki’s third interview. Coding steps 1 to 9 described earlier in the chapter (see page 67) were applied in the same manner to build a set of five to seven thematic categories from the coded data. Once all the transcripts were coded using the codes assigned to these categories (e.g., CV = cultural values), the coded transcripts were examined once again for evidences of knowledge and attitude separately. Accordingly, knowledge and attitude codes were assigned to text segments in coded data (e.g., CD-k = cultural diversity - knowledge; CV-a = cultural values - attitude). In order to see evidence of change in the level of student knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature overtime, relevant knowledge and attitude dimensions were used. That is, using these dimensions, corresponding data segments from the first, second, and third interviews were examined separately so that evidence of change, or absence of it, over time could be compared (see below). Examining the data in terms of specific dimensions of knowledge and attitude helped to understand and interpret the interview data within a reliable theoretical framework.

Indicators of change within the knowledge dimensions

For knowledge, three knowledge dimensions called ‘productive pedagogies’ - ‘deep knowledge’, ‘knowledge as problematic’, and ‘cultural knowledges’ from the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (Hayes et al., 2007, pp. 43-111), and one dimension from the revised version of Bloom’s taxonomy - ‘metacognitive knowledge’ (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 214) - were used. As discussed in Chapter 2 (see page 43), the three productive pedagogies provided a reliable analytical tool for understanding, interpreting and judging data segments

in terms of specific levels of knowledge in each dimension. Metacognitive knowledge was a useful tool for analyzing data segments that demonstrated the students' reflective thinking about how cultural constructs influenced the way they viewed themselves and the world.

Indicators of 'deep knowledge' were sought in data segments from the three interviews separately that showed an informant's ability to demonstrate "relatively complex understandings" of central concepts and discover relationships, solve problems, construct explanations, and draw conclusions" (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 43; see also QSRLS, 2001, p. 7-8). Indicators of change in relation to 'knowledge as problematic' were generally sought in data segments that showed evidence of the informant's ability to understand knowledge as constructed or "contested, rather than as a fixed body of information; and as subject to political, social and cultural influences and implications" and the ability to explain multiple and "potentially conflicting forms of knowledge" (Hayes et al., 2007, pp. 43 & 91; see also QSRLS, 2001, p.4). Indicators of change in relation to 'cultural knowledges' were sought in data segments that showed evidence of the informant's ability to value different and "non-dominant culture's beliefs, languages, practices and ways of knowing" (Hayes et al., 2007, pp. 68-69; see also QSRLS, 2001, p. 5). Indicators of change in relation to 'metacognitive knowledge' were sought in data segments that showed evidence of the informant's ability to demonstrate "knowledge of cognition in general as well as awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 214).

Indicators of change within the attitudinal dimensions

To examine data for change in attitude, three attitude dimensions were used: 'affect' (Greenwald, 1989, as cited in Olson & Zanna, 1993, p. 119), 'judgment' (Painter, 2003, p. 189), and 'appreciation' (see Martin's (2003, p. 173-174). These dimensions were used because they allowed data to be examined in terms of change over time. For example, indicators of change in relation to 'affect' were generally sought in data segments from the two questionnaires and three interviews that showed evidence of the informant's ability to state explicit, robust, positive, and knowledge-based expressions of affect like interest, desire, trust, commitment, pleasure, surprise, excitement, happiness, pride, delight, engagement (see Painter 2003, p. 189) and, potentially at least, to develop these over time. The attitude of 'judgment', as Painter (2003, p. 189) puts it, may "evaluate artistic, intellectual, sporting, professional or other products and processes". Indicators of change were sought in data segments over time that showed evidence of each informant's ability to state explicit, robust, positive, and knowledge-based expressions of judgment like the ability to evaluate "worth and reputation" (Painter 2003, p. 199). Drawing upon Martin's (2003, p. 173-174) definition of the attitude of 'appreciation' as "affect recontextualized to manage taste (what things are worthy)", again indicators of change were sought in data segments over time that showed evidence of the informant's ability to state explicit, robust, positive, and knowledge-based

expressions of appreciation like “likeability”, “usability”, “familiarity”, “value”, “sensory impact”, “social appropriateness”, “novelty”, “social value”, and “viability” (Painter, 2003, pp. 203-204).

Comparing the data for evidence of change

As presented in Chapter 5, after all the transcripts were coded for knowledge and attitude, the knowledge and attitude dimensions were applied on particular data segments to analyse them in terms of change over time. To do this, the most significant data segment, one each for knowledge and attitude and related to one of the thematic categories, was selected from the transcript files of particular informants’ first, second and third interviews. The selected data segments were then transferred to a comparison table (Appendix 3.18) created separately for each informant (see also Creswell, 2008, p. 261). This helped me to compare the data segments from the three interviews in terms of change in level of knowledge and change in attitude. In order to avoid biased selection and biased comparison of data segments, five criteria were used (e.g., see Creswell, 2008, pp. 251-252). First, only data segments in the transcript file that reflected knowledge or attitude in relation to the five themes were selected; second, data segments that were qualitatively the most important, significant, striking and meaningful in terms of knowledge and attitude in the relevant time period were selected; third, the most recurrent knowledge and attitude statements were selected; fourth, statements that best represented change in the level of knowledge and change in the quality of attitude were selected; and fifth, the comparison of data segments from the three interviews focussed primarily on the informant’s use of knowledge and attitude words (e.g., nouns, noun groups, verbs, adjectives, and groups of other words) in relation to the thematic categories. Significant data outside these categories were also noted.

Additionally, the collaborating teacher’s diary and my diary were read closely to identify statements that provided complementary or contrasting evidence to the data from questionnaires and interviews.

3.4.4.5 Presentation of the findings

Although data were gathered differently through questionnaires and interviews, the findings were meant to answer the same set of research questions. Data gathered from the action research were examined to see evidence of change in the students’ level of knowledge and change in attitude over time in relation to folk literature as a result of the learning experiences and opportunities that the students availed in the action research lessons. Therefore, in Chapter 5 triangulated data are presented to show instances of change or lack of it, in relation to the particular themes (topics) identified. Since some questionnaire data were descriptive statistics, responses from the first and second questionnaires in relation to the same topic are

compared in terms of percentage of respondents who said similar kinds of things. Findings from the interview data are presented in the form of thematic descriptions of the informants' responses from the first, second and third interviews compared in terms of evidence of change. Findings from the interviews are presented mainly in the form of thematic descriptions with multiple perspectives, patterns, contrasting evidences, surprises and paradoxes, illustrated by informants' statements from the interviews. Data from diaries were interposed to amplify or contrast. The findings were organised by research questions and presented in Chapter 5. The findings were further examined for deeper and "larger meanings" (Creswell, 2008) and implications for existent knowledge, policy and practice based on comparisons and contrasts with past literature and research and personal reflections about the data. These are taken up in Chapter 6.

3.5 Addressing quality

Since the study was based on the constructivist-interpretive paradigm which recognizes the role of interpretation and the researcher's intuitions and reflections about the data, it was important to address the issue of quality. The four quality criteria that Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1999, pp. 192-194) proposed for assessing the "rigor or trustworthiness" of research (Lincoln, 2002, p. 329) were applied. It was important to know what aspects of the study needed especially to respond to quality questions. Merriam (1998, p. 199), for example, recommends that the "way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented" should be evaluated for validity and reliability (see also Kvale, 1996, p. 235; Minichiello et al., 2008, pp. 182-183; Richards, 2005, p. 43). These two terms are directly associated with the positivist paradigm whereas the four Guba and Lincoln criteria - credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability - were relevant to the study because they reflected the values of the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, such as their emphasis on "commitment of inquiry to fairness", "learning of respondents", and "open and democratic sharing of knowledge rather than the concentration of inquiry knowledge in the hands of a privileged elite" (Lincoln, 2002, p. 330).

The criterion of 'credibility' helped the study to respond to the need for adequacy of methods used to understand the research problem. This understanding enabled the study to triangulate methods, data sources and data types in both domains of inquiry in this study - teachers' and students' perceptions - and these were set out clearly in the research management matrix (Appendix 3.1). The quality criterion of 'transferability' was reflected in the study's use of theoretically reliable concepts and models to guide data collection and analysis so that the same process could be used in similar circumstances (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 192). For example, the design of the questionnaires, their pre-test and improvement before they

were administered, and their thematic and content analyses were aimed to ensure quality. Also, reliable models and concepts were used in the study with attention to quality. The criterion of 'dependability' reminded the study of the need to guard against the notion that there is only one way of interpreting reality. Finally, 'confirmability' helped me to look critically at claims about the findings (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 195) by valuing multiple perspectives, contrasting evidences, and paradoxes in the data. This criterion was especially useful in dealing with data from the action research as it was examined for evidences of change or absence of it, in which the chances of researcher bias were high.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter described the design and methodology employed in this study and argued why the central issue raised by the research problem, whose contexts were further refined and clarified by the research questions, required a constructivist-interpretivist epistemology as the supporting paradigm to explore it. Supported by this paradigm, the largely qualitative multimethod three stage design allowed action in context, interaction, talk, multiple perspectives, meaning making and interpretations based on personal intuitions and reflections. The primary data gathering and analytical procedures and methods employed in each stage of the study were described. The chapter presented the methodology as an organic entity where links among the research paradigm, research design, methods, ethics, procedures, and quality criteria must be made visible. Findings from the first three research questions are presented in Chapter 4 and those from the action research are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

SECONDARY ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

4.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter 3 data were gathered from a total of 181 secondary English teachers in Bhutan through a questionnaire comprising open and closed-ended items, which were analysed to see frequency of responses to pre-existent themes and themes that emerged from the data. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to find out how teachers perceived the role of oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature in English as reflected in their school's formal and informal curricula and pedagogical beliefs and practices. Data were also gathered from six English teachers (three men and three women) selected purposively from among the 94 questionnaire respondents who had stated in their completed questionnaires willingness to be interviewed (see page 65) to delve more deeply into the issues from the teacher questionnaire analysis. The interview data analysis produced five thematic categories (see Appendix 3.12).

The first theme - '*Bhutanese folk literature and cultural values*' - generally included notions of customs and practices, beliefs, superstitions, cultural objects, rituals, spirituality, identity, art and nature. The second theme - '*Bhutanese folk literature and cultural diversity*' - generally included the informants' knowledge of and attitude in relation to the recognition of, and respect for cultural difference, and inclusiveness in the context of school. The third theme - '*role of Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum*' - generally included the curriculum content (or lack of it), its enactment in the classroom context, the students' learning experience, and extracurricular activities in school. The fourth theme - '*status of Bhutanese folk literature in English*' - generally included the esteem in which the informants held the style and standard of Bhutanese folk literature, particularly in relation to its aesthetic and cultural qualities. The fifth theme - '*role of English*' - generally included the advantages of English translation of folk literature for Bhutanese culture, the status of English in Bhutan, and the status of English as a global language and its implications for Bhutanese culture. The interview data from all the six interviews were arranged according to these thematic categories and examined further for deeper analysis of perspectives. As a result of these analyses, three broad domains of teacher perceptions emerged from the data.

Since the study was carried out in the context of the formal and informal dimensions of the secondary English curricula and the English teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices, the

data were analysed in relation to these dimensions. I drew upon Posner's (2004, pp. 12-14) definition of concurrent curricula and use 'official curriculum' to mean the curriculum "described in formal documents", 'operational curriculum' to mean the curriculum "embodied in actual teaching practices and tests", 'hidden curriculum' to mean the "norms and values not openly acknowledged by teachers or school officials", and 'extra curriculum' to mean the "planned experiences outside the formal curriculum". Considered within the framework of these definitions, it was important to find out how the official (or prescribed) curriculum influenced teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices in relation to Bhutanese folk literature. If the curriculum is rigid, prescriptive and exam-driven, then the scope for innovative practice would likely be limited. It is important to consider teachers' perceptions about Bhutanese folk literature in relation to the operational (or enacted) curriculum because it is in the enactment of the curriculum in the classroom context where the role and status of Bhutanese folk literature can actually be assessed. It is important to consider perceptions in light of the hidden curriculum because the non-curricular norms, values and beliefs that exist in the school, may influence the teachers' and students' understandings and experience of folk literature. And these values and beliefs may come from extraneous assumptions (e.g., about the value of high-culture literature in English). Schools in Bhutan emphasize the importance of extracurricular activities for learning cultural values (e.g., see CAPSD, 2007, p. v; PPD, 2003, p. 36). Therefore, it is important to see how the role of folk literature is reflected in the schools' extra curricula. Although it is a contested term, I use 'pedagogy' not in the sense of mere instruction or transmission of information by teacher to student but in a more learner-centric sense of teaching beliefs and practices that recognize learning as an active process where learners are "engaged in the generation and evaluation of knowledge", and are therefore "active constructors of meaning" (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999, p. 1). Since the research questions focussed on teachers' knowledge and perceptions about the role of Bhutanese folk literature in relation to curriculum and pedagogy, Posner's (2004) and Watkins & Mortimore's (1999) definitions provided a useful framework for examining the data pedagogically.

In this chapter I present thematic descriptions of findings from the questionnaire and interview data and show how they respond to the central issues raised by research questions 1, 2 and 3. In the thematic descriptions, presented separately as findings to each research question, I bring out multiple perspectives, recurring regularities in the response pattern, surprises, contrary evidences and paradoxes. I then draw a set of broad generalizations from the thematic descriptions under each research question which were then analysed and discussed further in light of theory in Chapter 6. The thematic descriptions are presented in a detailed and mostly non-evaluative style so that they create a rich context for further analysis and discussion in Chapter 6. As mentioned above, from the examination of data within the five thematic categories, three domains of teacher perceptions were derived, each of which is presented here as the findings to one of the research questions. Thus, presented logically, in the first domain, which answers research question 1, the informants' (teachers') own

perceptions about their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and knowledge of pedagogy are presented. In the second domain, which addresses research question 2, the informants' perceptions about how their schools' literary and social influences support the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge are described. And in the third domain, (research question 3), the informants' perceptions about the cultural values of Bhutanese folk literature are presented. In doing so, the three domains represent a progressively widening frame of reference of secondary English teachers' views about Bhutanese folk literature - from views about own knowledge to views about school to views about the wider considerations of culture.

4.2 English teachers' knowledge and perceptions

A teacher knows something not understood by others, presumably the students. The teacher can transform understanding, performance skills, or desired attitudes or values into pedagogical representations and actions. These are ways of talking, showing, enacting, or otherwise representing ideas so that the unknowing can come to know, those without understanding can comprehend and discern, and the unskilled can become adept. Thus, teaching necessarily begins with a teacher's understanding of what is to be learned and how it is to be taught (Shulman, 1999, p. 108).

The central issue raised by the research problem was explored in part through research question 1: *How do secondary English teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature influence their teaching practices?* The quality of students' learning experiences is influenced by the teachers' knowledge of content and knowledge of pedagogy. This influence is perceived by policy makers, educational administrators and teachers in Bhutan generally. In exploring English teachers' knowledge and attitude in relation to the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum, it was necessary to find out how these influenced their pedagogical practice, hence student learning. As I said above, answers to this research question were sought in data gathered from secondary teachers through questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Answers from interview questions 1 to 6 and within the responses to items 2, 3 and 5 in the questionnaire data provided the bases for the analyses. The findings to research question 1 from these two data sets are triangulated and presented in terms of three broad topics - perceptions about knowledge of genre, knowledge of pedagogy, and factors affecting teaching practice, including attitude towards Bhutanese folk literature. I will address each of these in turn.

4.2.1 Perceptions about knowledge of genre

In this section I consider secondary English teachers' perceptions about their knowledge of the oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature in English. Within the scope of research question 1, it was important to understand teachers' knowledge of the different genres of Bhutanese folk literature and to whom they traced the knowledge source, as their personal understandings influenced the way students perceive their knowledge and the source of their knowledge. Content analysis of item 3 of the questionnaire (see Appendix 3.5) showed that the respondents differentially knew the folk genres mentioned in the item; the frequency of responses affirming knowledge was generally low. This is illustrated in Table 4.9 which shows the frequency of responses to different aspects of item 3 of the questionnaire. Though 90 (50%) of total respondents said they enjoyed folktales, 75 (41%) said they enjoyed the *dpe-gtam* (proverb), 54 (30%) said they enjoyed the *lozey* (ballad), only 48 (27%) said they enjoyed the *tsangmo* (a type of verse exchanged orally between competing teams). Fewer respondents indicated they enjoyed lesser known genres mentioned in the question. For example, only 26 (14%) respondents said they enjoyed riddles, and 32 (18%) respondents said they enjoyed animal stories. Only 15 (8%) respondents indicated "Other" genres, which mostly included genres such as folksong, religious biographies, and legends. These figures indicate that the informants' enjoyment was confined mainly to the ones mentioned in item 3 of the questionnaire but this might easily have been influenced by the fact that these were named, that is, that the list was not exhaustive. Overall, the majority of secondary English teachers did not have an extensive knowledge of the genres of Bhutanese folk literature. This is a paradoxical situation of scarce knowledge in a culture that has a rich tradition of oral literatures. Later in the chapter I describe the reasons that teachers attributed to their generally low level of knowledge.

Table 4.9 Frequency of teachers' responses regarding enjoyment of Bhutanese folk literature (questionnaire item 03, N, (%))

Categories	Knowledge of Bhutanese Folk Literature								Language of genre		Where it was learnt			From whom/How it was learnt				
	Folktales	<i>Dpe-gtam</i> (Proverb)	<i>Lozey</i> (Ballad)	<i>Tsangmo</i> (Rebuttal poetry)	Riddles	Animal stories	Ghost stories	Other	Dzongkha	Other	Home	School	Other	Parents/Other	Teachers	Friends	Own reading	Other
Frequency of response	90 (50%)	75 (41%)	54 (30%)	48 (27%)	26 (14%)	32 (18%)	51 (28%)	15 (8%)	110 (61%)	97 (54%)	98 (54%)	112 (62%)	13 (7%)	76 (42%)	42 (23%)	44 (24%)	62 (34%)	43 (24)

Analysis of item 3 also showed that most of the folk literatures that teachers said they enjoyed were accessed in Dzongkha. Whereas 110 respondents (61%) said the language of access was Dzongkha, 97 (54%) said they accessed the genres in "other" languages. This shows the

importance of Dzongkha as a language of access to Bhutanese folk literature, and therefore, to Bhutanese culture. Data also showed that the respondents learnt Bhutanese folk literature mostly from parents, teachers and friends, so the influence of home and school is significant. So 76 respondents (42%) attributed their knowledge to parents, 62 (34%) attributed it to their own reading, 44 (24%) attributed it to friends, 42 (23%) attributed it to teachers, and 43 (24%) to “other” sources of knowledge, which mostly included the curriculum, school literary activities, social interaction, oral performance, teaching the students, and from older people. With regard to where the teachers learnt their genres, again the influence of school and home is significant. While 112 respondents (62%) mentioned school, 98 (54%) mentioned home, and only a small number - 13 (7%) mentioned “other”.

In the six interviews the informants mostly made ambivalent statements about their knowledge of folk literature. While some of the informants were able to exemplify their claims to knowledge, some made only banal affirmations of it. While they mostly said they had learnt folk literature from their parents and grandparents, they also said they did not remember it anymore, evident in statements such as “I cannot remember” (Yuden 8, p. 1), “I don’t exactly remember” (Lhazom 7, p. 2), and “I don’t have much idea” (Norbu 7, p. 4). Clearly recall of genre names was quite different from knowing actual examples. For example, Gembo (6, p. 2) said “I know some folktales like the story of the moon and about the wolf” and some ballads, Yuden mentioned the “Namthars” (religious biographies), the story of Drukpa Kuenley, Ap Wang Drugyel, and ballads. Tshoki said many stories she had heard had “faded away” yet she gave an example:

I have listened to many stories that my grandmother told me but I think most of them have faded away from my memory because I never tell them to my children. And one of the proverbs that I remember says, ‘It is easy to exaggerate to the size of an elephant the small mistakes that one finds in others and easy to ignore one’s own even the size of a blunder’ (Tshoki 7, p. 2).

Conversely, Tashi mentioned a few genre names like “folktales, proverbs, riddles ... that I heard from my parents and of course from my friends” (Tashi 7, p. 2), Lhazom said it was hard to remember any:

There are so many riddles I heard in my language. My language is Kurtoepkha. I hope I can remember one. I have been teaching in western Bhutan for long and it has been long that I haven’t said any, no I haven’t. I don’t get a chance to talk in my language. So I don’t exactly remember but I did listen to others saying them (riddles) and the competitions (on riddles) we used to have in our village. But now I don’t exactly remember these. Since they are in their oral, and not, written form, it’s hard to remember them (Lhazom 7, p. 2).

Unlike Lhazom, Norbu’s perception about lack of knowledge of folk literature presents an interesting contrast to the other informants’ statements, suggesting an increased sense of alienation from his own language and a reluctance to recall knowledge of folk literature in that language, owing perhaps to the need to “lean on Dzongkha”, as he said.

I am not very comfortable speaking my own language. Of course, I heard folktales and I also read some books on epics and legends. As such I don't have much idea about these. I don't feel very comfortable even with the proverbs in my language. I better lean on Dzongkha than on my own language (Norbu 7, p. 4).

Lhazom's and Norbu's statements about lack of knowledge in their own languages draw attention to the cultural assumptions and beliefs English teachers bring to class and how these values influence the way they view the process of learning a language. Their perception of lack of knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature was indicated earlier by the frequency of responses they made in relation to what genres of folk literature they enjoyed (see Table 4.9 (page 85)). They also underscore concerns about loss of language leading to loss of culture in contradistinction with the cultural ideals of GNH. This will be taken up later in the chapter.

4.2.2 Perceptions about knowledge of pedagogy

Since knowledge of the discipline influences teachers' pedagogical knowledge or practice, it was important within the scope of research question 1 to also find out how teachers used the resources available in the oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature in their teaching of the English curriculum. Findings provided insights into what genres of Bhutanese folk literature teachers used and what kinds of learning activities were used. There were also findings on what factors influenced their ability to explore the pedagogical advantages of Bhutanese folk literature. Item 5a and 5b of the questionnaire asked the respondents to "*Name 2-3 teaching/learning activities that you use in teaching of Bhutanese folk literature to stimulate student interest and motivation...*" and indicate whether the "*learning activities in 5 (a)*" were "*assessed*", and if so, how they were assessed. Analysis of data resulted in five thematic categories, which helped to answer research question 1. Table 4.10 shows the frequency of responses to each thematic category.

Table 4.10 Frequency of teachers' responses regarding pedagogical knowledge (questionnaire item 05, N, (%))

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
	Students and teachers narrate folk stories/tell <i>dpe gtam</i> (proverbs).	Students carry out writing project (collecting stories, proverbs from the community).	Students engage in folk literature competitions (e.g. telling stories, proverbs, and riddles).	Projects, presentations and performances are assessed.	Very little or no formal assessment is carried out.
Frequency of response	123 (68%)	44 (24%)	19 (10%)	97 (54%)	48 (27%)

As mentioned in Chapter 1 (see page 8) and Chapter 3 (see page 58), to understand the role and status of Bhutanese folk literature in the context of curriculum, it was important to find

out what teachers said about teaching, learning and assessment. Findings showed that although a majority of teachers said that narration of genres such as folktales and proverbs was part of their pedagogical practice, there was not much evidence of student engagement in exploratory tasks that encouraged them to move beyond the confines of the official curriculum. As illustrated in Table 4.10, first, 123 (68%) respondents said they (students and teachers) narrated folk stories and/or used the *pde-gtam* (proverbs) in their lessons. On the other hand, only 44 (24%) respondents said their students carried out writing projects related to folk literature in their communities. And even fewer respondents - only 19 (10%) respondents said students had opportunities for literary competitions related to folk literature within the scope of the English curriculum. This suggests that in the context of the schools' formal and informal curricula there was not much scope for the students to explore the cultural resources available in their own and other languages to support and enrich the quality of their learning. Findings also showed that only 97 (54%) respondents said that projects, presentations and performances related to Bhutanese folk literature that the students carried out were assessed. This is consistent with the findings I reported in Chapter 2 (see page 51) in relation to the status of Bhutanese folk literature in public exams.

Data from the six transcript files showed a similar pattern. First, some of the informants described, with examples, how they used the funds of knowledge available in their students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds in their English lessons. Second, and conversely, some informants stated that they never used these resources in their teaching practice. Lastly, most of the informants stated reasons why they were not able to use Bhutanese folk literature in their English lessons, which are discussed later as professional factors affecting pedagogical practice.

As highlighted in chapter 2, English courses in the pre-service B.Ed secondary programme of the two colleges of education in Bhutan made no mention of pedagogical methods that develop teacher candidates' ability to understand and respect "diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures" or make "use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts" (NCTE, 2010, p. 1). Some of the informants confirmed this. For example, Tashi (18, p. 5) recounted that the teacher training curriculum did not have any content related to Bhutanese folk literature and that "we did not have a very good opportunity to learn about it". Lhazom's statement corroborated this.

There was nothing taught about Bhutanese folk literature in the teacher training college ... We just read some on our own and we found it very interesting (Lhazom 18, p. 5)

As did Norbu's:

We were never exposed to our own literature, never told about the importance of our own literature and the folktales that we have in our culture. Also may be, we did not get ample opportunity to read these materials (Norbu 14, p. 6).

Tshoki's and Tashi's experience, however, points to the possibility that even without pedagogical knowledge acquired in teacher training, positive attitudes and practices may exist in the schools. They used some pedagogical strategies in teaching the official English curriculum that encouraged the students to explore the literary resources of their own languages, translate them into English and share the writings with the class. As their statements suggest, Tshoki's and Tashi's teaching strategies would likely have sensitized the students to the existence of rich oral literatures in their own and other languages in Bhutan.

Apparently the strategies created opportunities for the students to learn English literacy skills in the familiar context of their cultural experience.

I think in many classes that I teach English I have encouraged the students to come up with maxims and proverbs in their own dialect or language, and then we have shared it in the class. And I have also encouraged the students to choose from among the maxims that I translate into English and write on the board as they tell them in class. After I have written them down on the board I ask them to choose one from the list and write stories focussed on its theme (Tshoki 8, p. 3).

In my English class we used riddles. For example, I would tell the class, "A beautiful woman with long hair sitting behind the door" or say it as "There is a woman with long hair sitting behind the door and who never comes out" and ask the class "Who am I?" This would help the class to think and the students who had heard the riddle before would reply at once and say "It is a broom!" (Tashi 7, p. 2).

Faced with the double burden of having to successfully complete the prescribed official curriculum successfully and meet the schools' and parents' expectations for children to show high performance in terms of marks in annual exams, teachers are often compelled to orient their classroom teaching to what is generally believed to be important for exams and the successful completion of the prescribed official curriculum. Yet, as evident from these informants' feedback, the enacted curriculum can be much more meaningful and richer in terms of student learning than what the official curriculum allows. Some of the interview informants also made claims about how they used the folk genres to enrich or add variety to the teaching methods they used in their English lessons.

It is hard to remember. Yes, we relate Bhutanese folktales to non-Bhutanese texts. For instance, when we teach genres like the satire or allegory we try to relate these forms to our own Bhutanese text. And we also make use of Bhutanese proverbs (those are lovely ones), whenever necessary, in our English lessons (Lhazom 7, p. 2).

Although the old curriculum did not have much Bhutanese folk literature in our classes we had lots of activities in which students came up with stories, their own poems, and sometimes old ones which they translated on their own (Yuden 11, p. 3).

It would appear that Lhazom and Yuden had used general teaching principles and incorporated Bhutanese folk literatures into their students' learning despite the fact that they

had not learnt specifically about this in their college. They clearly showed that use of Bhutanese folk literature is advantageous.

Data also showed contrasting evidence. For example, informants also said they hadn't explored oral literature available in the students' languages, dialects or cultures in their English lessons because, as Gembo said (see below), it did not form part of the activities included in the prescribed curriculum. For instance, Tashi said "To date" he had not given a project and that he was "planning to give some project work" related to folk literature because students would enjoy doing it (Tashi 13, p. 3). Regarding the possibility of engaging students in folk literature projects (e.g. interviewing people in the village, compiling oral texts and writing them down), Gembo confirmed Tashi's statement:

I have never given activities related to Bhutanese folk literature to my students. These kinds of activities were not included in the list of activities given in the textbook. And there are several other reasons why such activities were not carried out. I have never done it once. I have never taken the students out of the class (Gembo10, p. 3).

Lhazom said "synthesizing text and life experience" was what "we carried out most of the time" but "never" created opportunities for the students to collect "oral literature from their own local languages". She said, "I have never tried doing that one" (Lhazom 13, p. 3).

Thus, though a minority had used materials from Bhutanese folk literature in their classroom practice, the general pattern of responses indicated prevalence of a conformist, syllabus-bound approach to teaching of English. From a constructivist-interpretive perspective, such an approach would likely limit the learning opportunities and experiences that will enable the students to engage in an active process of knowledge generation and meaning making in the context of their cultural experiences. Also, as envisaged in the English curriculum documents, it is expected that teachers are able to design learning experiences and opportunities for the students that allow them to "explore the social and cultural environment of Bhutan" (CAPSD, 2002a, p. 1), as a result of which they are able to "reflect" on the "different ways in which people discover meanings in their lives" (CAPSD, 2005a, p.3; CAPSD 2005b, p. 3). As the findings have shown, while English teachers' recognize the pedagogical and cultural advantages of Bhutanese folk literature and are positively disposed towards the genres, nothing much was done in their own classrooms because of factors that affected their pedagogical knowledge and practice. I discuss these next.

4.2.3 Teachers' attitudinal dispositions

Within the scope of Research question 1, it was important to understand what attitudes English teachers held in relation to folk literature and if they believed that it had pedagogical advantages. Unlike knowledge of genre which was not very evident in the data related to what

genres teachers enjoyed most (see Table 4.9), English teachers' positive attitude towards Bhutanese folk literature was quite evident in the pattern of responses that emerged from the data. Affective statements about Bhutanese folk literature and its pedagogical values were evident in the interview informants' expressions of desire to enhance their knowledge of genre and knowledge of how to use the resources available in the students' own languages or dialects. Tshoki (15, p. 4) said, "They (English teachers) have a desire to learn more"; Tashi (15, p. 4) said, "Definitely there should be improvement"; Lhazom said, "Yes, there are English teachers who are really interested to read Bhutanese folk literature"; and Yuden said, "Yes I think they (English teachers) need to improve". Their improved knowledge of folk literature would then enable them to teach English in a cultural context that would give the students opportunities to listen to stories, talk about stories and write down stories that they research in their communities. For example, Gembo said:

I think if we can design such activities for the students they will be really excited because they will then get a chance to go out and talk with their parents, listen to stories because they like listening to stories, and they will be able to write down the stories that they have heard. It will be a very meaningful experience (for the students) if such kinds of activities are designed for them. But it is never done. It was never done. (Gembo 11, p. 3).

The desire expressed by some teachers to improve their knowledge and practice of folk literature in their classroom teaching suggests possibilities ahead. In fact, as Gembo pointed out (see above), the pedagogical and cultural advantages of Bhutanese folk literatures for student learning could be explored within the scope of the English curriculum in school.

Interestingly, the informants also attributed the teachers' and students' ability to use Bhutanese folk literature in their teaching and learning to their 'rural' backgrounds (see Norbu and Gembo below). For example, Tashi (17, p. 5) said, teachers "who are born in the village" are better able to teach Bhutanese folk literature naturally than teachers "who are born in town". The former teachers are able to do this because of their experience with parents, friends and also their experience in a rural environment. Norbu's and Gembo's statements illustrate how teachers ruralise Bhutanese culture.

The students are comfortable with the names (in Bhutanese folk literature). Since most of the students come from rural areas in Bhutan they are able to make sense of the setting. I definitely feel this will improve our students' learning and their perception in future as well (Norbu 1, p. 1).

Because ours is a rural school and the students know the Bhutanese culture more, such as folktales and also some ballads, we carry out the activities in Dzongkha. For example, we hold *lozey* and *tsangmo* competitions on a monthly basis. So students are interested in genres of Bhutanese folk literature like *lozey* and *tsangmo* (Gembo13, p. 4).

Norbu's and Gembo's statements suggest that folk literature and the cultural values it embodies may be stereotyped as 'rural', something that only teachers and students in rural Bhutan familiar with village life and culture would know. The statements also imply that because of its 'ruralness' Bhutanese folk literature (e.g. proverbs, occasional poetry, ballads, folktales, myths and legends) may not be of interest to children in urban schools. While rurality is generally not looked down upon in modern Bhutanese society, as most people who live in the town will have some form of link with the village through ancestry, marriage, education, and work, the tendency to classify the rich folk traditions and their literary, cultural and aesthetic values as rural could lead to loss of culture. Attention must be paid as much to the abstract cultural and aesthetic meanings of the genres as to their surface elements such as people, places and events and literal meanings.

Informants also referred to the teachers' lack of reading habits. Norbu said:

We don't read much and as a result we will not have good knowledge about literature, whether it is literature from outside the country or literature from within our own country (Norbu12, p. 5).

It appears from the data that lack of reading habits may be a cause of lack of knowledge, which in turn impacts the students' knowledge and interest. So their own pedagogical formation gets in the way of developing knowledge and interest in Bhutanese folk literature. This might have something to do with the nature of the teacher training and first degree where the emphasis of their learning may have been not on learning autonomy but rather on cramming for tests. In fact, Tashi (21, p. 6) attributed his lack of knowledge to lack of courses in teacher training and said, that was "one of the major factors". Similarly, Lhazom (18, p. 5) said, "There was nothing taught about that one [in teacher training]".

Thus, English teachers were generally positively disposed towards Bhutanese folk literature and its cultural and pedagogical advantages for student learning. They also recognized the need to develop knowledge of teaching the genres and incorporating them into student learning. Yet in spite of the positive dispositions, not much was done in their own classrooms (see also Table 4.10, page 87) because of factors that limited their ability to do so.

4.2.4 Factors that affect teachers' ability to use Bhutanese folk in student learning

Since the findings did not reveal much evidence of English teachers' pedagogical knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature, data were examined to see what reasons they mentioned for their inability to use resources from folk literature in student learning. Three factors were mentioned - compulsion to 'finish' the syllabus, lack of library resources, and lack of professional growth opportunities in school. I discuss them in turn.

4.2.4.1 'Finishing' the syllabus

As the title suggests, the first factor relates to the limitations imposed by the demands of the syllabus. Informants attributed their inability to explore Bhutanese folk literature to its lack of substantive presence in the English curriculum and to the need to concentrate on finishing the content of the prescribed syllabus. Thus, the curriculum's expectation for students to explore the social and cultural environment of Bhutan in the English curriculum (see page 48) remains mostly theoretical within the limitations of the official curriculum. This perception is evident in data from two of the interviews.

Since it is not included in curriculum we somehow feel that we must devote more time to teaching what is there in the curriculum and not try to relate to all those not present in the curriculum. (Lhazom 19, p. 5)

They hardly get time to really think about Bhutanese folk literature and how it can be included in classroom teaching. Also because the number of students in classroom is forty-five to fifty and there are too many works to be done, they don't get the time. (Lhazom 17, p. 5)

It is evident, as one informant stated, that teachers are mostly "bothered about their curriculum, the syllabus" (Tashi14, p. 4) and lack of encouragement to try out teaching strategies that are not explicitly described in the syllabus documents, such as encouraging the students to carry out writing projects based on research in the local communities. Tshoki and Gembo both confirmed this. For example, Gembo stated that letting them (students) write stories will be "a very meaningful experience", but admitted that "It was never done" (Gembo 10, p. 3). Further, Gembo said "I have never taken the students out of the class" since "these kinds of activities were not included in the activities given in the textbook" (Gembo 10, p. 3). Nevertheless there was contrasting evidence. Some informants like Yuden, Tashi and Tshoki used strategies that made learning interesting and fun although they knew that the strategies they used were not prescribed by the curriculum. For example, Tshoki said she would "encourage the students to come up with maxims and proverbs in their own dialect or language" and write stories based on the maxims students chose (Tshoki 8, p.3). Yuden said that whenever she taught poetry she would "connect it to real life" situations (Yuden 9, p. 3). Similarly, Tashi let his students take up writing projects that required them to research the origin of a village in the locality and the students found the experience enjoyable (Tashi 11, p. 3). Thus, two particular pedagogical attitudes are evident: one characterised by conformity to the pressures of curriculum, and the other by attention to the authenticity of learning experiences. The point of tension between the official and the enacted curriculum is visible but it is clear that, overall, the official curriculum holds sway.

4.2.4.2 Lack of library resources related to Bhutanese folk literature

The second factor relates to resources. Teachers also linked their knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature to availability of resources in the school library. For improvement to occur, “resources should be available” (Tashi 15, p. 4), or “they should provide us with more library resources” (Lhazom 23, p. 7). This statement in part addresses the central issue raised by the research problem. That is, although there is a great deal of policy emphasis on the importance of culture, especially the rich oral traditions, and the need to preserve and promote them through education, without understanding the perceptions of the actors on the ground, the gaps in curriculum and pedagogy would continue to exist. Lhazom and Tshoki said:

English teachers are interested but I think lack of resources hampers them
(Lhazom 19, p. 5).

Teachers have the desire but I think because of insufficient resources and lack of awareness they are not able to develop their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature
(Tshoki 1, p. 4).

Analysis of responses to item 5c of the questionnaire (“*What kinds of material resources are normally available to you that support the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature?*”) confirmed lack of library resources. So, 153 (85%) respondents said that there were only a few books related to Bhutanese folk literature in their libraries. Thus, findings suggest that the development of teachers’ knowledge of the subject and knowledge of teaching it, Bhutanese folk literature included, must be supported by adequate library resources in school. In the Bhutanese context, where access to resources other than those in the school library is mostly limited, the need to emphasize the quantity and quality of books in the school library is particularly true. For example, few teachers would have a personal library and public libraries are not well developed throughout Bhutan.

4.2.4.3 Support for professional growth

The third factor relates to the availability of professional growth opportunities and experiences in school that influence the teachers’ pedagogical knowledge and attitudes. Analysis of responses to item 2 of the questionnaire (“*Does your school encourage the teachers, or even students, to carry out research in Bhutanese folk literature...? Please describe anything like this you have done*”) showed that teachers did not receive much support from their schools to do research in Bhutanese folk literature. The idea of research was important because both the old and new English curricula emphasize the need for students to become autonomous learners and explore topics in the curriculum in the context of their cultural experiences. This is the sense of ‘research’ implied. Also, since there was a dearth of Bhutanese folk literature in written forms, it was important to find out how the

teachers in particular and the school generally encouraged and supported the students to learn about their local oral forms through research activities. Table 4.11 shows the frequency of responses to the five thematic categories that were derived from the analysis of responses to items 2. Thus 67 (37%) respondents affirmed that their schools did not encourage and support teachers to do research, while 28 (15%) respondents said that their schools encouraged teachers to do research. Interestingly only 2 (1%) respondents said that they actually did some research in Bhutanese folk literature. Although 97 (54%) respondents said their schools encouraged the students to explore folk literatures, because the teachers' knowledge of the genres and knowledge of teaching them was generally low (see Table 3.9 and Table 3.10), it would appear that the learning that results from it may not be very substantive. This will be taken up in Chapter 5 when I discuss the students' learning of Bhutanese folk literature.

Table 4.11 Frequency of teachers' responses regarding support for research in school (questionnaire item 02, N, (%))

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
	The school encourages and supports teachers to do research in Bhutanese folk literature.	I have done some research in Bhutanese folk literature.	The school does not encourage and support teachers to do research in Bhutanese folk literature.	The school and/or teachers encourage and support students to carry out some research in Bhutanese folk literature.	The school and/or teachers do not encourage and support students to carry out research in Bhutanese folk literature.
Frequency of response	28 (15%)	2 (1%)	67 (37%)	97 (54%)	52 (29%)

Data from the six interviews showed a similar pattern of responses, namely lack of professional growth opportunities and experiences that empower teachers to engage in innovative practices and move beyond the prescriptions of the official curriculum, or even to embrace the cultural aspect of GNH agenda outlined in Chapter 1. Thus Tshoki (15, p. 4) said, teachers “have a desire to learn more” but there is a “lack of awareness”. Data indicated lack of incentives to do research to enhance their knowledge of subject and knowledge of pedagogy. Lhazom’s, Tashi’s statements show evidence of this.

Yes, there are some English teachers who are really interested to read Bhutanese folk literature but I strongly feel that there should be some encouragement given to teachers to do research. I think there is a need for somebody to encourage them to do research in Bhutanese folk literature (Lhazom16, p. 4)

Because teachers are mostly bothered about their curriculum, the syllabus, we don't receive encouragement to do research even from the school authority (Tashi14, p. 4).

I don't think teachers do research or come up with initiatives to do research on Bhutanese folk literature (Tashi 14, p. 4).

As evident in Tashi's statement, teachers' lack of knowledge may not be attributed entirely to lack of opportunities for professional growth. A general lack of individual interest, effort and initiative may also be part of the reason why the rich and diverse oral literatures are not incorporated into student learning.

Teachers also mentioned the need for seminars and workshops aimed to enhance their awareness and understanding of Bhutanese folk literature. So Norbu (12, p. 5) said, in order for teachers to "have a good knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature" there should be "seminars conducted and maybe forums where English teachers meet and share their work". Lhazom (23, p. 7) agreed that "people from education can organize seminars and workshops for teachers so that we can acquire more knowledge of how folk literature can be included in our teaching". These responses indicate that there were no opportunities in the schools for the standard forms of professional development for teachers, including research.

4.2.5 Summary of main points about teacher knowledge

There are a number of factors that interact to affect the uptake of Bhutanese folk literature by secondary English teachers in Bhutan. Three factors - teachers' knowledge and attitudes in relation to folk literature and knowledge of pedagogy, requirements of the official curriculum, and lack of professional growth opportunities and experiences in school - influence the role and status of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum. While their significance to the study is dealt with in Chapter 6, here I summarise the main points from the discussion so far.

As evident in Table 4.9, English teachers generally perceived their level of knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature to be low. This response pattern generally matched those that emerged from the interview data which showed more clearly the informants' ambivalent or unsubstantiated claims of knowledge about Bhutanese folk literature. Surprisingly, informants also indicated fading knowledge of their own languages, owing perhaps to the predominance of Dzongkha (and of English). In terms of pedagogical knowledge and practice, data also indicated that while English teachers in general did not use the literary resources available in the students' first language in their teaching of the English curriculum, there were some teachers like Tshoki and Tashi who had made attempts to explore these resources. Although English teachers were generally positively disposed to the cultural and pedagogical values of Bhutanese folk literature, not much was done to infuse these into their teaching. Informants also mentioned a number of factors that affected their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and their ability to explore its pedagogical advantages within the scope of the English curriculum. The factors mentioned most prominently were (1) lack of prior knowledge from teacher training, (2) the need to 'finish' the syllabus in school, (3) lack of library resources, and, (4) lack of professional growth opportunities in school. As evident in the data, some of

the informants also viewed Bhutanese folk literature and its values as ‘rural’ based on reference to the external elements of folk literature that they knew from the English curriculum. Doing so means they focus on their rural quaintness or surface features and miss the opportunity for cultural and literary reflection.

4.3 The schools’ literary and cultural influences

The central issue raised by the research problem was explored in part through research question 2: *How do the literary and cultural influences in the schools support students’ learning of Bhutanese folk literature?* A school’s pedagogical beliefs and teaching practices are also influenced by the literary and cultural influences that exist in it. It was therefore important to find out English teachers’ perceptions about how these influences in their schools supported their and their students’ interest to explore the oral and written forms of folk literature in different languages. As indicated in the research planning matrix (Appendix 3.1) answers to Research question 2 were sought in questionnaire data collected from secondary English teachers and from the six teacher interviews. Answers from interview questions 4, 7, 8 and 9 (Appendix 3.10) and within the responses to items 1a and 1b (Appendix 3.6) in the questionnaire data provided the bases for the analyses. The findings to research question 2 from these two data sets are triangulated and presented in terms of two broad topics - English teachers’ beliefs about the value of literary and cultural activities in school, and extracurricular events in school and the predominance of Dzongkha.

4.3.1 English teachers’ beliefs about the value of literary and cultural activities in school

Schools in Bhutan generally run a number of cultural and literary activities for the students’ extracurricular learning. There has been no study done to find out what kinds of activities are held and how these activities support the student learning of culture and literature and how the rich and diverse oral literatures in the students’ home languages are explored and promoted through these activities.

Questionnaire and interview data showed a pattern of responses that indicated English teachers’ beliefs about the pedagogical advantages of events and activities related to Bhutanese folk literature held in school. Seven thematic categories were derived as a result of content analysis of item 1b of the questionnaire (*In what ways do these activities [extracurricular activities] give students opportunities to talk about their own literary and cultural backgrounds?*). Table 4.12 shows the frequency of responses to these thematic

categories. From the data, English teachers generally stated that school activities related to Bhutanese folk literature would lead to cultural learning for the students. For example, 55 (30%) respondents, said that these activities deepened the students’ knowledge and appreciation of Bhutanese cultural values; 31 (17%) respondents stated that they increased the students’ knowledge of different cultural backgrounds (diversity); 54 (30%) respondents said they deepened the students’ knowledge of their own cultural roots; 16 (9%) respondents said they increased the students’ awareness of the value of cultural continuity; 23 (13%) respondents said they encouraged the students to learn folk literature from parents, older people, and others; 43 (24%) respondents said they developed the students’ ability to appreciate the literary and aesthetic values of Bhutanese folk literature; and 17 (9%) respondents said they provided the students with a source of learning Dzongkha language and literature.

Table 4.12 Frequency of teachers’ responses regarding the role of extracurricular activities (questionnaire item 1b, N (%))

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6	Category 7
	Students deepen their knowledge and appreciation of Bhutanese culture.	Students increase their knowledge of cultural diversity.	Students deepen knowledge of their own cultural root/identity.	Students recognize the need to preserve and keep culture alive.	Students feel encouraged to explore culture outside the curriculum.	Students appreciate the value of Bhutanese folk literature.	Students express better when the materials are culturally
Frequency of response	55 (30%)	31 (17%)	54 (30%)	16 (9%)	23 (13%)	43 (24%)	17 (9%)

Although each thematic category was affirmed positively only by a small number of the teachers surveyed, their views generally agreed with the larger policy view of children as the “custodians of culture” (see page 7), the importance of cultural identity and diversity (see page 2), and the importance attached to Dzongkha, the national language (see page 3).

Despite these statements about the cultural and pedagogical advantages, the data in the previous section revealed that Bhutanese folk literature in its oral and written forms is not used much as pedagogical catalysts by English teachers. In addition to the inhibiting factors described earlier, it is also a reflection of inadequate or lack of exposure to Bhutanese folk literature in pre-service teacher training. I discuss this aspect of the data in Chapter 6.

The secondary English curriculum documents are at present silent about the need for teachers to have basic knowledge, beliefs and attitudes in relation to the existence of cultural diversity in school and in their own classrooms (see Chapter 2, page 48). However, in order to meaningfully connect the GNH intentions of culture and classroom practice and quality of student learning in the ways that Government policy intended, then the teachers’ beliefs about their efficacy to do so can be built upon.

4.3.2 The role of oral traditions in the schools' extracurricular events

Since literary and cultural activities have an important role in the schools' extracurricular programme, it was important to find out what kinds of activities were held and in what languages they were most commonly held. Data from the questionnaire and interviews provided useful insights into these issues. Item 1a of the questionnaire showed which activities related to Bhutanese folk literature were held in the respondents' schools (Appendix 3.7). The number of respondents who affirmed the activities varied from high to low. Table 4.13 shows the frequency of responses to the categories presented. 113 (62%) respondents mentioned folksong and 90 (50%) respondents mentioned *tsangmo*. Clearly these were the most important activities. Interestingly, only 65 (36%) respondents mentioned folktales although it is a very common genre in Bhutanese folk literature. Only 17 (9%) respondents mentioned folk poetry and 24 (13%) respondents mentioned folk riddles.

Table 4.13 Frequency of teachers' responses regarding folk literature activities in school (questionnaire item 1a, N, (%))

Categories	School activities related to								Language of activities		
	Lozey (ballad)	Tsangmo (Rebuttal poetry)	Folk song	Folk drama	Folktales	Folk Poetry	Folk Riddles	Other	Conducted in English?	Conducted in Dzongkha?	Other languages/dialects
Frequency of response	68 (38%)	90 (50%)	113 (62%)	56 (31%)	65 (36%)	17 (9%)	24 (13%)	3 (2%)	44 (24%)	122 (67%)	6 (3%)

Data from the six teacher interviews also generally supported the questionnaire data. For example, Yuden, Lhazom, Norbu and Gembo (para 13, p. 4) mentioned *lozey* and *tsangmo* competitions.

There are *lozey* and *tsangmo* competitions and cultural activities where the students act in some drama. The activities would be in Dzongkha (Yuden13, p. 3).

So far we have carried out literary, social and cultural activities, which were all done in Dzongkha, not really in English (Lhazom15, p. 4).

Although responses to item 1a of the questionnaire (see above) showed that many of these activities were held in the respondents' schools, data on the frequency of activities held (see Appendix 3.7) showed a range of evidence. For example, 77 (43%) respondents said extracurricular activities related to Bhutanese folk literature were held once a year and 17 (9%) respondents said 1 to 3 times a year. By contrast, very few - 3 (5%) respondents said activities were held throughout the year, and 2 (1%) respondents said they were held weekly/monthly. Surprisingly, 8 respondents (4%) said such activities were never held in

their school, which is consistent with Tshoki's (13, p. 4) statement that "None of the schools that I taught till now has encouraged any of the activities that would help to upgrade Bhutanese folk literature". Many of the 181 respondents did not write a response to this questionnaire item. Overall, it can be inferred that over half of those who responded to the questionnaire item reported that activities related to Bhutanese folk literature were rarely held (only once a year at most). This indicates that the extracurricular opportunities available to students to learn folk literature are very limited indeed.

Given the kind of emphasis placed on Dzongkha as the national language, I wasn't surprised to see both the questionnaire and interview data indicate the predominance of Dzongkha in the schools' literary and cultural activities (see Table 4.13). As evident in the questionnaire data, while 122 (67%) respondents said these activities were held mainly in Dzongkha, only 44 (24%) respondents said they were held in English and only 6 (3 %) respondents said they were held in the other languages.

However, Norbu (9, p. 5) said:

Actually we have given equal opportunity to the students to present Bhutanese folk literature in both English and Dzongkha because we think that both the languages should grow simultaneously and equally. This is because we don't want to compromise on the importance of Dzongkha when we are taking care of English.

In any case, both of the dominant languages are used at the expense of the local languages. It may be inferred from Yuden's and Lhazom's statements' above and also from the questionnaire data that English teachers and their students' knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese folk literature are influenced by the cultural contents conveyed through Dzongkha, the main language of literary and cultural activities in school.

4.3.3 Summary of main points about the schools' extracurricular influences

English teachers generally held positive views about the cultural learning that would result from literary and cultural activities related to Bhutanese folk literature which might be held in schools. They said these activities would foster, among other cultural values, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and difference as well as understanding and appreciation of the literary and aesthetic values of folk literature among the students. In spite of the positive statements, it is evident, particularly from the questionnaire data, that not much teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge happens in the schools' extracurricular activities.

Although Dzongkha is used in different parts of the country, the cultural contents conveyed through this language may not necessarily be inclusive or reflective of the rich literary and

cultural resources that exist in many other languages in Bhutan. This therefore points to the need to consider the danger of the various literary resources available in these other languages and dialects fading from oral memory due to non-use in schools, even in extracurricular activities where they might be expected.

There is a perceptible relationship between data on the teachers' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature described earlier and data on the schools' extracurricular influences. First, if activities are mainly held in Dzongkha, then exploration of the literary resources in other languages cannot occur. So the oral literatures in other languages are neither learnt in those languages nor are they learnt through other means. This way their loss is inevitable. A cultural contextual discussion and interpretation of the key issues summarised here will be presented in Chapter 6.

4.4 Role of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge

A nation's folk literature offers a window into its people and their beliefs across time and geographic locations. Whether the stories are tall tales, creation stories, or fairy tales, they reveal insights into the make-up of the populace - what they believe, what motivates them, what their attitudes are, how they behave, and how time and place shape the stories (Perez-Stable, 2005, p. 86).

Perez-Stable points to the central issue raised by the research problem which was also explored in part through research question 3: *How do secondary English teachers perceive the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum as a source of cultural knowledge?* Since teaching and learning of folk literature may be influenced by the degree of importance teachers attach to it, it was important to find out how English teachers perceived the role of oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature in the students' learning experience. Again, answers to this research question were sought in data gathered from secondary English teachers through questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Answers from interview questions 3, 7 and 9 (Appendix 3.10) and within the responses to items 4, 6 and 7 (Appendix 3.6) in the questionnaire data provided the bases for the analyses. The findings to research question 3 from these two data sets are triangulated and presented in terms of three different but interrelated topics: Bhutanese folk literature and its pedagogical advantages, knowledge and appreciation of cultural values, and the role of Bhutanese folk literature in English. Each of these is addressed in turn.

4.4.1 Bhutanese folk literature as a pedagogical catalyst for cultural knowledge

Since research question 3 focussed on the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the context of the English curriculum, English teachers' perceptions about the pedagogical and cultural advantages of having folk genres in the English curriculum were explored. The secondary English curriculum recognizes the importance of students learning English in the context of Bhutanese culture (see page 48). As the curriculum documents show, the need to develop the students' ability to communicate effectively in English is also equally important (see CAPSD, 2005h, p. 21; CAPSD, 2007, p. 86). Hence, I was particularly interested to find out how materials from folk literature enhanced the students' motivation to learn English in a cultural context and also how they facilitated meaningful communication in English. Analysis of questionnaire and interview data provided insights into these issues. These data helped to understand the wider domain of the informants' beliefs and perceptions about the interaction of culture, curriculum and pedagogy.

4.4.1.1 Motivation to learn in a cultural context

Responses to item 4, 6 and 7 of the questionnaire showed that English teachers generally perceived the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum positively. Table 4.14 shows the frequency of responses to the thematic categories that were derived from the data. Most of the respondents, 144 (80%), affirmed that Bhutanese folk literature was appropriate for classes 7 to 12. This finding is somewhat surprising given that so little Bhutanese folk literature is used in schools. Views differed on where it should be included, English or Dzongkha curriculum. While 98 (54%) respondents said that it should be included in the secondary English curriculum, 91 (50%) respondents said it was better in the Dzongkha curriculum. A small number thought it should be in both. Data showed general agreement among English teachers that because of the cultural values of Bhutanese folk literature it should be included in the secondary English curriculum. Accordingly, 127 (70%) respondents said that it should be included because its cultural context motivated the students to learn the English curriculum better than non-Bhutanese texts, while 57 (31%) respondents said non-Bhutanese texts motivated the students better.

Lhazom said that students "enjoy more of Bhutanese text" because of its familiar setting, characters, and the cultural content of the text. Lhazom (8, p. 8) also said that when this happened "it is easy for them to learn language". In fact, most of the interview informants agreed that language learning was better when curriculum materials were contextually relevant and familiar to the learner's cultural background and prior experience as these materials aroused their interest and motivation better than materials that intimidated or alienated them culturally. These responses are not surprising given the fact that the old secondary English curricula, especially those of Class 9 to 12, until 2005 were dominated by contents from the classical canons of British literature (see page 7).

4.4.1.2 Enabling meaningful communication in English

In Bhutan, teachers generally express concerns about their students' reluctance to speak in English, even during English lessons. The problem could be worse if students are expected to learn to communicate effectively in English taught through materials that cause a sense of cultural-alienation and anxiety in them (see page 7). Thus, in exploring the pedagogical role of Bhutanese folk literature, it was important to understand how it motivated the students to learn and to express in English. Based on analysis of item 1b of the questionnaire (*In what ways do these activities give students opportunities to talk about their own literary and cultural backgrounds?*) only 17 (9%) respondents stated they thought activities related to Bhutanese folk literature helped students to communicate more effectively in English. In contrast, Lhazom, as someone who had had experience of such issues, stated that culturally familiar settings and characters enhanced students' interest and motivation to learn English. Another experienced user of Bhutanese folk literature, Gembo, confirmed that if the cultural content of the language curriculum was relevant and familiar to the learner's cultural background and prior experience, "The understanding will be more and then the expression will be more" (Gembo 5, p. 2). Gembo's, Tshoki's and Norbu's statements elaborate this view.

We enjoyed 'The Layaps Go Home'. I think this Bhutanese text actually allowed children to express themselves more because they already knew much about it. So I think they enjoyed the Bhutanese text (Tshoki 10, p. 3).

They will learn better because they know the culture and they will find more meaningful ways to express themselves because they know the Bhutanese ways (Gembo 2, p. 1).

I feel Bhutanese folk literature has a very important role to play in terms of teaching and learning in class 11 and 12 because of its familiar setting, plot and characters. I feel that this will help our students to do creative writing which most of our Bhutanese students, including adults, are not able to do because of unfamiliar settings and characters in literature from outside Bhutanese culture (Norbu1, p. 1).

The statements of these relatively expert practitioners of Bhutanese folk literature are critical to counter the views of the teachers who had less experience. The statements of the former group assume particular significance in view of the general concern in Bhutanese schools about students' reluctance to express orally in English, even in languages classes. Yuden's statement helps to illustrate this point further. In dealing with Bhutanese folk literature, Yuden said, students gave "many responses" to the English translation of Bhutanese traditional ballad 'Gaylong Sumdar Tashi' because they were able to relate mentally and emotionally to the concepts, events and places in the poem, such as the 'monk tax', the migration of monks between Thimphu and Punakha and so on (Yuden 2, p. 1). Lhazom's statement elaborates this further.

The learners must have an interest in what they are learning. In the process they also learn the language. Once they lose interest in the text they also lose interest in learning English, which then affects their interest to learn English as a whole (Lhazom 9, p. 3).

Informants generally stated that students found Bhutanese folk literature “interesting”, “easy”, “very simple” (Yuden1, p.1) and that they were able to understand it better than literature in English from other countries. This seemed attributable to the linguistic simplicity of the genres (e.g. the tales) and the culturally familiar language learning situations in which the students were able to relate to the characters, setting, events and cultural practices and values presented in Bhutanese folktales and ballads. For example, Yuden recounted, “One of the students” was able to “imagine the places and so on” (Yuden 1, p.1), and Gembo said that students “learn better” because they know the culture better (Gembo 2, p. 1). Also, familiar characterization and setting helped the students to “understand the story better” and the literature “better actually”, and also made them feel “more comfortable” (Norbu 3, p.2). Lhazom’s and Gembo’s statements elaborate these views.

Bhutanese folk literature plays an important role in the secondary English curriculum because it encourages very active learning, and I would say it also leads to very extensive discussion. Maybe it is because of the familiar setting. For instance, the settings in the novel *‘Dawa the Stray Dog’*, *‘The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tash’i*, and *‘Gaylong Sumdar Tash’i* are very familiar to the students, so it encourages their learning and they are able to participate actively in the activities. Even the characters appeal to the reader (Lhazom 1, p. 1).

The understanding will be more and then the expression will be more if Bhutanese cultures are imbedded in our curriculum. (Gembo 5, p. 2)

Thus, through the culturally familiar context of Bhutanese folk literature, including its setting, characters and the cultural meanings it reflects, students’ willingness to communicate in English is enhanced according to these experts. In the context of this study, these perspectives help to understand the role of folk literature not only in terms of its cultural values but also in terms of the pedagogical advantages it offers. Its pedagogical value in the English curriculum is particularly important because of the concerns often expressed by English teachers about their students ‘reluctance’ to speak in class. The fact that culturally unfamiliar materials alienate students from the process of learning and cause anxiety and emotional stress, especially when they are obliged to speak in class, is not often discussed.

4.4.2 Knowledge and appreciation of Bhutanese culture

Research question 3 also focussed on the role of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge in the curriculum. This study was particularly interested to find out what cultural values the informants identified in Bhutanese folk literature that students learnt, and

how they viewed the importance of maintaining the intergenerational continuity of these values, via the curriculum. Understanding teachers' perceptions about the need for and importance of cultural continuity will help the study to understand to what extent these perceptions reflect the cultural imperative emphasized so much in the cultural dimension of GNH. Data gathered through questionnaire and interviews provided insights into English teachers' perceptions about these dimensions of Bhutanese culture.

4.4.2.1 Appreciation of cultural values

As Table 4.14 shows, questionnaire data also showed that Bhutanese folk literature helped the students to appreciate Bhutanese cultural values. Thus, 63 (35%) respondents said that folk literature should be included in the curriculum because by learning about it in the curriculum students will develop knowledge and appreciation of Bhutanese culture, of which the folk traditions are a vital part. Although the data is significant, the response rate is rather low. But it is consistent with the teachers' generally low level of knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature indicated by their responses regarding the genres they enjoyed most (see table 4.9). From the data it appears that because of their lack of adequate knowledge of the genres, and their lack of experience of using them in student learning (see Table 4.10), the teachers were not very forthcoming in their responses to the notion of how students could learn and appreciate Bhutanese culture through the curriculum.

Table 4.14 Frequency of teachers' responses regarding the role of BFL in the curriculum (questionnaire item 4, 6 & 7, N, (%))

	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6	Category 7
	Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the English curriculum.	Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the Dzongkha curriculum.	Bhutanese folk literature is appropriate for class 7 to 12.	Because of its cultural relevance, Bhutanese texts motivate students better than non-Bhutanese texts.	Non-Bhutanese texts motivate students better.	Including Bhutanese folk literature in the school curriculum will help to preserve and promote Bhutanese culture.	Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the school curriculum as it will enable students to learn and appreciate Bhutanese culture.
Frequency of response	98 (54%)	91 (50%)	144 (80%)	127 (70%)	57 (31%)	30 (17%)	63 (35%)

As the six interview informants had had experience of using resources from Bhutanese folk literature in their teaching, their views were considered useful. These teachers generally held positive views about the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum if it is included there. Teachers said that apart from its pedagogical advantages, folk literature would also instil values of integrity and sense of belonging. For example, Lhazom said:

It [Bhutanese folk literature] encourages student learning. That is one reason. The other reason is, it has direct religious and cultural relevance. And also it instils in our students the value of integrity and sense of belonging. So I think it is important to have Bhutanese texts included in the secondary English curriculum (Lhazom 3, p. 1).

They also referred to the moral and aesthetic values that Bhutanese folk literature can transmit. For example, Tshoki said:

I feel in the future we need to have more of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum because folk literature helps to make our students aware of their culture and the moral and aesthetic values that it carries. It can help the students in their development (Tshoki 5, p. 1).

Norbu described the pedagogical approach he used to teach a traditional ballad in his English lessons and how his students responded:

When we were reading the poem ‘Gaylong Sumdar Tashi’ we didn’t just read the poem but actually we went deeper into our culture, the culture which was in the past and what we have now. In fact, it was an enjoyable class. We spent almost a week and the books are still there in the class (Norbu 4, p. 2).

Norbu’s statement is significant as the pedagogic moves he made were different from the largely lecture-dominated teaching strategy most English teachers used in their classroom, especially prior to the introduction of the new secondary English curricula (Class 7-12) in 2005. Going “deeper into the culture”, as Norbu said, was not possible in a classroom where the teacher merely talked and explained texts while the students “sat passively or made notes on what the teachers were saying, directly into their textbooks” (CAPSD, 2007, p. xvi). Norbu said that the pedagogic approach he used to teach ‘Gaylong Sumdar Tashi’ aroused his students’ interest and enjoyment in the lesson.

Thus, although their number was not large enough to be representative, the teachers who advocated the inclusion of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum believed that including materials from it in the curriculum could enhance students’ knowledge and appreciation of Bhutanese culture. What the findings have not shown is the need to make a distinction between using cultural material as a pedagogical catalyst to teaching the English curriculum and the danger of slipping into teaching culture without focus on developing language competencies that the curriculum policy emphasizes (see CAPSD, 2007, pp. 86-87; CERD, 2002, p. 7). This is discussed in Chapter 6.

4.4.2.2. Intergenerational continuity

In the Bhutanese context, the notion of cultural preservation and promotion, as outlined in Chapter 1, underpins the notion of culture and the importance attached to it. For example,

from the perspective of government policy, cultural preservation and promotion are considered imperative for maintaining Bhutan's unique identity in the world. The oral traditions, including the diverse forms of oral literature, are a part of Bhutan's cultural heritage. Abarry (1994, p. 308) says, "Oral literature contains our worldview, history, cherished values, fears, hopes, and aspirations". It is among a country's cultural institutions that "buttress the entire life of the society". Given the diversity and richness of oral traditions that exist in Bhutan's many different languages, the need to preserve the heritage is a genuine one. As the catalysts of cultural transmission, the role of teachers is vital.

In the questionnaire and interview data the secondary English teachers indicated a general desire for culture maintenance and continuity. Analysis of responses to items 4, 6 and 7 of the questionnaire also showed agreement among some respondents on the notion of preservation and promotion of culture (Appendix 3.8). So, 30 (17%) respondents said Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the English curriculum because through access to it in the curriculum students could help to preserve Bhutanese culture and play their part as its "custodians" (see page 7). Thus over 80% of the respondents did not choose to relate Bhutanese folk literature with notions of preservation and promotion! On the other hand, the interviewed experts were of a different mind. For example, Tshoki said, "it would be very sad if we lose all these beautiful proverbs and maxims which are laden with values" and believed that "if we preserve them" (in writing), "it would help the generations that are yet to come" (Tshoki 18, p. 5). Referring to the advantages of bringing out oral literatures in English translations (see the next section), Yuden (20, p. 5) said, "Yes, culturally we are going to preserve our folktales, folk traditions, the songs, and stories of the past. We will be able to preserve it". Thus, the desire to pass on is evident in both the statements. The contradictions inherent in this desire to preserve, promote and pass on Bhutanese culture and the lack of a strong pedagogic resource and knowledge base will be explored in Chapter 6.

4.4.3 Role of Bhutanese folk literature in English

In this section I consider English teachers' perceptions about Bhutanese folk literature in the language of globalization - English - to understand cultural preservation in light of emerging linguistic, cultural and pedagogical perspectives and tensions. As mentioned in chapter 1, English translations of Bhutanese folk literature drawn from different languages in the country were the precursors to Bhutanese writing in English, which mainly began in the 1990s. Some of these have been included in the secondary English curriculum for schools in Bhutan on the merit of their cultural values. Therefore, within the scope of research question 3, the study also explored English teachers' perceptions about the value of Bhutanese folk literature in English based on their understanding of the English curriculum and their experience of folk literature generally.

Three broad views emerged from the questionnaire and interview data. The first view relates to how Bhutanese folk literature in English can promote the values of diversity. The second view relates to the tension between the curriculum's cultural priority and the need to teach students 'standard' English. And the third view relates to the discursive possibilities of English as an international language for Bhutanese culture.

4.4.3.1 Appreciation of cultural diversity

From my analysis of secondary English curriculum documents (see page 52) I realized that the notion of cultural diversity was not part of the language of the extant English curriculum, school pedagogy, and the general social and cultural milieu in schools in Bhutan. Hence, I assumed that it was necessary for this study to explore Bhutanese folk literature in relation to diversity through a conversational mode that allowed probing for deeper understanding and interpretation through face to face interviews. Moreover, there was little data related to the language of diversity in the completed questionnaires. I was not surprised by the teachers' silence in relation to cultural diversity. Since they did not acquire relevant knowledge and skill to deal with diversity in teacher training and since the concept was not part of the popular language of school curriculum and pedagogy, perhaps they did not feel entirely comfortable writing about it; and that too, in relation to folk literature - a subject they did not know much about. Therefore, here I focus on interview data.

Generally three themes emerged. The first, broadly held, is that the informants recognized that in spite of its small size, cultural variations exist in Bhutanese society which ought to be recognized and respected. Second, when cultural differences are recognized and respected and people feel appreciated, mutual understanding grows among the people. Third, as Yuden (21, p. 5) said, if students are given the opportunity to read English translations of Bhutanese folk literature from different parts of the country, then they would be able to "understand the different ways or different life styles in different parts of the country". It would generate positive feelings in all the people because "They might feel that even their literature is appreciated or valued" and "not only Dzongkha" (Yuden21, p.5). With regard to the merits of compiling and translating folk literature in different Bhutanese languages and dialects, Tashi said:

I think that will make us understand more about each other's culture. Within Bhutan's small geographical size there are different cultures. I think that will enable a better understanding of each other's cultural values. And I think it will provide more knowledge and more colour to the readers (Tashi 19, p. 6).

Interestingly, Yuden also viewed translation of Bhutanese folk literature from languages and dialects other than Dzongkha into English (e.g. Kurtoep to English, Sharchopkha to English or Lhotshamkha to English) as "fair" to those languages and the people who speak them.

Tashi and Norbu both acknowledged that though Bhutan is a small country there are “different cultures within our small region” (Tashi 19, p.6). Norbu said:

Although our country is small in size, yet in terms of culture and way of life I think the people are slightly different. If we combine the literature from east, west, north and south and pull them together as a blend, it would give our students the opportunity to see our country as a whole (Norbu 15, p. 7)

Lhazom (20, p. 6) also argued that translating folk literature from different Bhutanese languages and dialects into English would help to foster intercultural understanding among the people, “intimacy with ourselves, amongst ourselves” and a sense of “belonging”, “integrity” and “respect”.

Thus, in the interviews the teachers generally believed that folk literatures in different languages in Bhutan will enrich the multicultural character of Bhutanese society and enhance respect for and appreciation of the value of diversity. While the teachers stated their understanding of cultural diversity in broad terms and in the context of student learning, they did not say how they perceived the complex interaction of culture, curriculum and teaching practice in the context of a multilingual and multicultural classroom. But the fact that teachers’ knowledge and attitudes in relation to culture, including diversity, influence their pedagogical beliefs and practices, hence the quality of student learning, cannot be overlooked. This and related issues will be taken up in Chapter 6.

4.4.3.2 Cultural learning and learning to use ‘standard English’

Although there has been no study to show classroom-based perspectives on it, an unspoken predicament in English education concerning what knowledge is of most worth for the students - cultural knowledge or competency in English (generally called ‘standard English’ in Bhutan) - has always been there. Hence, the study explored this tension because Bhutanese folk literature in English translations, as it were, personifies this tension. The tension between the need to include culturally relevant materials in the English curriculum and the need for students to learn “standard” English was visible in the teachers’ perceptions. This was evident in the teachers’ differing views about the status of Bhutanese folk literature as stated in the questionnaire and interviews. As shown earlier in Table 4.14, while 98 (54%) of the 181 questionnaire respondents preferred inclusion of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum, 91 (50%) stated preference for the Dzongkha curriculum. The evenly split difference in views was confirmed in the interviews where the informants stated dissatisfaction as well as satisfaction with the ‘standard of English’ used in Bhutanese folk literature and suggested improvement. For example, with the exception of writers like Karma Ura and Kunzang Choden, Bhutanese writers are “still inferior” to western writers (Gembo17, p. 5). Referring to the students’ reaction to Bhutanese folk literature in English, Tashi remarked, “They said that they enjoyed non-Bhutanese [Western] folk literature. When I

asked why, they said the language in it was so rich” (Tashi 1, p. 1). Gembo’s and Norbu’s statements further illustrate the tension between the need for culture in the English curriculum and the need to learn to communicate effectively in English.

If our aim is to improve the students’ communication skill, their English language skill, then I think literature from the West would be more relevant in the curriculum. But if the aim is to promote our own values, the Bhutanese values and culture, I think we can include more of our Bhutanese literature (Gembo31, p. 7).

Norbu’s (5, p. 3) statement adds an interesting dimension to the tension evident in the data. He said:

We teach it [Bhutanese folk literature] just for its beauty and students enjoy it. Also teachers feel very comfortable teaching it. But it is difficult to construct good test items from it based on Bloom’s taxonomy as the items drawn from it don’t fulfil the criteria for good questions. It is difficult to follow the table of specifications.

Adherence to Bloom’s taxonomy (see page 43) is emphasized in secondary English curriculum for schools in Bhutan, especially in the context of ensuring good quality assessment and test items in annual exams. As reflected in the informants’ statements, including Norbu’s in relation to “criteria for good questions” (see above), some informants viewed Bhutanese folk literature in English as culturally useful and relevant material for the English curriculum but not good enough for the students’ intellectual development. By contrast, other informants stated favourable views about Bhutanese folk literature in English. For example, Tshoki (6, p. 2) viewed English translations of Bhutanese folk literature positively and referred to its literary and aesthetic merits. According to her, Bhutanese writer Kunzang Choden’s folktales and novels are “very interesting” and “her diction is superb”. Similarly, Lhazom (5, p. 2) said that the “expression and vocabulary” as used in Bhutanese folk literature is “rich enough to make students appreciate how the situation is being expressed and how things are being discussed” and that the “language used there is quite enough for our students”. Even Gembo considered Karma Ura “great” and claims “he writes good books” and Kunzang Choden’s translation of Bhutanese folktales is “excellent” (Gembo 19, p.5).

The data presented in this section have brought out more clearly the inherent tension in the English curriculum’s culture-focussed priority, English-focussed priority, and test-focussed priority. Dyenka (1999, p. 5) saw a similar kind of tension in the teaching of high school English in Bhutan and said that if the “cultural and curricular conflicts” in the English curriculum were recognized and addressed, then “we will be able to help students learn English better and enable teachers to teach English better”. As the study has shown, the tension continues to exist. These and related issues are dealt with in Chapter 6.

4.4.3.3. Discursive possibilities of Bhutanese folk literature in English

The English language and English education were literally invited into Bhutan in the 1960s (via India) when the country launched its first planned economic development programme against the backdrop of a fast globalizing world. Since it was welcomed as a necessity and not forced upon the people by empire builders (see also Dyenka, 1999) or cultural missionaries, English as a language of education, governance, business and international relations, is viewed positively in Bhutan, and is perceived even as an effective agent of cultural assertion and identity in the global community (see pages 6 & 46). This positive stance was evident in English teachers' perceptions that English offered cultural possibilities, not Dzongkha. Teachers also generally viewed English as a popular language and so could "popularize" Bhutan. Tshoki (20, p. 6) was of the view that Bhutanese folk literature in English would provide people outside Bhutan a chance to "appreciate the unique beauty, and the culture, the tradition, the imaginative and the creative minds of our people". Lhazom elaborated this perception further, while Gembo's statement indicated the high status attributed to English and its usage.

I think most people love to read in English than in Dzongkha. So if it (Bhutanese folk literature) is being translated into English, it will help to maintain the cultural heritage (Lhazom 21, p. 7).

English, which is now a widely used language [in Bhutan], has become a kind of language of the aristocracy, a language of people in the higher ends of society. It has become a language of big people. They (users of English) feel that it is a language of the elite. Its status is something like this in Bhutan because when somebody speaks English, he seems like an elite person (Gembo 24, p. 6).

Gembo's statement on the status of English from an English teacher's perspective helps to understand the inherent tensions between culture, language and curriculum against the backdrop of globalization. While preserving and promoting Bhutan's unique cultural heritage is imperative for maintaining its identity in a globalised world where cultural distinctions blur and cultures homogenize rapidly, the need to take up the advantages of globalization and, at the same time, respond intelligently to its homogenizing effects through English - the most powerful language - is inevitable and more important than ever before. Because of the opportunities English education brings with it in the real world, it has rapidly become a language of status and prestige - although not so much in the aristocratic sense as Gembo's statements suggest - in the past few decades of Bhutan's development history. The growing popularity and importance of English and the desire to learn good English was also evident in some schools' efforts to implement an English language policy. Yuden (14, p. 4) said such a policy was pursued with the aim to improve the students' standard of English because "They are a little weak when it comes to English". Yuden (14, p. 4) said:

We also have an English language policy in our school by which we are not allowed to speak in any other language except English from morning to 4.00 in the afternoon.

Of course, the downside of this would be that other lesser known languages, and even Dzongkha, may be affected. Crystal (1997, p. 115) says of the dilemma and ambivalent attitude with which writers of Britain's former colonies view the English language:

Many writers in the countries of the outer circle see themselves as facing a dilemma: if they write in English, their work will have the chance of reaching a worldwide audience; but to write in English may mean sacrificing their cultural identity.

But as shown by the data in this study, English teachers generally perceived a dual advantage in promoting Bhutanese folk literature in English in particular, and the English language in general. First, it is perceived as a popular language and a high status language. Second, as an international language, English can expose Bhutanese cultures to the outside world. So it provides discursive possibilities to the cultures which otherwise would stay in their oral forms and perhaps face the danger of disappearing.

4.4.4 Summary of main points about the role of Bhutanese folk literature

While teachers perceived the cultural value of Bhutanese folk literature positively, there were differences in perception about where it should be included, in the English or Dzongkha curriculum (54% said English and 50% said Dzongkha). The six English teachers thought that students' interest and motivation to learn English were higher when they were exposed to culturally familiar material with settings, events and characters that resonate with the students' cultural backgrounds and prior experience. In a culturally familiar context students felt emotionally safe, were able to express themselves better in English and engage in discussion and higher-order thinking, and thus engage in active learning they said. Conversely, other teachers who were surveyed disapproved of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature as appropriate curriculum material for teaching the students standard English. And it appears that a minority (35%) thought the presence of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum would provide opportunities to the students to learn to appreciate Bhutanese culture. The six expert teachers also said English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum would promote understanding of and respect for cultural differences among the students in contrast to the secondary English teachers at large. Beyond the immediate scope of the curriculum, the expert teachers explained that Bhutanese folk literature in English would help to ensure intergenerational continuity of the cultural values that exist in different languages and dialects and to expose Bhutanese literary and cultural values to the outside world. As a popular language in Bhutan, English offered discursive possibilities in the international context. The issues of cultural diversity and cultural identity and the role of English in facilitating these will be discussed in Chapter 6.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I described three domains of secondary English teachers' perceptions about Bhutanese folk literature that emerged from the data - perceptions about their knowledge of the genres and knowledge of related pedagogy, perceptions about the influence of the schools' literary and cultural activities on the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature, and perceptions about the wider cultural implications of Bhutanese folk literature. The findings from both questionnaire and interviews were presented in the form of thematic descriptions aimed to answer research questions 1, 2 and 3 separately. The chapter has brought to light a number of pertinent issues that help to address the central issues raised by the research problem.

A number of issues emerged from the findings to research question 1. First, as inferred from the data on what genres they enjoyed most, secondary English teachers' knowledge of folk literature in their own or other languages of Bhutan is generally low, which was also evident in the ambivalent statements and banal affirmations of knowledge that some of the interview informants made. The lack of knowledge is attributed to a number of factors. These include diminishing use of the mother tongue, the low status attributed to folk literature as "rural", the predominance of Dzongkha and the literature disseminated through it, lack of attention paid to Bhutanese folk literature in teacher training, inability to move beyond the prescriptions of the official curriculum, lack of resources related to folk literature studies in the school library, and lack of professional growth opportunities in school. Second, the findings showed no significant evidence of teaching strategies English teachers employed that used Bhutanese folk literature as pedagogical resources. Yet, as evident in the data, some teachers either recognized or made unconscious attempts to use it in their classroom teaching that enhanced their students' motivation to learn English. These findings help to understand links and gaps that exist between policy emphases on the importance of culture and the significant role attributed to teachers and students, and the realities of curriculum, teacher knowledge and pedagogy as perceived by English teachers. In Chapter 5, I discuss the action research study that I conducted in a secondary school in Bhutan and the pedagogical strategies I used in it that influenced student knowledge and attitudes. The action research outcomes suggest possibilities for narrowing the gaps between policy and practice.

As evident in the findings to Research question 2, teachers generally recognized the value of literary and cultural activities in the schools' extra curriculum as a means to promote cultural learning among the students, including the value of diversity. Interestingly, the findings indicated the predominance of Dzongkha, and English to some extent, as the languages of cultural transmission, which, in the context of this study, means the diverse oral literatures in the smaller languages will not find space for articulation or performance, and as a result, disappear gradually. The history of smaller languages in relation to powerful national or official languages has not always been a favourable one (see page 20; see also Diamond,

2001, p. 1). Although teachers generally expressed the desire to move beyond the prescriptions of the formal English curriculum and use strategies that motivated the students to use English more actively, for example, creating opportunities for them to interact with knowledgeable members of the community, data did not show much evidence of its prevalence in the schools' formal or extracurricular activities.

A number of issues emerged from the findings to research question 3. First, while English teachers had no preference for English and Dzongkha curricula as the right place for including Bhutanese folk literature, there was general agreement on its cultural and pedagogical advantages for student learning. In the context of the English curriculum, culturally familiar materials enhance the quality of student learning experience through increased interest and motivation to learn, they argued. Second, teachers generally viewed the role of English in terms of its ability to assert Bhutan's unique cultural identity in a globalised world. Faced with the burden to teach good English, the informants expressed a general lack of confidence in the standard of English used in translations of Bhutanese folk literature. Yet, the cultural role of English translations of the oral literatures is acknowledged, which indicates some real contradictions in the trend in relation to the role of folk literature in the English curriculum. Third, the six expert teachers believed that English translations of Bhutanese folk literature could help to preserve and promote culture, including the enrichment of the diverse cultural traditions that exist in Bhutan.

The analyses presented in this chapter via each research question separately have created a contextual ground for theoretical analysis and discussion of the findings in Chapter 6, which will be done in relation to policy perspectives from Chapter 2 and findings from the action research study from Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CHANGE IN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE

5.1 Introduction

The review of the literature reported in Chapter 2 identified gaps in the field of knowledge production in relation to Bhutanese folk literature, in terms of scholarly work as well as classroom based studies. Based on the gaps identified I pointed out the need to work with students in an action research context in school to explore their perceptions and response in relation to Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge and gather data in that context. Moreover, gaps appeared in the data reported in the previous chapter. Data from teacher survey and interviews conducted prior to the action research study showed that although secondary English teachers generally acknowledged the cultural and pedagogical values of folk literature in the English curriculum (see Table 4.14, p. 105), they generally lacked knowledge of the genres (see table 4.9, page 85) and knowledge of teaching them. Hence, very little teaching of Bhutanese folk literature - in its oral as well as written forms - actually happened in English teachers' classrooms (see Table 4.10, page 87). Accordingly, an action research study was conducted with a group of 24 Class 11 students in a higher secondary school in south Bhutan for three months. The study was explored via the fourth and fifth research questions asked in this study:

- 4) What knowledge and attitude do secondary students show following three months of learning about Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum?
- 5) What strategies work in developing knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literatures and their cultural values in a secondary classroom?

In the action research, learning experiences and opportunities were created in the lesson interventions to improve the students' knowledge and attitudes in relation to Bhutanese folk literature and its cultural and aesthetic values. Since the main aim of the action research study was to see knowledge and attitude changes as a result of intervention a number of pedagogical strategies were used to facilitate the change. As evident in the questionnaire and interview data, both knowledge and attitudes changed over time.

In Chapter 3, I described the action research design and the strategies and procedures that I employed to gather, analyse and report the data (see page 69). In this Chapter I present the findings from the action research in terms of change in the students' level of knowledge and change in attitudes, or absence of change, as a result of the learning opportunities and experiences created for the students in relation to Bhutanese folk literature.

5.2 Broad context of the action research

As set out in Chapter 2, my review of government policy and English curriculum documents showed that a great deal of emphasis was placed on the importance of Bhutanese culture in the education of children, including its intangible aspects such as the oral traditions. The role of children and teachers respectively as the 'custodians' of Bhutanese culture and the catalysts of cultural transmission was emphasized equally (see page 8). In order to understand how far the policy emphasis of Bhutanese culture, particularly the oral traditions, are reflected in the curriculum and pedagogical practice, an external and internal situational analysis was carried out. As part of the external situational analysis, secondary English curriculum documents and public exam papers (see page 49) were examined. Documentary evidence from these sources was supplemented by relevant information gathered from the teacher questionnaires (which preceded the action research). Data from these sources indicated that secondary English teachers' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and pedagogy related to it was generally low and students lacked the incentives to explore, within and outside the scope of the formal curriculum, Bhutan's rich and diverse cultures represented by folk literatures in different languages. For example, only 44 (24%) respondents said that their students carried out writing projects such as collecting stories and proverbs from the community (see page 87). Also, my review of secondary English curriculum documents showed a negligible presence of Bhutanese folk literature in the new secondary English curriculum (e.g. only 2% in Class 7; none in Class 8 and Class 9; only 2.5% in Class 10; 6.7% in Class 11; and only 2.4% in Class 12). Similarly, a content analysis of public exam papers for classes 8, 10, and 12 for 2003, 2004, and 2005 showed no presence of questions related to Bhutanese folk literature (see page 50). Thus, data from the teacher survey, review of curriculum documents and public exams for secondary classes suggested that the context of the schools' formal and informal curricula, teacher knowledge and classroom practice, did not support the learning of Bhutanese folk literature, which, in its oral and written forms, is a rich source of knowledge of diverse cultures in Bhutan.

As part of the internal situational analysis, information was gathered from the school mainly from the principal, the collaborating teacher, through meeting with the action research class, the school library, and through questionnaire. In my conversation with the school principal, he

said, “Probably they [secondary students] won’t know much about Bhutanese folk literature as it is not there in the curriculum” (DT diary, 31/7/06, p. 4). This was confirmed by the collaborating teacher, who said that although a traditional ballad was already included in the Class 10 English curriculum, “it was never taught because it was not assessed in the Class 10 exams”, and also because it was “bulky” and “would have taken up a huge amount of time allotted to English studies” (DT diary, 15/8/06, p. 5). In order to understand how the library resources supported the students’ knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese folk literature, I gathered information on the kinds of books available that students accessed. The information I gathered from the school librarian showed that there were only 17 books related to Bhutanese folk literature in the entire library (DT diary, 15/8/06, p. 5). Preliminary information gathered from these sources was supported by what the students generally said about their interests outside the curriculum. When I asked the class what they had read besides the curriculum materials most of the students did not respond. A few mentioned “newspaper” and “comics”. No one mentioned any title from Bhutanese writing in English, including folk literature. Since information gathered externally and internally indicated that students generally had limited understanding of Bhutanese folk literature, it was necessary to find out more accurately what knowledge and attitude they brought to class and how the existent knowledge and attitudes could be improved. Therefore, data were gathered through a questionnaire administered in the first week of the action research project. Data from the questionnaire indicated a generally low level of knowledge of folk literature and its cultural values (see Tables 5.15, 5.17, 5.23 & 5.34).

5.3 Creating learning experiences and opportunities and gathering data

In order to address the two action research questions (see 5.1 above), opportunities and experiences were created for the students to read selections from Bhutanese folk literature in English, discuss the literary, cultural and aesthetic values of the genres they read, and explore the oral literatures that existed in their own or other languages. To give these experiences a pedagogical focus, a total seventeen classroom lessons centred on oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature in English were taught during the 3½ months of action research period. The learning experiences were based mainly on their reading of six published books of Bhutanese folk literature in English (see Table 1.1, page 5 for details). They were *Sumdar Tashi: Songs of Sorrow* (1998), a Bhutanese traditional ballad; *The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi: A Wind Borne Feather* (1996); *Folktales of Bhutan* (1994); *Bhutanese Folktales: From the East and the South* (2004); *Ta She Gha Chha: The Broken Saddle and Other Popular Bhutanese Beliefs* (2005); and *Sayings and Proverbs from Bhutan: Wisdom and Wit in Dzongkha Idiom* (1999). The students also collected oral literatures such as folktales, proverbs, riddles, beliefs and superstitions, imprecations, and animal stories from their own

languages, translated these into English and shared their written products with the class and talked about their experience. In the action research lessons, students also had opportunities to reflect on their readings, complete simple task sheets, and write open-ended responses to questions. These activities were generally designed to support and encourage the students to think critically about the literary, cultural and aesthetic elements of the folk literatures that they read in the action research lessons. Hence, in some lessons the intellectual tasks were based on the varying levels of intellectual complexity used in the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 215). These opportunities and experiences enabled them to talk about the literary, cultural and aesthetic values of Bhutanese folk literature. The lessons were themselves based upon a prior analysis of students' knowledge and understandings. To achieve this, data were gathered right at the beginning of the lesson sequence and served as a form of diagnosis in the students' knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature.

5.4 Handling the data

As described in Chapter 3, data were gathered during and at the end of the lesson interventions that were complementary to the early data for two purposes: (1) to monitor students' reaction so that lessons could be adjusted as necessary and (2) for comparative purposes against the baseline data. While data from the questionnaire was count analysed, data from the interviews were analysed thematically. A set of five thematic categories emerged from the analysis of interview data: (1) Bhutanese folk literature and cultural values; (2) Bhutanese folk literature and cultural diversity; (3) Bhutanese folk literature and its role in the English curriculum; (4) the status of Bhutanese folk literature; and (5) Bhutanese folk literature and the role of English. Each of the thematic categories is defined in terms of their sub categories in their relevant sections in this chapter. Since the interviews were aimed to gain a deeper and more interpretive understanding of the students' response to Bhutanese folk literature, the description of change in this chapter is mostly illustrated by typical data segments from the interviews. But data from the questionnaires and the collaborating teacher's and the researcher's diaries are used to triangulate evidences, observations and insights relating to change or the absence of it. The collaborating teacher's and researcher's diaries are cited as "CT diary" and "DT diary" respectively.

5.4.1 Judging the data for evidence of change

Change in knowledge and attitude in relation to the five thematic categories is discussed with the help of selected data segments from particular informants' first, second and third

interviews. While the five criteria used to select the data segments were explained in Chapter 3 (see page 79), here I describe briefly the two principles that were used to judge the evidence of change in the selected data segments. First, evidence of change in the level of knowledge in relation to each thematic category was sought in the informants' ability to shift progressively from factual, static knowledge, or lack of knowledge, to explicit, complex, differentiated, deeper knowledge forms across the three interviews. Second, these evidences were sought specifically in lexical shifts (change in words and phrases) that the informants made across the three interviews. In relation to attitude, evidence of change was sought in the informants' ability to shift progressively from implicit, neutral, noncommittal, ambivalent, and negative attitudinal stances, or absence of attitude, to attitudinal stances that were explicit, positive, proactive, legitimized and supported by knowledge. Second, these evidences were sought specifically in lexical shifts that the informants made across the three interviews. Thus, following the two principles, the knowledge and attitude words (adjectives, verbs, nouns, noun groups, groups of other words) used in the first, second and third interviews in relation to the five themes were analysed and compared.

5.4.2 Presenting the data

Data related to 'change' in knowledge and attitudes and those related to the pedagogical strategies used in the study that stimulated the change are presented separately. Change in the level of knowledge and change in attitude over time are described within the five thematic categories separately. The description of change in relation to knowledge and change in attitude is each supported by selected data segments from typical informants' interviews at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the action research. To make the evidence of change visible, relevant knowledge and attitude words in the data segments are italicized and presented in bold fonts in tables. To enable comparison at a quick glance, data from the three interviews are arranged under three separate headings in a table, as "Beginning" [beginning of action research], "Middle" [of action research] and "End" [of action research]. Data segments are cited by the informants' abbreviated pseudonyms (e.g., R1.1, p. 1 means paragraph 1 of Rabsel's 1st interview and page 1 of his transcript file; K3.12, p. 2 means paragraph 12 of Khandro's third interview and page 2 of her transcript file). While the discussion of change is based, for the most part, on data from the interviews, data from the questionnaire, and observations and insights from the field diaries are used to provide complementary or contrasting perspectives to the discussions. At the beginning of each thematic category, before discussing the results concerning change in knowledge and attitude, I briefly explain the preceding context of each set of results and define the category for the sake of clarity.

5.5 Bhutanese folk literature and cultural values

Items 8a, 9a, and 11a of the questionnaire (Appendix 3.15) were implicitly related to the notion of cultural values. Part of question 6 and part of question 7 of the interview (Appendix 3.17) explored the theme of cultural values and culture maintenance more overtly than the questionnaire. Data were analysed to see what knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in its oral and written forms the students brought to school and what cultural values they attributed to it. In the present context, ‘cultural values’ generally includes traditional customs and practices, beliefs, superstitions, rituals, spirituality, compassion, faith, commitment, identity, art and nature.

5.5.1. Change in knowledge of genres of Bhutanese folk literature

Before exploring the informants’ knowledge and attitudes in relation to the cultural and aesthetic values of Bhutanese folk literature, its role in the curriculum and its advantages for Bhutanese culture in general, it was necessary at the beginning of the action research to find out what knowledge of the diverse genres - in their oral and written forms - students knew. Item 4 of the questionnaire asked: *On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, rate your present knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature (in your own language/dialect/in English).* Table 5.15 summarises the responses of the whole class to this item at the beginning and at the end of the action research. As Table 5.15 illustrates, students’ opinions about their knowledge levels improved over time. For example, while at the beginning 33% of the respondents rated their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in their own language as ‘poor’ and only 4% rated it as “very good”, at the end, no one rated it as poor and 21% rated it as “very good”.

Table 5.15 Change in students’ self-rated knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature (BFL)

Knowledge category	Beginning of action research	End of action research
Knowledge of BFL in their own language	8 (33%) respondents rated ‘poor’.	No one rated ‘poor’.
	5 (21%) respondents rated ‘fair’.	3 respondents (13%) rated ‘fair’.
	1 (4%) respondent rated ‘good’.	6 (25%) respondents rated ‘good’.
	1 (4%) respondent rated ‘very good’.	5 (21%) respondents rated ‘very good’.
	No one rated ‘excellent’	1 (4%) respondent rated ‘excellent’.

This shift in self-rated knowledge was explored further through the interviews with the six informants who were broadly representative of the class. Hence, as part of question 1 of the semi-structured interview, the informants were asked this question in all the three interviews: *What do you think your present knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature is? Do you think you know lots or is it just OK?* Data from the first, second and third interview showed a general

pattern of growth in the informants' level of confidence about their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature. In the first interview, the informants' responses reflected the low level of knowledge they stated in the first questionnaire. Most of them said their knowledge was just "OK", meaning (in Bhutanese English) only fair. For example, in the first interview Selki (1.9, p. 2) said she knew "very little"; in the second interview she said, "My knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature before the action research was less because I didn't read much about Bhutanese writers ... Now I have read more writings by Bhutanese writers" (2.5, p. 1). And in the third interview she said, "I think I have gained more knowledge about folk literature ... Now I feel more comfortable and easy to read books on folk literature. If I get a chance, I would like to know more" (S3.1, p. 1). A similar pattern of responses was evident in Wangyal's data. In the first interview, Wangyal (1.6, p. 2) said his knowledge "at the moment" was "very limited"; in the second interview, he said it was "now drastically improved" (W2.6, p. 2), and he attributed the rise in his knowledge level to the "notes" they had read in the action research lessons. And in the third interview, Wangyal (3.6, p. 2) said, "My level of interest in Bhutanese folk literature now is quite different from the interest I had previously ... the more I read it, the more interested I become". As evident in the data segments shown in Table 5.16, Jigdrel goes much beyond Selki's and Wangyal's views. In the first interview, Jigdrel's opinion about his knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature was "Just OK". Progressively, in the second and third interviews, his opinions change significantly. Whereas in the second interview, Jigdrel said implicitly that his knowledge was now better than in the past ("in the past it was not good"), in the third interview, he said explicitly that as a result of increased level of knowledge and interest, he was willing to go to his village and write down some of the folktales which existed in the oral form. So, in terms of knowledge and understandings, there was a significant change as evident in the lexical shifts he made across the three interviews.

Table 5.16 Jigdrel's three interviews reflecting knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
Knowledge of BFL	"It's just OK" (J1.5, p.1)	My knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature <i>in the past was not good</i> because the <i>teachers did not share their knowledge of it</i> with the students and also because the curriculum <i>did not have much of Bhutanese folk literature</i> in it; also because there was very little available in the library in the form of books. (J2.4, p. 2)	I think after having been in this action research <i>I am interested to know more</i> about our culture and read more about folk literature. I have <i>developed more interest</i> in reading it. <i>But if I can go to my village I will be interested to write down some of the folk literature which is in the oral form.</i> (J3.2, p. 1)

The informants' claims about increase in the level of their knowledge, as illustrated by Jigdrel's data in Table 5.16, were generally supported by the level of knowledge demonstrated by the class as a whole at the end of the action research, as shown in Table 5.17. Item 3 of the questionnaire asked the respondents to write the "title of a book", "title of a story", "name of a central character or place in Bhutanese folk literature", and "name of a Bhutanese writer of folk literature" correctly. So the data was significant because it showed knowledge that

required the respondents to illustrate and exemplify and not just state it. For example, at the beginning only 50% of the class wrote the title of a book of Bhutanese folk literature correctly and only 33% of the class wrote the name of a Bhutanese writer of folk literature correctly.

Table 5.17 Change in students' ability to identify titles in Bhutanese folk literature (BFL) correctly

Knowledge categories	Beginning of action research	End of action research
Title of a book of BFL	12 (50%) respondents wrote it correctly.	18 (75%) respondents wrote it correctly.
Title of a Bhutanese folktale	9 (38%) wrote it correctly.	17 (71%) wrote it correctly.
Name of a central character or place in BFL	9 (38%) wrote it correctly.	17 (71%) wrote it correctly.
Name of a Bhutanese writer of folktales	8 (33%) wrote it correctly.	21 (88%) wrote it correctly.

The collaborating teacher wrote, "There aren't many Bhutanese writers but sadly our students cannot name one of them when asked" (CT diary 17/10/06, p. 4). These data helped me to reflect on the subsequent activities that would help the students to improve their knowledge levels.

5.5.2 Change in knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and its cultural values

Unlike the questionnaire data where not much evidence was seen in terms of change in the level of the respondents' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and its cultural values, the interview data generally showed the informants' ability to shift from simple factual knowledge at the beginning to more complex, differentiated knowledge forms at the end. The collaborating teacher wrote in her diary, "Students' analytical power seems to have increased. When asked about their choice of folktales out of the two ['Puchey Bandhar' and 'The Buffalo With Sixteen Horns'], they had their own choice and good reasons. Impressive!" (CT diary, 31/10/06, p. 5). In all of the first six interviews (at the beginning) the informants generally recognized the cultural and historical value of Bhutanese folk literature and, therefore, advocated its preservation through documentation in written forms. They mostly used knowledge words such as 'ancestor', 'culture', 'past', 'country', 'preserve', 'children', 'customs', 'tradition', 'future generation', 'cultural values' (e.g. C1.7, p.2; S1.18, p.3; W1.11, p.3; J1.16, p.2). To illustrate, in the first interview, Chonyi said, "Bhutanese folk literature deals with themes based on our country's past and how our country came from ancestor to ancestor... We learn about how our ancestors lived and the kinds of culture they practiced" (C1.7, p.2). At this stage the statements showed only simple factual knowledge and lacked 'deep knowledge' (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 43). In the second interview, the informants generally used knowledge words that indicated intimate knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature as an important source of cultural values. Now they used knowledge words such as 'loyal', 'faithful', 'vanish', 'Bhutanese beliefs', 'monk tax' (K2.5, p.1; S2.9, p.2; W2.10, p.2; C2.3, p.1), which indicated interpretive knowledge, something which was not visible in the data from the first interviews. Progressively in the third interview, most of the informants

used words such as ‘spiritual’, ‘will disappear’, ‘original meaning’, ‘ecosystem’, ‘lost forever’, ‘my own language’ ‘explored’ (e.g. R3.3, p.3; J3.3, p.1; W3.4, p.1), which showed their ability to relate Bhutanese folk literature to the wider social, cultural, spiritual, even environmental frames of reference. In the third interview, the informants were able to deal with the “meanings and implications” of Bhutanese folk literature and, to some extent even express ideological positions. Data from Khandro’s first, second and third interviews, shown in Table 5.18, represent this pattern of change over time. As described in Chapter 3, the data segments presented in this chapter best represent the informant’s knowledge within the thematic categories described in the chapter. The same rule applied to selecting data segments shown in all the other Tables to illustrate change in attitude.

Table 5.18 Changes in Khandro’s knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
Cultural Values	From Bhutanese folk literature we <i>learn</i> about our own traditions and customs. We <i>know</i> more about what our ancient ancestors had done. Yes, <i>sometimes we find</i> . Cultural values ...No <i>I don’t have any idea</i> . (K1.13, p.3)	<i>I have learned</i> about the Bhutanese culture, traditions, customs and the laws that were there in the past. <i>For example</i> , in <i>The Change of Fate</i> we see the monk tax imposed upon the people; <i>there were</i> also some laws <i>imposed</i> upon the people. (K2.4, p.1)	As Bhutan <i>becomes modernised</i> the people are also getting modernised and they are <i>not aware</i> of the Bhutanese culture and traditions. <i>So it is very important to know</i> about these. This will <i>help to preserve</i> our cultural heritage. (K3.14, p.3)

The shift in Khandro’s choice of knowledge words across the three interviews is illustrated by the words that are italicized and shown in bold fonts (see Table 5.18). The verbs of knowledge (e.g. “learn”, “know”, “find”, “don’t have”) used in the first interview are indicative of the informant’s emerging knowledge which was passive and shallow in the beginning. Conversely, in the second interview the knowledge verbs were more active (e.g. “have learned”) and consequently the informant is able to exemplify her claim for knowledge. For example, Khandro referred to a poem ‘The Change of Fate’ that the class read in the action research lessons and alluded to the issue of the ‘monk tax imposed upon the people’. Khandro was now able to problematize knowledge instead of simply viewing it as necessarily good and problem-free. In the third interview, Khandro took a critical stance on the value of preserving and advancing cultural values and looked at Bhutanese culture against the backdrop of a globalised world and advocated the need for culture maintenance. The knowledge gained over time was visible even in the class as a whole.

While Khandro’s data showed significant evidence of change in the level of knowledge, Selki’s data, presented in Table 5.19, did not show much evidence of it. Thus, in the first interview, Selki (1.18, p.3) advocated preservation of Bhutanese folk literature in the form of books so that “people from other countries will come to know about our past and our culture” and also because “the future generation can also read and learn about them” In the second interview, she said if it was written down, “it will not vanish” and “students in the future will be interested in it and they will also write like us” (S2.7, p.2). In the third interview, she repeated the same argument in a different mould. The action word “write” is common in all

the three interviews, while the noun groups “future generation” and the verbs “vanish” are common in the second and third interviews. Although Selki understood the importance of Bhutanese folk literature to Bhutanese and the need to preserve it, in terms of change, the level of knowledge displayed in all the three interviews remained much the same – “shallow”, “static” and “uncritical” in the language of productive pedagogies (see Hayes et al., 2007, pp. 43 & 145). There was not much evidence of higher-order thinking or the ability to critique existing knowledge.

Table 5.19 Selki’s three interviews reflecting knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
Cultural Values	I think we <i>must collect the stories</i> and <i>write them in the form of books</i> . If our folk literature is written down in the form of books people from other countries will come to <i>know about our past</i> and our culture. Also the future generation can also <i>read and learn</i> about them. (S1.18, p.3)	Yes. If we write it down <i>it will not vanish</i> and students in the future <i>will be interested</i> in it and they will also <i>write like us</i> . I feel that we will learn about our tradition if we <i>write it down...</i> Similarly, the future generation can also <i>learn about</i> their past. (S2.7, p.2)	I think that the folk literature that exists in the oral form <i>should be written down</i> because in due course of time it might <i>vanish</i> . So to <i>preserve</i> our culture and traditions and past deeds I think we must <i>write it down</i> in the form of books. (S3.2, p.1)

To sum up, despite Selki’s lack of change, the informants generally showed positive change in their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in relation to its cultural values. Specifically, the trend observed in the data was a shift from knowledge at the level of recall and simple explanation and broad generalizations without exemplification in the beginning to more holistic and global knowledge forms characterized by exemplification, differentiation, interpretation, and enhanced self-knowledge in relation to Bhutanese folk literature in the end.

5.5.3 Change in Attitude

Was the generally positive change in knowledge reflected in a positive attitude change? Item 11 of the questionnaire asked, “*Is Bhutanese folk literature useful, necessary and important? Yes/No/Not sure. Why?*” Interestingly, in both the first and second questionnaires, 23 (96%) respondents affirmed the usefulness, necessity and importance of Bhutanese folk literature. A close examination of the respondents’ choice of words in the two questionnaires showed a visible shift in the attitudes displayed at the beginning and at the end of the action research. For example, in the first questionnaires the respondents generally said that Bhutanese folk literature was useful, necessary and important because it reflected Bhutan’s past, Bhutanese culture, Bhutanese literature, moral values, geographical knowledge, and duties of a responsible citizen. While in the second questionnaire, the respondents repeated all these reasons, they also said Bhutanese folk literature helped to preserve Bhutanese culture and tradition, it helped to compare Bhutanese literature with that of other countries and learn from the process, and that it could represent Bhutanese literary tradition to the outside world. While

the respondents expressed attitudes of appreciation and judgment in both the questionnaires, the quality of judgement was supported by a wider understanding of the value of Bhutanese folk literature, particularly in terms of how through documentation and dissemination in a global language it will not only help to preserve culture but will also promote it outside the country (see Appendix 3.16 for details). Hence, the attitudinal expressions in the second questionnaire were more legitimized and active than in the first one. Change in attitude was also visible in the data from item 13 of the questionnaire which asked the respondents to provide “Any other information or comments”. In the first questionnaire, only 4 (17%) respondents made an attitudinal statement, while in the second, 14 respondents expressed attitudes. In the first one, the respondents said Bhutanese folk literature should be given greater importance and distributed more widely by translating it from other languages into English. Because of its cultural value books on folk literature should be made available for children to read. In the second questionnaire, while these ideas were repeated, the respondents also expressed the need for the school to buy more books related to Bhutanese folk literature, the need to allocate special time in school for the study of folk literature, the need for teachers to create folk literature projects for the students, and the need to develop students’ interest in the subject. Thus, change was evident in the data not only in terms of increase in the number of respondents in the second questionnaire but also in the proactive stance that the respondents took in terms of how to improve the status of Bhutanese folk literature.

As explained earlier, evidences of change in attitude in the interview data were sought in the informants’ ability to shift from generally naive, neutral, noncommittal, ambivalent, and negative attitudinal expressions, or absence of attitude, to positive, active and legitimized attitudinal expressions. A close examination of the data showed a positive change over time. Data from Jigdrel’s three interviews, presented in Table 5.20, illustrate this change.

Table 5.20 Jigdrel’s three interviews reflecting attitude

	Beginning	Middle	End
Cultural Values	I think it <i>should be preserved</i> . It <i>should be published</i> in the form of books. (J1.8, p.2)	It <i>should be written down because</i> it will help to <i>preserve</i> our culture and also know about our past. So they will <i>gain more knowledge</i> about their country. Some of the quotations are very <i>beautiful and interesting</i> ; they <i>can be used</i> in our writing such as essays, stories, letters, and so on. (J2.13, p.3)	But if I can go to my village <i>I will be interested to write down</i> some of the folk literature which is in the <i>oral form</i> . And if I get a chance I will write it down and <i>bring it out</i> . <i>I will be interested</i> to collect folktales <i>because</i> folktales give us <i>knowledge</i> of the history, traditions and the landscape of our country. (J3.2, p.1)

In the first interview, Jigdrel advocated preservation of Bhutanese folk literature and said, “it should be preserved” and “it should be published in the form of books”. Here appreciation was only implicit (Martin, 2003). In the second interview, he legitimized his attitudinal stance (“because”) by emphasizing the aesthetic qualities of Bhutanese folk literature such as its “beautiful and interesting” quotations (J2.13, p.3). Furthermore, he attempted to make an implicit ‘judgment’ (Martin, 2003) about it, even suggesting that some of these qualities “can

be used in our own writing such as essays, stories, letters and so on” (J2.13, p.3). Likewise, Jigdrel took a more positive, active, agentive interest in recording folk literature, which was reflected in his choice of attitude words such as “will be interested”, “write down”, “bring it out” (J3.2, p.1). In sum, Jigdrel displayed implicit appreciation in the first interview, an attitude of appreciation and judgment in the second interview and an attitude of affect and appreciation in the third interview. Also, in the third interview Jigdrel made a personal investment expressed in terms of an intended act (e.g. “I will write it down”). This is quite a significant shift from the attitudes expressed in the first and second interviews.

Change was also visible in Chonyi’s data in all the three attitudinal dimensions of affect (e.g. “I am interested”), judgment (e.g. “heroic qualities”) and appreciation (e.g. “interesting words”). However, unlike Jigdrel, Chonyi expressed an attitude only in the second and third interviews. Table 5.21 shows data from Chonyi’s three interviews. Although Chonyi did not express an attitudinal disposition in the first interview, she stated significant views in the second and third interviews.

Table 5.21 Chonyi’s two interviews reflecting attitude

		Beginning	Middle	End
Cultural Values	Makes no statement		I find it <i>interesting</i> to know that even in Bhutanese literature there <i>are characters with heroic qualities</i> . I also find it interesting to see that there are so many <i>interesting words</i> used in Bhutanese literature as we see in literature from other countries. (C2.2, p.1)	<i>I am interested</i> to know more about Bhutanese folk literature. Among <i>different forms</i> like <i>blessings, imprecations and superstitions</i> , I am interested in learning more about the <i>superstitions</i> . I am interested more in the superstitions <i>because</i> they mostly reflect our customs. (C3.3, p.1)

For instance, in the second interview she recognized and appreciated the cultural and aesthetic values of Bhutanese folk literature and judged its intrinsic value by comparing it with literature from other countries. The attitudinal expressions of judgment and appreciation were evident in the second and third interviews. While in the second interview she focussed on the “attitude target or object” (George & Jones 1997, p. 398), describing it as “interesting” three times, and evincing little personal belief and commitment, in the third interview she said “interested” three times in relation to learning about particular genres of Bhutanese folk literature. Thus in the third interview, Chonyi displayed the ability to make judgments based on considered knowledge of the attitude object. In sum, while in the second interview Chonyi recognized the cultural, aesthetic and stylistic qualities of Bhutanese folk literature but without much personal belief and commitment, in the third interview she was able to make a judgment about the relative importance of the different genres of Bhutanese folk literature. Here she took a personal stance based on an evaluative understanding of the choice.

To sum up, as illustrated by Jigdrel’s and Chonyi’s data (see above) the students’ attitudes in relation to the cultural values of Bhutanese folk literature showed positive change over time.

Whereas the statements of interest and appreciation they made in relation to Bhutanese folk literature at the beginning of the action research were mostly broad generalisations, the statements they made at the end reflected differentiated and interpretive awareness of folk literature and its cultural values.

5.6 Bhutanese folk literature and cultural diversity

Since the action research was framed within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, which assumes participant autonomy, knowledge generation and interpretation, the action research activities did not explicitly focus on notions of cultural diversity. Items 4 and 9 of the questionnaire (Appendix 3.15) had only implicit notions of diversity. While question 1 of the semi-structured interview asked the informants to talk about folk literature in their own languages, question 7 asked them to talk about its cultural and aesthetic values. Data segments were examined to see what notions of diversity the informants attributed to Bhutanese folk literature. For the purpose of data analysis, ‘cultural diversity’ generally includes the informants’ knowledge of, and attitude in relation to, the recognition of and respect for cultural difference and inclusiveness in the context of learning experience in school.

5.6.1 Change in Knowledge

The informants were generally not very forthcoming, especially in the beginning, about notions of cultural diversity. This was because ‘cultural diversity’ as a concept was not part of popular pedagogical language and language of the curriculum. Thus, compared with the other thematic categories, there were not many statements about diversity. For example, Selki did not make any statement regarding cultural diversity in all the three interviews. Chonyi expressed a view about the theme only in the third interview. Likewise, Wangyal did not speak about cultural diversity in the first interview, while Khandro and Jigdrel did not speak about it in the second interview. In order to see a pattern in the responses that were made, statements from the six informants’ first, second and third interviews were examined and compared. Thus, in the first interview, three respondents made knowledge statements about cultural diversity. For example, Rabsel (1.21, p. 4) said students had a chance to read folk literatures from different parts of the country, which had “many advantages”. Jigdrel and Khandro (see Table 5.22) said similar things. In the second interview, Wangyal (W2.4, p. 1) said that if Bhutanese folk literature is translated into Dzongkha or English, then “many people will come to know about it”, while Rabsel (3.8, p. 2) said “if the folk literature of Bumthang is made available in other Dzongkhags, then the people will know about the country’s other cultures also”. Thus, as evident in the informants’ statements in the first and second interviews, there wasn’t a significant change in the level of knowledge.

In the third interview, four informants made knowledge statements about cultural diversity. Unlike in the first and second interviews, here the informants spoke more explicitly about cultural diversity. Rabsel (3.16, p. 4) made explicit statements about cultural diversity. He said, “There will be some differences in the cultures and also attitudes towards culture, so they [students] will be interested to know about each other’s cultures”. Khandro’s data from the first and third interview, shown in Table 5.22, represent a typical case of change in the level of knowledge as compared with that at the beginning of the action research. In the first interview, Khandro only implicitly conveyed the notion of diversity through knowledge words such as “types of stories”, “certain region’s”, “kinds of folktales”, “other folktales”, and “other regions”, in the third interview, she expressed it explicitly through such words as “west Bhutan”, “south Bhutan”, “the west”, “communication gap”, and “literature that exists in other parts of the country”.

Table 5.22 Khandro’s two interviews reflecting knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
Cultural Diversity	People will be more aware of these <i>types of stories</i> . Then we will not only know <i>certain region’s</i> or certain <i>kinds of folktales</i> , we will also know about <i>other folktales, other region’s</i> folktales. (K1.6,p.2)	Makes no statement	We will be more aware of our country. For example, people in <i>west Bhutan</i> will not know much about <i>southern Bhutanese</i> literature and similarly people in <i>south Bhutan</i> will not know much about literature in <i>the west</i> . As a result, there will be some <i>communication gap</i> between the countrymen. People will not be aware of the kind of literature that exists in <i>other parts</i> of the country. (K3.12, p.2)

Thus, where the informants spoke about diversity, especially in the third interview, data showed evidence of knowledge related to notions of cultural diversity. In particular, Rabsel, Jigdrel and Khandro’s data from their first, second and third interviews showed evidence of change in the level of knowledge. The change was visible in the shift from simple acknowledgement of the advantages of documenting folk literatures from the oral sources at the beginning to very explicit statements about knowledge of how folk literatures from different languages of Bhutan would promote better understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity at the end. No doubt others in the class developed similar notions but there would have been others who did not develop in this way and this is explored through the questionnaire data over time.

Unlike the interview data, the questionnaire data, on the other hand, did not show much evidence of a change in the level of knowledge in relation to cultural diversity. For example, in the first questionnaire, 22 (92%) respondents said that English translations of Bhutanese folk literature would enable people in different parts of Bhutan to understand and appreciate the diverse folk literatures that exist in different parts of the country (see Appendix 3.16). On the other hand, if it is not translated into English, its presence in languages other than Dzongkha will be ignored (see Appendix 3.16). So the notion of linguistic and cultural diversities and the need to preserve these were implicit in the data from the first questionnaire. And in the second questionnaire also 22 (92%) respondents said nearly the same thing about the cultural advantages of English translations (Appendix 3.16).

The students' interaction with diverse forms of Bhutanese folk literature in English in print and with the oral genres they collected from their own and other languages not only increased their knowledge of genres but it also sensitized them to the diversity and richness of cultural and aesthetic values these genres represented. That is why they were actively showing interest in learning about diverse folk literature from different cultural sources. This was evident in the questionnaire data. Table 5.23 shows data from item 2 of the questionnaire which asked the respondents to put a tick mark against the genres they knew in the list. At the beginning of the action research only 42% of the respondents knew "folk riddle" while at the end, 92% said they knew it. Similarly, 83% knew "folktale" at the beginning, whereas at the end 100% said they knew it. No one knew "lullaby" and "imprecation" at the beginning, whereas 79% and 96% respectively knew these genres at the end. Also, whereas at the beginning no one said they knew "Any other" genre, at the end of the action research 13% mentioned blessings, proverbs and ballads.

Table 5.23 Student self-rated knowledge of diverse forms of Bhutanese folk literature (BFL)

Beginning of action research	End of action research
Folk riddle: 10 (42%)	Folk riddle: 22 (92%)
Folktale: 20 (83%)	Folktale: 24 (100%)
Lullaby: No one knew it.	Lullaby: 19 (79%)
Imprecation: No one knew it.	Imprecation: 23 (96%)
"Any other" genre: None one wrote an example.	"Any other" genre: 3 (13%) wrote "blessings", "proverbs", and "ballads".

To find out how the change in the class' knowledge of different genres they had access to influenced the students' understanding of cultural diversity, the interview data were examined. Data from Jigdrel's interviews showed evidence of how knowledge of genre influenced knowledge of diversity positively. For example, while in his first interview he only emphasised the importance of translating folk literatures into Dzongkha, in the third interview he (J3.11, p.3) said, "Folk literature from other languages in Bhutan should be shared in the class. Through sharing students from different parts of the country will be able to know about each other's culture and about each other's past". Although unlike Jigdrel, Chonyi did not perceive the cultural and pedagogical advantages of the genres, she acknowledged the value of knowing about them. While she was silent about diversity in the first and second interviews, in the third interview she said, "Now I have gained lots of knowledge ... I now know the story called 'The Phob that Provided Food, 'The Buffalo With Sixteen Horns' and all kinds of proverbs and stories (C3.1, p. 1). Clearly, without exposure to the diverse genres collected from different languages this understanding was not possible.

To sum up, a discernable pattern emerges from the data. First, not many of the informants showed willingness to speak about cultural diversity in all the interviews. Second, where knowledge was displayed, data showed evidence of noticeable change in terms of a shift from

very implicit knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and the values of diversity and inclusion at the beginning to recognition of the need to respect cultural difference at the end.

5.6.2 Change in Attitude

As in the case of knowledge, the informants were generally not very forthcoming in terms of stating attitudinal positions about cultural diversity. In any case these can be found as underpinnings of words and actions. For example, Selki and Wangyal did not make an attitudinal statement about cultural diversity in any of the three interviews; Khandro did so only in the first interview; Chonyi and Rabsel did so only in the third interview; and Jigdrel did so in the first and third interviews. Yet, where the informants spoke about it, especially in the third interview, data generally showed some evidence of the informants' ability to express appreciation of and judgment about the cultural values of Bhutanese folk literature they read in the action research lessons. Jigdrel's data, shown in Table 5.24, illustrates this response pattern. In the first interview, Jigdrel said that through reading Bhutanese folk literature "people will be able to respect each other" and "there will be respect among the people in the society" (J1.16, p.3). The attitude of appreciation was expressed rather implicitly, while the tone of the attitude was neutral and non-committal. However, the generally bland and nondescript attitude words of the first interview were replaced by a choice of nouns and verbs (e.g., "increase the friendship"; "talk to each other"; "share with each other"; "culture and tradition of their own regions") in the third interview that not only conveyed an attitude of appreciation but also of implied judgment (e.g. "should be encouraged"). The attitudes in the latter interview were positive, active and agentive in tone. The action research lessons helped to develop positive affect in Jigdrel.

Table 5.24 Jigdrel's two interviews reflecting attitude

	Beginning	Middle	End
Cultural Diversity	In the Bhutanese folktales we see the <i>values of respect</i> . By reading the folk literature people will be able to <i>respect each other</i> . There will be <i>respect</i> among the people in the society. (J1.16, p.3)	Makes no statements	Students should also be <i>encouraged to write books</i> on folk literature from <i>other parts of the country</i> . Knowing about each other's culture will <i>increase the friendship</i> . Even if boys and girls may not talk to each other, such activities will compel them to <i>talk to each other</i> and <i>share with each other</i> the <i>culture and tradition of their own regions</i> . (J3.16, p.3)

Although they were not very different from Jigdrel's, Rabsel's data, presented in Table 5.25, shows how from not saying anything about cultural diversity in the first and second interviews, he stated very explicit views about it in the third interview. The attitudes that Rabsel expressed explicitly about cultural diversity in the third interview were evident in the choice of nouns and verbs that he used ("difference"; "commonalities"; "must compare"; "differences") to articulate the need for valuing and respecting cultures other than one's own.

Table 5.25 Rabsel’s third interview reflecting attitude

	Beginning	Middle	End
Cultural Diversity	Makes no statement	Makes no statements	We have to look at the <i>differences</i> as well as the <i>commonalities</i> . We <i>must compare</i> them. As they are all our own country’s literature we <i>must know</i> them. If we learn about the <i>differences</i> between literatures from the south or from the east, then the people will know about others and they will <i>feel</i> that theirs is the same as that of others. Each will <i>feel the importance</i> of the other’s literature. It will <i>become richer</i> and richer. (R3.17, p.4)

Thus, Rabsel changed from making no attitudinal statement in the first and second interviews to advocating the need to “look at the differences as well as the commonalities” in the third interview. However, the attitudes of judgment and appreciation that Rabsel stated were mostly in the future tense (e.g., “have to”, “must know”, “will”) and did not evince a sense of personal involvement and commitment. Therefore, although attitudes were expressed, there was still a sense of disinterestedness and detachment.

To sum up, in relation to cultural diversity, the informants generally made attitudinal statements about how Bhutanese folk literature from different languages can be a way to promote understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Their attitudes in relation to diversity showed some change over time. Whereas the statements they made in relation to diversity at the beginning of the action research were characterized by ambivalence and tentativeness, those they made in the second and third interviews expressed more explicitly their understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

5.7 Bhutanese folk literature and its role in the curriculum

Items 8 and 11 of the questionnaire and items 6 and 8 of the interview explored the students’ perceptions of the role of folk literature in the English curriculum. Data segments from the three interviews were examined to see what knowledge and attitudes the informants held over time in relation to the role of Bhutanese folk literature as a catalyst of cultural knowledge in the English curriculum. For the purpose of data analysis, ‘curriculum’ generally includes the curriculum content, its enactment in the classroom context, the students’ learning experience, and extracurricular activities in school. Evidences of knowledge and attitudes were sought in data segments that showed how these dimensions supported the preservation and promotion of Bhutanese folk literature, hence Bhutanese culture.

5.7.1 Change in Knowledge

The role of Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum was a theme which the students talked uninhibitedly about. Questionnaire item 8 asked, “*Should English translations of BFL be included in the English curriculum for Class 7 to 12? Yes/No/Not sure. State up to three reasons*”. In both questionnaires, most students (21 and 23 respectively) favoured inclusion because it enhanced the students’ cultural knowledge. The argument for inclusion in the second questionnaire showed evidence of interpretative awareness and ability to look at Bhutanese folk literature in a wider frame of reference. Thus, in the first questionnaire, the respondents generally said including Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum would motivate the students to learn English in a culturally familiar context and thus promote Bhutanese culture more widely in English among young people, which is not possible in a local language, including Dzongkha (see Q.08, Appendix 3.16). In the second questionnaire, they said it should be included because English can spread more widely across languages and cultures in Bhutan. They said, including English translations of folk literatures from different languages in the English curriculum would enhance the students’ knowledge and attitudes in relation to their own oral traditions and their cultures as well those in other languages (see Q.08, Appendix 3.16). Thus, through knowledge gained in the curriculum, they would be able to preserve their cultures and traditions. Here their understanding of the cross-cultural advantages of English was more explicit and deeper than it was in the first questionnaire.

Change in the level of knowledge displayed was generally discernable across all the six informants. In the first interview, the informants generally advocated the inclusion of Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum because it enhanced the students’ cultural and historical knowledge. In the second interview, most informants argued that inclusion in the curriculum would help to preserve culture because it would be accessible to the students. For example, in the first interview, Jigdrel (1.9, p. 3) said, “Bhutanese folktales are a form of our literary heritage. It is like history”. In the second interview, he (J2.10, p. 2) said, “If it is not included students will not be interested in their own culture and direct their interest into other things”. In the third interview, he (J3.12, p. 3) said, inclusion in the curriculum would enable the students to “read it and preserve their own culture and act accordingly”. While Khandro’s statements in the first and second interviews generally reflected the stance taken by Jigdrel, her statement in the third interview elaborated the notion of cultural preservation more clearly with examples: “They [educational administrators] should supply more books of Bhutanese folk literature. They should encourage some people to collect and write down the oral literatures so that they can be included in the curriculum and they will be available for students to read” (Khandro 3.5, p.4).

Data segments from Selki’s three interviews, shown in Table 5.26, represent a typical case of change from static knowledge at the beginning to interpretive knowledge at the end. In the first interview, Selki endorsed the idea of including Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum because it enabled the students to “compare” Bhutanese culture with “other

cultures” and also because they can “judge the standard of their language”. In the second interview, she said, “If it is not included in the curriculum one day our tradition might vanish” and also “we won’t find much time to read it”, presumably outside the curriculum. The choice of knowledge words in the first and second interviews indicated different knowledge forms. The reasons in the first interview were linked to her present experience of the context of the curriculum, while those in the second indicated the ability to move beyond the curriculum and perceive a link between non-inclusion and culture loss. In the third interview, Selki argued for inclusion of Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum because it embodied the “values of kindness and good things of life”.

Table 5.26 Selki’s three interviews reflecting knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
Learning through the Curriculum	If we include Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum we can <i>compare</i> our culture with other cultures. We can also <i>judge</i> the <i>standard of our language</i> . We will <i>know</i> more about our culture. (S1.17, p.2)	It should be included in the curriculum. If it is not included in the curriculum one day <i>our tradition might vanish</i> . If it is not included we won’t find much time to <i>read it</i> . So it is <i>easier to learn</i> about Bhutanese folk literature if it is included in the curriculum. (S2.13, p.3)	I think in order to know about our culture Bhutanese literature should be included in the syllabus. It will enable us to <i>compare</i> it with the literature of other countries. There are <i>values of kindness</i> and <i>good things of life</i> in Bhutanese folk literature ... then the students will <i>learn these values</i> and always <i>think in positive ways</i> . (S3.7, p.2)

Thus, the choice of knowledge words in the third interview indicated Selki’s ability to deal with the abstract qualities of folk literature. Unlike Selki’s, data from Chonyi’s three interviews did not show any significant change in the level of knowledge displayed over time. Table 5.27 illustrates this. The knowledge that Chonyi displayed did not reflect much higher-order thinking and was mainly a repetition of words common in official discourse (e.g., “country”, “people”).

Table 5.27 Chonyi’s three interviews reflecting knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
Learning through the Curriculum	As I said in the beginning Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the curriculum because, as we are an <i>independent country</i> , we can <i>know more about ourselves</i> and gather more information about <i>our own country</i> . Through it we will know about things that happened in <i>the past</i> . (C1.9, p.3)	It should be included in the curriculum because it will be helpful for the students. If they read it only later (after they leave school) then the chances are that <i>they may forget it</i> . On the other hand, if they learn it while they are in school, they will know the <i>cultural and national symbols</i> of the country. (C2.8, p.2)	We can learn more of it through the curriculum. We will <i>know more about our country</i> and <i>our people</i> , and the <i>stories of our country</i> . Students <i>may be interested</i> to learn it because it is about our country. (C3.13, p.3)

To sum up, while Jigdrel’s, Khandro’s and Selki’s data indicated some change in the level of knowledge over time, Chonyi’s data did not show significant change even in the third interview. In case of Khandro and Selki, whereas in the beginning the knowledge displayed was for the most part static and largely reflective of popular discourse, the knowledge forms displayed in the end was complex and indicated the ability to engage in interpretive and evaluative thinking. Overall, the informants’ stance in the first interview was supported by a

simple recognition of the cultural values of Bhutanese literature, while in the second interview it was supported by a deeper understanding of the need to preserve these values through learning experiences and opportunities in the curriculum. Progressively, the stance changed from knowledge and awareness in the beginning to recommendation for action in the third interview.

5.7.2 Change in attitude

In terms of attitude, the informants generally showed a sense of dissatisfaction about their lack of knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature at the beginning and a sense of excitement about increased knowledge levels at the end. For example, in the first interview, Chonyi (1.3, p. 2) said, “I know little because Bhutanese folk literature is at the moment not popular”. In the second interview, she (C2.1, p. 1) said, “I feel very happy and proud to know about our country’s folk literature. It is very interesting to know about it”. And in the third interview, she (C3.6, p. 2) said that she had “gained knowledge” of Bhutanese folk literature “through the action research” and “through reading the articles” that she was given in the action research lessons. Similarly, in the first interview, Selki (11.10, p. 2) said her knowledge was “very little”; in the second interview, she (S2.5, p. 1) said, “Now I have read more writings by Bhutanese writers” (S2.5, p. 1); and in the third interview, she said “I have developed more interest in reading folk literature” (S3.1, p.1). Thus there was a pattern of attitude characterized by an acknowledgement of low level of knowledge in the beginning and a sense of enhanced knowledge and interest at the end of the action research.

Wangyal’s three interviews (Table 5.28) represent a typical case of this pattern of change in attitude. In the first interview Wangyal only expressed interest and desire to learn and improve, while in the second interview he said, “My knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature is now drastically improved” (W2.6, p.2). So, from his intonation, in the second interview there was a rise in Wangyal’s self-esteem in relation to knowledge. Progressively, in the third interview, Wangyal claimed that his “level of interest in Bhutanese folk literature is now quite different” from the previous level of interest. Interestingly, Wangyal said, “the more I read it, the more interested I become” (W3.6, p.2) in it. The influence of knowledge on attitudinal disposition was evident in Wangyal’s statements.

Table 5.28 Wangyal’s three interviews reflecting attitude

	Beginning	Middle	End
Learning through the Curriculum	I think that at the moment my knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature is <i>very limited</i> , which means that <i>I have to improve. I must keep on reading the stories</i> and materials that are available. (W1.6, p.2)	My knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature is now <i>drastically improved</i> . Through the notes we have come to know many things regarding Bhutanese literature and <i>I feel</i> that I know something about it now, which I hadn’t before. (W2.6, p.2)	My level of interest in Bhutanese folk literature now is <i>quite different from the interest I had previously</i> . At present I am <i>more interested</i> in it because I have been reading materials from Bhutanese folk literature (I have been in touch with it), <i>so the more I read it, the more interested I become</i> . (W3.6, p.2)

To sum up, a pattern of attitudinal dispositions was discernible across the six informants' interview data. Whereas in the first interview the dominant attitude was characterized by the informants' perception of their knowledge and experience of Bhutanese folk literature as being inadequate, hence needing improvement, in the second interview the estimation of self-worth was positive, evident in implicit statements of positive feeling. In the third interview, the informants made their affective feelings more explicit (e.g. "I am more interested in it").

Thus, whereas the attitudes that the students expressed in the beginning mostly reflected low esteem in relation to their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature, those at the end were more positive and involved as a result of their new knowledge.

5.8 Status of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature

Bhutanese literatures in English are becoming increasingly more popular and more widely read than those in Dzongkha (see also Gyatso, 2004, pp. 273-274). A small number of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature have been included in the secondary English curriculum (see Chapter 2, pp. 28 & 29). Therefore, it was important for this study to explore students' knowledge and attitude in relation to the status of these works. Accordingly, item 7 of the questionnaire asked the respondents to state their preference among Bhutanese folk literature in English, Bhutanese folk literature in Dzongkha/Choskay and literature from other countries. Also part of questions 3, 4, 6, and 7 of the interview asked questions related to English translations of Bhutanese folk literature. The 'status of Bhutanese folk literature' generally includes the esteem in which the informants hold the standard of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature, particularly in relation to its vocabulary, structure ('good English'), themes and ideas, and its emotive (e.g. feeling), aesthetic and cultural elements. The informants generally made evaluative statements about the standard of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in terms of richness of vocabulary, complexity of structures, notions of 'good English', depth and sophistication of ideas and themes, depth of feeling, and depth and sophistication of the aesthetic and cultural elements of the stories and poems they read and discussed in the action research lessons.

5.8.1 Change in Knowledge

As in the case of cultural diversity, not many informants spoke about the status of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in comparison with English literature from other countries in the first interview. This was mainly because the concept itself was too sophisticated for Class 11 students, especially at the beginning of the action research. Yet, where they responded, the informants generally displayed explicit knowledge and attitudes in

relation to the cultural and aesthetic qualities of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in English. The knowledge form displayed in the first interview was for the most part “factual” and demonstrated mainly “knowledge of terminology” (Krathwohl 2003, p. 214). For example, in the first interview, Wangyal (W1.9, p.2), Selki (S1.12, p.2) and Chonyi (C1.6, p.2) said Bhutanese folk literature was easy to understand as it was “practical in nature” (K1.10, p.2) and culturally familiar as it was about the “identity of the country” (J1.21, p.4). The statements in these first interviews mostly showed the informants’ general awareness of the surface features of Bhutanese folk literature in English, while in the second interview, they were able to talk about its aesthetic and cultural values. For example, in the second interview, Selki referred to a poem that the class had read in the action research lessons and said “The language of the poem is poetic” and that he can write “beautifully with his poetic imagination” (S2.10, p.2). And progressively in the third interview, the informants were able to compare Bhutanese folk literature with English literature from other countries.

In terms of the standard of English used in Bhutanese folk literature, while some informants said it was not good as compared with English used in literature from other countries (S3.4, p.1; C3.8, p. 2), others said it was good (e.g., see Wangyal below). Data from Khandro’s first, second and third interviews, shown in Table 5.29, illustrates the former perception and shows change in the level of knowledge over time. In the first interview, the statements were bland generalizations about standard (e.g. “practical in nature”; “things that we can see”) without much evidence of differentiated knowledge and interpretative awareness, which were evident in the second interview when she said that while the language of ‘Change of Fate’ was just “plain narrative”, that of ‘The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi’ had “sophisticated words” and it was more “poetical and more interesting” (K2.10, p.2). And progressively in the third interview, Khandro was able to evaluate the stylistic quality of Bhutanese folk literature against external criteria for ‘standard’ English. The choice of knowledge words was carefully made so that a clear distinction was made between “deep feelings” in respect of literature from other countries and “plain narratives” in respect of Bhutanese folk literature.

Table 5.29 Khandro’s three interviews reflecting knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
Status of Bhutanese Folk Literature	Bhutanese folktales are usually a <i>bit practical in nature</i> , which means they deal with <i>things that we can see</i> . Bhutanese stories, poems, and other literary forms deal with <i>things which we know</i> and <i>can see</i> , whereas western literature is written in an <i>emotional style</i> and has <i>emotional feelings</i> . (K1.10, p.2)	The poem from ‘ <i>The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi</i> ’ has <i>more poetic style</i> . In <i>Change of Fate</i> , the language is just straightforward, <i>plain narrative</i> . In <i>The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi</i> more <i>sophisticated words</i> are included and it is more poetical and <i>more interesting</i> also. (K2.10, p.2)	Literature from other countries expresses <i>deep feelings</i> whereas Bhutanese folk literature texts are just <i>plain narratives</i> and they do not <i>express deep feelings</i> about a <i>thing</i> or <i>person</i> . (K3.8, p.2)

Others like Wangyal, on the other hand, held a different perspective and said that Bhutanese writers too had the ability to write beautifully about their culture and landscape (W2.11, p.3). Table 5.30 presents data from Wangyal’s three interviews. While in the first interview,

Wangyal used knowledge words that were part of familiar discourse (e.g. “environment”; “society”; “culture”; “tradition”), in the second interview, he used knowledge words that reflected a finer and more intimate sense of the aesthetic and emotive qualities of texts by Bhutanese writers (e.g., “reflect”; “their feelings”; “describe”; “beauty of nature”; “poetic forms”). Progressively in the third interview, Wangyal was able to further elaborate his learning by referring to the spiritual (e.g. “compassion”; “love”), and personal qualities of the Bhutanese people (e.g. “responsibility”; “dedicated”) as represented in the poem ‘Why Must I Go to War?’, and said that his appreciation of these values increased his interest in Bhutanese folk literature.

Table 5.30 Wangyal’s three interviews reflecting knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
Status of Bhutanese Folk Literature	Bhutanese literature <i>is easy to understand</i> , may be because it is <i>written by our authors</i> , and that it is related to <i>our environment, our society</i> , and our <i>culture</i> and <i>tradition</i> . This could be the reason why I find Bhutanese literature <i>easier</i> than the others. (W1.9, p.2)	I have also learnt that the <i>writers</i> and <i>poets</i> have the ability to <i>reflect</i> their <i>feelings</i> and <i>describe</i> the <i>beauty of nature</i> in poetic <i>forms</i> . (W2.11, p.3)	For instance, in the poem ‘ <i>Why Must I Go to War? Liberation</i> ’ and others, I have learnt that Bhutanese people have a <i>great sense of responsibility</i> , they are <i>dedicated</i> , and they also have <i>love</i> and <i>compassion</i> for each other. So the existence of these <i>values</i> has further <i>increased my interest</i> in it. (W3.7, p.2)

As evident in the data from item 7 of the questionnaire (see Appendix 3.16), the respondents generally attached high status to Bhutanese folk literature mostly because of its cultural and historical values. Because of these qualities, 18 (75%) respondents stated preference for Bhutanese folk literature in English over others. In the second questionnaire, the number of respondents increased to 22 (92%), that is, almost the whole class. But in terms of the level of knowledge displayed, there was no significant change evident in the statements. Also, in the first questionnaire, 3 respondents (13%) stated preference for literature from other countries because it had rich vocabulary and gave pleasure. Progressively, in the second questionnaire, 5 (21%) respondents stated preference for this genre because they said it was more beautifully written. The response pattern at the end of the action research showed increased knowledge of the aesthetic qualities of literature and their ability to make comparisons between genres from different cultures. Thus, in the questionnaire data too, there was some evidence of the students’ ability to evaluate the status of folk literature based on its cultural and aesthetic values.

To sum up, data showed a shift in the informants’ generally factual knowledge in the first interview to a more differentiated knowledge form in the second and to a more critical and comparative knowledge form in the third interview. Both questionnaire and interview data showed two dimensions of standard with which the students viewed the status of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature. While some informants held the status of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in low esteem because it lacked deep feelings, rich vocabulary, and complex structures, others rated it high because of its rich aesthetic and cultural values.

5.8.2 Change in Attitude

In terms of change in attitude, data showed a shift from generally naïve and banal attitudinal stance towards English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in comparison with English literature from other countries, in the beginning, to more explicit forms of evaluative and comparative understanding of their aesthetic, cultural and spiritual values in the end. To illustrate the pattern, in the first interview most of the informants judged the standard of

English translations of Bhutanese folk literature as simply “not high” (J1.11, p.2), “low” (R1.11, p.2; K1.11, p.2), “OK” (S1.13, p.2; C1.6, p.2), and needing “improvement” (W1.10, p.3). In the second interview, the informants generally recognized and appreciated the aesthetic qualities of Bhutanese folk literature in English. For example, Selki said, “I like to learn by heart some lines from the poem because *Pemi Tshewang Tashi* narrates the ballad in a very interesting manner ... I like the line which says “Upper lip like a lotus petal” (S2.11, p.2). And in the third interview, most of the informants said that English translations of Bhutanese folk literature lacked sophistication and depth as compared with English literature from other countries.

Data from Khandro’s three interviews, shown in Table 5.31, represents a typical case of this pattern of responses. In the first interview, Khandro attributed low status to English translation of Bhutanese folk literature and high status to literature from other countries. In the second interview, the critical stance was further elaborated by the explicit use of adjectives such as “not so poetic”, “plain”, and “not so sophisticated”. Whereas in the first and second interviews Khandro’s attitudinal stances were tentative (e.g., “slightly”, “not so”), her stance in the third interview was clear and definite. Thus, she said that the language of Bhutanese folk literature was “just plain” and “only at the surface level”. In the Western literary pieces, on the other hand, “the words have depth” (K3.11, p.2).

Table 5.31 Khandro’s three interviews reflecting attitude

	Beginning	Middle	End
Status of Bhutanese Folk Literature	In terms of the standard of language, Bhutanese folktales are <i>slightly lower</i> than the literature from other cultures. Bhutanese writers can think only at the <i>surface level</i> , the surface area of the story, whereas in literature from other cultures we find that the poet or the author deals with <i>deeper meanings</i> in their writings. (K1.11, p.2)	In my opinion Bhutanese folk literature is <i>not so poetic</i> , so some <i>poetic style</i> should be included in it. The language is <i>plain</i> and <i>not so sophisticated</i> . (K2.13, p.2)	Yes in terms of the <i>standard of words</i> , they are <i>just plain</i> and only at the <i>surface level</i> . Whereas in the Western literary pieces the words have <i>depth</i> . It is hard to understand but it is very interesting and it makes the literature <i>very beautiful</i> . (K3.11, p.2)

To sum up, a discernable pattern of responses emerged from the data. The informants generally found the standard of English used in Bhutanese folk literature lower than the English used in literature from other countries. Hence, there was a concern about the ‘standard’ of English, which is discussed in the next section. Yet, generally the informants

also considered Bhutanese folk literature interesting and beautiful. Thus, while at the beginning the informants generally expressed low opinions about the status of Bhutanese folk literature in English, at the end they expressed appreciation of the aesthetic qualities and cultural values that it embodied. Some informants were even interested to model the good style of writing evident in Bhutanese folk literature.

5.9 Bhutanese folk literature and the role of English

Since the action research aimed mainly to provide learning opportunities and experiences for the students to enhance their understandings about the oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature and their cultural and aesthetic values, not much emphasis was laid on the role of English in relation to Bhutanese culture. But the learning was undertaken in English in the context of the secondary English curriculum. The questionnaire items asked the respondents to state perceptions about Bhutanese folk literature in English. For example, item 9 of the questionnaire asked the respondents to state their views about whether or not “Bhutanese folk literature which exists in Dzongkha and other languages and dialects should be translated into English”. Similarly, question 5 of the interview explicitly asked the informants which of three forms of literature - Bhutanese folk literature in English, Bhutanese folk literature in Dzongkha or Choskad, and English literature from other countries - they preferred and why (Appendix 3.17). For the purpose of data analysis, the ‘role of English’ generally includes the advantages of English translation of folk literature for Bhutanese culture, and the status of English as a global language and its implications for Bhutanese culture.

5.9.1 Change in Knowledge

Unlike Dzongkha the national language which has high official status as the language of Bhutanese cultural identity, English is generally not perceived as a language of significance to Bhutanese culture. However, it is rapidly becoming more popular and widespread than any other language in Bhutan. There exists an unspoken tension between Dzongkha, the national language and language of culture, and English, the language of globalization. But since the tension is not part of popular discourse, it was natural for the informants to consider it unorthodox to speak of the growing status and popularity of English in comparison with Dzongkha. Hence, the responses in relation to the advantages of English translations for Bhutanese culture were not very substantive in the beginning.

In the first interview, most informants advocated English translation because “English has become a universal language and many people even in Bhutan can read and write in English

and they can understand it” (W1.5, p.2). Chonyi’s reason for advocating English translations was because “English will help to promote Bhutanese identity” (C1.3, p. 2). For Khandro the reason was simply because English was a popular language. In the second interview, she said, “Dzongkha as a language is relevant only in Bhutan and not in other countries. It will be difficult for foreigners to read Bhutanese folk literature” (K2.10, p.2). Progressively in the third interview, some of the informants showed explicit interpretive knowledge of the cultural advantages of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature.

Data from Jigdrel’s first and third interviews, shown in Table 5.32, is a typical example of this response pattern. As evident in the data segments, most of the ideas Jigdrel mentioned in the first interview were repeated in the third interview. Although the fact that English could also be a language of cultural transmission, not only Dzongkha, is implicitly suggested in both the interviews, the idea is thought about more carefully in the third interview. For this study, this was high quality, even innovative, thinking as it was different from mainstream thinking that assumes Dzongkha to be the main language of culture maintenance and promotion.

Table 5.32 Jigdrel’s three interviews reflecting attitude

	Beginning	Mid	End
The Role of English	I think it will be better if it is translated into English. The English language is <i>very popular</i> in the <i>world</i> , so it will be read not only by the Bhutanese people but it will be read by <i>interested foreigners</i> . The <i>sale of the book</i> will increase. It should also be translated into Dzongkha. (J1.9, p.2)	Makes no statement	If it is translated into English, then <i>those who don’t know Dzongkha</i> will be able to read it in English. Also the <i>books on Bhutanese folk literature</i> can be sold <i>outside the country</i> . People from <i>other countries</i> who are interested in <i>our culture</i> will be <i>interested</i> to read the books. (J3.9, p.2)

Unlike the other informants, Selki did not show significant change in the level of knowledge as evident in the data from her first and second interviews. Table 5.33 shows Selki’s responses in the first and second interviews. While in the first interview Selki advocated the need to translate Bhutanese folk literature into English simply because “we can understand the exact translation of Bhutanese words in English” (S1.16, p.2), in the second interview she argued, “Nowadays students take more interest in learning English, so I think they will learn a lot of good and interesting words from English” (S2.8, p.2).

Table 5.33 Selki’s two interviews reflecting knowledge

	Beginning	Middle	End
The Role of English	<i>I like it in English</i> because we can understand the <i>exact translation</i> of Bhutanese words in English. <i>I also like it in Dzongkha and Choskad</i> because it is easier to understand it in Dzongkha as it is our <i>national language</i> . (S1.16, p.2)	Nowadays <i>students take more interest in learning English</i> , so I think they will learn a lot of <i>good and interesting words</i> from English that are translated from Dzongkha. (S2.8, p.2)	Makes no statement

In relation to the role of English in Bhutanese culture, while data from some informants did not indicate substantial change in the level of knowledge, data from some other informants, especially Khandro and Jigdrel, showed evidence of it. Khandro’s arguments were particularly revealing. Unlike the other informants, Khandro was able to perceive the cultural and linguistic implications of translating Bhutanese folk literature only in Dzongkha and recognized the possibility of facilitating cross-cultural understanding through English. She displayed the ability to view “knowledge as problematic” and recognized cultural diversity - the essence of “cultural knowledges” (Hayes et al., 2007, pp. 43 & 68).

Unlike the interview data, data from the questionnaires did not show significant evidence of change in the respondents’ level of knowledge and understanding over time. In both the first and second questionnaires, 22 (92%) respondents favoured translating different folk literatures that exist in different languages in Bhutan into English for nearly the same reasons, such as the possibility of English as an international language to expose Bhutanese folk literature to an international audience and English being a richer language than Dzongkha. However, in the second questionnaire, the idea of the diversity of folk literatures in Bhutan and how English could disseminate it more widely across cultures than Dzongkha was stated more explicitly. Thus, the notion of English not only as a global language but also as a language that could promote inter-cultural knowledge and understanding was quite explicit in the questionnaire data at the end of the action research. The high level of preference shown for English in the interview and questionnaire data was supported by data from item 4 of the questionnaire which asked the respondents: “On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, rate your present knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature (in your own language/dialect/in English)”. As shown in Table 5.34, while in the first questionnaire, 25% of the respondents rated their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in English as “poor”, in the second questionnaire, no one rated it. Similarly, whereas at the beginning no one rated their knowledge as “very good”, at the end 29% rated it “very good”.

Table 5.34 Level of knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature (BFL) at the beginning and end of action research

Knowledge category	Beginning of action research	End of action research
Knowledge of BFL in English	6 (25%) respondents rated ‘poor’.	No one rated ‘poor’
	6 (25%) respondents rated ‘fair’.	1 (4%) rated ‘fair’.
	2 (8%) respondents rated ‘good’.	4 (17%) rated ‘good’.
	No one rated ‘very good’	7 (29%) rated ‘very good’.

To sum up, although no explicit efforts were made in the action research to increase the students’ knowledge and understanding of the role of English in Bhutanese culture, since all the folk literatures that they interacted with were in English they were able to perceive the role of English translations in relation to Bhutanese culture. As evident in the questionnaire and interview data, while generally the students’ level of knowledge did not change

significantly over time, they perceived the advantages of English translations for cross-cultural knowledge and understanding and cultural identity.

5.9.2 Change in Attitude

The informants generally stated preference for Bhutanese folk literature in English rather than in Dzongkha, mainly because of the status and popularity of English, and the complexity of Dzongkha and general lack of interest in it. Thus, Chonyi preferred English because “nowadays all are interested in English” (C1.15, p.4). In the first interview, Chonyi (C1.9, p. 3) said, “I like Bhutanese literature in English and literature in English from other countries, not Bhutanese literature in Dzongkha or Choskad”. In the third interview, Chonyi (C3.12, p. 2) was explicit about why she preferred it in English: “I like to read it [Bhutanese folk literature] in English because it is easy to understand and I can understand it more in English than in Dzongkha. So given the choice, I will choose English”. Data segments from Jigdrel’s three interviews, shown in Table 5.35, represent a typical example of this response pattern. In the first interview Jigdrel used attitude words such as “happy”; “improves”; “wish”; “better” (J1.18, p.3) and he did not explicitly talk about the role of English in relation to Bhutanese folk literature. In the second interview, on the other hand, he stated his preference for English more explicitly and said he preferred it because Bhutanese folk literature was “beautiful, especially all the quotations” (J2.7, p.2). Progressively, in the third interview Jigdrel expressed a heightened sense of awareness and interest in English as a result of the action research. He (J3.8, p.2) said, “After I have been through this action research I am also equally interested to read it in English” and “English is very important in the modern world.

Table 5.35 Jigdrel’s three interviews reflecting attitude

	Beginning	Middle	End
The Role of English	I will be <i>happy</i> if my English standard <i>improves</i> . As the <i>world</i> is <i>modernizing</i> if we improve our English it will be <i>better</i> for us. And <i>I wish</i> that my English standard is <i>improved</i> . (J1.18, p.3)	I <i>would choose</i> Bhutanese literature in English because it is <i>beautiful</i> , especially all the <i>quotations</i> . (J2.7, p.2)	My Dzongkha is <i>better</i> than English, so I can understand things in Dzongkha better than in English. However, after I have been through this action research I am <i>also interested</i> to read it in English as well. <i>English is very important in the modern world ...</i> (J3.8, p.2)

The data segments from Selki’s first and second interviews, shown in Table 5.36, help to further illustrate the response pattern evidenced in Jigdrel’s data. In the first interview, Selki only said it would be “interesting” to translate Bhutanese folk literature into English, while in the second interview, the attitude expressed was explicit, active and supported by reason, unlike the tentative and neutral stance she took in the first interview.

Table 5.36 Selki's two interviews reflecting attitude

	Beginning	Middle	End
The Role of English	It will be <i>interesting</i> to translate them into English. (S1.6, p. 1)	<i>I would like to know</i> about Bhutanese folk literature written in English because <i>it is easy to understand</i> , for example the words. On the other hand, <i>difficult words in Dzongkha</i> are not easily understood. That's why I think it is <i>better to read</i> Bhutanese folk literature in English. (S2.6, p. 1)	Does not make a statement

Item 7 of the questionnaire also elicited responses related to Bhutanese folk literature in English (see Q. 07, Appendix 3.16). Analysis of data showed higher level of preference for Bhutanese writing in English. For example, in the first questionnaire, 18 (75%) respondents stated their preference for Bhutanese literature in English, while only 3 (13%) respondents stated preference for folk literature in Dzongkha or Choskad. The reasons they cited for preferring Bhutanese literature in English were important for this study. First, Bhutanese folk literature in English dealt with Bhutanese culture and history, which were easy to understand. Apparently they felt more comfortable reading Bhutanese literature in English than in Dzongkha or Choskad. In the second questionnaire, the number of respondents who stated preference for English increased to 22 (92%) and they stated the same reasons as those in the first questionnaire, while the number of respondents who preferred Bhutanese literature in Dzongkha or Choskad declined to 2 (8%).

To sum up, there was a pattern of attitudinal change. While in the first interview the students' preference for English translation was because of the popularity of English in Bhutan and the need to learn it, in the second and third interviews the informants generally said they preferred English because they found Dzongkha difficult to understand and also because English was a global language. The generally naive reasoning in the first interview changed to an understanding of comparative advantages of English in the latter interviews. In the questionnaire data, while there was an increase in the level of preference for English, the level of preference for Dzongkha further declined in the second questionnaire.

The experiences and opportunities created for the students in the action research had a positive impact on their understandings about the role of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge. The knowledge and attitude changes evident in the questionnaire and interview data were facilitated by the pedagogical approach I took to understand student learning and improve it, which I discuss next.

5.10 Pedagogical strategies that provided the stimulus for change

The central issue explored via research question 5 (*What strategies work in developing knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literatures and their cultural values in a secondary classroom?*) was to identify what pedagogical strategies used in the action research

lessons influenced the students' knowledge and attitude changes described in the previous sections. Evidences of what strategies worked to influence those changes were also identified in the questionnaire and interview data, and the collaborating teacher's and the researcher's reflective diaries. Most of the seventeen action research lessons focussed on developing the students' knowledge and appreciation of the cultural and aesthetic qualities of Bhutanese folk literature. Since the study dealt with both oral and written forms of folk literature the strategies were carefully chosen with the aim to maximize student response over time through close interaction with both these forms. In this section I describe the main strategies that I used in the action research, which, as evident in the data, provided the intellectual stimulus for the students' knowledge and attitude changes. The general pedagogical approach I adopted and the teaching strategies I used in the action research lessons were underpinned by my experience of teaching literature in the two colleges of teacher education in Bhutan, the interest and enthusiasm that I showed in helping the students to explore knowledge outside the prescriptions of the official curriculum, and the learning environment I created for the class where the students availed opportunities not only to consume knowledge but also generate new knowledge and learn to make sense of it.

5.10.1 Reading culturally familiar materials

The opportunities that the students were given in the action research to read and discuss the works of many Bhutanese writers and the writing projects in which they explored oral literatures in their own languages had a positive impact on their motivation to write. The external and internal situational analyses carried out prior to the action research study revealed that because of factors related to curriculum, teaching practice, assessment, resources, and the professional learning environment of schools the students' knowledge and understanding of folk literature were generally low (see page 116). To improve their knowledge and attitudes the students needed to read a wide range of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in print. Although many texts were used, the main ones were 'A Change of Fate', 'The Departure', 'Liberation', 'Why Must I Go to War?', 'The Buffalo with Sixteen Horns', 'Puchey Bandhar', 'The Ani and the Migoi', and 'The Phob that Provided Food'. Students read, reflected upon, discussed and also completed task sheets in relation to these texts. Since the texts generally represented languages and cultures in east, west and south Bhutan, students were able to relate to their contents and responded positively.

The diverse nature of the collection contributed to discussion of texts from various parts of Bhutan and thus encouraged respect for diversity amongst students. Hence, the level of motivation they displayed was high indeed. The collaborating teacher said in our first meeting that the students "show interest when connections are made to real life experience, to Bhutanese society, and when they are made to relate personal experience" (CT diary, 15/8/06,

p. 5). This was evident when in Lesson Eight the class read and discussed a folktale from south Bhutan called 'The Buffalo with Sixteen Horns'. The level of excitement and motivation was very high. After they had read it, I asked the class: (1) what they thought about the story, (2) what they thought was the most significant theme they saw in it, (3) what aspect of the story represented the southern Bhutanese culture, and (4) what aspect of the story they enjoyed the most. In response to my second question, a student [name withheld] who was one of the most shy and reticent among the class was this time most forthcoming and raised his hand and said, "The theme of the story is that a person who sprung [sprang] from vile dust must ultimately fall from where he sprang". The excitement in the class became greater now because the students couldn't believe it was this student who said the theme of the story and even wrote it on the chalk board (DT diary, 23/10/06, p. 30). Clearly the engagement with Bhutanese folk literature had enabled this shy student to see important things in the literature to which he responded quite deeply here.

When the materials were culturally familiar, the energy levels displayed were high. The collaborating teacher reported, "When asked to share the moral or theme of a book they had read over the weekend, even the ever-elusive [names withheld] seemed to take deep interest to share their work (CT diary 8/9/06, p. 2). For example, in lesson 8 when the class was asked to recite a verse called 'The Liberation' from Bhutanese folk literature, even the normally shy and silent students would raise their hand to stand in front of the class and recite (DT diary 25/9/06, p. 21). In lesson 17 of the action research (DT diary, 6/11/06, p. 34) I was excited about the writing project I had given the class in the previous lesson. I collected the writings and read out a story collected and translated by one of the students and it caused a sudden rise in the level of enthusiasm, interest and excitement in the class. These positive energies gave them the motivation for learning and for self-expression.

5.10.2 Talking about Bhutanese writers and their works

The students' level of knowledge of Bhutanese writers and their works at the beginning of the action research was generally low (see Table 5.17, p. 122). The situation analysis conducted prior to the action research lessons revealed that books and other resources related to folk literature studies were not always available in the school library (see page 116), hence the students had little access to Bhutanese writing in English. Therefore, in the lesson interventions nearly all the contemporary Bhutanese writers writing in English and their works in oral literatures in English (see Table 1.1, page 5) were introduced and discussed. Repeated exposure to these writers and their works not only increased their level of knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature but through the experience they also developed positive attitude towards Bhutanese writing generally (see above).

In the action research lessons the students interacted with English translations of folk literature by different Bhutanese writers. They reflected on the importance of having

Bhutanese writers writing in English and its advantages for the country. As a result of these reflective activities they were able to perceive how Bhutanese writing in English would expose Bhutanese culture to the outside world and help the country to assert its national identity. With the intellectual stimulus provided by these activities, they were able to recognize the importance of saving the oral literatures from disappearing by writing them down and some of them even committed to do so themselves (see Table 5.19 & Table 5.20). While most of them were not able to write the name of a Bhutanese writer of folktales or the title of a book of Bhutanese folk literature (e.g. folktales) accurately at the beginning of the action research (see Table 5.17), over time they were able to appreciate the literary ability of Bhutanese writers. Thus, Wangyal was able to comment that Bhutanese writers and poets were able to “reflect their feelings and describe the beauty of nature in poetic forms” (see Table 5.30).

In some of the lessons I made deliberate attempts to teach students to write the names of Bhutanese writers and their works correctly by writing them several times during the lesson. Whereas most of the students had no knowledge about Bhutanese folk literature and were therefore mindless about writers’ names, titles of books, poems and folk stories at the beginning of the action research, at the end they had learnt to be more precise and accurate regarding names and titles. Noting the rise in the level of knowledge the students displayed as a result of these methods later in the action research, the collaborating teacher (CT 8/9/06, p. 2) again wrote in her diary, “Making them [students] write the names of writers and their works on the chalkboard would have been put away by a syllabus-conscious teacher ... when students ... are patted on the back for accuracy, it motivates them for higher order learning”. Consequently, as Table 5.17 (see page 122) shows, at the end, 18 (75%) respondents wrote the title of a book correctly. Similarly, at the end, 21 (88%) respondents wrote the name of a Bhutanese writer of folktales correctly. The collaborating teacher wrote:

I feel talking about various writers and knowing about their in-depth experiences have inspired some of the students to try their hand at writing as well. Moreover, their additional knowledge is helping them to perform better than the other two sections of Class 11 (CT 18/9/06, p. 3).

Thus, as the collaborating teachers said, through repeated exposure to Bhutanese writers and their works, students’ level of knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in print became more substantive. Some of them even said they would be interested to research and write down the oral literatures when they visited their villages so that the oral traditions and their cultures were preserved.

5.10.3 Exploring oral literatures

Since the action research concerned students’ knowledge and attitude in relation to the oral as well as written forms of Bhutanese folk literature, another strategy used was to enable the students to collect different genres of oral literature from their own or other languages and

write them down in English. They would then present their translated works to the class. Exploring oral literatures enables the students to talk with their parents, grandparents and knowledgeable members of the community to document the oral genres. This pedagogical method was found to be a particularly effective process because through it the students became more aware and appreciative of the literary and cultural resources that existed in their own and other languages. The main activity that the students engaged in through this strategy was a series of small writing projects. For example, in one of these projects (assigned on 31/10/06 and collected back on 6/11/06) they did one of two activities: to collect 3 to 5 examples of oral literature (e.g., proverbs, beliefs and superstitions, blessings, and imprecations) from their own language and to translate them into English, or to collect a folktale from their own language and reproduce it in English (DT diary 31/10/06, p. 32). Students said collecting these genres from their own mother tongues and translating them into English was useful and interesting. When they were asked what they thought about the project that they did, Rabsel said in his third interview:

The project was very interesting. I got two days to collect these from my parents and I wrote them down. I was very interested to learn about them and I shared my writing with my friends and my parents. They were also interested in it (R 3.19, p. 4).

In the third interview Khandro said:

Yes it was very useful. This project has enabled us to know more about our own Bhutanese literary pieces. Collecting folk literature [from their oral sources] made us more aware of our own literature (K 3.21, p. 3).

When they presented English translations of oral genres from their languages to the class, the level of interest and intellectual engagement they displayed was high. These influenced the level of their knowledge. For example, in one of the lessons the class presented the proverbs they had translated from their languages. One student said, “One who sees banana for the first time will eat it along with its skin”. Another student said, “The rat eats the grain but the frog gets the punishment”. This kind of knowledge-generating activity was new for the students. The collaborating teacher wrote in her diary that she had seen the translation that the student she was sitting next to had produced and how beautifully it was done (CT 26/9/06, p. 4). The collaborating teacher wrote, “We often underestimate our students’ knowledge ... given the correct amount of materials and motivation, they are capable of praiseworthy work. The translation of the oral traditions of their native languages into English was really wonderful” (CT diary 26/9/06, p. 4). As evident in Table 5.19 (see page 124) and Table 5.20 (see page 125), the students expressed the need to preserve these invisible cultures by writing them down, and actually did so following their own writing projects.

Thus, through working with the oral literatures in their own and other languages the students not only learnt the basic skills of collecting and writing down the oral forms of Bhutanese literature but they also imbibed positive attitudes in relation to these literatures and their cultural and aesthetic values.

5.10.4 Critical appreciation of the aesthetic and cultural values of folk literature

Another strategy that I used in the action research lessons was to create opportunities for the students where they interacted closely with particular cultural and aesthetic aspects of the genres they read. To illustrate, in lesson 5 the students read a poem called ‘Departure’ taken from a traditional ballad from Western Bhutan (DT diary 12/9/06, p. 17). They were then asked to write what they felt or thought about the way Bhutanese culture, history, society and landscape were described in the poem. They also identified expressions in the poem that they thought were beautiful. Similarly, in lesson 13 the class identified different aspects of Bhutanese culture in the poem ‘Why Must I Go to War?’ For example, they named cultural products, cultural practices, aspects of spirituality, art, architecture, and agricultural practice (DT diary 17/10/06, p. 29). At this stage of the action research their understandings were confined mainly to the surface features of the poem and their descriptions did not reflect much abstract thinking. For example, most of the class mentioned “the tattered scarf”, the “glorious Punakha Dzong”, and the “hamlet of Phangyulgang” (DT diary, 12/10/06, p. 17). By contrast, later in lesson 16 the students were able to deal with more abstract qualities of the folk stories and poems they read. In relation to the two stories they had just read - ‘Puchey Bandhar’ and ‘The Buffalo With Sixteen Horns’ - most of the class said that they liked the ideas of curiosity, adventure, simplicity and beauty, humour and interest, leadership and trust (CT diary, 31/10/06, p. 5).

Some of the tasks required the students to treat the folk literatures that they read with varying levels of understanding. For example, in lesson 12 of the action research, upon reading ‘Why Must I Go to War?’ the class was asked to write short answers to five questions each of which required them to think at various levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. For example, the first question (*Is Chamberlain Pemi Tshewang Tashi really keen to go to war?*) required the students to think at the level of literal comprehension. Likewise, the fifth question (*What ideas about ‘duty’ do you learn from the poem? Would you consider Pemi Tshewang Tashi dutiful? Why? Why do citizens need to be dutiful?*), required the students to move from literal to inferential comprehension (DT diary, 10/10/06, p. 27). The collaborating teacher wrote in her diary that “These sessions have not only improved the students’ literary taste, they have also improved their language and grammar” (CT, 8/11/06, p. 5). Thus, some of the activities which encouraged them to engage in higher order thinking, generally influenced the way they thought of the aesthetic and cultural values of Bhutanese folk literature over time.

5.10.5 Comparing and contrasting the genres

Some of the action research lessons created opportunities for the class to compare and contrast English translation of Bhutanese folk literature they had just read. For example, in Lesson 16, after they had finished reading two stories - ‘The Buffalo With Sixteen Horns’ and ‘Puchey Bandhar’ - which the class enjoyed thoroughly because they found them “funny and

humorous” (DT diary, 31/10/06, p. 31), I asked them which of these stories they liked better. One student said, “I like ‘The Buffalo with Sixteen Horns’ because through it I have come to know about the qualities of a good leader”; another student said, she liked the latter story because it was “simple and it provides good lessons”. Similarly, in lesson 10 of the action research, the students made comparative evaluation of poems they read in terms of the quality and standard of English used in them (DT diary 3/10/06, p. 23).

As a result of similar activities in which the students compared folktales and ballads, they were able to express evaluative opinions about the texts they read. For example, Khandro’s opinion about ‘The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi’ and ‘Change of Fate’ - the two traditional ballads the class read - was that the former was more “poetical”, “sophisticated” and “interesting” than the latter which was “straightforward” and “plain” (see Table 5.29, page 136). Moreover, the class was invited to compare literatures across cultures but in English. For example, in another activity in which the class compared Bhutanese folk literature with English literatures from the West that they read in the curriculum, Khandro said, Western literature had “emotional style” and “deep feelings” and was “interesting” and “beautiful”, while Bhutanese folk literature in English was “plain”, “not so poetic” and “not so sophisticated” (see Table 5.29 & Table 5.31). Thus, through these activities students were able to read, reflect, and express their attitudinal stances on the cultural, aesthetic and moral dimensions of the stories and poems they read from Bhutanese folk literature (DT diary, 31/10/06, p. 32).

5.10.6 Recitation of memorable passages from traditional ballads

In order to fill the huge knowledge gap that the students displayed at the beginning of the action research in relation to Bhutanese folk literature - in the oral as well as written forms (see Table 5.15, Table 5.17 & Table 5.23) - in the lesson interventions the students were encouraged to not only read the ballads holistically but also to choose their favourite passages from these texts and memorise and recite them in the class. Of course, it was important to ensure that they learnt to memorise the passages only after the genre had been read closely, discussed and reflected upon. It was also important to make sure that the lines they memorised appealed to them intellectually or emotively so that they were able to defend their choice. Sometimes I chose the passage for them. The recitations were often followed by my telling the class why they chose that passage and what its special qualities were. For example, in lesson 7 I asked the class to memorise a stanza of nine lines from ‘Liberation’ - a poem from the ballad ‘Gaylong Sumdar Tashi’ (DT diary, 19/9/06, p. 20). The students especially enjoyed memorizing their favourite passages, and some would even memorise a whole poem. For example, in lesson 8, five students recited the stanza - three successfully and two with some difficulty.

Thus, from a state of no knowledge at the beginning of the action research to being

encouraged to deal intimately with beautiful verses from traditional Bhutanese ballad in English and reciting it in class, I thought the students felt empowered. Even [name withheld], who was generally shy and reticent, was the first one to raise their hand to recite the passage (DT diary, 25/9/06, p. 21). The implication of these observations is that if children are to be the ‘custodians of culture’ (see page 7), it is vital for them to acquire the right level of knowledge and attitudes, which, in the context of the curriculum, is possible via authentic learning experiences and opportunities.

Thus, allowing the students to choose their favourite verses from Bhutanese traditional ballads for memorisation and recitation in the class and defend their choice not only motivated them to read these texts for their deep meanings, it also enabled them to build mental and emotional connections with their own cultures. Pedagogically, this was a vital process for the action research because it allowed children the choice to decide, articulate and perform. The process was consonant with the constructivist-interpretive orientation of this study in that it allowed the students to “choose their favourite verses”, the cultural materials they felt strongly about and perform these in the form of new knowledge generated for the class. It gave the students a personal, interpretive voice. One student’s “favourite” verse was not necessarily another student’s favourite. In a multilingual and multicultural setting, the process also helped the students to recognize the value of multiple perspectives.

5.10.7 Reflections about the strategies

The teaching strategies used in this study influenced the students’ learning and facilitated the change evident in their data. Part of the responses to item 5 of the questionnaire (Appendix 3.15) concerning teaching strategies, presented in Table 5.37 (see page 150), reflects the students’ understanding of the strategies that influence their learning. Whereas at the beginning only 11 (46%) students in the class responded to the item and mentioned seven strategies their English teachers used, at the end, 21 (88%) respondents mentioned ten strategies. The increase in the response rate and increase in the number of teaching strategies mentioned in the second questionnaire indicate the respondents’ improved understanding of what factors influenced the quality of their learning.

Table 5.37 Respondents’ feedback on type of teaching strategies used to teach Bhutanese folk literature

At the beginning of action research	At the end of action research
Class presentations; teacher telling stories and students listening to them; students reading the stories on their own; lecture and summary of stories by the teacher; group work; teacher asking questions on the stories; and teaching for information only.	Narrating stories from different parts of the country; teaching stories from our own languages; translating stories from our own languages; teaching local oral materials in English; class presentations; teacher asking questions; reading class handouts (e.g., articles) and discussing themes; sorting themes and making suggestions; emphasizing Bhutanese culture; and doing projects.

I wrote in my diary (DT diary, 31/10/06, p. 32) that when the curricular and pedagogical approaches are “prescriptive, book-bound and based on mono-cultural assumptions” the students’ learning experience is dominated by a “routine consumption of facts and information to be poured out in exams”. As a result, their inner and outer worlds are not sufficiently explored or explored very little or never” (DT diary, 31/10/06, pp. 31-32). In the action research lessons, these gaps were filled and opportunities were created for the students to talk about, discuss or read in the class their translation of folk literatures from their oral forms into English. Thus, the collaborating teacher (CT diary, 8/11/06, p. 5) wrote in her diary, “I thought reading an extract from students’ project work was motivating. I could see the eagerness on each student’s face, waiting for their work to be read out to the class”.

To summarise, as I reflected in my research diary (DT diary, 6/11/06, pp. 34-35), the learning experiences and opportunities created in the action research enabled the students to “explore themselves - their experiences and their worldviews ... their personal choices and preferences”, and created an environment that enabled self-expression, respect and appreciation of cultural differences. These experiences gave students the intellectual autonomy, interest and motivation to generate knowledge in the classroom and outside and thus became not only consumers of knowledge but creators and owners of knowledge. The lesson activities enhanced their understanding of the cultural and aesthetic value of Bhutanese folk literature in relation to the English curriculum. For example, as part of the last activity in the action research they chose a title from among the ones they had read that they thought was “good” for inclusion in the school curriculum (DT diary 6/11/06, pp. 34-36). As a result of these experiences, they were able to talk about the potential role of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum (e.g., see Table 5.26 & Table 5.27).

The stories of change described in this chapter illustrate an important principle in the context of this study. When learning opportunities are created where the students make mental and emotional connections with their inner and outer worlds by exploring the social and cultural worlds in which they live, positive change becomes more quickly visible than when the learning experiences are dictated by the syllabus and the requirements of exams.

5.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the process of change in the informants’ level of knowledge and change in attitude in relation to five broad themes derived from the interview data. The description of knowledge and attitude changes within each of the five thematic categories and the pedagogical strategies that influenced the changes has addressed the key issues in research questions 4 and 5. To respond generally to research question 4, overall, the data presented in

this chapter has shown evidence of change in the informants' knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature and cultural values. Generally the responses were more forthcoming, active and explicit in relation to the first two thematic categories - cultural values and the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum - where the informants generally expressed knowledge and attitudinal positions equally.

In general, the learning experiences and opportunities that the students had access to in the action research created positive conditions for change in knowledge and attitude in relation to the five thematic categories. Responses to the three other categories - Bhutanese folk literature and cultural diversity, the status of Bhutanese folk literature, and Bhutanese folk literature and the role of English - were generally less explicit or active, especially at the beginning of the action research. But where the informants responded, especially in the second and third interviews, the knowledge and attitudes displayed were deeper, differentiated, more explicit and positive than those in the first interview. Also, in relation to these themes, the informants generally made more knowledge statements than attitudinal ones. Because attitudinal expressions carry value-laden content such as a person's beliefs, assumptions and ideological positions, which may not always be in unison with those of others, including school and society at large, and even with their stage of development, perhaps informants were reluctant to share what might be seen as unorthodox views. Thus, the response patterns within each theme indicate that if a cultural concept such as diversity was not part of the dominant discourse - in curriculum documents or in the teachers' and schools' normative language use - the informants generally hesitated to talk about these concepts explicitly. On the other hand, where the action research activities such as reading, writing, discussion and presentation explicitly or implicitly explored particular dimensions of culture, the informants' responses generally reflected a deeper understanding of those dimensions, even if these dimensions were not part of popular discourse.

The thematic descriptions of change presented in this chapter will be discussed in Chapter 6 in light of literature and in relation to policy perspectives from Chapter 2 and teacher perspectives from Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSIONS

A major challenge for conserving the country's rich culture will be to minimize the effects of globalization that tends to homogenize diverse and rich cultures and causes people's cultural identity to wither often resulting in a dissolution of local languages, knowledge, beliefs and practices (GNHC, 2009a, p. 161).

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss and interpret the major findings to the five research questions (Appendix 3.1) set out in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Significant new findings from the student and teacher data are presented separately, followed by a discussion of the similarities and contrasts identified in the two sets of findings. Accordingly, in 6.2.1.1 key findings to research question 1 are discussed in terms of English teachers' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature. In 6.2.1.2 key findings to research question 2 are discussed in terms of how the oral traditions are reflected in the schools' extracurricular activities. In 6.2.1.3, the findings to research question 3 are discussed in terms of secondary English teachers' perceptions about the cultural and pedagogical value of Bhutanese folk literature. In 6.2.2.1 the key findings to research question 4 are discussed in terms of change in students' knowledge and attitude in relation to the cultural and pedagogical value of folk literature. In 6.2.2.2, I discuss key findings to research question 5 in terms of what pedagogical strategies facilitated change in student knowledge and attitudes. Finally in 6.2.3, I discuss the complementarities and contrast in teachers' and students' views about the role of Bhutanese folk literature.

Creswell (2008, p. 265) says "qualitative research is interpretive research" and so the researcher "will need to make sense of the findings". In this type of research, personal views cannot be kept separate from interpretations. In the context of this study, it is particularly so because of my own professional experience in the educational system of Bhutan and also because of my close interaction with the interview informants, especially the students with whom I worked closely in the context of the classroom. Hence, I discuss the findings in light of personal reflections, hunches, and intuitions. Equally importantly, as a qualitative inquirer I interpret the findings in light of concepts, ideas and reported views from the literature and prior studies and show how the findings support or contradict these.

6.2 Discussion of teachers' and students' perspectives

As reported in Chapter 4, the analysis of data gathered from secondary English teachers in Bhutan through questionnaires and interviews produced useful findings to the study that helped to answer research questions 1, 2 and 3. Findings that resulted from teacher data were triangulated with findings from questionnaire and interview data gathered from students in the context of an action research study. As Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 have shown, while the techniques and procedures used to gather data from teachers and students were similar, the contexts of the two data sources were different. They were similar in that data from teachers and students were gathered through questionnaires and interviews in both cases. They were different in that while data from the teachers were gathered only once and they were not preceded by factors that influenced the quality of responses, data from the students were gathered over time in the context of an action research project in which the research subjects were exposed to a series of lesson interventions focused on the study of Bhutanese folk literature. Therefore, as described in Chapter 4, while the findings from the teacher data are discussed only in terms of significant themes that answer research questions 1, 2 and 3, those from the student data are discussed in terms of change in knowledge and attitude in relation to significant themes that answer research questions 4 and 5. In this section I discuss the significant findings from the teacher and student data separately. I then discuss the complementarities and contrasts evident in the findings.

6.2.1 Understanding teachers' perspectives

From the perspective of government policy, the role of children is vital in promoting the rich and diverse oral traditions that exist in the Bhutanese cultural landscape and ensuring their intergenerational continuity. The school, its formal and informal curricula, and teaching and learning environment, therefore, become important sites for learning these oral traditions and their cultural values. The role of teachers is equally important, if not more. Rightly so, their facilitative role in the transmission of cultural values to children has been emphasized in policy documents and in the curriculum literature. But in the absence of evidence based research, as this study has revealed, it is difficult to understand the link between policy intent and the reality that exists on the ground where the real action takes place. Therefore, it was important for this study to find out what congruence or gaps exist between the teachers' attributed role and the reality of that role as reflected in their perceptions. Significant findings from the questionnaires and the interviews relating to teachers' perceptions are discussed within three widening frames of reference - 6.2.1.1: perceptions about their knowledge of genre and of pedagogy, 6.2.1.2: perceptions about how the influences in school supported the study of Bhutanese folk literature, and 6.2.1.3: perceptions about Bhutanese folk literature in relation to cultural preservation and globalization.

6.2.1.1 Secondary English teachers' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature

Secondary English teachers' perceptions about their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in the context of the English curriculum and pedagogy were explored through research question 1 (*How do secondary English teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature influence their teaching practices?*). As described in Chapter 4 (see page 83), teachers' perceptions about three interrelated themes of importance to this study, especially in relation to this research question, emerged from the data. Perceptions about the first two themes relate to knowledge - teachers' knowledge of oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature or "knowledge of genre" and knowledge of teaching the genres (pedagogical knowledge). The two perceptions were important for the study as they helped to understand the congruence or incongruence between the role attributed to teachers as cultural catalysts (see page 7) and how that role was reflected in their knowledge, understanding and professional practice. The third theme - professional factors affecting knowledge and practice - was also important as it helped to understand teachers' perceptions about what factors in their professional lives affected their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and knowledge of teaching it.

6.2.1.1.1 Knowledge of genres (Bhutanese folk literature)

As reported in Chapter 4 (see Table 4.9, page 85), a vast majority of the 181 teachers surveyed said in their questionnaire responses that they did not know the most common genres of folk literature that exist in the many languages of Bhutan, including the most common genres such as riddles and animal stories. For the most part, the interview informants were unable to recall the genres that they had learnt in their own languages (e.g. Lhazom 7, p. 2; Norbu 7, p. 4). They did not show evidence of specific knowledge through exemplification or illustration.

These findings are significant because they have implications for policy expectations, curriculum, and teaching practice. While from the policy perspective, teachers are expected to be the catalysts of the students' cultural knowledge and understanding, the low level of knowledge evidenced in their statements indicates mismatch between intent and reality. Teachers' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literatures and their cultural values will influence their knowledge of teaching the genres, both of which in turn determine the decisions and choices they make for the curriculum.

Additionally, these findings are significant because they suggest two paradoxical situations. First, while Bhutanese society has been a largely oral society and where the existence of rich and diverse funds of oral knowledge and the need to preserve them are emphasized in policy documents, in reality, as this study suggests, these oral literary traditions may be dying away rapidly from people's, at least teachers', oral memories. Second, although the teachers' role is

considered vital for instilling understanding and appreciation of the country's rich cultural heritage, their level of knowledge reported in this study does not seem to reflect the level of policy expectation placed on them.

Teachers' knowledge of genre has implications for folk literature studies in the Bhutanese context because it points to the need to document the oral literatures which may be disappearing quickly and I have argued for the need to generate print materials in the form of English translations. This could help to keep these literary traditions and their cultures alive. As Crystal (1997, p. 18) says, "When a language dies, so much is lost. Especially in languages which have never been written down ... language is the repository of the history of a people. It is their identity". Teachers' knowledge has implications for policy, teacher education, curriculum, teaching and learning because policy expectations regarding teachers' role in the transmission of cultural values and cultural continuity must be matched by the knowledge and understandings that teachers possess in relation to the oral traditions. Their knowledge will in turn influence the decisions and choices they make about the curriculum, the strategies they use to explore folk literatures in their oral and written forms, and create learning experiences and opportunities for the students.

6.2.1.1.2 Knowledge of teaching the genres

Not surprisingly, as shown in Table 4.10 (page 87), in the enacted curricula, creating constructive, authentic and autonomous learning experiences and opportunities that enabled the students to explore oral literatures was not a significant part of the teachers' classroom practice. Only a small percentage of the teachers surveyed claimed in their questionnaire responses that the oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature were used as pedagogical catalysts in their teaching of the English curriculum. Only 10% of the teachers surveyed said their students had opportunities to engage in competitions related to Bhutanese folk literature, while only 24% of them said their students carried out writing projects focused on collecting folk stories and proverbs from their own languages and writing them down. These findings were explored further in the interviews. In the interviews, some of the teachers said they never used folk literature - in its oral or written forms - as pedagogical resources. It is evident that the lack of adequate knowledge of the genres had a bearing on the teachers' beliefs about folk literature as a pedagogical resource, hence their teaching practice. Since the level of knowledge of genres as evident in the questionnaires was generally low, the issue was explored further in the interviews to find out what factors impinged upon their knowledge. The reasons the teachers mentioned are significant because they help to understand the relationship between policy, knowledge and practice and thus understand the nature of the problem more closely.

In their extensive study of over a thousand primary and secondary classrooms Hayes et al. (2007, p. 196) found that teacher knowledge was one of the key determinants of the quality of

learning students acquire in school. They said, “A focus on learning is not sufficient in itself if teachers do not have the necessary knowledge and skill in terms of both subject content and pedagogical repertoire”. In the interviews, teachers said they did not have an opportunity in teacher training to acquire knowledge of the genres of Bhutanese folk literature and related pedagogy. The two colleges of education in Bhutan do not at present prepare their teacher candidates to teach in multilingual and multicultural settings. But given the rich linguistic and cultural diversities that exist in Bhutan (see page 2), and therefore, in a typical Bhutanese classroom, teaching them how to deal competently with cultural materials, especially invisible forms of culture in the curriculum, will not only increase the teachers’ pedagogical repertoire but will also help to enhance the quality of learning environments through infusion of more care, warmth, and respect for diversity, which are consonant with the values and principles of Gross National Happiness. It implies that there must be more visible connection between teacher training and GNH intentions. Standards 9 and 10 of the NCTE-IRA (2010, p. 1) ‘Standards for the English language Arts’ that I referred to in Chapter 2 (see page 42) would be a useful framework for developing pre-service teacher candidates’ knowledge and skill of teaching in multicultural settings.

Second, the teachers said how the need to “finish” the syllabus (complete the prescribed content) limited their ability to engage in innovative practice and to let the students explore culturally familiar materials which were available in their own languages and cultures. The third factor that the teachers mentioned - lack of library resources in school that support the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature - is significant for this study because it widens the existing knowledge gap that the teachers reported as a result of the other factors. Fourth, in their schools there were no professional development opportunities in terms of intellectual stimulus and academic incentives that enabled and motivated them to explore these resources and enrich the curriculum and students’ learning experience (e.g. see Table 4.11, page 95). This is significant because the existing knowledge gap remains unfilled and this gap influences the teachers’ beliefs, attitudes and practices in relation to the curriculum. Some of the informants also mentioned a fifth factor - teachers’ attitude towards Bhutanese folk literature as being “rural” and so therefore of less significance which affects their interest and motivation to explore folk literatures. Dismissive attitudes about folk literature are not uncommon. For example, Cuddon (1999, p. 322), considers ‘folk literature’ the creation of “primitive and illiterate people”, the “product of illiterate or semi-literate societies”. For Bhutanese teachers and students to develop positive attitudes towards folk literature, it is necessary first to acquire a foundational knowledge of the genres. With this knowledge they will be able to judge the literary and aesthetic qualities of the genres and the cultural values they represent. This suggests the need to create opportunities for teachers to acquire knowledge in teacher training and in the schools’ professional environment where basic resources are available.

6.2.1.1.3 *Exceptional practices*

The survey and the interviews both showed that secondary English teachers' perceptions about their knowledge of folk literature and knowledge of teaching the genres were generally low due mainly to the professional obstacles mentioned above. Yet, the interviews also showed that in spite of the obstacles there were also teachers in the field who explored the oral literatures in the students' home languages to enrich the social and cultural experience of learning English. From the perspective of this study, they are exceptional practitioners whose beliefs and practices about culture, curriculum, teaching and learning derive from their own inspiration and convictions. The implication of these exceptionalities for policy and practice is that while these good practices affect the learning outcomes of the students who benefit from them directly, their positive impact does not appear to have had a cascading effect on the school as a whole. This may be more so in centralized educational systems where the pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices are driven mostly by what is enshrined in the official curriculum documents and assessment handbooks and premonitions about annual examinations. Moreover, as evident in the curriculum documents and in the questionnaire and interview data, exceptional practices that have a deep impact on student learning seem to go unnoticed, which works as a disincentive for innovative practices.

In summary, except for these exceptional professionals, teachers' lack of knowledge of the genres influenced their beliefs and practice in relation to folk literature and its teaching. In the interviews, they attributed their lack of knowledge to a number of professional factors. The implication for research in this study is that if these impediments are not addressed holistically, expecting teachers to engage in innovative practice in relation to folk literature would not be realistic. If policy regards children as the custodians of Bhutanese culture (see GNHC, 2009a, p. 20) in the face of globalization, and if the curriculum values the need to create culturally non-alienating contexts and experiences for the learners (e.g. see Ura, 2009, p. 53), then it is important to make sure that these expectations are matched by the teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices.

6.2.1.2 **Status of oral literatures in the schools' literary and cultural milieu**

The daily lives of schools bring time, space and activities into rhythms of learning, both formal and informal, structured and unstructured. Formal, structured learning is the object of curriculum and pedagogy. Informal, situated learning takes place in the distributed practice of fluid communities. Building habituated practices of learning into the school day is one way of supporting learning (Hayes, 2009, pp. 194-195).

Schools in Bhutan are generally culturally vibrant with a number of activities and events held during the academic year. Students are expected to learn values through these "extracurricular programmes and organization of school life" (CAPSD, 2007, p. v). Secondary English

teachers' perceptions about how these activities supported the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature were explored through research question 2 (*How do the literary and cultural influences in the schools support students' learning of Bhutanese folk literature?*). It was important for this study to find out how the value of the country's rich oral traditions, particularly the oral literatures, whose preservation and promotion are emphasized in government policy, were reflected in the schools' informal curricula, especially in their extracurricular activities. Because extracurricular activities in schools are mostly conducted by teachers and the variety and frequency of these activities vary among schools, it was necessary to gather data on the status of folk literatures in these activities from a large sample of teachers through questionnaires.

6.2.1.2.1 Cultural value of extracurricular activities

The teachers generally said extracurricular activities related to Bhutanese folk literature were important because of their cultural values. As shown in Table 4.12 (see page 98), the teachers concurred that extracurricular activities in the school deepened the students' knowledge and appreciation of Bhutanese culture, deepened the latter's knowledge of their own cultural identities, and enhanced their knowledge of cultural diversity. These perceptions help to answer in part the key issue raised by research question 2. First, the perceptions indicate a positive link between the policy emphasis on cultural preservation and the teachers' positive views about the cultural value of extracurricular activities in school. This also indicates teachers' close involvement in these activities in school (see 6.2.1.2 above) and the decision-making power they hold with regard to the degree of attention paid to folk literatures, especially the oral literary traditions, in these activities. Second, the notion of 'identity' that the teachers referred to in relation to folk literature is a departure from the policy notion of a larger-than-self collective or national identity. Their acknowledgment that extracurricular activities helped to deepen the students' understanding and appreciation of their own cultural identity or cultural "root" (see Table 4.12, page 98) was a departure from the commonly held view of collective identity. Third, teachers perceived the relationship between folk literature and cultural diversity. Given the linguistic and cultural diversity that exists in Bhutan and the importance attached to it in government policy, it is important that teachers' beliefs, attitudes and professional practices concerning diversity are understood through empirical studies. In the context of the present study, this was necessary because of the curriculum documents' general silence about the concept of diversity, as I mentioned in Chapter 2 (see page 48).

Thus, secondary English teachers' acknowledgement that extracurricular activities in schools promoted the values of cultural identity and diversity suggest that the rich and diverse folk literatures in different languages, especially the oral literatures, can be preserved and promoted through the schools' informal curricula.

6.2.1.2.2 *Status of oral literatures in extracurricular activities*

While the teachers generally upheld the cultural values of extracurricular activities in school, the questionnaires showed contrasting evidence in terms of the types of activities held, in what language they were held, and how frequently such activities occurred. The main genres of folk literature were not attended to. As Table 4.13 (see page 99) illustrates, not many teachers affirmed the conduct of extracurricular activities related to Bhutanese folk poetry, folk riddles, folktales, and the ballad in their schools. Significantly, only a negligible 2% said “Other” activities not mentioned in the questionnaire were held in their schools. On the contrary, a majority of them said that folksongs, and ‘tsangmo’ (a type of oral verse exchanged verbally in Dzongkha between competing teams) were held in their schools. Since folk songs and tsangmos are all written down in Dzongkha these activities are performed mostly in Dzongkha. In terms of the frequency of these activities, the teachers said they were mostly held once a year. As Table 4.13 (see page 99) illustrates, extracurricular activities were mostly held in Dzongkha, some in English, and a negligible 3% in “Other” languages. Thus, while not many such activities were held, the ones that were held were mostly in Dzongkha. Conversely, there is not much scope in the school’s extracurricular life for keeping the other languages and their oral traditions alive. Consequently, children will become increasingly alienated from their home languages and the rich cultures these languages contain.

In the questionnaires and interviews teachers made no reference to the involvement of members of the community in student learning. As Table 5.37 (see page 150) shows, this was not evident in their pedagogical knowledge and practice. In their studies on the Bhutanese folktales, Zam (1991, p. 143) and Dorji (2002, pp. 20-21) recommend that the rich cultural resources available in the community must be recognized and harnessed. Thus, Zam (1991, p. 143) says that if folktales are to be at the centre of the English curriculum, then “contributions of volunteers from the community, who can come to the school with their stories” must be sought. Similarly, Dorji (2002, pp. 20-21) says, “The old timers [senior members] from the villages could be invited” to the school to share with the students their knowledge of the “beautiful art of folktale narration”, which is an effective “vehicle of transmission of ... social and moral values”.

These suggestions are supported by studies in the international context. For example, Gilstrap and Evens (1996, p. 4) recommend for middle grades activities such as taking students to a “professional storyteller” and inviting local folklorist to “visit the class and spin his or her yarns”. Gilstrap and Evens (1996, p. 4) are of the opinion that “Some senior citizens have discovered the pleasure of sharing stories with children and are happy to share favourite folktales with groups of children”. But in the Bhutanese context, since the extracurricular activities in schools are conducted mostly in Dzongkha and the other languages do not have a role in the informal curricula and student learning, it is unlikely that invitation of knowledgeable members of the community from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds will be forthcoming. Moreover, it is possible that teachers who have been to university and

have learnt ‘modern’ pedagogical methods might tend to disregard the traditional knowledge and wisdom people in the villages possess. This implies that there is a need to forge a closer and stronger school-community partnership to improve the quality of student learning, especially their knowledge and attitudes in relation to culture.

In the Bhutanese context, as suggested in this study, the local funds of knowledge are at present underutilized, perhaps because of the mainstream thinking that education is in the textbook and its authentic sources are the teachers. As I point out in 6.2.3 later in the chapter, the attitude towards Bhutanese folk literature as “rural” perhaps reflects part of the prevailing thinking. This implies the need to reinforce the positive idea of a school-community partnership with the aim to explore and utilize the local finds of knowledge that can enrich the students’ learning experiences.

Thus, while policy emphasizes the need to preserve and promote cultural diversity and the role of children as custodians of culture, the rich and diverse oral literatures that exist in many languages do not find much space in the schools’ informal curricula. From the educational perspective, how effectively children are able to live out the cultural roles assigned to them will depend on the kind of knowledge and attitudes they acquire through the schools’ formal and informal curricula. They must be sufficiently exposed to the diverse oral traditions and their cultural values. In the present context, however, since Dzongkha is the main language of access to Bhutanese culture in school, the possibility of children learning from different cultures and developing positive beliefs and attitudes about diversity is not visible in curricula and in classroom practice as reported by teachers. This implies that if cultural diversity is to be preserved and promoted, then alternative ways must be sought that can keep the oral traditions and cultures in lesser known languages alive and expose children to them. As evident in the teachers’ perceptions, English is a possibility but not without drawbacks. I discuss this issue in 7.3.1.3 (page 184) and 7.3.2.1 (page 185) in Chapter 7.

6.2.1.3 Bhutanese folk literature and cultural values

As I described in Chapter 1 (see page 8), one of the key issues highlighted in the central research problem concerned the need to understand how far teachers’ perceptions about the cultural values of Bhutanese folk literature were congruent with or reflective of the government’s policy emphasis on the need to preserve and promote Bhutan’s diverse oral traditions and their cultural values and the vital role ascribed to teachers in that process. These issues were explored through Research question 3 (*How do secondary English teachers perceive the long-term role of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge in the English curriculum?*). Through the questionnaires and the interviews teachers presented four main perspectives in relation to folk literature that help to answer the research question. First, its presence in the English curriculum would provide opportunities for the students to

learn English in meaningful cultural contexts. Second, its inclusion in the English curriculum would be an effective and enduring approach to help children to imbibe the rich and diverse cultural values that are present in folk literature, and thus, through this process ensure the intergenerational continuity of Bhutanese culture. Third, since English is a popular language it could offer discursive possibilities in the face of globalization and its homogenizing effects. In the Bhutanese context, the possibilities are greater since English is an increasingly popular language in the country. Each of these is considered in turn.

6.2.1.3.1 Cultural and pedagogical values of folk literature

A vast majority of the teachers believed that culturally relevant texts motivated the students to learn English better than those that were not (see Table 4.14, page 105). They agreed that their students learnt English better and they enjoyed learning more when the curriculum materials had familiar settings, characters, cultural concepts and themes in them. This can be set against the experiences of many of the teachers who had been at school prior to the Bhutanisation of the curriculum (Maxwell, 2008). Significantly, the teachers said that these materials generated the students' interest to learn and motivated them to express themselves more meaningfully in English. They said that when the materials were familiar, students felt more comfortable and they participated more willingly in class discussions. As Table 4.14 (page 94) illustrates, the teachers advocated the inclusion of folk literatures in the curriculum because it would expose children more closely and widely to Bhutanese culture and encourage them to become active agents of cultural preservation and continuity. Thus, these culture-rich translations can be used in the English curricula as cultural and pedagogical resources so that they are kept alive in a language that interests young people. These perceptions support the approach taken in policy that cultural values in children can be instilled and cultural alienation prevented (e.g. see Ura, 2009, p. 53).

The concept of cultural diversity is not yet part of Bhutanese English teachers' pedagogical language because it does not figure in the language of the English curriculum (see page 48) nor in general discourse even though it is encouraged in government policy (see page 2). Hence, it was assumed that the informants would not say much about it. Interestingly, most of the informants acknowledged the value of cultural diversity and its place in the curriculum. Moreover, the teachers generally believed that through exposure to English translations of diverse Bhutanese folk literatures included in the curriculum students would develop deeper understanding of diversity and its value for Bhutanese culture as a whole. These views are consonant with the government's stance on cultural diversity:

Although not without numerous positive benefits, globalization has to a certain extent contributed to some erosion and partial loss of the country's rich cultural heritage ... Another critical challenge for conserving the cultural heritage relates to the potential loss of many cultural traditions, particularly oral traditions, as much of these have yet to be fully inventoried and documented (GNHC, 2009a, p. 161)

These understandings further enrich the multicultural character of Bhutanese society, which, as government policy recognizes, is increasingly challenged by the “attendant pressures and impact” of globalization. Bhutanese folk literature studies and the use of culture-laden materials in the curriculum will not only help to increase teachers’ knowledge of the diversity of oral literatures that exists in Bhutan but will also encourage them to explore this diversity further to enrich the curriculum and their teaching practice. Ultimately, increased knowledge of the oral traditions will support the policy stance on diversity.

6.2.1.3.2 Perceptions about English translations

Although the teachers acknowledged the pedagogical and cultural advantages of having Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum, in the interviews some of them also admitted that the quality of English used in Bhutanese folk literature is not good enough for the students to learn ‘standard English’. So, Bhutanese folk literature is not a good bridge to elite forms of English. Some of the informants also said that English translations of Bhutanese folk literature were ‘inferior’ to literatures from the West (e.g. Gembo 17, p. 5) and that they lacked the depth and sophistication required for teaching higher order thinking and building test items according to Bloom’s taxonomy. These perceptions raise important questions about the criteria used to judge English translations of Bhutanese folk literature for inclusion in the English curriculum, and translation studies in Bhutan generally. As I said in Chapter 2 (see page 38), at present these issues have not been attended to in folk literature studies in Bhutan. These and related issues are discussed in 7.3.2 (page 185) and 7.3.3 (page 188) in Chapter 7.

Since this study concerned the role of Bhutanese folk literatures in their oral forms and in English translations in the English curriculum, and English was the language of access to folk literature in that context, the teachers also expressed views about the role of English in relation to Bhutanese culture. English teachers generally believed that English was a language of popularity and prestige in Bhutan. Because of this, in a globalized world, English could popularize Bhutanese culture to the outside world. In the absence of similar studies, the teachers’ general perception about English as a language of prestige is significant for this study not only because it fills the existent knowledge gap but also because it reflects the status of English in Bhutan, as it is the case in other developing countries. For example, even before the dominance of internet, Crystal (1997, pp. 78- 110) found that English was a “prestige lingua franca”, confirmed by Hohenthal’s (2003, pp. 24-42) study which showed that English was a more prestigious language than Hindi in India, and by Abdullah’s (2001, p. 350) and Ayyub’s (1994, pp. 211-212) claims for English in Singapore and Malaysia respectively. Significantly, these authors also said that since people’s preference was for English over the other languages, as appears to be the case for Dzongkha, English was growing steadily.

In one respect, English translations of folk literature would be better able than other languages, including Dzongkha, to enhance the people’s knowledge and understanding of

Bhutan's rich and diverse oral traditions and so its culture. However, what the teachers did not talk about were the cultural losses that may occur through using English translations as a language of access to the oral traditions and their cultures. In the Bhutanese context, it is important to consider the tensions inherent in teachers' perceptions about English - the need for English as a global language, and the implications of overreliance on it for minority languages and their cultures.

To sum up, folk literatures - in their oral and written forms - can be used effectively as cultural and pedagogical resources for teaching English in a familiar cultural context. The deeper implication of this for Bhutanese culture is that it will expose children to the diversity that exists in Bhutanese culture and, through increased knowledge and understanding, they become effective agents of cultural continuity. There is also the implicit tension between competing needs - for culturally familiar texts, and for access to elite literary texts in a foreign language. While English translations of folk literature could make the diverse oral traditions and their cultures available to Bhutanese people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and also to the outside world, there are cultural implications that must be addressed. I discuss the implications in Chapter 7 and make relevant suggestions about reviewing the emerging role of English in Bhutan in the context of globalization.

6.2.2 Understanding students' perspectives

As I highlighted in Chapter 1, from the government's policy perspective, the role of children is vital in the preservation and promotion of Bhutan's unique and diverse cultural heritage much of which consists of folk literatures in the oral form. Because of their rich cultural values, it is imperative that these are kept alive through inclusion in the curriculum since it is here where children have most of their formal academic learning. But as globalization homogenizes cultures, especially the small and vulnerable ones, the challenge of preserving and promoting them is by no means small and easy. There has been no study that shows the relation between policy expectations about children's role in culture and their knowledge, perceptions and attitudes in relation to it that influence that role. Hence, one of the key issues raised by the central research problem in this study was how far policy expectations about children's role in relation to culture are reflected in the way children see it in the context of their educational experiences and their aspirations in life. As evident in the teacher surveys, document study and situational analysis carried out prior to working with the students, the level of students' knowledge of folk literature was thought to be generally low and the academic support for increasing it was not visible. Therefore, it was important to create an action research context in which lesson interventions were taught with the aim to improve knowledge and attitude over time. In 6.2.2.1, I discuss the significant findings from the questionnaires and interviews in relation to change in knowledge and change in attitude, and in 6.2.2.2 I discuss the pedagogical strategies used in the action research that facilitated these changes.

6.2.2.1 Students' knowledge and attitudes

As described in Chapter 3, the third stage of the study involved an action research in a secondary school with a group of Class 11 students. The action research questions were concerned with change in knowledge and attitude over time in relation to Bhutanese folk literature as a result of the learning experiences and opportunities through teaching interventions. Change in knowledge and attitude was investigated through research question 4 (*“What knowledge and attitude do secondary students show following three months of learning about Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum?”*) the findings to which were described in terms of five thematic categories in Chapter 5. Findings from the data gathered at different stages of the action research through questionnaires and interviews helped to answer this research question by revealing these Class 11 students' knowledge and attitudes prior to the teaching interventions.

Findings from the action research helped to understand how far the vital role government policy attributed to children as the ‘custodians of culture’ (see page 7) was reflected in the knowledge and attitudes that students showed in relation to Bhutanese folk literatures and their cultural values, including the values of diversity. Furthermore, the growth in knowledge and understanding indicated that students at Class 11 level could learn about Bhutanese culture through folk literature. In this section I discuss significant findings related to four interrelated themes that emerged from the action research which help to understand the key issues identified in the central research problem. The themes are 1) the genres and their cultural values, 2) preservation and promotion of cultural diversity, 3) status of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature, and 4) discursive advantages of English for Bhutanese culture. Since the data were gathered in the context of action research aimed to see change in knowledge and attitude over time as a result of the teaching interventions used, I discuss the findings in terms of change.

An important assumption in action research is that it will create new understandings and new meanings for the research subjects as a result of intervention (see Greenwood & Levin, 2000, p. 94). At the same time, within the constructivist paradigm of this study, it was important for me to be aware that the realisation of a “value” like “improvement” is “very context bound ... a matter of personal judgment in particular circumstances” (Elliott, 2001, p. 50). Therefore, the interpretation of the main findings from the questionnaire and interview data takes into account the pedagogical factors in the preceding contexts of change. To address the limitations of my personal judgment the interpretation of the findings are based predominantly on the “thick description” of the themes (Creswell, 2009, pp. 191-192) presented in Chapter 5.

6.2.2.1.1 Knowledge of the genres and their cultural values

This study has shown that students' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature - in its oral and written forms - and through it, their knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese cultures, can improve. As shown in Table 5.15 (page 120), Table 5.17 (page 122) and Table 5.23 (page 129), questionnaire data showed that their initially low level of knowledge improved over time. The knowledge forms that the students displayed at the beginning of the action research, which were generally implicit, tentative, broad generalizations and lacked much substance, became increasingly more substantive, complex and interpretive towards the end of the action research. The shift was visible in the language that the students generally used at the beginning to state their knowledge and attitudes in relation to the cultural values of Bhutanese folk literature that they experienced in the action research. At the beginning, they were able to "recite only fragmented pieces of information" (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 43) using words that showed scant knowledge of folk literature. The knowledge that they showed was largely a recitation of official language in relation to Bhutanese culture such as "ancestor", "past", "country", "preserve", "customs", and "future generation". Conversely, towards the end of the action research, they used words that evinced specific and interpretive knowledge of Bhutanese culture, such as "spiritual", "simplicity", "beauty", "leadership", "trust", "my own language", "vanish", "will disappear", and "lost forever". Thus, the action research has shown that students can develop knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese folk literature and its cultural values if learning opportunities and experiences are created for them in school.

The students also showed positive shifts in terms of attitude. While in the beginning they made generalized statements of appreciation and affect in relation to folk literature and its aesthetic and cultural values, at the end they were able to take an attitudinal stance based on differentiated and interpretive awareness of folk literature. The students' initially tentative and generally low opinions about their knowledge of the genres improved significantly by the end of the action research. At the beginning of the action research, they generally believed that their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature was "not good" (e.g. J1.5, p.1) because the curriculum and teaching methods did not create opportunities for the students to explore the cultural resources of their own languages. Moreover, books and other resources related to Bhutanese folk literature were not always available in the school library. Conversely, at the end of the action research, the students not only believed that their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature improved but they were also able to express convictions about its importance for Bhutanese culture and the commitment to preserve it by collecting the oral literatures that exist in their own and writing them down (e.g. Jigdrel 3.2, p. 1). The students' knowledge and attitude changes reflected the motivation generated by the small writing projects that the class carried out in the action research. This implies that while the role of students in the preservation of Bhutanese culture is vital, how far they are able to take on this role effectively will depend significantly on the positive attitudes they develop through authentic learning opportunities and experiences in the schools' formal and informal curricula.

6.2.2.1.2 *Preservation and promotion of cultural diversity*

In both the questionnaires and the interviews the students made knowledge and attitude statements in relation to cultural diversity. They advocated the need to translate the diverse oral literatures in different languages in Bhutan because it enabled people to value and appreciate the diversity of cultures these oral literatures represent (Appendix 3.16). In the interviews, the students' knowledge and attitudes in relation to cultural diversity showed a clear pattern of shift from implicitness and ambivalence at the beginning of the action research to explicitness and deeper understanding of diversity at the end. The positive changes occurred in the context of the action research in which the students were exposed to folk literature from different languages and cultures. This implies that the students' knowledge and attitude in relation to culture and the need to preserve it can change positively if authentic experiences are provided where they learn to recognize and respect the values of diversity.

Although at the beginning of the action research, the students were generally not very forthcoming in terms of willingness to talk about diversity, in the later stages of the study they not only spoke more explicitly about it but also showed the ability to recognize or value multiple cultures (see Hayes et al., 2007, p. 111). Whereas the students' knowledge of cultural diversity at the beginning of the action research was generally superficial and stated implicitly, it became more explicit and differentiated at the end (e.g. see Table 5.22, page 128). Similarly, shifts in attitudes were visible in the later interviews. Whereas in the initial interviews the attitudes expressed were generally vague, detached and noncommittal, in the later interviews, they were more explicit and involved. Significantly, some of the informants even expressed commitments to preserve the oral literatures that exist in their languages by writing them down. This suggests a possibility for the English curriculum for schools in Bhutan to build learning units into it that enable the students to visit local communities to record and write down oral literatures in English. Such an approach, according to Martin and Rose (in press), "fulfil the complementary goals of teaching cultural traditions, recording them for the future, and integrating both with the knowledge and skills" that children need.

Positive change in knowledge and attitude would not have been possible in the action research lessons if I was not sensitive about the cultural and linguistic diversity that existed in the class. Chan's (2006, pp. 261-171) study showed that if the varying ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds that students bring to school are not acknowledged and considered seriously, efforts to make the curriculum, teaching practices and school context culturally-sensitive would not yield much result even if claims are made for culturally-sensitive curricula and practice. Ideas must be implemented practically. For example, Smolen and Ortiz-Castro (2000) found that exposing children to Latino literature with its rich poetry, elements of magic, humour and adventure helped them to broaden their understanding of each other's cultures and respect differences. In the action research lessons in the present study, the students not only read, reflected upon and talked about Bhutanese folk literatures in English but also collected oral literatures from their home languages, translated them into English, and

talked about their experiences in class. The change that was visible in the students' knowledge and attitudes was, therefore, a result of the cultural contexts, learning experiences and opportunities that were created for the students.

Instances from these studies and the change observed suggest possibilities in the Bhutanese classroom in relation to culture, curriculum and pedagogy. The implications of the change that resulted from the pedagogical strategies used in the action research lessons are discussed later in Chapter 7.

6.2.2.1.3 Status of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature

As a result of their exposure to English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in both prose and verse in the action research, the students developed perceptions about the status of these translations. The interviews showed that their notion of status was based on two criteria. The first criterion concerned their judgment about the 'standard of English' used in these translations which included richness of vocabulary, complexity of structure, and sophistication of themes, ideas and concepts. The second criterion concerned their judgments about the cultural and aesthetic qualities of Bhutanese folk literature evident in the folktales and ballads that they read. While some students expressed low opinions about Bhutanese folk literature in English because they thought the standard of English was not good, some others rated it highly because they thought Bhutanese folk literature in English was interesting, beautiful and rich in terms of its cultural and aesthetic qualities. Change in the level of knowledge and change in attitude were generally visible in both the questionnaires and interviews.

In the interviews, most of the students stated their knowledge of the standard of English translations of folk literature in terms of bland generalizations without much evidence of specific knowledge at the beginning of the action research. This is hardly surprising because few would have experienced them. Progressively, at the end of the action research they were able to use expressions that reflected more critical, comparative and interpretive knowledge forms.

In the questionnaires at the beginning of the action research a vast majority of the students stated their preference for English translations of Bhutanese folk literatures over other forms, with the response rate increasing at the end of the action research (Appendix 3.16). This pattern was reflected in the interviews. For example, the students' generally naïve and banal attitudinal statements at the beginning of the action research became increasingly complex towards the end of the study. Here they were able to express in explicit terms their evaluative and comparative understanding of the aesthetic, cultural and spiritual values of folk literature. For example, whereas most of the students in the beginning simply said the standard of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature was "just OK" (S1.13, p. 2; C1.6, p.2) and

“not high” (J1.11, p. 2), in the end they were able to make specific evaluative comments such as “I like the line which says, ‘Upper lip like a lotus petal...’” (S2.11, p. 2), Bhutanese folk literature is “not poetic”, “not sophisticated” and “only at the surface level” (K3.11, p. 2). Hence, there was a clear shift in their attitudinal stance at the end of the action research.

The students’ perceptions about the standard of English raise two issues. The perception that nonnative models of English are not ‘standard’ is generally strong in the South Asia countries. The notion of ‘standard’ English generally includes sophisticated prose and poetry from nineteenth century British literature. Thus, Rahman (1996, pp. 191-205) admits that in Bangladesh “people have negative attitudes toward nonnative models” of English and that nineteenth-century literary English produced in Britain is “still held in high esteem by a large section of educated persons in Bangladesh”. Desai (as cited in Baily, 1996, pp. 47-48) says the same thing of India where the symptom of purism based on British literary English still prevails. In the Bhutanese context, owing to the influence of English curricula borrowed from postcolonial India, this has generally been the dominant perception, although it has changed in the past decade. Second, the students’ notion of ‘standard’ also raises the issue of the quality of English translations of Bhutanese oral literatures, to which no attention has been paid. For example, the criteria that Smolen and Ortiz-Castro use (see Table 2.5, page 38) - “literary quality”, “cultural authenticity”, “cultural detail”, and “language” - can be useful as a framework for initiating a rigorous process of ensuring the quality of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature. For example, in the first instance the issue of standard would be addressed if attention were paid to at least two of the four criteria that Smolen and Ortiz-Castro (2000, p. 568) recommend for benchmarking quality. The first useful criterion would be literary quality, which asks, “Is the story well written?” and the second would be language, which asks, “Is the language of translation written in a fluent, rich, and natural way?” These criteria would be useful especially for selecting English translations of Bhutanese folk literature for inclusion in the English curriculum since there is no evidence of these or other criteria being used for the purpose at present (see page 38).

The students’ concerns about ‘standard’ also have implications for curriculum and pedagogy. In relation to curriculum, the quality of available materials selected for inclusion in it will depend on the procedures used for selection, which will ensure quality if done properly. They also have implications for pedagogy because it is the teachers, apart from curriculum officers (in the Bhutanese context), who must draw up the quality criteria carefully so that the materials that students are exposed to are of good quality. I discuss these implications later in Chapter 7.

6.2.2.1.4 The role of English translations in promoting cultural identity

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, this study did not focus particularly on the role of English in relation to Bhutanese culture. But since the students were exposed to and interacted with

English translations of the genres in the action research lessons and they also collected oral literatures and translated these into English, while talking about the status of these translations, they also provided useful insights into the role and status of English in relation to Bhutanese cultures. While the cultural advantages of English translations were generally acknowledged, the cultural loss that may occur in using English as the vehicle for Bhutanese folk literature was not evident in the students' perceptions.

The students believed that because of its influence as a global language and its growing popularity in Bhutan, English translations of folk literature could promote identity. It was evident that their notion of 'identity' referred mainly to the "identity of the country" (J1.20, p.4) or "national identity" (e.g. K1.16, p. 3; R3.4, p. 1). While the literature shows different ways of conceptualizing identity (e.g. see Table 2.3 & Table 2.4, page 19), as evident in the action research data, students' understanding of the concept was limited to what Gee (2000-2001, p. 199) calls "affinity-identity" or Oring (1994, pp. 212-213) "collective identity". Gee's (2000-2001, pp. 100-101) conceptualization of identity - 'four ways to view identity', namely 'nature-identity', 'institution-identity', 'discourse-identity', and 'affinity-identity' - provides an excellent theoretical lens for understating "what it means to be a certain kind of person". This implies that if students are to learn to value multiple perspectives on culture, the curriculum and teachers' classroom practice must create opportunities and experiences that allow them to develop these abilities.

The students affirmed the growing popularity of English. In the questionnaires a vast majority of the students stated preference for English translations of folk literature over the other forms. Conversely, not many stated their preference for folk literature in Dzongkha or Choskad at the beginning and at the end of the action research (Appendix 3.16). While in the beginning most of the students simply said because of its universal status English was gaining popularity in Bhutan, in the later interviews they judged the role of English in terms of how it could popularize Bhutanese culture and promote Bhutan's literary and cultural identities. This is a unique way of looking at the advantages of English and it is different from the way the role of English is generally described in English curriculum documents and in the literature generally.

The importance attached to cultural identity suggests that students are aware of the vulnerability of Bhutanese culture in the face of globalization. Yet, the language that can respond effectively to the disquieting effects of globalization is English. In a way, this resonates with the way some postcolonial writings delineate the role of English. For example, Achebe (as cited in Crystal, 1997, pp. 135-136) admits that "English will be able to carry the weight of my African experience" and that African writers, instead of rejecting English, must use the global advantages of English to present their cultures effectively to the outside world. However, in the Bhutanese context, implications of using English translations to preserve and promote the oral traditions, especially in terms of what may be lost in the process, must be

considered carefully. Because the history of Bhutanese writing in English is quite recent (see page 4) and because folk literature research and scholarship, especially translation studies, in Bhutan are yet to assume the depth and sophistication required for generating high quality literature, it is possible that the mindless use of English for preserving the oral cultures may lead to loss of ‘cultural authenticity’ and ‘cultural detail’ (see Smolen & Ortiz-Castro, 2000, p. 568). If it happens, then English would only hasten the decline of lesser known languages and the loss of the cultures they contain.

Thus, the findings from the action research have implications for a deeper and more realistic understanding of the role of English in relation to culture in Bhutan. I discuss their implications in Chapter 7.

6.2.2.1.5 Attitudinal discretion

In terms of difference between knowledge and attitude, students generally made more knowledge statements, particularly in relation to cultural diversity and the role and status of English, including statements about English translations of Bhutanese folk literature. Just as in the wider society, the notion of ‘diversity’ is not part of the language of the curriculum, and therefore, not part of the teachers’ professional language. And since it is uncommon to look at the role of English in relation to Bhutanese culture, it was possible that the students preferred to be less open about attitudinal stances that would not necessarily be congruent with larger opinions in vogue.

To sum up, students’ knowledge and attitudes in relation to the different genres of folk literature and their aesthetic and cultural value improved over time. But change required the use of teaching strategies that enabled the students to interact critically with folk literatures in their own and other languages. As a result of these, the level of their knowledge changed from broad generalizations and recitation of commonly accepted knowledge forms at the beginning to illustrative, exemplified and interpretive knowledge at the end. Similarly, their generally implicit and naïve expressions of appreciation and affect at the beginning changed to attitudinal stances that reflected differentiated and interpretive awareness of folk literature at the end.

6.2.2.2 Teaching strategies that influenced change

The teaching strategies I used were underpinned by a firm conviction about the importance of Bhutanese folk literature and its place in culture and so in the curriculum. I had access to a wide range of folk literature resources and had extensive experience of the secondary English curriculum and ways of teaching it via my role at Samtse and then Paro College of Education. Positive and meaningful learning experiences are almost always supported by pedagogical

beliefs and practices that create opportunities for the students to learn in the social and cultural context of their experience. I proceeded with the belief that when students explored culture they naturally learnt language as the latter is the verbalization of the former, especially true in oral societies. As Kickham and Sealy (2008, p. 83) put it, “Teaching culture is teaching language ... students can’t understand the language without understanding the culture”. In culturally familiar and unthreatening contexts the students not only respond to knowledge given in the curriculum but are also, and more importantly, sufficiently empowered to deal with knowledge with a sense of autonomy and independence. Research question 5 (*What strategies work in developing knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literatures and their cultural values in a secondary classroom?*) concerned what pedagogical strategies worked and facilitated the change that was evident in the students’ knowledge and attitude over time.

I was aware that a language curriculum, even if it emphasizes the role of culture in learning languages and has sufficient cultural contents included in it, may not lead “inexorably to intercultural empathy, intercultural competence ... These need to be taught as a deliberate part of language programs rather than assumed to result naturally” from interaction with the curriculum (Lo Bianco, 2001, p. 458). With this understanding, a number of strategies were used with the aim to improve the students’ generally low level of knowledge and vague and detached attitudes in relation to Bhutanese folk literature. Unlike in the existing pedagogical practice, in the lesson interventions opportunities were created for the students to explore the oral traditions in their home languages. Collecting folk literatures from oral sources enabled them to talk with their parents, grandparents and knowledgeable members of the community using basic tools of academic inquiry such as interviewing, recording and interpreting. Martin and Rose (in press) acknowledge the educational value of taking children to “their family communities to study with their elders and record their stories and activities” because it deepens their knowledge and understanding of their cultures. But as they suggest, such an approach would be possible only if policy makers, teachers and parents are willing to “look beyond the clause, to describe the cultural contexts of communities and schools as symbiotic systems, including their genres, fields, social relations and modes of meaning making”. In the Bhutanese context, it implies that the possibility of school-community collaborations can be explored with the aim to keep cultures alive and instil in children the values of cultural identity and diversity and the importance of preserving them.

An important strategy used in the action research was giving students small writing projects in which they collected a variety of oral genres from their own and other languages and wrote them in English (e.g. proverbs, folktales, beliefs and superstitions and imprecations), which they shared with the class. In a way, the process involved collecting what Kickham and Sealy (2008, p. 85) call the “traditional narrative” (in prose or verse) from the students’ own or other languages, generating a “meta-narrative” (thematic meanings of the traditional narrative) and a “cultural/instructional narrative” (larger cultural meanings and implications of the traditional narrative). Since they wrote and talked about their writings in the context of

their social and cultural experience, even students who were generally known as being introverted and shy showed evidence of increased motivation, interest and the initiative to learn on their own and with others. So the pedagogical strategies focused on the students' own experience and it empowered them to take charge of their own learning, a position favoured by a number of workers in this field including Gilstrap and Evens (1996, p. 5) who point out that "Personal narratives can provide a strong beginning for helping children better understand themselves and their families" and I would add, their culture.

This study has shown that letting the students explore oral literatures in their own and other Bhutanese languages can be an effective way of teaching language and culture. Calling it a "unique" pedagogical approach, Porcaro (2002, p. 7) acknowledges, "Translation of literature in the students' native language into English ... affords students an opportunity to learn language, culture, and literature from the inside out. It involves an exceptional engagement with both the first and second languages". The positive learning environment in which the students learnt to write and talk about their writing boosted their self-confidence and self-esteem. As shown in Table 5.20 (page 125), Table 5.21 (page 126) and Table 5.24 (page 130), these experiences and opportunities not only enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the genres of folk literature in their own languages they hadn't previously known, but also ingrained in them positive attitudes towards the need to document them. As these tables show, they used phrases such as "interested to write" these genres down, "bring it [oral literature] out", "I am interested", and "Students should also be encouraged to write books" to express their changed attitudes. Thus, if the activities enabled the students to write in English folk stories, folk poems, folk proverbs, and folk riddles they collected from their own or other languages in Bhutan and talk about these experiences, the level of excitement and motivation in the class grew significantly.

As evident in the students' perceptions about their knowledge (see Table 5.16 & Table 5.18, pages 121-123), there were factors that impeded the students' potential to learn. As these tables show, one of the factors that the students mentioned was the lack of folk literature resources in the school library. Therefore, in the action research lessons I developed reading materials for the class and structured my own knowledge and experience of the subject in the form of classroom activities and questions to support student learning. The significant improvement in the students' knowledge of folk literature suggests that if teachers use pedagogical strategies that respond effectively to weaknesses and gaps in the school's formal and informal curricula, resources, and professional environment, positive changes are possible. If the teachers get the encouragement and support to develop knowledge of folk literatures and knowledge of teaching them and are generally aware of folk literature publications available in the book market, they will be able to explore more creative ways of developing reading materials even if resources are not always available in the school.

The action research has shown that if Bhutanese children are to become knowledgeable about and positively disposed towards folk literatures and the invisible cultures they represent, the

curriculum and teachers' classroom practice must create opportunities that expose them repeatedly to good works by local authors. Setting aside some time in the action research lessons especially to talk about Bhutanese writers whose works of folk literature were available in print in bookshops in Bhutan not only enhanced the students' knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese writing in English but it also presented role models for the students. In fact, some of the students even expressed their interest and commitment to write down the oral literatures that they now knew existed in their own and other languages in Bhutan (see Table 5.19 & Table 5.20).

With the aim to improve students' knowledge and attitudes, other pedagogical strategies were also used in the action research lessons, to which the students generally responded positively. Since the students showed generally simple and superficial knowledge and vague and detached attitudes in relation to Bhutanese folk literature at the beginning of the action research, the teaching strategies focussed on engaging them in specific intellectual tasks so that over time they were able to state substantive knowledge and more explicit and targeted attitudes. First, engaging them in tasks that allowed them to attempt a critical appraisal of specific cultural and aesthetic dimensions of the genres they read helped them to build substantive knowledge through close interaction with the genres. Abarry (1994, p. 326) suggests that a good way to teach literary appreciation is to "isolate a dirge [in this case] and treat it for its beauty as a piece of poetry" and help the students to recognize its "techniques and sources of pleasure". In this study, when this was done, over time the students were able to talk about the abstract, symbolic qualities that they discovered in the texts they read, whereas at the beginning of the action research their knowledge of the genres was confined mostly to naming and stating literal meanings. Second, tasks that required the students to compare and contrast the genres allowed them to engage even more critically with the texts and express aesthetic and affectual attitudes. Gilstrap and Evens (1996, p. 4) recommend "comparing different versions of the same folktale" as a useful activity in a folk literature lesson. In their comparison of the genres the students focussed mainly on the thematic aspect of the texts, the sophistication of ideas they contained, and the quality of English used in them. Third, encouraging the students to memorize impressive passages from Bhutanese traditional ballads and perform these verses through recitation in the class was a powerful pedagogical process that English teachers in Bhutan could try out in their literature lessons. The students not only felt they owned new knowledge but realized that Bhutanese languages had rich literary resources, which, on merit of their cultural and aesthetic values, must be preserved. These strategies and their positive impact on student learning would have implication for professional practice. Although these pedagogical strategies are not yet part of the popular language of curriculum, and therefore not evident in the classroom practice of English teachers in Bhutan, as the teacher data in Chapter 4 showed, their positive influence on student learning in the action research suggests possibilities for improving the situation.

The use of a wide variety of teaching strategies facilitated the change that was evident in

student knowledge and attitudes. As evident in Table 5.37 (page 150) the number of teaching strategies that the students mentioned at the beginning of the action research was more than the ones they mentioned at the end. Moreover, the strategies mentioned at the end of the study were more focused on student learning. For example, while the strategies in the left hand column of Table 5.37 by and large reflect teacher dominance in the pedagogical process and passive reception of information by the students, those in the right hand column reflect student engagement in the production of knowledge. The action research activities in which the students collected different genres of oral literatures in prose and verse from their own languages, translated these into English, and talked to the class about their experiences of doing so, enabled them to access the surface and then the deeper meanings of the genres that they dealt with. The higher level of knowledge that the students displayed towards the end of the action research was facilitated mainly by the experiences and opportunities created in the action research that encouraged them to engage in higher order thinking. Hayes et al. (2007, p. 43) found that students demonstrated “deep knowledge” when they felt a sense of success in “producing new knowledge by discovering relationships, solving problems, constructing explanations, and drawing conclusions”.

Thus, the change evidenced in the students’ knowledge and attitude as a result of the pedagogical strategies used in the action research suggests that Bhutanese folk literature can be taught in the English curriculum. As evident in the findings reported in Chapter 5, the students learnt about some of the oral literatures that exist in different languages in Bhutan and their cultural values, including the value of diversity, and the need to preserve and popularize them through English translations and the cultural implications of doing so. But in order to help students to develop deep knowledge and positive attitudes in relation to folk literature, the English curriculum must be sufficiently flexible to allow innovative pedagogies. The teaching strategies must enable the students to learn English in socially and culturally non-alienating contexts. There is not dearth of cultural resources. As Hanzén (2007) says, “Proverbs exist everywhere in daily life and must therefore be detected and focused on so learners of languages develop their cultural knowledge, their metaphorical understanding and their communicative competence”. But for the literary and cultural resources available in different languages to be “detected”, the schools’ formal and informal curricula and teaching practice must be prepared to accept these as valuable resources for student learning.

6.2.3 Complementarities and contrasts in the findings

In this section I discuss the complementarities and contrasts that were found in the teachers’ and students’ questionnaires and interviews. The discussion is focused on the main thematic issues in the two shared findings. As I described in Chapter 3 (see page 57), although data were gathered differently from teachers and students at different stages of the study, the key issues explored were the same. Hence, data gathering focused on teachers’ and students’

perspectives on Bhutanese folk literature in the shared contexts of the secondary English curriculum, teaching practice, and the students' learning experience. Because of the similarity of the contexts it was important for the study to find out what complementarities existed in the two shared findings. But because the nature of teachers' and students' experiences differed, it was also important to find out what contrasts existed in their perspectives. Moreover, since the student data were gathered in the context of an action research with a series of lesson interventions, it was also assumed that contrasts would be found.

Teachers' and students' knowledge of folk literatures in their own or other languages that they knew showed contrasting evidences. While the teachers generally said they had either forgotten what they had learned from their parents or in school and their knowledge statements were generally tentative and ambivalent, the students displayed substantive knowledge and even illustrated their claims of knowledge with specific examples, especially at the end of the action research (e.g. see Table 5.29, page 136 & Table 5.30, page 137). But since the students' data were gathered in the context of an action research, the learning experiences and opportunities created for them not only stimulated their oral memories and experiences but also enriched their knowledge, while the teachers did not have that advantage. Hence, although theoretically it may not be appropriate to draw a comparison between the knowledges they demonstrated, its implication for curriculum and pedagogy is that through carefully designed learning opportunities and experiences, it is possible for teachers to harness the cultural resources that exist in their students' own languages.

A significant contrast between the two sets of findings was seen in relation to the concept of cultural identity. In the interviews, while the students generally talked about how Bhutanese folk literature in English translations would popularize Bhutanese cultural identity outside Bhutan, the teachers were generally silent about it. On the other hand, the teachers implicitly linked the notion of identity to Dzongkha suggesting that Dzongkha was the main agent of cultural identity. While the students' perspectives represent an understanding of the emerging role of English in a globalized world, the teachers' perspectives represent the commonly held view that Dzongkha is the language of Bhutan's cultural identity. Both the perspectives are legitimate and have implications for theory and practice. While the teachers spoke with care and reverence for Dzongkha, the students spoke in terms of their aspirations about the English language in a globalised world.

Complementarity of teachers' and students' views was evident in relation to the notion of cultural diversity. The recurrent theme was that documenting the rich and diverse oral literatures from different languages in Bhutan in the form of English translations would not only help to preserve these oral traditions and their cultures but would also enrich the existing diversity in Bhutanese culture as a whole. A generally accepted argument was that since English is a global language and its popularity in Bhutan is growing rapidly, documenting the diverse oral literatures in English not only can keep these cultures alive but will also expose Bhutanese culture to the outside world. Internally, diversity will promote intercultural

understanding and empathy. While both teachers and students held the view that English translations of Bhutan's oral literatures would promote cultural diversity, they were both generally silent about the more delicate issue of what would happen to the lesser known languages and cultures as a result of globalization and the dominance of Dzongkha and English and the cultures they represent.

Teachers and students also held complementary views regarding the status of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature. They generally held these translations in high esteem because of their aesthetic and cultural values. Complementarity of views was also evident in relation to how they regarded the standard of English used in Bhutanese folk literature. They considered the standard of English rather low and not appropriate as a good model of English for students to learn. While there was complementarity of teachers' and students' views regarding the standard of English used in Bhutanese folk literature, an implicit tension was also evident in relation to how they viewed the intellectual quality of folk literature. While the teachers thought these materials were not good enough for constructing test items of high intellectual quality, especially according to the hierarchy of Bloom's taxonomy, the students questioned their depth and sophistication. These views raise a number of important issues regarding the quality of English translations, the process of selecting materials for the curriculum, and the need for more intensive study of the literary, aesthetic, and cultural elements of Bhutanese folk literature so that teachers and students are able to make judgments about quality on the basis of close knowledge of the genres. Interestingly, the quality of translation was not mentioned by teachers and students. I draw up their implications in Chapter 7.

A significant contrast in the views relates to another aspect of the status of folk literature. While some of the teachers viewed Bhutanese folk literature as "rural" and even implicitly suggested its sole relevance to rural teachers and rural students (e.g. Norbu1, p.1; Gembo13, p. 4), the students generally held the genres in high esteem. While the teachers' views consisted mainly of generalizations without illustrations and exemplifications, the students' views were for the most part based on intimate knowledge of the aesthetic and cultural values of the folk literatures - in the oral and written forms - that they were exposed to in the action research. Ironically, in this case, the students' views seemed more plausible than the teachers' because the former were more substantive than the latter. As mentioned earlier in this section, because of the different genres of folk literature they were exposed to in the action research, the students generally displayed more specific knowledge of folk literature than the teachers. The latter's knowledge statements were tentative, ambivalent and without illustrations and example. Paradoxically, the teachers attributed the element of "rural" or what Cuddon (1999, p. 322) calls the "primitive" or "illiterate" to Bhutanese folk literature, while the students whose knowledge levels improved at the end of the action research attached no negative attributes to it. As I indicated in 6.2.1.1.1 (page 155) and 6.2.1.1.2 (page 156) this suggests that opportunities must be created for teachers to enhance their knowledge of the genres and knowledge of pedagogy.

Thus, the complementarities and contrasts in the teachers' and students' views not only help to understand deeply and foreground the significant issues discussed separately in this chapter but they also help to draw up their implications holistically taking account of these two perspectives viewed in conjunction with insights drawn from my study of key policy and curriculum documents presented in 2.6.2 (see page 48).

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed significant findings on secondary English teachers' and students' knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature. The discussion of teachers' knowledge of the genres and knowledge of related pedagogy has shown that while their role in the cultural education of children is considered vital, their generally low level of knowledge and understanding of folk literature is not congruent with the level of expectation placed on them. Teachers' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and its cultural and aesthetic values influences their beliefs about and knowledge of teaching the genres. At present, since English teachers' knowledge of the genres in their oral and written forms is generally low, their classroom practice does not evince use of folk literature as a pedagogical resource to enhance student learning in the English curriculum. While lack of knowledge may be the case, there are a number of professional factors that impinge upon teachers' desire and ability to explore the cultural and pedagogical resources that folk literatures contain. The chapter has shown that folk literature - in its oral and written forms - does not have much role in the schools' extracurricular life, especially in their cultural and literary activities. Thus, findings relating to teachers' lack of knowledge of the genres and knowledge of pedagogy, and the negligible presence of folk literature in the schools' literary and cultural activities present a sharp contrast to the high value attached to the oral traditions. Although the role of folk literature in the schools' pedagogical practice and informal curricula is negligible, teachers' perceptions about its cultural and pedagogical advantages are mostly positive. Using culturally familiar materials from folk literature in the English curriculum raises the students' level of interest and motivation to learn to communicate effectively in English. Its cultural and pedagogical advantages notwithstanding, the standard of English used in Bhutanese folk literature is generally perceived to be inadequate as a model for good English.

As discussed in the chapter, students' knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature changed over time as a result of teaching strategies that were used in the action research lesson interventions. Thus, the students' knowledge of folk literature in relation to the issues of cultural diversity, status of English translations, and the role of English in relation to Bhutanese culture and identity, which was generally stated implicitly and in terms of broad generalizations at the beginning of the action research became more explicit,

substantive and interpretive over time. In terms of attitudinal change, the generally implicit, neutral and ambivalent statements of attitude at the beginning of the action research gradually became more explicit, differentiated and interpretive over time. The study has shown that the students' knowledge of and attitude towards Bhutanese folk literature and its cultural values can change if learning opportunities and experiences are created for the students within the scope of the schools' formal and informal curricula. The chapter has shown the complementarities and contrasts that were evident in the teachers' and students' views about the role of Bhutanese folk literature. The implications of the findings from the teachers' and students' data will be taken up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The context of the study

This dissertation set out to analyse the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the context of curricula, teaching and student learning experiences as perceived by secondary English teachers and students in Bhutan. The central research problem addressed in this study concerned the challenge of keeping the rich and diverse oral literatures that exist in different languages in Bhutan alive through documentation and inclusion in the English curriculum. The potential loss of these heritages means loss of their cultures as well. Within Bhutan's development paradigm of Gross National Happiness, keeping the country's rich and diverse cultures, and therefore maintaining its cultural identity through its unique heritage, is considered a developmental imperative. I have argued that while it may be increasingly difficult for smaller and lesser known languages to withstand the homogenizing effects of globalization, one of the ways of ensuring the intergenerational continuity of the diverse oral literatures and their cultures is by bringing them alive through English translations and exposing children to this diversity through the English curriculum. The study has shown that because of the rapid growth of English as the language of globalization in Bhutan and its increasing popularity and prestige among the youth of Bhutan, the English curriculum can be a productive site for the study of folk literature.

In the Bhutanese context, since children are regarded as the future citizens of the country, and therefore, the future custodians of culture, their role in ensuring cultural continuity is vital. Similarly, the role of teachers as the catalysts of cultural transmission is considered equally vital. But as I noted in Chapter 1 (see page 9) and Chapter 2 (see page 27), there has been no empirical study that shows how the Bhutanese policy aspirations are reflected in the curriculum, the teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices, and the students' learning experience. Hence, this study explored teachers' and students' perceptions about folk literature in relation to curricula, teaching and learning.

In this final chapter I revisit the research questions and briefly answer each one of them separately. Significant new findings from the study are stated briefly. Implications of the findings are then drawn for educational policy and practice, folk literature education, and folk literature studies. Based on the implications and limitations of the study, I point out the areas for further research. Finally, the chapter states the significance of the present study to the profession and to the field of knowledge.

7.2 Significant findings to the research questions

Undertaken in three stages - the first two conducted through teacher surveys and interviews, and the third conducted in the context of an action research project - the study set out to investigate five research questions (Appendix 3.1). Answers to research question 1 (*How do secondary English teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature influence their teaching practices?*) were sought in data gathered from secondary English teachers in Bhutan through questionnaires and interviews. Since the questionnaires covered a large and representative sample of secondary English teachers (see page 62) and the interviews focused on a small number of teachers who were interested in the teaching of Bhutanese folk literature (see page 65), data gathered were sufficient to answer the key issue raised by the research question. Secondary English teachers' knowledge of the oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature and knowledge of related pedagogy were generally low, which contrasts with the high level of expectation placed on them in relation to culture. Hence, they showed little evidence of using folk literatures as pedagogical resources in their teaching of English. The study has identified a number of professional factors that affect teachers' desire to improve knowledge of folk literature, including lack of prior knowledge from teacher training, limitations of the curriculum, lack of adequate resources in library, and lack of a stimulating professional environment in school. The study has also shown that in spite of these factors, exceptional pedagogical practices exist in schools. This suggests that if the importance of folk literature is foregrounded in educational policy, curriculum, teaching practice and the schools' professional environment, Bhutanese folk literature education can be made possible.

Answers to research question 2 (*How do the literary and cultural influences in the schools support students' learning of Bhutanese folk literature?*) were sought in data gathered from secondary English teachers through questionnaires. Since the questionnaires gathered closed and open-ended responses, data gathered were sufficient to answer the key issue raised by the research question. Data showed two significant findings. First, even the most popular genres of Bhutanese folk literature have a negligible presence in the schools' literary and cultural activities. Second, Bhutanese folk literatures in languages other than Dzongkha receive little attention in the schools' literary and cultural activities. Thus, there isn't much scope for students to develop deep understanding and appreciation of and respect for the values of diversity in the schools' literary and cultural environment.

Answers to research question 3 (*How do secondary English teachers perceive the long-term role of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge in the English curriculum?*) were sought in data gathered from secondary English teachers through the questionnaires and interviews. Three important perspectives on the role of oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature were identified. First, Bhutanese folk literature can create opportunities for students to learn English in culturally familiar contexts. Second, using folk literatures that exist in different languages as pedagogical catalysts will not only promote the

values of cultural diversity in school but will also ensure the intergenerational continuity of Bhutanese culture through the education of children. Third, since English is a global language and a language of growing popularity in Bhutan, translating oral literatures into English will help to promote cultural diversity and continuity in the face of globalization.

Answers to research questions 4 and 5 were sought in the context of an action research study. Data gathered at different stages of the action research study were sufficient to answer the research questions. Research question 4 (*What knowledge and attitude do secondary students show following three months of learning about Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum?*) concerned change in students' knowledge and attitudes. Their knowledge of the genres and of related concepts such as cultural diversity, status of English translations, and the role of English at the beginning of the action research was mostly at the level of recall and recitation at the beginning of the study. Over time, their knowledge statements became more substantive, illustrative and interpretative. In terms of change in attitude, the generally tentative, ambivalent and neutral attitudinal statements at the beginning of the action research became more explicit, critical and differentiated over time.

Research question 5 (*What strategies work in developing knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literatures and their cultural values in a secondary classroom?*) concerned what pedagogical strategies facilitated the change in the students' knowledge and attitudes. The action research showed that Bhutanese folk literature in the students' own languages can be used to facilitate the learning of English in a cultural context. Students will also develop deep knowledge of and positive attitudes towards Bhutanese culture and its rich diversity. But efforts to use folk literature as pedagogical catalysts in the English curriculum will work only if the role of folk literature, including the oral traditions, as a source of cultural knowledge is emphasized in educational policy, curriculum, teaching, and the schools' extracurricular life in general.

7.3 Implications of the study

This study has implications for a number of areas concerning folk literature and education. Together with the key official documents such as language policies and from the discussion of findings from the teachers' and students' data and the complementarities and contrasts identified in these findings, implications have been drawn for three broad areas relevant to this study - educational policy and practice, folk literature education, and folk literature studies in Bhutan. In discussing the implications I focus mainly on new understandings generated by the study and the gaps identified in these areas. Based on these, I then suggest what could be done to fill the existent gaps.

7.3.1 Educational policy and practice

The present work has shown that although the importance of the oral traditions, which mainly include the rich and diverse oral literatures of Bhutan, is emphasized in policy as sources of cultural knowledge, no mention is made of them in educational policy in general and in the secondary English curriculum in particular. Nor are items concerning Bhutanese folk literature found in formal examinations. In fact, the terms ‘oral literature’ or ‘folk literature’ do not appear even once in educational policy and curriculum documents. Moreover, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, Bhutanese writing in English began with English translations of oral literatures gathered from different languages in the country in the 1990s. Given that Bhutan has been a largely oral society dependent for hundreds of years on its rich and diverse oral traditions that exist in prose and verse, this gap in policy and practice points to the need to raise the profile of oral traditions as valuable sources of cultural knowledge in the classroom practices of teachers.

7.3.1.1 Promoting the diversity of cultures through folk literature

This study has shown that the role of children can be vital in ensuring the intergenerational continuity of Bhutan’s rich and diverse oral traditions and the cultures they contain and this is consistent with government policy (see page 7). Since many of these exist in the oral form, their continued existence as verbal arts is threatened by the forces of globalization and the lack of teachers’ use of these resources. The present study confirmed the importance of ensuring the continuity of these cultures by keeping them alive, and one potential way forward is through the English curriculum, teaching and learning.

Although the notion of cultural diversity is emphasized in the cultural domain of government policy (see page 2), its importance is not yet acknowledged in educational policy and curriculum documents. Silence in the language of educational policy and curriculum influences the teachers’ professional language of culture, their pedagogical beliefs and practices. This was borne out by the teachers’ lack of substantive knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature and its cultural values. Yet as a result of the intellectual stimulus and support provided in the study, especially through the many probes used in the interview questions, they were able to talk about the value of diversity. The students’ knowledge and especially their attitudes showed improvement at the end of the action research. The general perception was that recognition of cultural diversity would facilitate intercultural empathy, respect, understanding and effective communication among cultures. But how far these values are learnt in school will depend on how cultural diversity is valued in educational policy, curriculum, and the schools’ cultural environment, all of which influence teachers’ pedagogical attitudes, beliefs and practices. Elaine Chan (2007) says:

When students come to school they bring their home cultures, developed through interaction with family and community members. These cultural histories are never

merely formal categories ... It is necessary to understand in some depth the particular narrative histories of each child in order to identify both his or her cultural group and his or her specific history.

In coming to know their home cultures the students come to know themselves better and in sharing these home cultures at school their knowledge of Bhutanese cultural heritage grows. This study suggests that it is desirable for teachers and students to develop knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the value of cultural diversity.

7.3.1.2 Using folk literature as pedagogical resources

The action research in this study has shown that exploring the rich and diverse folk literatures - in their oral and written forms - can provide opportunities for the students to explore the familiar resources of their “home cultures” and work with their “narrative histories”, as Chan (see above) puts it. The findings from the action research suggest that even in situations where cultural concepts are either new to teachers and students or are not part of the language of educational policy and the schools’ formal and informal curricula, the right kind of pedagogical situations can be created where teachers and students are given an opportunity to work with materials from diverse cultures. Then, new understandings can be generated. The knowledge and attitudes that the students displayed in the action research interviews in relation to the values of respect for difference, of tolerance, understanding and empathy (see page 130) suggest that the curriculum and the teachers’ classroom strategies must create opportunities for the students to explore notions of cultural diversity and difference so that they build more grounded understandings of culture and see even a classroom as a rich mosaic of cultural representations.

7.3.1.3 Reviewing the role of English

The present study has provided fresh insights into teachers’ and a smaller number of students’ views about the role and status of English based on their experience of the English curriculum and their perceptions about the role of the English language more broadly. Policy documents generally attributed three commonly accepted roles to English in Bhutan - as a language of modernization, as an official language alongside Dzongkha, and as a language of curriculum and instruction, hence as a tool for “thinking” (see page 47). Teachers and students, on the other hand, showed alternative ways of looking at the role of English. Although there are drawbacks in doing so, translating the oral literatures into English can help to popularise the oral traditions and the cultural values in lesser known languages, promote intercultural empathy, and promote diversity. The deeper implications of English translations for Bhutanese culture were not visible in the teachers’ and students’ perceptions. In one respect, translating the disparate forms of folk literature from the lesser known languages into English

might help prevent these literatures from disappearing with the languages themselves. English translations would also make the diverse range of oral traditions available to the Bhutanese people who do not speak those languages, as well as making them available to the world. However, the linguistic and cultural implications of heavy reliance on English as a language of access to Bhutanese culture cannot be overlooked. Lo Bianco (2008, p. 1) says, “Languages are deeply intellectual and intensely practical. When you learn a language well, you engage in the deepest manifestations of a cultural system”. In fact, there may be cultural losses through English translations, and the whole process could well hasten the decline of minority languages in Bhutan.

There is at present a gap between policy perceptions about English and the perceptions of English teachers and students - teachers as perceived experts of the language, and students as its present and future beneficiaries. From the present work I suggest that the role of English translations of the oral traditions, and the role of English generally, and its implications for language and culture in Bhutan be reviewed but not before empirical studies are undertaken on its spread, influence, status and impact on people’s lives and their perceptions about language and culture. In the age of globalization, this seems essential. This will assist policy efforts to understand more deeply the cultural and linguistic implications of the growth of English in Bhutan - in terms of its advantages as well its disadvantages.

7.3.2 Promoting folk literature education

Significant findings from the teachers’ and students’ data generally indicate that a folk literature education for children can be an effective way of not only preserving and promoting the oral traditions and their cultures but can deepen students’ knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese culture and its diversity. The change in students’ knowledge and attitudes at the end of the action research suggests the need to enrich the curriculum, and make the teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and practices more student-focused in terms of learning tasks that enable them to explore the rich and diverse oral traditions that may be on the brink of loss. The focus must not be on rote learning and reciting fragments of cultural concepts but on dealing with cultural materials creatively and intelligently so that the knowledge and attitudes learnt through such a process are grounded in deep understanding and personal beliefs. The study suggests that the introduction of folk literature education in schools will have implication for curriculum, pedagogy and teacher training. The colleges of education have a key role here.

7.3.2.1 Examining the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum

The present work has shown that although the importance of preserving and promoting the oral traditions, which mainly include the rich and diverse folk literatures of Bhutan, is emphasized in government policy (see page 4), no mention is made of them in the secondary

English curriculum. Moreover, although the secondary English curriculum underscores the importance of creating relevant cultural contexts in which the students will learn English, the presence of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature, which are rich sources of cultural knowledge, is at present negligible (see Table 2.6, page 49). The study has raised important issues concerning the contextual background to the titles included in the secondary English curriculum and the procedures and criteria used to select these titles, such as the ones that Smolen and Ortiz-Castro (2000, p. 568) recommend. There is a need to develop sufficient theoretical knowledge related to Bhutanese folk literature and use it in the design and development of the English curriculum that will raise awareness of its existence as a body of cultural and historical knowledge that is currently underutilized.

Findings from the teachers' and students' data also revealed that not much happened in relation to folk literature in the secondary schools' formal and informal curricula. As I have noted, this is not surprising especially given the largely examination-driven schooling evident in Bhutan. Since curriculum policy is silent about Bhutanese folk literature as a rich body of cultural knowledge (as this may be viewed as a start), its cultural and pedagogical advantages have not yet been attended to in the school curriculum. These findings help to see more closely the link between policy, curriculum and practice. A programme of folk literature included in the English curricula for schools will help to bridge the existing gap. Based on the knowledge identified in this study, a series of propositions such as the following may help to understand the wider context in which the possibility of a folk literature education for children may be considered.

- 1) Research and document the diverse oral literatures in Bhutan and generate English translations;
- 2) Examine and define the role of oral literatures in promoting the cultural dimension of GNH;
- 3) Document the social, cultural and historical background of the genres and indicate the language of their origin so that their unique and distinctive features are retained;
- 4) Evaluate the quality of the English translations using the criteria of 'literary quality', 'cultural authenticity', 'cultural detail', and 'language' (Smolen & Ortiz-Castro, 2000, p. 568);
- 5) Classify the genres into their prose and verse forms and define each genre according to its unique characteristics and document and indicate the language of its origin;
- 6) Examine the genres for specific cultural values that they embody (e.g. identity, diversity, impermanence);
- 7) Examine the genres for specific literary and aesthetic values that they embody (e.g. images, objects, landscapes);
- 8) Select content based on pre-determined criteria of excellence outlined in Step 4 for inclusion in the English curricula;
- 9) Give greater prominence to these genres in the schools' pedagogical practices than they receive at present;
- 10) To raise its profile, include Bhutanese folk literature in end-of-year examinations;
- 11) Include relevant content in the English education programme for teacher training in alignment with that of school; and
- 12) Study the impact of these contents on students' and teachers' knowledge and attitude in relation to the oral traditions in particular and Bhutanese cultural diversity in general and how these support the cultural dimension of GNH.

7.3.2.2 Teachers' pedagogical knowledge and practice

Teachers' beliefs about what knowledge is of most worth for their students influence their pedagogical practice. Although secondary English curriculum documents underscore the need for teachers to create constructivist and autonomous learning situations for the students to enable them to learn the content of the curriculum in relation to their cultural experiences, the various sources of data explored in this study and reported in chapters 2, 4 and 5, showed very little evidence of English teachers using folk literature as cultural and pedagogical resources in their classroom practice. Content analysis of exam papers and educational monitoring officers' reports (see page 51) showed that although some materials from Bhutanese folk literature had been included in the English curriculum, their importance was not reflected either in public exams or the teachers' classroom practice. Yet, the change observed in the action research suggests the students' potential to learn and respond positively to folk literature in their own and in other languages. The action research suggests that English translations of Bhutanese traditional ballads, folktales, poetry, proverbs, beliefs, superstitions, riddles and imprecations can be used as effective pedagogical resources in the English curriculum.

The action research and its impact on student knowledge and attitudes suggest that given the right kind of learning experiences and opportunities created for the students, they can develop complex forms of knowledge, including 'deep knowledge', 'problematic knowledge', and 'cultural knowledges' (Hayes et al., 2007, pp. 42-68). This contrasts with the views some English teachers expressed in the interviews concerning the low intellectual quality of Bhutanese folk literature and hence its unsuitability for testing higher order thinking in exams according to Bloom's taxonomy in their view (see page 110). This kind of unsuitability can be relatively easily refuted.

The pedagogical strategies used in the action research had a positive impact on the students' learning, which was evident in terms of change in their knowledge and attitudes over time. The change suggests that it is not the curriculum content or use of Bloom's taxonomy per se that promote higher order thinking in the students but the quality of the learning opportunities and experiences created for them that challenge them intellectually, ask them the right kinds of questions, and engage them in the right kinds of activities, including reading, writing, talking and reflecting. The present work has shown that both oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature in English can be used as pedagogical catalysts as well as rich sources of cultural learning for the students. The extant gaps in pedagogical knowledge identified in the present study suggest the need for more focused studies on the interactions of culture and pedagogy in the Bhutanese context.

7.3.2.3 Promoting folk literature education in teacher training and in school

As discussed in Chapter 4, English teachers' knowledge of both oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature and of related pedagogy was generally low. Hence, the data did not show much evidence of teachers using innovative and constructive teaching methods that enabled the students to learn English in the context of their social and cultural environment and experience. This suggests the need to develop teachers' knowledge of the genres of Bhutanese folk literature and knowledge of related pedagogy. The present action research study is paralleled elsewhere in the international context. Hayes et al. (2009, p. 196) observed in their study that "Ensuring that teachers have the necessary threshold knowledges, skills and dispositions is an important basis for teacher professional activity". As the first study of its kind based on the constructivist-interpretive paradigm aimed to improve student knowledge and attitudes, it can serve as a beacon for future classroom-based studies in Bhutan.

Teachers mentioned lack of folk literature studies in teacher training, limitations of the curriculum, lack of resources that supported the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature, lack of opportunities to enhance their knowledge in the schools' professional environment and their own dismissive attitude towards folk literature as the main reasons for their lack of pedagogical knowledge. These are precisely the areas that must be addressed to improve teacher knowledge. These suggest the need to design courses in Bhutanese folk literature studies in teacher education awards. This will not only give teacher candidates foundational knowledge of different genres of Bhutanese folk literature in prose and verse and of Bhutanese cultures but will also provide them the knowledge and skill to research and translate oral literatures into English and, most especially, use these as pedagogical resources for teaching English. But threshold knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired in teacher training may dissipate if they are not supported and reinforced in the schools' professional environment. This then calls for the need to create a school professional environment that encourages and supports teachers and students to explore resources available in their cultures to make the curriculum meaningful and enriching. Implied here is the challenge for teachers to use the home cultures of students as one starting point in the learning of Bhutanese folk literature.

7.3.3 Promoting folk literature studies

Although the main aim of the present study was to investigate the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the educational context, mainly in relation to the schools' formal and informal curricula, pedagogical beliefs and practices, and student learning experiences, the findings to the research questions and study of documents reported in Chapter 2 have provided valuable insights into the current state of research and scholarship in folk literature studies in Bhutan generally. First, as this study has revealed, although normative claims about the cultural values of Bhutanese folk literature are made in the few commentaries that are available in the

literature, serious works of scholarship or evidence-based studies dedicated to substantive treatment of the specific elements of folk literature are almost non-existent. A typical example is the notion of “identity” which commentaries on Bhutanese folk literature mention frequently but no study of people’s perceptions or interpretive studies of specific elements of oral and written forms of folk literature have been done to date. Second, as highlighted in Chapter 1 (see page 4) and Chapter 2 (see page 24), although government policy emphasizes the importance of documenting and promoting Bhutan’s diverse oral traditions, due to the paucity of studies in folk literature, the myriad oral literatures that exist in different languages in the country have yet to be classified and defined according to their genres and sub genres.

In spite of the importance attached to oral literatures, no attention has been paid to classification and definition of the various genres of folk literature that exist in different languages in Bhutan. As a result, the few commentaries that exist in the Bhutanese context are confined exclusively to one genre - the folktale (e.g. Acharya, 2004; Choden, 2002; Dorji, 2002; Gyaltsen, 2005), and no attention has been paid to the many other genres that exist in prose and in verse in different languages of Bhutan. On the other hand, as shown in Table 1.2 (see page 11), the literature confirms the existence of diverse forms of folk literature (see also Cuddon, 1996, p. 322; Smolen & Ortiz-Castor, 2000, pp. 566-567). Given the importance attached to diversity in relation to the oral traditions and the need to preserve and promote them, the extant gap in knowledge that the present study identified is surprising. Therefore, a good starting point to fill this gap would be for folklore scholars to lead sustained and rigorous tasks of classifying and defining the undocumented genres. The conceptual definitions of folk literature presented in Chapter 1 (see page 11) will be a useful basis for such a work.

7.4 Limitations of the research

This study has raised a number of issues that merit attention. Yet, there were methodological limitations due to which many of these issues could not be explored fully. Because the review of literatures indicated that no study had yet been done that showed the role of folk literature in the school curriculum or in teacher training, it was not possible to explore teachers’ and students’ knowledge and perceptions of the different genres of Bhutanese folk literature extensively. Therefore, the data on knowledge of the genres was limited to the few that were mentioned in the questionnaire. Although this study has defined some genres of folk literature in prose and verse (see Table 1.2, page 11), it is not known how many genres of folk literature in prose and verse actually exist in the different languages of Bhutan. Within the methodological limitations of this study, it was not possible to pursue this important question but it creates scope for further research.

Since the teacher and student questionnaires and interviews generally aimed to gather perceptions about the role of folk literatures in the context of curriculum and pedagogy, the specific issues related to culture have not been treated in great depth. Hence, while important concepts such as cultural diversity, cultural identity, the specific cultural and aesthetic elements of the different genres, and the role and status of English have been treated in broad thematic terms in this study, future studies could treat them more intensively.

I am aware that since the study sample consisted of only 24 secondary students (including the six who were interviewed) and 181 secondary English teachers (including the six who were interviewed), teachers' and students' views about the 'status' of English translations of Bhutanese literature and the role of English in Bhutan generally do not represent a wide range of perspectives. For example, they do not reflect the views of teachers teaching subjects other than English (e.g. Dzongkha teachers) and the views of Bhutanese people in different professions though it can be said that the teachers' views are representative of English teachers. Therefore, while the findings have interpretive value and have added to existent knowledge in the field, no blanket generalizations are intended. The methodological approach used in the study has the value of 'transferability' to similar circumstances (Lincoln, 2002, p. 330; Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 191) and the findings have implications for curriculum and teaching practice and interpretive value for existent knowledge gaps and future studies.

In retrospection, I think more substantive and richer data on folk literatures in different languages in Bhutan could have been gathered if the questionnaire had provided a longer list of genres for the respondents to choose from. Further, since the study was conducted in a situation of no prior research in folk literature education and meagre scholarship in folk literature studies in Bhutan, a list of genres mentioned in Table 1.2 (see page 11) and their definitions could have accompanied the questionnaire. The definitions may have assisted the respondents to think of the possible existence of the genres in their own and other languages in Bhutan and thus provide more substantive responses to the questionnaire items.

7.5 Areas for further research

Several areas for further research have been identified already and these are consolidated here together with others. The present work has shown that in spite of the importance attached to Bhutan's rich and diverse oral traditions, no credible work of scholarship or evidence-based studies exist that deal with identification of the genres, their classification and their definitions. This study has set a good starting point for more serious and sustained work in this regard. Scholarly endeavours in this area must be taken up seriously so that the country's rich and varied oral literary traditions, each with its unique cultural, aesthetic and literary

qualities, will continue to enrich the diversity that exists in the Bhutanese cultural landscape and do not become extinct through neglect. Specifically, further research could focus on identifying the diverse folk genres that exist in the oral form in each of the nineteen languages of Bhutan. This could be followed by more rigorous works of scholarship focused on (1) classifying the genres by their prose and verse forms and defining the genres and their sub genres according to their unique and distinctive attributes and (2) identifying their literary and cultural merit.

Within the methodological scope of this study, important cultural concepts and issues were approached in broad thematic terms only. Future studies must focus on in-depth treatment of the specific cultural, aesthetic, stylistic and thematic elements of the different genres. For example, Bagg's (1991, p. 5) study on folk literature in the foreign language classroom found that it could encompass various aspects of life such as the emotions, lived experiences, values, and humorous and serious situations. Similarly, Perez-Stable's (2005, p. 86) study, which dealt with elements of humour, sacrifice, cunning and irony, suggests that carefully designed folk literature lessons can enrich the students' knowledge and understanding of various elements of cultures. Paradoxically, in a situation of abundant folk literature in Bhutan, there exists no study to see what their unique qualities are. For example, although notions of cultural 'identity' and 'cultural diversity' are present in the language of policy, no study has been done to explore how these cultural concepts are presented in the curriculum, taught by the teachers, and learnt by the students except this one. Conceptual models of identity or diversity could be used to assist the students to develop deeper and more complex understandings of these and other related cultural concepts. While it is important for Bhutanese children to understand and appreciate the value of national identity, in order for them to become intelligent and sensitive future citizens and custodians of culture in a multilingual and multicultural society, they must acquire the competence for "intercultural exploration" and "dealing with otherness" (Lo Bianco, 2003, p. 32). According to Lo Bianco (2003, p. 32), "Identities are multiple and shifting, always communicated and often about communication. Language education is inextricably involved in the construction of new, or the enshrining of existing, identities". Future studies must focus on these unexplored areas.

An important area of further research is the interaction of culture and teachers' classroom practice. As I mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, government policy emphasizes the need for children to learn cultural values. For example, policy emphasizes the values of cultural identity, cultural diversity, respect, compassion, and interdependence. Also the secondary English curriculum documents expect teachers to create learning situations where students get an opportunity to learn English through interaction with their social and cultural experiences. Therefore, future research must investigate the pedagogical strategies teachers use to teach these concepts. Such studies have the potential to show links and gaps between policy intent and practice on the ground. Findings based on grounded knowledge can be used to inform and support policy.

This study has helped to understand that oral literatures in the students' home languages can be used as pedagogical and cultural resources in the English curriculum. While findings from the present study have provided useful insight into the pedagogical advantages of the genres generally, further research could focus on specific genres such as proverbs, ballads and folktales. For example, studies could be carried out to see how specific genres may be used to teach social and interpersonal skills.

Although English has been a language of modern secular education and of Bhutan's participation in the globalized world since the 1960s, its emerging role and status in relation to languages and cultures in Bhutan has not been studied. With the exception of cursory references made to its importance in curriculum documents, there has been no evidence-based study of its impact on language and culture in Bhutan and people's perceptions about it. Studies focused on the emerging role and status of English in the fast changing linguistic-cultural landscape of Bhutan will contribute towards filling the yawning gap in knowledge at present.

The action research in this study, and the positive findings that have resulted from it, suggest that similar studies should be conducted, especially as action research is beginning to gain popularity among educational practitioners in Bhutan. In fact, by 2003 there were already signs of "a growing interest in action research in Bhutan" (Maxwell, 2003, p. 1). The emerging environment is conducive for exploring different dimensions of the curriculum in a real classroom context. In the action research my main focus was to improve the students' knowledge and attitudes in relation to Bhutanese folk literature. Hence, the scope was quite wide. In the context of school where the aim is to improve practice and improve learning outcomes in relation to specific subjects, the model that I used in this study can be adapted to design teaching interventions aimed to improve various aspects of student learning. For example, studies could focus on how the particular genres of Bhutanese folk literature could be used to improve particular domains of knowledge and skill in the English curriculum. Related studies suggest further possibilities. For example, Hanzén's (2007, pp. 11-15) study on the role of proverbs in EFL (English as Foreign Language) showed that as pedagogical tools, proverbs can teach "metaphorical language" in conversation, "communicative competence", "abbreviation in computer language", and "bases for discussions". Bhutanese languages are such a rich repository of diverse forms of folk literature that there is enormous scope for their use as pedagogical resources in the classroom. Therefore, as I have mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, there is a huge knowledge gap to be filled in this area.

7.6 Significance for the profession and for knowledge

The constructivist-interpretive multimethod research design employed in the present study and the findings from it help to inform curriculum policy, teaching and learning, professional development, and folk literature studies in Bhutan. As the first study of its kind, its investigation of the role of folk literature in relation to the secondary English curriculum and the insights and understandings generated from it will assist policy makers, curriculum planners, teachers, teacher educators, and educational researchers in Bhutan in understanding the interaction of culture, curriculum, teaching and learning. The pedagogical strategies employed in the action research to improve students' knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literature show teachers alternative ways of looking at their pedagogical beliefs and classroom practice. Hence, they support efforts to stimulate and promote student learning and teachers' professional practice. Understandings and insights generated by the study in relation to folk literature research and scholarship in Bhutan add to the existent gaps in knowledge in the Bhutanese context. While there is at present a paucity of studies on the role of English in Bhutan in relation to culture, the few statements made in English curriculum documents suggest the discursive possibilities of English, as beautifully sketched here:

The flexibility, versatility, and richness of English allow it to be used in a variety of circumstances and to be used by the Bhutanese people to meet their own goals ... The cultural and intellectual resources of the English-speaking world and the formulations of philosophy, jurisprudence and economics, to mention a few, have been opened to the Bhutanese people directly. In return, Bhutan has been able to share with the international community its rich cultural and spiritual heritage and, in the ensuing dialogues, enrich the intellectual resource of the world (CAPSD, 2005h, p. vii).

While the English language presents possibilities for the survival of the oral traditions, the study has brought to light a number of issues that have not been attended to, including the quality and cultural authenticity of English translations of Bhutanese folk literature, and the role of English in Bhutan's multicultural and multilingual landscape. The present study helps to understand that while the oral and written forms of Bhutanese folk literature can be used as pedagogical resources, success will depend on the epistemological approach of the English curriculum, the teachers' understanding of folk literature and its cultural value, and how well the literary, cultural and professional environment of schools is able to harness and nourish diversity. Finally, the study has shown possibilities and starting points for more sustained work in folk literature education, including educational policy, curriculum, pedagogy, professional support in schools, teacher training, and folk literature studies in Bhutan.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 3.1 Research Management Matrix

Research Planning Matrix

Research questions	Data source /who to contact	Data gathering technique	Timeframe of gathering data	Data analysis technique	Timeframe of data analysis
1. How do secondary English teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature influence their teaching practices?	English teachers of lower, middle, and higher secondary schools.	Questionnaire Interviews	Questionnaire mailing and receiving - over 3 months Interviews to be completed within a year after analysis of questionnaire data	Count analysis on an Excel spreadsheet Thematic analysis using coding categories	A week after receiving the completed questionnaires. Next day following the interview
2. How do the literary, social and cultural influences in the schools support students' learning of Bhutanese folk literature?	English teachers of lower, middle, and higher secondary schools.	Questionnaire Interviews	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
3. How do secondary English teachers perceive the long-term role of Bhutanese folk literature as a source of cultural knowledge in the English curriculum?	English teachers of lower, middle and higher secondary schools.	Questionnaire Interviews	Same as above	Count analysis on an Excel spreadsheet Thematic analysis using coding categories	Same as above
4. What knowledge and attitude do secondary students show following three months of learning about Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum?	Students of higher secondary school.	Action Research i. Questionnaire ii. Interviews	Questionnaire – once before and after the action research. Interview - 3 times during the action research (beginning, middle, end)	Content analysis on an Excel spreadsheet Thematic analysis based on coding categories	Questionnaire - once received from the students Interviews – next day following the interview

5) What strategies work in developing knowledge and attitude in relation to Bhutanese folk literatures and their cultural values in a secondary classroom?	Students of higher secondary school.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
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Source: Adapted from Maxwell & Smyth (2010, p. 411).

Appendix 3.2 UNE HREC approval for the study

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Research Services
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HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: A/Prof T Maxwell, Ms G Kupczyk-Romanczuk & Mr D Thinley
School of Education

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE: The Present and Future Role of Bhutanese Folk Literature in the
Secondary English Curriculum as a Source of Literary, Social and
Cultural Knowledge.

COMMENCEMENT DATE: 24/06/2005

COMMITTEE APPROVAL No.: HE05/138

APPROVAL VALID TO: 24/06/2008

COMMENTS: Nil. Conditions met in full.

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years. For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project. The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address: http://www.une.edu.au/research-services/ethics/hrec_pages/final.report.doc

The *NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* requires that researchers must report immediately to the Human Research Ethics Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of participants, proposed changes in the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five year period, the Research Ethics Officer should be advised of the new location.

8/06/05

Jo-Ann Sozou

Secretary

Appendix 3.3 Application seeking permission for study involving teachers and students

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15 June 2005

The Director
Ministry of Education
Thimphu.

SUB: Approval for collecting data from teachers and students to find out the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum.

Dasho,

I am conducting a study entitled *The Present and Future Role of Bhutanese Folk Literature in the Secondary English Curriculum as a Source of Cultural Knowledge* as part of my PhD project approved by the Human Research and Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE 05/138, Valid to 24/6/2006). My principal supervisor is Dr. Tom Maxwell (Associate Professor), Faculty of Education, University of New England, New South Wales (Australia).

The purpose of this study is twofold: firstly, to identify the role allocated to Bhutanese folk literature in the current policy and curriculum documents and resources framework for school education in Bhutan; secondly, to examine secondary English teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature and see how these are reflected in their teaching practices; and to establish the students' current knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature and explore how these might be enhanced in the English curriculum.

The significance of this study will be in terms of increased awareness and potential understanding among educational administrators, curriculum developers, English teachers and students of the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum as a source of literary, social and cultural knowledge.

The study involves gathering data through the following methods:

A questionnaire comprising 7 open-ended items will be sent to all secondary English teachers teaching Class 7 to 12 gather data on the school's literary, social and cultural environment, teachers' knowledge, perceptions and teaching practices in relation to Bhutanese folk literature; and to identify English teachers who demonstrate enthusiasm about the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum as a source of literary, social and cultural knowledge;

Interviews with six secondary English teachers of Class 7-12 to be selected from the list of questionnaire respondents to explore further significant data gathered from the questionnaire.

To collect data from the students, I have planned to conduct an action research study in a secondary school in Bhutan. The study will involve working with a group of Class 11 or 12 students in that school. The duration of the action research is intended to be 3 ½ months (July-November).

I request the Ministry's approval conducting the study.

Yours faithfully,

Dorji Thinley
Lecturer
National Institute of Education
Samtse.

Appendix 3.4 Information Sheet & Consent Form for secondary English teachers

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25th August 2005

INFORMATION SHEET

(For teacher participants)

Dear Secondary English Teacher,

I am conducting a study on the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum. For this study, I am taking Bhutanese folk literature to include such forms as folk poetry, ballads, myths, legends, folk tales, fables, proverbs, riddles, etc. Theoretical writing suggests that folk literature can be an active source of literary, social and cultural knowledge for the students. My study will examine the role of Bhutanese folk literature in relation to curriculum, teaching, and learning. The significance of this study will be in terms of increased awareness and potential understanding among educational administrators, curriculum developers, English teachers and students of the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum as a source of literary, social and cultural knowledge. Your support is crucial for this study to achieve its goals.

This study will include all English teachers of lower, middle and higher secondary schools in Bhutan. The large sampling ensures that the study will be able to gather meaningful and accurate data across the country.

Enclosed in this package is a *CONSENT FORM* for you to read and sign, and a *QUESTIONNAIRE* for you to complete. Items 1-2 ask you to describe the kinds of social, cultural and literary activities that your school conducts which impact the students' learning of Bhutanese folk literature; items 3-4 ask you to describe your knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature; items 5-6 ask you to describe your classroom practices; and item 7 asks you to write any suggestions or comments related to the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum. Your responses to the questionnaire will provide useful data to this study, so I request you to make your responses candid and informative.

I will only interview a small number of participants who have completed this questionnaire. I may contact you and seek your cooperation once again for a taped interview on the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum. If you are willing to be contacted, please add your name and contact details in the relevant box on the questionnaire. Your signed agreement on the Consent Form will confirm to me that you are willing to participate in the interview.

This project has been approved by the Human Research and Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE05/138, Valid to 24/06/2006). Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services

University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351

Telephone (+ 61) 02 6773 3449 Facsimile: (+ 61) 02 6773 3543 Email: Ethics@pobox.une.edu.au

Please place your signed *Consent Form* and the completed *Questionnaire* in the prepaid addressed envelope provided and return it to me by 25th September 2005. I hope you find the questionnaire interesting. Through it I am trying to find out what the situation of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum is and also to locate teachers who are interested in promoting Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum.

Yours Sincerely,

Dorji Thinley, Lecturer

Samtse College of Education

Royal University of Bhutan

Samtse.

CONSENT FORM

(For teacher participants)

This project, *The Role of Bhutanese Folk Literature in the Secondary English Curriculum as a Source of Cultural Knowledge*, aims to examine the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the context of educational and curriculum policies and current practice in schools. Its purposes are twofold: firstly, to examine how the role of language and culture in general and folk literature in particular is explicitly or implicitly stated in the policy and resources framework for school education; secondly, to examine how the school's literary, social, and cultural environment, the teachers' knowledge and perceptions and teaching practices, and the students' knowledge and perceptions and learning experiences reflect the role of Bhutanese folk literature.

Your participation in this study will require you to provide descriptive responses to 7 open-ended items in the questionnaire sent to all secondary English teachers in Bhutan. The questionnaire is meant to gather data on the role of Bhutanese folk literature in relation to the school's formal and informal curricula, teaching and learning. The questionnaire will also identify secondary English teachers who are interested to talk about Bhutanese folk literature in relation to the curriculum and their own teaching practices.

Please be assured that your responses are kept confidential, and all information collected from you will be aggregated for analysis and no identification of individual respondents is possible. The data collection process in this study will ensure that all your responses are stored in a locked filing cabinet until such a time when this project is completed. The data will then be destroyed, and the results of the study will be available for your access.

Any questions you may want to ask about the project, *The Present and Future Role of Bhutanese Folk Literature in the Secondary English Curriculum as a Source of Cultural Knowledge*, which is part of my PhD research at the University of New England, may be directed by way of email, fax or telephone to:

Dorji Thinley

Lecturer

National Institute of Education

Samtse

Telephone: 05-5-365419 (h) 05-5-365-273 (w) Fax: 05-5-365-363

Email: dthinley@une.edu.au/djthinley@yahoo.com

I (the participant) have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw at any time. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published, provided my name is not used.

.....

Participant's name & Signature

DATE

.....

Investigator' name & Signature

DATE

Appendix 3.5 Initial version of the teacher questionnaire

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Your answer to the questions below will assist greatly in part of my research, which addresses the question “How does the implementation of the secondary English curriculum reflect the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the maintenance of Bhutanese culture?” I am taking Bhutanese folk literature to include such forms as folk poetry, ballads, myths, legends, folk tales, fables, proverbs, riddles, etc. Theoretical writings suggest that folk literature can be an active source of literary, social and cultural knowledge for the students.

This questionnaire asks you to describe the kinds of literary and cultural activities that your school conducts which support the students’ learning of Bhutanese folk literature, your knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature, and the classroom strategies you use to teach Bhutanese folk literature. There are no correct answers to these questions. I am seeking your honest views.

1 (a) Which of the following activities does your *school* conduct: *Lozey* (ballad) recitations; *tsangmo* (rebuttal poetry) recitations; folk song competitions; enacting local folk dramas; narrating folk tales; recitation of folk poetry; folk painting; sharing folk riddles, etc.?

.....

(b) In what ways do these activities give students opportunities to talk about their own local languages, cultures, beliefs, superstitions, customs and traditions?

.....

2) Does your *school* encourage the teachers, or even students, to carry out research in Bhutanese folk literature (e.g. collecting folk tales, folk proverbs, myths, legends, and other forms of folk literature found in the community)? Please describe anything like this you have done.

.....

3) Name 3-4 pieces of Bhutanese folk literature (such as folktales; *dpe gtam* (proverbs); *lozey* (ballads); *tsangmo* verses; riddles; animal stories; ghost stories; etc.) that you enjoy. Where (e.g. at home, at school) and how (e.g. from grandmother) did you learn them? Please insert your responses in the table below.

Kind of Bhutanese folk literature	Language to which it belongs	Where it was learned	How it was learned

4) Do you think that Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the English curriculum? Give a reason for your answer.

.....

5) (a) Name 2-3 teaching/learning activities that you use in teaching of Bhutanese folk literature to stimulate student interest and motivation (e.g. telling a student to narrate a local folk story that he or she knows, saying a Bhutanese proverb, etc.).

.....

(b) How do you use your own knowledge and experience of Bhutanese folk literature (e.g. characters from folk stories, lines from Bhutanese proverbs. etc.) in your lessons?

.....

Are the learning activities in 5 (a) assessed? If so, how?

.....

(c) What kinds of material resources are normally available to you that support the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature? (e.g. story books, objects and pictures related to Bhutanese folk literature, etc.). Where are they kept (e.g. personal collection, in the library)?

.....

6) Describe the differences you see between Bhutanese and non-Bhutanese texts (stories, poems, etc.) in the English curriculum in terms of student interest and motivation to learn.

.....

7) Please feel free to write any *thoughts, suggestions* or *comments* regarding the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum and your experience of teaching it.

.....

Appendix 3.6 Revised version of the teacher questionnaire

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Your answer to the questions below will assist greatly in my research on the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum in Bhutan. I am taking Bhutanese folk literature to include such forms as folk poetry, ballads, myths, legends, folk tales, fables, proverbs, riddles, etc. There are no correct answers to these questions. I am seeking your honest views.

1 (a) Which of the following activities does your *school* conduct: *Lozey* (ballad) recitations; *tsangmo* (rebuttal poetry) recitations; folk song competitions; enacting local folk dramas; narrating folk tales; recitation of folk poetry; folk painting; sharing folk riddles, etc.? How frequently are the activities held? Are the activities held in English or Dzongkha, or some other languages/dialects?

.....

(b) In what ways do these activities give students opportunities to talk about their own literary and cultural backgrounds?

.....

2) Does your *school* encourage the teachers, or even students, to carry out research in Bhutanese folk literature (e.g. collecting folk tales, folk proverbs, myths, legends, and other forms of folk literature found in the community)? Please describe anything like this you have done.

.....

3) Name 3-4 pieces of Bhutanese folk literature (such as folktales; *dpe gam* (proverbs); *lozey* (ballads); *tsangmo* verses; riddles; animal stories; ghost stories; etc.) that you enjoy. Where (e.g. at home, at school) and how (e.g. from grandmother) did you learn them? Please insert your responses in the table below.

Kind of Bhutanese folk literature	Bhutanese language/dialect to which it belongs	Where it was learned	How it was learned

4) Do you think that Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the secondary school curriculum? In which secondary school subject do you think Bhutanese folk literature fits best? In what grades (classes) should it be taught?

.....

5) (a) Name 2-3 teaching/learning activities that you use in teaching of Bhutanese folk literature to stimulate student interest and motivation (e.g. telling a student to narrate a local folk story that he or she knows, saying a Bhutanese proverb, etc.).

.....

(b) Are the learning activities in 5 (a) assessed? If so, how?

.....

(c) What kinds of material resources are normally available to you that support the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature? (e.g. story books, objects and pictures related to Bhutanese folk literature, etc.). Where are they kept (e.g. personal collection, in the library)?

.....

6) What motivates students better in the English curriculum – Bhutanese or non-Bhutanese texts? Please give reasons for your answer.

.....

7) Please feel free to write any *thoughts, suggestions* or *comments* regarding the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary curriculum and your experience of teaching it.

.....

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- i) What is your gender? Please circle the number.
- | | |
|-----------|---|
| a. Male | 1 |
| b. Female | 2 |
- ii) What is your age?
- iii) What languages do you speak? (e.g. Dzongkha, Khengkha, Lhotshamkha, etc.)
.....
- iv) How long have you been teaching English? Please circle the number.
- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| a. Less than 5 years | 1 |
| b. 5-10 years | 2 |
| c. 11-15 years | 3 |
| d. More than 15 years | 4 |

Please provide the following information if you are willing to be contacted for an in-depth interview later.

Your name:

Your School:

Dzongkhag/Gewog:

iv) Telephone (Home) (School)

v) E-mail:

Please place your signed *Consent Form* and the completed *Questionnaire* in the prepaid addressed envelope provided and return it to me by 25th September 2005.

I APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION

Appendix 3.7 Analysis grid for item 1a of the teacher questionnaire

Analysis grid for count analysis of responses to question 1a of the teacher questionnaire

Respondent Code	Activities conducted in school								Language of activities			Frequency of activities
	Lozey (ballad)	Tsangmo (Rebuttal poetry)	Folk song	Folk drama	Folktales	Folk Poetry	Folk Riddles	Other	Conducted in English?	Conducted in Dzongkha?	Other languages/dialects	How frequently were the activities conducted (e.g. in a day/week/month/year/never)
R01	1	1	1									Once a year
R02												
R03			1							1		Once a year
R04	1		1									
R05			1	1					1	1		Once a month
R06	1	1	1	1								
R07	1	1	1				1		1			
R08		1		1						1		Twice a year
R09				1	1	1	1			1		
R10	1	1								1		Once a year

Appendix 3.8 Thematic categories derived from responses to open-ended items of the questionnaire

Thematic categories derived from items 1b, 2, 4, 5abc, 6 and 7 of the teacher questionnaire.

Questions	CATEGORIES						
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
1b	Students deepen their knowledge and appreciation of Bhutanese culture and its values. 55 (30%)	Students increase their knowledge of cultural diversity/different cultural backgrounds. 31 (17%)	Students deepen knowledge of their own cultural root/identity. 54 (30%) respondents	Students recognize the need to maintain cultural continuity/to keep culture alive. 16 (9%)	Students feel encouraged to explore cultural knowledge through parents, older people and other sources. 23 (13%)	Students appreciate Bhutanese folk literature and its literary/aesthetic values. 43 (24%)	Students express better and feel more comfortable when they work with material that is culturally relevant. 17 (9%)
2	The school encourages and supports teachers to do research in Bhutanese folk literature. 28 (15%)	I have done some research in Bhutanese folk literature. 2 (1%)	The school does not encourage and support teachers to do research in Bhutanese folk literature. 67 (37%)	The school and/or teachers encourage and support students to carry out some research in Bhutanese folk literature. 97 (54%)	The school and/or teachers do not encourage and support students to carry out research in Bhutanese folk literature. 52 (29%)		
4, 6, 7	Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the English curriculum. 98 (54%)	Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the Dzongkha curriculum. 91 (50%)	Bhutanese folk literature is appropriate for classes 7-12. 144 (80%)	Because of its familiar cultural meanings and contexts, Bhutanese texts motivate and interest students better than non-Bhutanese texts. 127 (70%)	Non-Bhutanese texts motivate students better. 57 (31%)	Including Bhutanese folk literature in the school curriculum will help to preserve and promote Bhutanese culture. 30 (17%)	Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the school curriculum as it will enable students to learn and appreciate Bhutanese cultural values. 63 (35%)
5abc	Students and teachers narrate folk stories/tell <i>dpe gtam</i> (proverbs). 123 (68%) respondents	Students carry out writing project (collecting stories, proverbs from the community). 44 (24%)	Students engage in folk literature competitions (e.g. telling stories, proverbs, riddles). 19 (10%) respondents	Projects, presentations and performances are assessed. 97 (54%)	Very little or no formal assessment is carried out. 48 (27%) respondents	There are a few/some books related to Bhutanese folk literature in the library. 153 (85%)	

Source: Adapted from Gillham (2005, p. 74)

List of categories derived from responses to Question 1b for C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6 ad C7

- Students deepen knowledge and appreciation of the country's unique culture and their values
- Students increases knowledge of different cultural backgrounds/diversity
- Students deepen knowledge of one's own cultural root/identity/past
- Students increases understanding of the need to maintain cultural continuity/keep culture alive
- Students feel encouraged to explore parents' and older generation's knowledge of culture
- Students increase appreciation of Bhutanese folk literature and its literary values
- Students express better and feel more comfortable when they work with material that is culturally relevant. **17 (9%) respondents**

List of categories derived from responses to Question 2 for C1, C2, C3, C4 and C5

- The school encourages and supports teachers to do research in Bhutanese folk literature.
- I have done some research in Bhutanese folk literature.
- The school does not encourage and support teachers to do research in Bhutanese folk literature.
- The school and/or teachers encourage and support students to carry out some research in Bhutanese folk literature.
- The school and/or teachers do not encourage and support students to carry out research in Bhutanese folk literature

List of categories derived from responses to Question 5a, b, and c for C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6

- Students and teachers narrate folk stories/tell dpe gatm (proverbs) heard from parents, grandparents and other sources
- Students carry out writing project (collecting stories, proverbs from the community)
- Students engage in folk literature competitions (e.g. telling stories, proverbs, riddles)

- Projects, presentations and performances were assessed
- Very little or no formal assessment was done
- There are a few/some books related to Bhutanese folk literature in the library

List of categories derived from responses to Question 4, 6, and 7 for C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6 and C7

- Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the English curriculum.
- Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the Dzongkha curriculum.
- Bhutanese folk literature will be appropriate for classes 7-12.
- Because of its familiar cultural meanings and contexts, Bhutanese texts motivate and interest students better than non-Bhutanese texts.
- Non-Bhutanese texts motivate students better/both types motivate the students.
- Including Bhutanese folk literature in the school curriculum will help to preserve and promote Bhutanese culture.
- Including Bhutanese folk literature in the school curriculum will help to preserve and promote Bhutanese culture.

Appendix 3.9 Analysis grid for items 1b, 2, 4, 5abc, 6 and 7 of the teacher questionnaire

Analysis grid for responses to open-ended items of the teacher questionnaire

	Question 1 (b)							Question 2					Question 4, 6 & 7							Question 5					
Respondent Code	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
R01	1		1								1		1	1		4				1				1	1
R02		1		1						1		1	1	1	1	1				1				1	1
R03										1					1		1	1		1				1	
R04						1				1	1		1	1	1	1			1		1			1	
R05					1						1		1			1		1			1			1	1
R06	1					1				1	1				1		1		1	1				1	1
R07			1	1							1		1	1		1			1	1				1	1
R08		1	1	1		1					1				1	1							1		1
R09	1						1				1		1	1	1	1	1		1	1				1	
R10	1					1				1		1	1		1	1			1					1	1
R11	1									1	1					1	1			1			1		
R12	1					1					1			1		1			1	1			1		1
R13	1						1			1			1		1	1		1		1			1		1
R14											1				1	1			1	1			1		1
R15	1						1	1			1		1		1	1			1	1			1		1

Note: For sale of space, only a part of the grid is shown. Complete grid shows all the 181 respondents.

Appendix 3.10 Semi-structured interview (Secondary English teachers)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Secondary English Teachers

Questions 1-5 ask the respondent to describe in detail her/his school's literary, social and cultural influences that support the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature, the teacher's knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature and how these influence her/his teaching practices, and classroom approaches to teaching Bhutanese folk literature. Questions 6-8 ask the respondents to say what the future possibilities are regarding the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum.

1) What is the present role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum?

- *How do you compare it with non-Bhutanese literary texts?*
- *Why is it there in the curriculum? (e.g. to develop moral and aesthetic values in the students?)*
- *Is Bhutanese folk literature included in class tests and annual exams?*
- *Why is it taught in the curriculum?*
- *Do English translations of Bhutanese folk literature help the students to learn rich, complex English?*

2) Can you talk about the kinds of Bhutanese folk literature that you know (e.g. folk tales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, poetry, work songs, etc.)?

- *What language/dialect do they come from?*
- *Folk literature of your native language or dialect*
- *Give some examples of the ones you know*
- *How do you use them in your teaching?*
- *Do you know it in the oral or written form?*

3) What activities do your students enjoy the most in the English lessons? What is their favourite literary text in the English curriculum?

- *Talking about oral and written literature from their own local languages*
- *Narrating stories*
- *Synthesizing text and life experiences*
- *Collecting oral literature from their own local languages*

4) What kind of learning environment does your school create to support the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature?

- *Literary, social and cultural activities*
- *Folk literature projects*
- *Wall displays related to Bhutanese folk literature (writings, paintings, etc.)*
- *Guest speakers, writers of folk literature*

- *Teacher's classroom practice*
- *Folk literature competitions*
- *Research and writing by teachers (student and teacher)*

5) What do you think about English teachers' knowledge, perceptions, classroom practices, and research interests in relation to Bhutanese folk literature? Do you think there is a need for improvement?

- *Through the teacher education curriculum?*
- *Through in-service training programmes for teaching of folk literature?*
- *Research grants for teachers interested in collecting and translating Bhutanese folk literature?*
- *Through improved reading habits?*

6) From your responses to the questionnaire, it is evident that you have knowledge, interest and the enthusiasm to enhance the students' knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese folk literature. Why do you think other English teachers in Bhutan do not include Bhutanese folk literature as much as you do in their English lessons?

- *No biography*
- *No interest*
- *Lack of interest in reading Bhutanese folk literature*
- *Lack of resources*
- *Bhutanese folk literature is not included in the secondary English curriculum*

7) Should Bhutanese folk literature in various local languages and dialects in the oral form be translated into English? What will be the advantages and disadvantages of such an undertaking?

- *Inclusion in the English curriculum*
- *Orature-written literature balance*
- *Cultural maintenance*
- *Understanding and appreciation of Bhutanese literary heritage*
- *Educational benefits*
- *Writing and research in the school system*
- *Cultural inclusion*
- *Identity*
- *Which languages/dialects?*

8) What do you think the education system could do to make the study of Bhutanese folk literature educationally meaningful for the students as a rich source of literary, social and cultural knowledge?

- *At the policy and planning level*
- *In the school's overall learning environment*
- *Teacher's knowledge and perceptions*
- *Teacher training and development*
- *Research and writing*
- *Library resources*

9) Any further comments

Appendix 3.11 Transcript File (Teacher interview)

Transcript File

Informant:	Tshoki
Date:	30 April 2007
Time & length of interview:	10:40 – 11:18 am (38)
Place of interview:	A Middle secondary school in Bhutan
Informant background:	Female teacher; has taught English for five years and currently teaches English in Class 9 and 10; has a Bachelor of Education degree.
Setting & Circumstances:	The informant had arranged for the interview to be held in a room next to the principal's office, so it was quiet and congenial for the interview. There were no distractions either. The informant appeared quite enthusiastic about the interview. Permission to use digital voice recorder was sought.

Para	Transcript Data	Themes/ underlying meanings/potential codes
Ts1	<p><i>DTh:</i> What is the present role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum?</p> <p><i>Tshoki:</i> At present its role is minimal because out of thirty-seven titles that are there in the Class 10 English curriculum only three are by Bhutanese authors. And especially in relation to folk literature, there is only one. And it is included in the supplementary section. So it doesn't have a place in the core reading.</p>	RoC – minimum role at present. There is only one.
Ts2	<p><i>DTh:</i> What is there in the supplementary reading?</p> <p><i>Tshoki:</i> There is a story. It is written by Aum Kunzang [Choden]. It is a folk story. [It is called] <i>Not Even a Corpse to Cremate</i>.</p>	
Ts3	<p><i>DTh:</i> So are you saying that there is very little in the secondary English curriculum?</p> <p><i>Tshoki:</i> Yes very little, yes.</p>	RoC/SBFL – students are more comfortable with works by Bhutanese authors but they also have equal amount of interest in foreign writers.
Ts4	<p><i>DTh:</i> How do you compare it with non-Bhutanese literary texts?</p> <p><i>Tshoki:</i> I think the students are more comfortable with the ones written by Bhutanese authors, but it doesn't mean that they don't have interest in foreign writers. They are equally interested. For instance, in the new curriculum, the teacher encourages healthy discussion in the class. So their participation is more and they come up with lots of opinions and they try to debate on their opinions in order to prove that they are right. This way it helps to understand other people, other cultures. It also helps them to compare ours and others' culture and tradition. That way, I think they enjoy. [In the old curriculum] I don't remember that [teaching]. I taught <i>Dawa</i> last year. Yes I think. It is [Dawa] up to the standard.</p>	CD – other people, other cultures.

Ts5	<p><i>DTh:</i> Why is it there in the curriculum (e.g. to develop moral and aesthetic values in the students)?</p> <p><i>Tshoki:</i> At present I think it is a good attempt that we are making. I feel in the future we need to have more of folk literature in the English curriculum because I think folk literature helps to make our students aware of their culture and the moral and aesthetic values that it carries. [If these are learnt] we can see development in the students. So it has lots of values. Core readings ... it doesn't belong to folk literature. These are Bhutanese authors. One is an essay and the other one is a novel. The essay in class 10 is <i>The Layaps Go Home</i> and the novel is in class 9 and it is written by Aum Kunzang [Choden] - <i>Dawa the stray dog</i>. [So you may have taught one of these texts] Yes. [I have taught] <i>The Layaps Go Home</i>. I found them [students] more interested since they are learning about their own country and people And at the end when we were revising the text, there was interest. In the beginning we talked about our opinion in relation to Layaps. Later on, after we read that essay, when I asked their opinion once again they had changed their opinion. [It helped to understand their country better, the people better.] And I think it also in a way helped them to grow personally, their attitudes especially. We enjoyed that essay.</p>	<p>CV – moral and aesthetic values RoC Higher motivation to learn</p>
Ts6	<p><i>DTh:</i> Do English translations of Bhutanese folk literature help the students to learn rich, complex English?</p> <p><i>Tshoki:</i> [The author is Aum Kunzang [Choden], and the novel is very interesting and it does have Bhutanese culture and beliefs in it. I like her diction, which is superb and we are proud of her work.] But somehow I don't know, may be, it is just my opinion. I felt that after some time, it became tedious for them [students]. For example, there are too many new words; I found that after some time the students were getting almost distracted because they had to refer to the dictionary every now and then. I think that although the storyline is very interesting it becomes quite tedious for the students to read the novel. My experience was that the guide advises us to teach a few chapters through presentation. I tried to do that. I put the class into five groups and gave each group a chapter to read and to present it to the class. I was very disappointed at the end because I came to know that most of them could not complete their task and those who did it did not do it satisfactorily. When I asked them the reason they said there were too many words for them to learn and that they had to refer to the dictionary and it took them a lot of time.</p>	<p>CV – <i>The Layaps Go Home</i> - change of opinion/attitude at the end of the lesson.</p> <p>SBFL – Bhutanese author Kunzang Choden's diction is superb.</p>
Ts7	<p><i>DTh:</i> Can you talk about the kinds of Bhutanese folk literature that you know (e.g. folk tales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, poetry, work songs, etc.)?</p> <p><i>Tshoki:</i> I have listened to many stories that my grandmother told me but I think most of it has already faded away because I never tell it to my children. A proverb that I remember says, "It is easy to exaggerate the small mistakes that you find in others to the size of an elephant and ignore your own even if you have created a blunder". That's the one [I remember].</p>	<p>Oral literature fading away from memory.</p>
Ts8	<p><i>DTh:</i> Did you share this proverb with your students?</p> <p><i>Tshoki:</i> Yes I think in many classes where I teach English I have encouraged the students to come up with maxims and proverbs in their own dialect or language and share them with the class. I even encourage the students to choose the maxims that I write down as they tell and translate them into English. I then write them down on the board and ask them to choose one and write stories on it. This way they also learn what the theme is, and the maxim itself can be the theme of their story. So that way, I have encouraged the students to find more on the maxims and proverbs and then say them to the class. [The proverb I have said above] I think is from the Nepali [Lhotshamkha] language. I translated it.</p>	<p>RoC – teacher's knowledge</p> <p>RoC – Teaching practice – encourages the students to write proverbs and maxims in their own languages and dialects.</p>

- Ts9 *DTh:* What activities do your students enjoy the most in English lessons? What is their favourite literary text in the English curriculum?
Tshoki: I have not done this. I have never asked them to translate the literature which exists in their local language into English, or something like that. But I found that synthesizing the text and relating it to their life experiences was a most interesting activity in the new English curriculum. I think after we have done an essay or a novel, synthesizing the text facilitates healthy discussion [in class] and the children enjoy expressing their opinions. These days we have lots of discussion in the class. So now I find that almost all the children love to express their opinion. Yes. This was something new done in the classroom.
- Ts10 *DTh:* Which text - Bhutanese or non-Bhutanese has the potential to generate interesting discussion in the classroom?
Tshoki: We enjoyed *The Layaps Go Home*. I think Bhutanese literary texts allow the children to express themselves more because they already know much about them. So I think they enjoy Bhutanese texts.
- Ts11 *DTh:* So are you saying that in your teaching you have required the students to collect oral literature from their own local languages or dialects?
Tshoki: No. The only thing I did is asking them to come with maxims and proverbs and then make them ... to write a story.
- Ts12 *DTh:* Would students enjoy activities that involve going into the villages, interviewing old people and translating them into English?
Tshoki: Yes. I think children will enjoy doing it and will also learn much from it because I think all the stories, proverbs and maxims help them to learn the values that they contain and also help them to learn how a language originated ... Bhutanese language. I did a lesson on the origin of language in class 9 and 10. So last year when I was teaching them the origin of language, we tried to find out why learning English is more difficult than learning Dzongkha, for instance. And we also tried to find out the reasons behind it. And I was very happy when one of them ... [not clear, so could not be transcribed] said that it might be because Dzongkha is easier to learn than English. It might be because although we don't learn Dzongkha formally at home, we learn it by listening and by mimicking. When the grandmother tells her children a story she uses certain words which they don't use every day....
- Ts13 *DTh:* What kind of learning environment does your school create to support the teaching and learning of Bhutanese folk literature? For example, activities like literary, social and cultural activities, folk literature projects, putting up wall displays related to Bhutanese folk literature (writings, paintings, etc.), inviting writers and so on?
Tshoki: Frankly, no. None of the schools where I taught till now has encouraged any activity that would help to upgrade Bhutanese folk literature. I was talking to one of my friends in the school last week regarding the reading activity we have in our schools, in all the schools of Bhutan during September. We thought we should focus a few days on Bhutanese folk literature. I thought it would help the students and teachers to know more about Bhutanese folk literature
- Ts14 *DTh:* Why are such activities not happening in the schools?
Tshoki: May be because at present we don't have many notable Bhutanese writers. This may be one reason and then the lack of resources. Most of the school libraries are quite poor and that is the only access we have to books, both teachers and students. But we don't have many books and that could be another reason.
- RoC – Teaching practice – never asked the students to translate. Synthesizing text and life experiences makes learning interesting.
- RoC – *The Layaps Go Home* – allows the children the express more and they seem to enjoy it.
- CV – students will enjoy it and also learn about the origin of Bhutanese language through the stories, proverbs, and maxims.
- RoC - none of the schools encouraged activities that promoted Bhutanese folk literature.

- Ts15 DTh: What do you think about English teachers' knowledge, perceptions, classroom practices, and research interests in relation to Bhutanese folk literature? What about the need for improvement?
Tshoki: I think we need to improve in this area. It is not that teachers are not interested. They have a desire to learn more. It is very obvious from the new curriculum, which has new contents, and we can see teachers working hard, trying to get materials from one source or the other. Their interest is quite ... It is not enough, not adequate just now in Bhutanese folk literature. This might be because of lack of awareness. The teachers have the desire but I think it might be because of insufficient resources and also lack of awareness....
- Roc - Teacher's knowledge and attitude.
- Ts16 DTh: Did you learn any Bhutanese folk literature while you were training as a teacher?
Tshoki: I don't remember, I don't think I did any of the Bhutanese literature. I remember we had some poetry, short stories, and also a play but I don't remember folk literature. [So there is a general awareness about Bhutanese folk literature]. Yes.
- RoC - Pre-service teacher training – did not do any Bhutanese folk literature as part of the training programme.
- Ts17 DTh: From your responses to the questionnaire, it is evident that you have knowledge, interest and the enthusiasm to enhance the students' knowledge and understanding of Bhutanese folk literature. Why do you think other English teachers in Bhutan do not include Bhutanese folk literature as much as you do in their English lessons?
Tshoki: It could be lack of resources, I think. I think if they are made aware and there were lots of books around, teachers would definitely read and develop interest in it. And the other thing could be that it is not included in the curriculum. Also there are already enough titles for the teacher to teach for the year ... and teach whatever is offered [in the curriculum]. So it could be that. And it also depends on the interest. Some of the teachers are interested in Bhutanese folk literature, so they try to include it in their teaching. And those who are not interested in it won't bother. That's all. But if it is mandatory for the teachers, they would definitely. It would also be very vital for developing the teachers' and students' interest in it if it is included in the English curriculum].
- Interest linked to lack of resources.
- RoC - Teachers' interest in Bhutanese folk literature depends on its presence in the curriculum.
- Ts18 DTh: Should Bhutanese folk literature in various local languages and dialects in the oral form be translated into English? What will be the advantages and disadvantages of such an undertaking?
Tshoki: Yes I think it would be very good because as I said, in almost all the classes that I teach, I ask the class to make maxims and proverbs. Since in my class there are students coming from different backgrounds and different parts of the country, I have found lots of advantages in doing so. When I ask them to come with maxims or proverbs from their own dialects and when these are written on the board and when they are asked to explain their writing, it is very helpful for the rest of the class. It helps to understand that particular person [student] better. Some of the advantages are that it exposes the class to the variety of rich culture and tradition that prevails in Bhutan. It helps them to be proud to belong to Bhutan. It also helps them to build good understanding among themselves because they learn to respect their differences. I have also realized that when they start respecting each other for the differences that they have then the criticism declines, because we know that students love to criticize each other, call names, and things like that. So it [criticism] declines. Another advantage is that it helps them to overcome that cultural shock because when they begin to understand each other more, their behaviour and their culture. They are able to accept the other person in a better manner. These are some of the things ... It would be very sad if we lose all these
- CD - When cultural differences are understood and appreciated, criticism declines.
- CV - proverbs and maxims are laden with values.
- RoC – doing proverbs and maxims can be an interesting activity for the students.

beautiful proverbs and maxims which are laden with values. I think if we preserve them in the written form, it would help the generations that are yet to come. Because I feel like these maxims and proverbs can be an interesting activity when teachers are asked to teach or take value lessons also....

RoC – Values education – values need not be taught through formal lessons.

Ts19 *DTh:* What do you think the education system could do to make the study of Bhutanese folk literature educationally meaningful for the students as a rich source of cultural knowledge?

Tshoki: I think the first should be teachers' knowledge and perception. If we groom teachers I think they can do a lot for the students. So first I think we encourage the teachers and then there should be lots of library resources to encourage reading for the teachers as well as the students. And I think implementation will not be a problem because these are some things that belong to us and they are something that children enjoy more....

Teacher knowledge

Encouragement

Resources.

DTh: Do you have any further comments?

Ts20 *Tshoki:* As I said ... we should encourage the people to write more so that we have many writers and then we can choose from the many writers I think if we put an effort to include more Bhutanese folk literature in our curriculum we would be inviting more writers to write ... and research in Bhutanese folk literature. When it is translated into English I think we also open up the door for the world to read our folk literature and they would also get a chance to appreciate Bhutanese culture and tradition and their unique beauty, and the imaginative and the creative minds of our people too....

RoC – Inclusion in the curriculum will encourage more writing and research.

BFLE - English translation will help to expose Bhutanese folk literature to the outside world.

Appendix 3.12 Visual model of the coding process

A visual model of the coding process (Interview data)

List of Informants' Responses (From coded data segments in the transcript files)	Master List of Inductive Codes (After eliminating overlapping and redundant initial codes)	Inductive and a Priori Themes and Sub Themes (Similar codes aggregated together)
a) Bhutanese folk literature must be promoted b) Bhutanese folk literature carries moral and aesthetic values c) I know some folk literature - ballad, folktales, proverbs d) Bhutanese folk literature helps to understand the country better and the Bhutanese people better e) Study if Bhutanese literature in the English curriculum will help the students to compare Bhutanese culture with those in other countries f) I have not used Bhutanese folk literature in my English lessons g) They learn better in the Bhutanese cultural context h) When they know the culture, they express opinions better and participate more willingly in class discussion i) The standard of English in Bhutanese folk literature is not good as the English used in literature from the West j) Some Bhutanese writers are excellent k) English is a popular language in Bhutan l) There is not much richness in the English used in Bhutanese folk literature m) Students will be excited if they get opportunities to collect folktales and write them down in English	1. Bhutanese folk literature is being forgotten (t, y) 2. Bhutanese folk literature must be preserved and promoted (q, z) 3. Bhutanese folk literature has cultural and aesthetic values (b) 4. Teachers generally do not have much knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature (c, s) 5. Folktales, proverbs and maxims help learn about the country, people and their language (d, u) 6. English translations of oral literatures will promote cultural diversity (hh) 7. Knowledge of diversity of cultures will	Folk literature and Cultural Values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural and aesthetic values ▪ Knowledge of people and language ▪ Teachers' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature ▪ Culture loss and need for preservation (Codes t, y, q, z, b, c, s, d, u)

- n) Students are interested to narrate write stories
- o) English literature from the West makes the readers think deep (has depth)
- p) In our school, we do extracurricular activities mostly in Dzongkha
- q) In my class I have never let my students collect folktales and proverbs form their parents and write them down in English
- r) Most of the extracurricular activities in our school are held in Dzongkha
- s) Teachers generally don't read Bhutanese folktales
- t) My knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature is fading from my memory
- u) Folktales, proverbs and maxims are value to children not only because they enjoy but also because they will learn about the history of language
- v) Teachers have the desire to improve their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature but resources do not support the desire
- w) My teacher training did not prepare me to teach folk literature
- x) The schools where I have taught do not promote extracurricular activities hat support students' learning of Bhutanese folk literature
- y) I never tell my children the oral tradition I learnt from my parents
- z) Bhutanese folk literature must be preserved because it is beautiful and valuable
- aa) When the teacher uses Bhutanese folk literature in his or her lessons, not only cultural values are transmitted, the students; motivation to learn is also enhanced because of its cultural meaning for them.
- bb) Students like *Lozey* (balld) and *Tsangmo* (type of verse exchanged orally between two competing teams).
- cc) English translations of Bhutanese folk literature are preferable to Dzongkha because English is a richer language than Dzongkha
- dd) English has richer vocabulary then Dzongkha
- ee) At present, the presence of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum is minimal
- ff) My students enjoyed translating *Lozey* and *Tsangmo* into English

promote understanding, respect and empathy (ii, jj)

8. Folk literature is generally not used as a pedagogical resource in the schools (f, q)
9. The schools' extracurricular activities do not generally promote folk literature (x, ll)
10. Students express opinions and participate in class discussion more when the learning tasks are related to their cultural experience (g, h, aa, kk)
11. Students like to collect folktales and write them down, narrate stories, recite *Tsangmo*, and read ballads (m, n, bb, ff)
12. Bhutanese folk literature will be good in the English curriculum for cultural comparisons (e)
13. At present the role of folk literature in the curriculum is minimal (ee)
14. In my class I have encouraged students to use their knowledge of proverbs and maxims (gg)
15. Teachers have the desire to enhance their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature there are no resources to support it (v)

Notion of cultural diversity

- Knowledge of diversity though folk literatures
- Respect for diversity
- Cultural diversity in the curriculum and pedagogy

(Codes hh, ii, jj)

Folk literature in the curriculum

- Role of folk literature in the curriculum formal and informal curricula
- Pedagogical value of folk literature (student learning)
- Need for pedagogical knowledge and practice
- Professional support for developing knowledge

(Codes f, q, x, ll, g, h, aa, kk, m, n, bb, ff, e, ee, gg, v, w, p, r)

- gg) In my class I encourage my students to recall proverbs and maxims from their own languages and dialects and say them to the class in English
- hh) Writing down the oral literatures of smaller and lesser known languages in English will help to bring the diversity that exist in Bhutanese culture
- ii) English translation of Bhutanese folk literature will understanding and empathy among the people
- jj) Knowledge of cultural diversity will promote mutual respect, acceptance and recognition of cultural difference among people
- kk) Students enjoy learning when they are made to synthesize the text and their life experiences
- ll) My school has never invited folklorists and authors but doing so would be interesting for the students
- mm) Teachers do not hold Bhutanese folk literature folk literature in high esteem
- nn) Bhutanese writers are inferior to writers outside Bhutan
- oo) English literature from the West is better for teaching communications skills
- pp) Bhutanese folk literature in English is good for cultural knowledge and values

- 16. Teachers do not have prior knowledge of folk literature from teacher training (w)
- 17. Extracurricular activities in school are mostly held in Dzongkha (p, r)
- 18. The standard of English used in
- 19. Bhutanese folk literature is not good for students' to model (i, l)
- 20. English translations of Bhutanese folk literature do not have the intellectual depth that English literature from the West has (o)
- 21. Bhutanese folk literature is not held in high esteem (j, mm, nn)
- 22. English is a popular language in Bhutan (k)
- 23. English translation of Bhutanese folk literature is preferable to Dzongkha translation since English is richer language than the latter (cc)
- 24. English translations of Bhutanese folk literature are good for the curriculum because of their cultural value, while English literature from the West is better than the former for teaching students good English (oo, pp).

Status of English translations of Bhutanese folk Literature

- Standard of English
- Depth and sophistication of themes and ideas
- Cultural values in Bhutanese folk literature
- Aesthetic values in Bhutanese folk literature

(Codes i, l, o, j, mm, nn)

The role of English

- The globalisation of English
- Popularity of English
- English and Bhutanese culture

(Codes k, cc, oo, pp)

Appendix 3.13 Application to principal of school seeking permission
for action research involving secondary students

UNE

THE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW ENGLAND

Research Services

Armidale, NSW 2351 Australia
Telephone +61 2 6773 2239 Facsimile + 61 2 6773 3543
[http:// researchservices.une.edu.au](http://researchservices.une.edu.au)

The Principal,
Samtse Middle Secondary School
Samtse.

25th May 2006

SUB: Approval for Action Research in your school to explore student, knowledge, attitudes and learning experiences in relation to Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum.

Sir,

This has reference to the letter of approval obtained from the Director, Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, Thimphu vide letter no. MoE/DSE-/2005/2153 dated 24/6/2005. I am conducting a study entitled *The Role of Bhutanese Folk Literature in the Secondary English Curriculum as a Source of Cultural Knowledge* as part of my PhD project approved by the Human Research and Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE05/138 dated 8/06/05). My principal supervisor is Dr. Tom Maxwell (Associate Professor) of the Faculty of Education, University of New England, New South Wales (Australia).

This study has two main aims: firstly, to explore secondary English teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Bhutanese folk literature and see how these are reflected in their teaching practices and how these influence the students' knowledge of and attitude towards folk literature; and to explore secondary students' knowledge and perceptions of folk literature and explore how these influence their understanding of Bhutanese culture.

The significance of this study will be in terms of increased awareness and potential understanding among educational administrators, curriculum developers, English teachers and students of the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum English curriculum as a source of literary, social and cultural knowledge.

In order to explore the students' knowledge, perceptions and learning experiences in relation to Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum, I would like to conduct an Action Research project for any class of your choosing – 9 to 12, in your school for a period of 3½ months from July to November 2006. The action research will comprise a series of lessons related to Bhutanese folk literature in its oral and written forms. The activities and teaching strategies I will use with the class will be determined mainly by the situational analysis that I intend to carry out before the commencement of the lessons. At the beginning of the action research, I will gather preliminary information on the students' understanding of folk literature through a questionnaire. During my work with them I will interview some of the class to find out how they are responding to the folk literature lessons.

Your approval for me to conduct the action research and accompanying interviews with the students will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Dorji Thinley
Lecturer
National Institute of Education
Samtse.

Appendix 3.14 Information Sheet & Consent Form for students

UNE

THE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW ENGLAND

Research Services

Armidale, NSW 2351 Australia
Telephone +61 2 6773 2239 Facsimile + 61 2 6773 3543
[http:// researchservices.une.edu.au](http://researchservices.une.edu.au)

25th May 2006

INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM (For students)

Dear Student,

I am conducting a study on the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum. Research in other countries has shown that folk literature can be an active source of literary, social and cultural knowledge for students. I am interested in carrying out an Action Research project to see how students in your school respond to Bhutanese folk literature taught in English lessons. In this project, I am taking Bhutanese folk literature to include such forms as folk poetry, ballads, myths, legends, folk tales, fables, proverbs, riddles, etc. Your support is crucial for this study to achieve its goals.

The action research that I am going to conduct with your cooperation will comprise a series of lessons focused on Bhutanese folk literature for 3 ½ months in your school. Before the lessons, I will collect some information on your understanding of folk literature through a short questionnaire and I will interview some students to find out their understanding and attitudes regarding Bhutanese folk literature. I will interview the same students again during my work with your class. Your participation in the interviews is voluntary. If you are willing, please sign the form below. Your signed agreement on the Consent Form will confirm to me that you are willing to participate in it. You may stop participating at any time.

This project has been approved by the Human Research and Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE05/138 dated 8/6/05). Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351
Telephone (+ 61) 02 6773 3449 Facsimile: (+ 61) 02 6773 3543 Email: Ethics@pobox.une.edu.au

Let me assure you that all your answers to the interview questions will be kept confidential, and that your identity will not be known to anybody. All the information that I gather from you will be stored in a locked filing cabinet until such

a time when this project is completed. The information will then be destroyed, and the results of the study will be available for your access.

Yours sincerely,

Dorji Thinley, Lecturer
National Institute of Education
Samtse.

I (the participant) have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw at any time. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published, provided my name is not used.

.....
Participant's name & signature

.....
DATE

.....
Investigator's name & signature

.....
DATE

Appendix 3.15 Student questionnaire

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADE 11 STUDENTS (XI 'B')

Your answer to the questions below will assist greatly in my research on the role of Bhutanese folk literature in the secondary English curriculum in Bhutan. I am taking Bhutanese folk literature to include such forms as folk poetry, ballads, myths, legends, fables, proverbs, riddles, etc. There are no correct answers to these questions. I am seeking your honest views.

1. Have you heard of, or read, the term "Bhutanese folk literature" before? (Circle one) YES NO

2. Please put a tick mark (✓) against each of the following terms you have read, or heard of, before.

- | | | | |
|--------|--|--------|----------------------------------|
| i) | Folktale_____ | ii) | Folklore _____ |
| iii) | Fable_____ | iv) | Myth _____ |
| v) | Anecdote_____ | vi) | Legend _____ |
| vii) | Lyric_____ | viii) | Lullaby _____ |
| ix) | Imprecation_____ | x) | Hymn _____ |
| xi) | Oral literature_____ | xii) | Oral poetry_____ |
| xiii) | Traditional ballad_____ | xiv) | Oral folk literature _____ |
| xv) | Beliefs and superstitions_____ | xvi) | Legendary epic_____ |
| xvii) | Oral heritage_____ | xviii) | Folk sayings _____ |
| xix) | Folk riddles_____ | xx) | Folk tradition _____ |
| xxi) | <i>Lo-zey</i> (Bhutanese)_____ | xxii) | <i>Pe-tam</i> (Bhutanese) _____ |
| xxiii) | <i>Jig ten bi tam gud</i> (Bhutanese)_____ | xxiv) | <i>Nam-thar</i> (Bhutanese)_____ |
| xxv) | Please mention <i>any other</i> that you know. | | |

3. What Bhutanese folk literature, in Dzongkha/Choekay or in English translation, have you *read* so far? Please complete as many of *a) - d)* as you can (in their original language).

a) Title of a book

b) Title of a story

c) Name of a central character or place in a story or book

d) Name of a Bhutanese writer of folk literature

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, rate your present knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in your own language/dialect (circle one) or in English. (Tick one) 1 2 3 4 5

5. a) Did you learn any Bhutanese folk literature (folktales, ballads, proverbs, etc.) from texts in your curriculum? (Circle one) YES NO

b) If YES, how were they taught? Describe briefly.

c) If YES, how were you assessed (tested/examined) in these texts? Please put a tick mark (✓) for any that applies.

i) Home work

ii) Through questions by teacher during the lesson

iii) Project work on Bhutanese folk literature

iv) Term and annual exams

v) Other (Please describe

6. a) Have you read any folk stories, sayings, etc. from other countries in your English lessons since class 7? (Circle one) YES NO

b) If YES, please describe what the stories, sayings, etc. were about.

7) a) Which of these three do you like more – Bhutanese literature in English, Bhutanese literature in Dzongkha/Choekay, or literature from other countries? Please put a tick mark (✓) against one or the other.

- i) Bhutanese literature in English _____
- ii) Bhutanese literature in Dzongkha/Choekay _____
- iii) Literature from other countries _____

b) Please explain why you like one better than the other.

8) a) Do you think English translations of Bhutanese folk literature should be included in the English curriculum for classes 7 -12? Please put a circle.

YES NOT SURE NO

b) Why do you think this way? Please mention 2-3 reasons if you can.

i) _____

ii) _____

iii) _____

9. a) Do you believe that Bhutanese folk literature which exists in Dzongkha and other languages and dialects should be translated into English?

YES NOT SURE NO

b) Please explain briefly what your reasons are.

10. a) What kinds of library resources (books, pictures, etc.) are normally available to you that improve your knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature?

b) How many times last semester (February-July 2006), roughly, have you borrowed books on Bhutanese folk literature (folktales, proverbs, ballads, etc.) from the school library and read them? Please put a tick mark (√).

- i) Never borrowed any book on Bhutanese folk literature _____
- ii) Borrowed 1 – 2 times _____
- iii) Borrowed 2-5 times _____
- iv) Borrowed more than 5 times _____

c) Does the school library have enough reading materials on Bhutanese writing in English generally and Bhutanese folk literature particularly? (Circle one)

YES NOT SURE NO

11. a) Is Bhutanese folk literature useful, necessary and important for students to learn? (Circle one)

YES NOT SURE NO

b) Why?

12. a) Should the school do more to improve the students' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in English? (Circle one)

YES NOT SURE NO

b) If YES, what do you think the school should do? Please mention up to three things that you think the school should do.

13. Any other information or comments

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is your age? _____

What is your gender? (Circle one) MALE FEMALE

Which part of Bhutan are you from?

i) Name of Village _____

ii) Name of Dzongkhag (District) _____

What language/dialect do you mainly speak at home? (Please name the language(s))

Thank you for your cooperation! Please complete and turn in the questionnaire today.

Appendix 3.16 Comparison table showing beginning and end data from the action research

Comparison of data from questionnaire: before and after the action research

Questions	At the beginning of the action research (Administered 22 August 2006)	After the action research (Administered 7 November 2006)
Data segments related to knowledge		
Q. 01	20 respondents (83%) said they had heard/read the term "Bhutanese folk literature."	22 respondents (92%) said they had heard/read the term "Bhutanese folk literature."
Q. 02	There were 24 different terms related to folk literature which the respondents had to tick if they had read or heard of. If all the 24 respondents ticked all the 24 items, the total ticks would be 576. The total ticks (confirming knowledge of) counted was 180 (31%). To illustrate by specific examples, 20 respondents (83%) ticked "folktales", 1 respondent (4%) ticked "folklore", none (0%) ticked "lullaby" and "imprecation", 4 respondents (17%) ticked "oral literature", 10 respondents (42%) ticked "folk riddles". None of the respondents wrote an example of "any other" that they knew.	The total ticks (confirming knowledge of) was 368 (64%). To illustrate by specific examples, 24 respondents (100%) ticked "folktales", 8 respondents (33%) ticked "folklore", 19 respondents (79%) ticked "lullaby", 23 respondents (96%) ticked "imprecation", 15 respondents (63%) ticked "oral literature", 22 respondents (92%) ticked "folk riddles". Three respondents mentioned "blessings", "proverb", and "ballads" as additional terms they read or heard.

Q. 03	12 respondents (50%) wrote the title of book on Bhutanese folk literature correctly, while 10 respondents (42%) did not write anything. 9 (38%) respondents wrote the title of a Bhutanese folk story correctly, while 13 respondents (54%) did not write anything. 9 respondents (38%) wrote the name of a central character or place in a Bhutanese folk story correctly, while 13 respondents (54%) did not write anything. 8 respondents (33%) wrote the name of a Bhutanese writer of folk literature correctly, while 14 respondents (58%) did not write anything.	18 respondents (75%) wrote the title of book on Bhutanese folk literature correctly, while 1 respondent (4%) did not write anything. 17 respondents (71%) wrote the title of a Bhutanese folk story correctly, while the rest wrote it incorrectly or wrote some other. 17 respondents (71%) wrote the name of a central character or place in a Bhutanese folk story correctly, while 2 respondents (8%) did not write anything. 21 respondents (88%) wrote the name of a Bhutanese writer of folk literature correctly, while 3 respondents (13%) did not write anything.
Q. 04	Rated on a scale of 1 to 5, 8 respondents (33%) rated 1 (poor), 5 respondents (21%) rated 2 (fair), 1 respondent (4%) rated 3 (good), and 1 respondent (4%) rated 4 (very good) on their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in their own language or dialect, while 6 respondents (25%) rated 1 (poor), 6 respondents (25%) rated 2 (fair), and 2 respondents (8%) rated 3 (good) on their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in English.	Rated on a scale of 1 to 5, 3 respondents (13%) rated 2 (fair), 6 respondents (25%) rated 3 (good), 5 respondents (21%) rated 4 (very good), and 1 respondent (4%) rated 5 (excellent) on their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in their own language or dialect, while 1 respondent (4%) rated 2 (fair), 4 respondents (17%) rated 3 (good), and 7 respondents (29%) rated 4 (very good) on their knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature in English.
Q. 05	19 respondents (79%) said "YES" they learned Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum, while the rest either said "NO" or abstained. In relation to how they were taught, 11 respondents (46%) said they were made to present a story in front of class, were asked questions, were taught for information, were put in groups to explain paragraphs, and also the teacher tell the summarise the story, while the rest either abstained or write unclear responses. In relation to how they were assessed, respondents mentioned several examples. So 11 respondents (46%) mentioned homework, 14 respondents (58%) mentioned teacher questions, 3 respondents (13%) mentioned projects on Bhutanese folk literature, 6 respondents (25%) mentioned term/annual exams.	22 respondents (92%) said "YES" they learned Bhutanese folk literature in the curriculum, while the rest said either "NO" or abstained. In relation to how they were taught, 21 respondents (88%) mentioned several examples. 9 respondents mentioned oral explanation of stanzas, 1 respondent mentioned narration of stories from different parts of Bhutan, 1 respondent mentioned translating stories from their own languages, 4 respondents mentioned class presentations, 7 respondents mentioned teacher questions, 2 respondents mentioned handouts and notes, while the rest either mentioned reading, emphasizing Bhutanese culture and tradition, project, abstained or wrote unclear responses. In relation to how they were assessed, respondents mentioned several examples. So 16 respondents (67%) mentioned homework, 19 respondents (79%) mentioned teacher questions, 7 respondents (29%) mentioned projects on Bhutanese folk literature, 7 respondents (29%) mentioned term/annual exams, while others mentioned class presentations or interviews.

Q. 06	13 respondents (54%) said "YES" they had read folk stories for other countries in their curriculum, and 6 respondents (25%) said "NO" they hadn't read, while 5 respondents (21%) abstained. As example, 9 respondents (38%) mentioned stories about life and lifestyle, culture, language, and religion. 15 respondents (63%) abstained.	16 respondents (67%) said "YES" they had read folk stories folk from other countries in their curriculum, while 7 respondents (29%) said "NO" they hadn't read folk stories from other countries. As example, 17 respondents (71%) mentioned the "Story of monkey and crocodile", "The Accursed Horse", "the ugly frog, the farmer and the snake", "Savitri - a loyal, faithful and dutiful wife", "Folktales of Africa", and "English proverbs".
Q. 10	14 respondents (58%) said newspapers and books were available in the library for them to read. 10 respondents (42%) abstained. 18 respondents (75%) said they never borrowed books from the library in the previous term (February - July), while 3 respondents (13%) said they borrowed 1-2 times, and 3 (13%) other respondents also said they borrowed 2-5 times. In relation to library resources, 3 respondents (13%) said "YES" there were enough reading materials in the library, 2 respondents (8%) said "NO", and 19 respondents (79%) said "NOT SURE".	17 respondents (71%) said newspapers and books were available in the library for them to read, while 3 (13%) respondents abstained and 5 respondents (21%) wrote unclear responses. 15 respondents (63%) said they never borrowed books from the library in the previous term (February - July), while 6 respondents (25%) said they borrowed 1-2 times, and 2 respondents (8%) other respondents also said they borrowed 2-5 times. In relation to library resources, 1 respondent (4%) said "YES" there were enough reading materials in the library, 5 respondents (21%) said "NO", and 17 respondents (71%) said "NOT SURE".
Q. 12	In relation to whether or not the school do more to improve the students' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature, 19 respondents (79%) said "YES". Things that the school could do, they said were: that the school library should have books on Bhutanese folk literature, that the school should create opportunities for storytelling, dramatization (e.g. folk literature competitions), that teachers household encourage students to research folk literature, give enough time to read, and encourage students to translate folk literature in Dzongkha into English.	20 respondents (83%) said "YES" the school should do more to improve students' knowledge of Bhutanese folk literature. Things that the school do, they said, were the school library should have book related to Bhutanese folk literature, that the school create opportunities for storytelling, dramatization, researching folk literature, carrying out folk literature projects, and include folk literature in the curriculum.
Data segments related to attitude		

<p>Q. 07</p>	<p>18 respondents (75%) said they preferred Bhutanese literature in English because it is easy to understand and it is about the country and its past. It helps to understand beliefs, traditions and customs. Feel more comfortable reading in English than in Dzongkha or Choskad. 3 respondents (13%) said they preferred Bhutanese literature in Dzongkha/Choskad because Dzongkha is easier to understand. 3 respondents (13%) said they preferred literature from other countries because it has rich vocabulary and gives pleasure and because Dzongkha or Choskad is difficult to understand.</p>	<p>22 respondents (92%) said they preferred Bhutanese literature in English because it is easier to understand in English than in Dzongkha, so reading Bhutanese folk literature in English helps to understand beliefs, customs, and cultural values. Preference was also because Bhutanese folk literature in English can be read by people from other countries. 2 respondents (8%) said they preferred Bhutanese literature in Dzongkha/Choskad because it reflects their culture and values. 5 respondents (21%) said they preferred literature from other countries because it is more beautifully written.</p>
<p>Q. 08</p>	<p>In relation to whether or not Bhutanese folk literature in English should be included in the secondary English curriculum, 21 (88%) said "YES" because it will help to develop interest in English because it is easy to understand. English translations of Bhutanese folk literature will promote and keep alive Bhutanese culture and tradition among the young people. Dependence on literature from other countries will be less. It will promote Bhutanese literature. English is a richer language than Dzongkha. English translations of Bhutanese folk literature will promote Bhutanese writing outside Bhutan, which will be good a small country like Bhutan.</p>	<p>22 respondents (92%) said "YES" because of English's wider reach across languages and cultures in the country. English translations of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum will help children to know and be interested in literature present in their own and other languages and will help them to preserve their culture and tradition and keep them alive. Access to it through the English curriculum will enable children to be aware of Bhutanese literature from an early stage. Presence of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum will encourage and enable students to compare it with English literatures from other cultures and countries. English translations will expose Bhutanese literature to an international audience. Since most students are familiar with English, availability of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum will enable many students to read it and know about their country. English translations will increase the popularity of Bhutanese folk literature.</p>

Q. 09	In relation to what they believed about translating Bhutanese folk literature in different languages and dialects in Bhutan into English, 22 (92%) respondents said, "YES" they should be translated. Reasons mentioned were, that English is an international language and a more influential language than Dzongkha, people are more interested in English and easier to understand than Dzongkha. English translations will not only enable people in different parts of Bhutan who cannot understand Dzongkha to read each other's folk literature, it will also help Bhutanese folk literature be known in the world. Dzongkha is a difficult language to understand. If Bhutanese is not translated into English, its presence in other languages will be ignored. English translations will also help to improve students' competency in English.	22 (92%) of the respondents said "YES" it should be translated in English. Reasons mentioned were, that the beautiful Bhutanese literature will be exposed to international readers. Since English it is an international language, people outside Bhutan will know about Bhutanese culture. Since English is easier to understand than other languages, people will be interested in it and will understand it better. Translating Bhutanese folk literature into English will enhance the popularity of Bhutanese writers and they will be in demand. If it is translated into English, then people who do not understand Dzongkha can read it in English. Nowadays, People prefer to read more in English than in Dzongkha because English is easier to understand than Dzongkha.
Q. 11	In relation to whether they thought Bhutanese folk literature was useful, necessary and important, 23 respondents (96%) said "YES" because it reflects Bhutanese culture, its past, its ancestors, language, beliefs, traditions and customs of Bhutan's past. Through it people about their own literature in relation to literature from other cultures.	23 respondents (96%) said "YES" because it is a means of preserving the Bhutanese culture as Bhutanese folk literature in English reflects Bhutan and its culture. It will help people to learn about their culture its literature. It will enable the people to view their own literature in relation to literature from other cultures. Translating it into English will enable the people to develop enthusiasm to read, understand and use it.
Q. 13	Asked to write comments, if any, 4 respondents (17%) wrote a response. They said Bhutanese folk literature should be given importance through publication, should be translated into English and more books should be made available for students to read.	14 respondents (58%) responded to this item. They said, more books should be made available in the school library and that schools should buy good books. In the teaching timetable, at least one session every week should be allocated to learning Bhutanese folk literature. During vacation teachers should give students research projects related to Bhutanese folk literature. Bhutanese folk literature in Dzongkha should be translated into English so that people can read it in English. Bhutanese folk literature is interesting to learn.

Appendix 3.17 Semi-structured interview (secondary students)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(For secondary students)

These questions will be asked to six students purposively selected from the action research class. The interview will be conducted with each student - one each at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the action research. Each interview will last 15-25 minutes.

1) What Bhutanese folk literatures do you know?

- *Folk tales, myths, legends, proverbs, ballads, animal stories, riddles, poetry, work songs, etc.*
- *Folk literature of your own language or dialect*
- *Folk literature in English*
- *Say some examples of the ones you know*
- *To what language or dialect do they belong?*
- *Do you think your present knowledge of BFL is good? If not, why? (personal interest, curriculum, library resources, book shops, teachers' knowledge)*

2) Tell me about how you got to know them.

- *From parents, grandparents, friends, books, village elders, etc.?*
- *In informal situations and formal situations?*
- *In conversation with friends, teachers, parents, formal speeches, writings, etc.?*

3) What Bhutanese folk literature have you studied in your English lessons? How does it compare with stories from other countries (e.g. Britain, US, India)?

- *Folktales, proverbs, ballads, riddles, beliefs and superstitions, etc*
- *Standard of language*

4) What do you learn from Bhutanese folk literature?

- *Bhutanese literature that you know orally or have read*
- *Literary, social and cultural values*
- *Spiritual values*
- *Lifestyle*
- *Customs and traditions*

5) Which of these three do you like more – Bhutanese literature in English, Bhutanese literature in Dzongkha/Choekay, or literature from other countries?

- *Advantages*
- *Disadvantages*

6) What are your opinions about the inclusion of Bhutanese folk literature in the English curriculum?

- *What are the advantages and disadvantages?*
- *Do you think it will help preserve and promote Bhutanese culture?*
- *Do you think it will increase your understanding and appreciation of Bhutanese literary heritage?*
- *Do you think it will enable the students to learn aesthetic and moral values?*

7) What do you think about collecting Bhutanese folk literatures that exist in various home languages and dialects in the oral form and translating them into Dzongkha or English?

- *Advantages and disadvantages of English translation*
- *Importance of English*
- *Any problems for Bhutanese culture from its reliance on English or Hindi?*
- *How will it promote writing and research skills among the students?*
- *Cultural and aesthetic values of own literature in the local languages*
- *Unique forms of Bhutanese literature*
- *National identity*

8) On the whole, do you think the school and education system could make the study of Bhutanese folk literature educationally meaningful for the students as a source of literary, social and cultural knowledge?

- *Why/why not/how?*
- *Curriculum planning*
- *In the school's overall learning environment*
- *Teacher's knowledge and perceptions*
- *Teacher training and development*
- *Research and writing*
- *Library resources*

9) Do you have any more comments on Bhutanese folk literature?

Appendix 3.18 Data comparison table (student interviews)

Comparison of Data for change in knowledge and attitude over time (Informant: Khandro)

Theme & Code		Data segments from the three interviews		
		Statements from pre-intervention interview	Statements in mid-intervention interview	Statements in post-intervention interview
Cultural Values	K	From Bhutanese folk literature we learn about our own traditions and customs. We know more about what our ancient ancestors had done. Yes, sometimes we find. Cultural values ...No I don't have any idea (K1.13, page 3)	I have learned about the Bhutanese culture, traditions, customs and the laws that were there in the past. For example, in <i>The Change of Fate</i> we see the monk tax imposed upon the people; there were also some laws imposed upon the people. (K2.4, page 1)	As Bhutan becomes modernised the people are also getting modernised and they are not aware of the Bhutanese culture and traditions. So it is very important to know about these. This will help to preserve our cultural heritage. (K3.14, page 3)
	A	Because such kinds of stories are very interesting to know as we can see it practically. That is, the ox works hard to support us. That's why. It's done practically so we should encourage some of the people to write it down. (K1.5, page 1)	I have learned the value that we should be loyal and dedicated. In these three poems (<i>Change of Fate, ...</i>) I have seen that the authors or the speakers are very dedicated and are very willingly participating in the activities. They are very dutiful and loyal to their leaders. (K2.5, page)	These should be collected and preserved because through these we can increase our knowledge. We are not much aware of our southern Bhutanese folk literature. So we will be more aware of and knowledgeable about southern Bhutanese literature. (K3.3, page 1)

Cultural Diversity	K	People will be more aware of these types of stories. Then we will not only know certain region's or certain kinds of folktales, we will also know about other folktales, other region's folktales. (K1.6, page 2)	Makes no statement	We will be more aware of our country. For example, people in west Bhutan will not know much about southern Bhutanese literature and similarly people in south Bhutan will not know much about literature in the west. As a result there will be some communication gap between the countrymen. People will not be aware of the kind of literature that exists in other parts of the country. (K3.12, page 2)
	A	Makes no statement	Makes not statement	Makes no statement
Role of the Curriculum	K	The school and the education system on the whole should encourage the teachers to tell the students about the importance and advantages of Bhutanese folktales. Teachers should be encouraged to do certain activities in the class. For example, students can do activities related to Bhutanese folktales; we can do some drama; we can narrate some Bhutanese folk stories (K1.20, page 4)	The school can provide more library books related to Bhutanese literature. The school can request the curriculum department to include some more Bhutanese literature. The school can conduct some dramas based on Bhutanese literature in both English and Dzongkha. The school can conduct drama, poetry recitation, and story telling competitions. These competitions will increase their knowledge of Bhutanese literature. (K2.12, page 2)	They should supply more books on Bhutanese literature texts. They should encourage some people to collect and write down the oral literature pieces so that the pieces can be included in the curriculum and they will be available for students to read. (K3.5, page 4)
	A	Because at present we do not find any books on Bhutanese folktales in the library. Only two or three are there. That's why I think I did not get the opportunity to learn more. (K1.8, page 2)	The curriculum had limited supply of Bhutanese folk literature and the teachers were not very concerned to talk about Bhutanese literature. I had keen interest but as there was limited supply of reading materials I could not increase my knowledge about Bhutanese literature. (K2.2, page 1)	Till now I was not interested in Bhutanese folk literature because I did not know much about it; I was not aware of it. Through my participation in this research I have come to know more about Bhutanese literature and I am now more interested to learn about it. (K3.5, page 2)
Status of Bhutanese Folk Literature	K	Bhutanese folktales are usually a bit practical in nature, which means they deal with things that we can see. Bhutanese stories, poems, and other literary forms deal with things which we know and can see, whereas western literature is written in an emotional style and has emotional feelings. (K1.10, page 2)	The poem from <i>The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi</i> has more poetic style. In <i>Change of Fate</i> , the language is just straightforward, plain narrative. In <i>The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi</i> more sophisticated words are included and it is more poetical and more interesting also (K2.10, page 2)	Literature from other countries expresses deep feelings whereas Bhutanese folk literature texts are just plain narratives and they do not express deep feelings about a thing or person.(K3.8, page 2)

	A	In terms of the standard of language, Bhutanese folktales are slightly lower than the literature from other cultures. Bhutanese writers can think only at the surface level, the surface area of the story, whereas in literature from other cultures we find that the poet or the author deals with deeper meanings in their writings. (K1.11, page 2)	In my opinion Bhutanese folk literature is not so poetic, so some poetic style should be included in it. The language is plain and not so sophisticated. (K2.13, page 2)	Yes in terms of the standard of words. They are just plain and only at the surface level, whereas in the Western literary pieces the words have depth. It is hard to understand but it is very interesting and it makes the literature very beautiful. (K3.11, page 2)
Bhutanese Folk Literature in English	k	That is why I think we should learn about Bhutanese literature in English. Also I think when Bhutanese literature is translated into English, the students or people reading it will have more ideas about it. For example, if we go abroad and if we have to narrate one folktale from Bhutanese literature, it will be easier for us to narrate it in English. Also foreigners will understand it better in English. It will improve our national identity. (K1.16, page 3)	It should be written in English because Dzongkha as a language is relevant only in Bhutan and not in other countries. It will be difficult for foreigners to read Bhutanese folk literature. (K2.10, page 2)	Bhutanese folk literature in Dzongkha may not be understood by all people because, for example, people from southern Bhutan and even some people from western Bhutan are not able to read Dzongkha. So translating it in English will be more advantageous for those people who can't read Dzongkha. Culturally the people will be more aware of the need to preserve the cultural heritage (K3.18, page 3)
	A	For example as southern Bhutanese students we will have knowledge and ideas of folktales from southern Bhutan only. Similarly, students from western Bhutan will have knowledge of folk literature from western Bhutan only. That's why it is better for us if we collect these folk literatures and translate them into English. We will then be aware of all types of folk literature that exist in Bhutan. (K1.19, page 4)	Bhutanese folk literature may be beautiful and interesting but because of the language foreigners will not be able to read it. (K2.10 page 2)	I would prefer Bhutanese folk literature in English. It will be uniformly understood. Foreigners will also be able to learn it. But if it is in Dzongkha or Choskad, then only the countrymen will be able to read it. Only the people who are able to read Dzongkha will be able to read it. (K3.17, page 3)