

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This study started from a random comment made by my preadolescent son. “Mum, I can write stories now since I’ve been listening to audiobooks so much!” I had discovered books on tape in my early 20s during my frequent visits to the local public library. It became my habit to stuff my pockets full of cassette tapes before I would head off for long walks on the weekends with my Sony Walkman. From cassette days my husband and I advanced to CDs in the car on long commutes. It was only natural that this would continue with young children in the car, although the choice of titles changed considerably. Years of international travel followed and this coincided with our family being able to listen to our own choice of downloadable audiobooks on our personal devices while waiting at airports. We have somehow ended up quite addicted to our listening and it is now a usual habit for each of us to be plugged in, particularly while commuting and before sleep. So when my third-grade son attributed his story writing ability to his listening of audiobooks, it made me wonder about all those articles I had read about the benefits of audiobooks to children’s literacy development. What research was there I wondered? I had read that there was research, but what did it really say? Were other preadolescents feeling empowered to write because they had listened extensively to audiobooks?

What I discovered surprised and disappointed me. As a teacher librarian I read many professional journal articles and books telling me there was research about the use of audiobooks in school, but I found that most of the ‘research’ that supported using audiobooks in education either comprised anecdotal reports, related to the benefits of a parent reading to a pre-reader child, were used as a remedial tool for students who had learning difficulties or for students who were new to English. What about children like my own preadolescents who were fluent readers and writers with no identified learning difficulties? Was there research about them and the benefits of listening to audiobooks in their free time as they were doing? Surprisingly not, as it turns out.

In this introductory chapter I provide an overview of my study, describe the personal, technological and locational contexts influencing my research and clarify my use of the terms literacy, multimodal communication and listening comprehension, to better inform the reader about key ideas related to the research topic. I conclude the chapter with an introduction to the research problem.

1.1 Overview of the study

Narrative inquiry was chosen as the most suitable methodology for the data and the selection of this approach is described in detail in Chapter 3. In narrative inquiry, the dissertation itself is also considered to be a narrative and the researcher a narrator. Hence I use the first person when writing to emphasise my “own narrative action” (Chase, 2005, p. 657). For this reason, in this introductory chapter I present my context coming into this research because “researchers need to understand themselves if they are to understand how they interpret narrators’ stories and that readers need to understand researchers’ stories (about their intellectual and personal relationships with narrators as well as with the cultural phenomena at hand) if readers are to understand narrators’ stories” (Chase, 2005, p. 666). Following this narrative structure, after orientation to the setting and characters I introduce the research problem, elaborate on that problem in Chapter 2 by showing a gap in the research, explain how the problem can be resolved through narrative inquiry methodology in Chapter 3, reveal how the research problem was resolved in the results in Chapter 4 and finally, in Chapter 5, evaluate what was learned from the research story.

Data for this study were collected through student interviews for two school years between September 2012 and June 2014. Participants were preadolescent students at an international school in South Korea, where I was employed as an elementary teacher librarian. Various contexts have been influential in this research, but three are of particular interest. These are personal experience, technological advancements, and the location of the research, all introduced in this chapter. There are also three elements foundational to narrative inquiry, following Connelly & Clandinin (2006): Sociality, temporality and place. Sociality is explored in my personal context, temporality is reflected in the changing technological context of downloadable audiobooks, and place is the locational context for this research.

1.2 Personal context

When using narrative in research, Bold (2012, p. 60) explains that personal values “underpin your choice of research topic and those values will drive the methodological and ethical choices in conducting your research project.” My educational values have been heavily influenced by my learning from my own children, and the students with whom I work as an elementary teacher librarian. I value education that incorporates the intrinsic motivation of students and I believe that, as educators, we can learn much from our students if we take the time to hear their perceptions.

Particularly during the first year of data collection, my research was influenced by the audiobook listening habits of my own two preadolescent children, who also attended the school where this research took place. Their perceptions guided my questioning when interviewing participants. For example, my own two children (girl aged 11 and boy aged 9 at the start of data collection) sometimes described themselves as ‘addicted’ to listening to audiobooks. They remain very self-motivated to listen regularly, often up to two hours a day or more while multitasking and travelling, and have maintained this routine for several years. They are both fluent readers and writers, but often prefer to listen to audiobooks than read, particularly for fiction. At times they take a break from listening to audiobooks if they find a series of books they want to read.

Additionally, both my children like to listen repeatedly to favourite audiobooks. They explain that they remember the storyline and words well from the first listening, but enjoy extending the time spent with their favourite characters. For the same reason they also particularly like audiobooks that are ‘long’ (recording time in excess of about ten hours for one book). They both dislike having to analyse the story too much with me, because ‘that’s what you do at school when you read and this is listening for fun.’ However, both my children enjoy voluntarily telling me about audiobooks to which they listen and particularly if they find a mistake in the plot of a story. For example my son was explaining that one bald character from the audiobook to which he was listening ended up pushing his hair back off his face later in the story. From this I deduce they are listening critically. In my research I wanted to know if other student listeners are tuned into the nuances of a story. Does this only come from repeatedly listening to the same story?

My children tell me that they create mental images when listening to audiobooks and are often quite shocked when they see the covers of books because the illustration often has nothing to do with how they visualised the story. For example, my son had listened to J. K. Rowling’s entire *Harry Potter* series three times before he saw the cover of one of the books with a drawing of Harry. “That’s not what Harry Potter looks like!” he exclaimed, although it was the round-eyed bespectacled character that is the popular portrayal of Harry Potter. My children have also said that sometimes they get so absorbed in an audiobook that they start to believe it is real life.

My son explained that, although he does get story ideas from watching movies, he thinks audiobooks aid his writing more because he hears statements like, ‘Tom shook his head,’ and then he remembers to write in a similar way in his stories. He explained that these

details are not stated in movies, but rather shown with actions. Friesen (2008, p. 24, 25) supports this and writes that movie adaptations “rely much more on pictures to show emotion, describe settings, and establish mood than words.” My son believes that listening to audiobooks is better than watching movies in many ways. One way, he said, is that audiobooks can describe how a character feels, and he used this paraphrased example that he remembered from one audiobook; ‘She felt like she did when she woke up and realised it was a weekend.’ They cannot describe it like that in a movie, he told me, and this verbalisation of thoughts helps him in his writing.

Once, when my son was writing an assignment, he told me that he was using, ‘a lot of big words,’ that he had learned in audiobooks. My children sometimes check word meanings with me for unfamiliar words that they hear, but most times they learn the meaning using context clues within the story. I am often surprised by what they know about certain topics or their understanding of low-frequency words and I have sometimes asked, ‘Where did you learn that?’ to which they enjoy telling me that they learned it from an audiobook.

I have also overheard my children agreeing together that listening to audiobooks had helped them come up with ‘a lot’ of story ideas. Both of my children have shown that they have a wealth of story and conversation ideas based on their audiobook listening and have said that this helps them when writing stories in class. They have described creative writing experiences in class as ‘hearing’ the story ideas like an audiobook in their head and having those ideas come ‘flowing down’ their arm and out their pencil when they write.

The sound of the narrator is very important to my children. If the narrator makes a gasping noise when they inhale, smacking noise with their lips when they talk, pace their words too fast or slow, have a very strong accent, show a lack of expression or are overly expressive, then my children will choose not to listen, even if the story might be interesting to them. Instead they will look for another story that they think is good and has an appealing narrator, or, if a new story is not immediately available, they will listen again to a favourite story, while waiting for me to come up with another suggestion. It is certainly beneficial that, before we buy downloadable audiobooks online, we can hear a sample of the narration. They also do not like series stories read by different narrators. They like the sound of a narrator’s voice to be consistent throughout the saga. For example, my daughter enjoyed listening to the first book in a trilogy and asked for the second. When she discovered it was narrated by a different actor, she chose not to listen to the rest of the trilogy. My children have become very

familiar with particular narrators after extensive listening and will often want to listen to a new story narrated by that actor, as long as the summary also seems appealing.

My children's teachers have the impression that my children 'read a lot' but as their mother I see that they actually listen to audiobooks much more than they read text. Audiobook listeners may be familiar with many stories and can discuss various characters and plots, and so give the impression that they read 'a lot.' My children get through a lot more audiobooks than they could possibly find the time to read, because they are listening at times when it would be impossible for them to read a book (for example when the lights are out and they are lying in bed with their eyes closed). Both children enjoy multitasking while listening. At one stage my preadolescent son particularly enjoyed playing driving games on his tablet computer while listening to audiobooks.

My children also both think that listening to audiobooks has negatively affected their spelling and punctuation. They know the sound and usually figure out, or ask, the meaning of new words but if they are not following along in the book then they do not know the spelling, although they can often recognise the word if used in context when reading text. They both recognise that reading text makes them more familiar with the spelling of a new word and how punctuation marks are used. Both have struggled with correct spelling and punctuation when handwriting, although thankfully using word processing spelling suggestions minimises evidence of this.

Neither of my preadolescent children likes to search for new audiobooks by themselves but instead rely on my recommending and purchasing audiobooks with their input. They both particularly enjoy series fantasy but if this is not available, they request to listen to anything moderately 'interesting,' as long as the narrator is appealing to them. They will always listen to a sample of the recording and read the plot summary before trying an audiobook. They have come to rely on my provision of audiobooks 24/7 and I will frequently hear, 'I need a new story, Mum,' at inopportune moments. Understandably, they are often not aware when a story will finish as they listen on devices without a screen to show them the track number. If I explain that I do not have a new audiobook right then, they will listen again to a favourite story, but usually hate to be without one, especially at night before they sleep, or when travelling. As the two of them have similar literature preferences, they will frequently listen to the same story and often discuss story plot or characters. They have a shared vocabulary from the audiobooks to which they have both listened. We too have found that, "Listening together encourages a secret literacy code in families and classrooms" (Wilde &

Larson, 2007, p. 23). When our family has listened to audiobooks together on a long car journey, we enjoy having a shared vocabulary, or even a particular pronunciation, drawn from the audiobook. For example our family still pronounces a meal 'buffet' the way the narrator did in the *Paddington Bear* stories to which we listened when the children were younger. Friesen (2008) describes others having similar experiences, and even suggests that listening to audiobooks in the car might decrease 'road rage'!

Talking to the parents of students (participants and non-participants) who like listening to audiobooks also informs my bias, especially regarding the influence of structure at home. One mother told me how she listened to audiobooks as a child, and still likes to listen now when doing menial tasks. Because of this she has always made sure her own children have as many audiobooks as they wish. She believes that the reason her children are such imaginative writers is that they have listened to audiobooks throughout their life. Her children are also both keen readers, and she values reading highly. She said her youngest son will gladly choose to listen to a story rather than watch television if he wants to be entertained. Another mother said that listening to audiobooks in the car helps to calm her young children if they are tense. My own children find that listening to audiobooks also calms them and they use it as a self-regulating activity when they are stressed. They both also use audiobooks to keep themselves company when they are alone, with which Frum (2009) can identify. Frum (2009, p. 96) explains that for him listening to audiobooks "fills time that might otherwise have been wasted with pleasure and meaning" and fulfils his "need for the company of writers at all times and places," even while waiting in line or exercising.

My children are also very capable at reading aloud fluently and they believe this is from the example of listening to professional narrators. They have a good memory for verbal instructions (although they sometimes choose to ignore these like many preadolescent children), and can fluently summarise a story they have either read or to which they have listened. My daughter said she usually skim reads text but points out that the audiobook narrator says every word, so she believes she is more focused on each individual word when listening to the audiobook version. My son agrees that when reading text he does not always read every word. He believes that audiobooks help him to improve his verbal memory and so he can summarise a story well. For example, he explained to me that one of his teachers was impressed with his ability to retell a story, of which he had read the text, in great detail.

If my two children have these perceptions from listening to audiobooks, it seemed likely then that other preadolescents who listen to audiobooks in their leisure time might have

similar perceptions. Why can I find little research about audiobook listening and preadolescent students that does not include learning difficulties? If other students are self-motivated about this seemingly literacy-enhancing leisure activity should not our schools help provide an enabling structure that promotes audiobook listening? How could I, as teacher librarian, help provide and promote this structure? This research topic was ideal in helping me better understand my personal situation as a parent, and as a teacher librarian. Narrative research aims for a collaborative understanding for both the participant and researcher (Montero & Washington, 2011).

1.3 Technological context

Advancements in digital audio technology have the “potential to do for spoken language what the printing press did for written language” (Goldman et al., 2005, p. 297). Specifically, “[a]dvances in audio technology have the potential to change the way we think about reading practices” (Rubery, 2008, p. 64). However, the effects of these digital audio technology improvements on student literacy have yet to be understood. Humanity has always had a storytelling tradition, but “durability and accessibility have given primacy to the written word for thousands of years” (Goldman et al., 2005, p. 287). The dominance of text may change since the digital storage and accessibility of the spoken word has now become the same as text in our digital world. Digital audio files can be downloaded from the Internet just as easily as text files and “modern technology makes fixity and endurance possible for spoken texts because now they can be recorded and preserved” (Bednar, 2012, p. 7). Thanks to some modern marketing campaigns from audiobook publishers, listening to audiobooks on your favourite device is now even considered ‘cool’ (Newman, 2013), thus, this “increasing popularity of audio storytelling owes a lot to technology” (Wen, 2015, para. 3).

While the history of the audiobook is decades old, recent changes in audiobook production and distribution technology have greatly increased the number of titles available and have made them more accessible to more people. The “proliferation of portable listening devices” has also contributed to the rise in popularity of audiobooks (Bednar, 2016, p. 9). This technological development has resulted in a variety of audio products becoming available but not all of these are considered audiobooks. What an audiobook is, for this current research, will be defined in this section. A proprietary audiobook device called a ‘Playaway’, sometimes referred to in discussions of audiobooks, will be described alongside a brief history of audiobook technology and some recent demographic data from audiobook publishers. This

section shows why research about audiobooks is a timely topic from a technological advancement perspective.

1.3.1 What an audiobook is and what it is not

In this research, ‘audiobook’ refers to any leisure-reading book, both fiction and nonfiction (Friesen, 2008; Bednar, 2016), that is performed and recorded by a professional narrator, cast of narrators (Brown, 2003; Yokota & Martinez, 2004; Cardillo, Coville, Ditlow, Myrick and Lesesne, 2007) or even the author themselves. Bednar (2016) describes the “relatively rare occurrence” of the author narrating their own work as a situation in which the “author, textual narrator, and oral narrator are all the same voice” (p. 10). This definition of an audiobook does not cover the audio version of textbooks (Boyle et al., 2003). Allmang (2009, p. 173) agrees that audiobooks are “suited to content intended to be read from beginning to end” and this does not include textbooks or technical manuals. Burkey (2013, p. 13) defines an audiobook as “a spoken word recording of a work of literature,” but then confusingly talks about multimedia interactive books (p. 34) which are not audiobooks by her definition.

Audiobooks are sometimes referred to as spoken books, narrated books (Engelen, 2008), recorded books, talking books (Gamby, 1983; Bergman, 1997; Engelen, 2008), or previously as ‘books on tape’ (Shokoff, 2001). Electronic talking books (ETBs) are not to be confused with audiobooks. ETBs, according to Oakley & Jay (2008, p. 246), are “texts on CD-ROM or the Internet that feature not only the written word but also multimedia elements such as animations, narrations, music and video.” Interactive control of the multimedia by the reader is an important distinction of ETBs (Wood, Ozturk & Rawlings, 2003). Some authors, such as Rose & Dalton (2006) and Irwin (2009), suggest that audiobooks may start to include more multimedia like ETBs or the multimedia mobile applications that Burkey (2013) describes, but these features generate an experience very different from listening to an audiobook. One of the relaxing features of an audiobook is the ability for a listener to look at their surroundings, listen with eyes closed or be able to multitask with another activity, while listening to an audiobook. ETBs have other purposes and the varying formats can exist together for different purposes and experiences for the reader.

The term audiobook is the preferred descriptor for this research, as this nomenclature is independent of the format on which the recording is stored. With the emergence of downloadable audiobooks (Burkey, 2011, 2013; Farrell, 2010; Friesen, 2008; Have & Pedersen, 2016; Hoy, 2009; Irwin, 2009; Kuzyk, 2011; Maughan, 2006, 2010; Minkel, 2004;

Philips, 2007), also called e-audiobooks (Duncan, 2010), where files are stored online and downloaded to personal listening devices, the assumption for the purposes of this research is that most audiobooks listened to by modern school-age students are professionally narrated downloadable digital files. Although a cost-effective alternative, having teachers and students record audiobooks or podcasts (Skouge, Rao & Boisvert, 2007) may have a place in class assignments, but will not replace the professionalism in commercially available audiobooks. My research also does not include ‘text-to-speech technology,’ as this machine generated speech cannot compare to the quality of a professional narrator (Stern, 2011, p. 85). Audiobooks have an “additional layer of interpretation provided by the narrator,” (Bednar, 2012, p. 10), which includes correct pronunciation and emotion conveyed by the narrator’s voice, which Bednar (2016, p. 10) interprets as “a kind of dynamism” that is not available to “mute words on the page.” This research also does not address podcasts or radio (Wen, 2015) because of the more informal and unscripted elements evident in these media.

As will be shown in the literature review (Chapter 2), many people assume that listening to an audiobook is similar to an adult reading aloud to a young child or an audience listening to an oral storyteller. An audiobook is neither. As will be discussed in detail later (Section 2.5), an adult interacting with a young child while reading, discussing the illustrations or storyline together, is nothing like what is experienced when listening to a prerecorded professionally narrated audiobook that can be paused or sections skipped. Likewise, a storyteller interacting with their audience and changing both the story and their facial expressions depending on audience reaction, is very different from sitting on a bus, looking out the window and listening to an audiobook on an iPod. It is a fundamental argument of this dissertation that research about the benefits of parents reading aloud to pre-reader children cannot be applied to audiobook listening by proficient readers and this is discussed in the literature review.

1.3.2 Playaways

While not used in this research, some libraries have Playaways in their audiobook collection. These plastic listening devices come preloaded with one audiobook and are lent by a library in the same way as a book. When a patron has finished listening, the item is returned and another Playaway needs to be borrowed if a patron would like to listen to a different story. Grover & Hannegan (2012), Cislak (2012), Fues (2009), Fellerer (2009), and others, endorse this proprietary product and claim that Playaways are popular for students. However,

many school librarians surveyed in Brock's (2013, Appendix B) study believe that Playaways are too expensive and not durable enough for lending in libraries. The replaceable batteries and hygiene concerns when lending earbuds mean that these parts of the device need to be replaced frequently and add to the cost of having Playaways in the library. Nevertheless, a preloaded device would be useful in a region of slow Internet, as an alternative to downloading audio files, or in a situation where there are few students with their own listening devices. However, at the international school in South Korea where my research was conducted, very fast Internet is available and nearly all students have their own personal devices that they already use for listening to music and performing other tasks.

1.3.3 Brief history of audiobook technology

While differing considerably from listening to a modern downloadable audiobook, reading aloud is often addressed in discussions of audiobooks. Kozloff (1995) reminds us that reading aloud was common in Ancient Greece and Rome. Public readings from the Bible have long been used in churches. In the nineteenth century public readings in both the United States of America and United Kingdom were performed by professional orators. As Rubery (2008) explains, in Victorian England many novels would have had a listening audience rather than a reading audience, and were written with that audience in mind. Radio drama was a forerunner of audiobooks, where professional narrators performed for an unknown mass audience (Shokoff, 2001). Initially 'talking books' were recorded on long-playing phonograph discs (LPs) in the 1930s by the American Foundation for the Blind (Novak, 2013; Burkey, 2013; Brock, 2013).

Commercially recorded audiobooks became popular in the 1980s, "when suburbanites discovered that they were an ideal way to mitigate the horrors of long car commutes" (Colapinto, 2012, para. 9). For this purpose, audiobooks were recorded on tapes, then CDs, and only in the last ten years have digital file downloads been available. Now, the "ease of acquisition has resulted in an explosion in the business; most hard copy titles are published today in audio version, too" (Colapinto, 2012, para. 11). The "growing popularity of audio books" according to Friesen (2008, p. 5), "can be linked with both technological and societal changes." She explains that the increase in the number of commuters has "directly affected the listening environments for audio books" (p. 37), and so has the significant improvement in more realistic sounding audio technology.

A detailed history of the development of audiobook technology in the United States has been prepared by Burkey (2013). Two chapters of her book are dedicated to detailing the production of audiobooks from acquisition to production, where a professional actor, or cast of narrators, is coached to “craft an aural literary experience” (Burkey, 2013, p. 22), and she then gives details of post-production digital editing. An interview with Laura Colebank, cofounder and partner of Tantor Audio, reveals that the cost of producing audiobooks in downloadable format is decreasing, due to efficiencies in the digital publishing system. For example, narrators can now record at home, transfer the files to the publisher electronically and then the file can be uploaded to the vendor’s site. With a good narrator it takes about five times the completed recording time to produce an audiobook, for example, for a four-hour book it would take 20 hours of work to produce.

1.3.4 Demographic data from audiobook publishers

While not educational research, data from surveys conducted by audiobook publishers are helpful in predicting what to expect from research participants. The Audio Publishers Association in the United States, quoting its 2011 consumer and sales survey, found that audiobook buyers state convenience as a main inducement to buy audiobooks, especially for listening on long car journeys. Additionally they found that, “More than two-thirds of recent audiobook buyers described audiobooks as relaxing and a good way to multi-task,” listeners said that, “an audio performance makes some books more interesting than they would be in print,” younger listeners were found to “prefer download and streaming formats,” and there had been a significant increase in downloadable titles and the total number of titles published (Audio Publishers Association, 2013, para. 7 & 9).

An earlier Audio Publishers Association (2010) consumer survey gives additional demographic information about audiobook purchasers, as summarised in these extracts:

Audiobook listeners are better educated than non-listeners: 21% have completed post-graduate work or hold a doctorate degree, twice as many as non-listeners; People who listen to books also have higher incomes, with an estimated median income of \$56,000 (compared to non-listener median income of \$43,000) (para. 2).

Audiobook listeners are avid readers: In the past year, 90% of listeners read at least one book; Frequent listeners of audiobooks (those who listened to four or more audiobooks in the past year) read a median of 15 books in the past year, compared to six books read by people who don't listen to audiobooks (para. 3).

Nearly one-half of audiobook listeners (45%) with children under age 18 report that their children listen to audiobooks as well; 49% of listeners feel audiobooks increase their children's love of reading, while 59% said it exposes them to books they might not otherwise read (para. 4).

Listeners are most likely to turn to recommendations from a friend (27%) to select an audiobook; Librarians, co-workers, and teachers are also influential in helping people to choose a particular audio production (para. 6).

Quoting Megan Fitzpatrick, Senior Manager of Hachette Publishing's audio division, Angelotti (2011, para. 4) reports that, "young audiobook listeners actually tend to be avid readers," and when listening to audiobooks they prefer to listen to unabridged titles. As discussed in Chapter 3, audiobooks should no longer be considered compensatory or solely for remedial educational purposes.

1.4 Situational context

This research was conducted at an international school in South Korea (referred to in this dissertation as 'the school') where I worked as Elementary Teacher Librarian and Head of Libraries. The school is a not-for-profit private fee-paying international school. It is run by a Board of Governors elected yearly from volunteer parents and members of the international community. At the time of data collection (September 2012 - June 2014) the school had approximately 500 students enrolled from Early Learning Centre (ELC) to Grade 12. Over forty nationalities were represented in this small student body, with the largest proportion (12%) from the United States of America and second largest (10%) from Norway. The school had approximately 70 teachers at the time, most of whom were from the USA, UK, Australia and the Philippines.

At the time of data collection, the school offered the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum framework for the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP). It was accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The medium of instruction for all classes was English and there was a small English as an additional language (EAL) department. Korean was the only foreign language offered for elementary students. Preadolescent participants for this research study were primarily in Grades 4 and 5 so their learning was structured according to the PYP model. PYP is not a prescriptive curriculum but rather a concept-driven inquiry program that covers six transdisciplinary themes each year, namely: Who we are; Where we are in place and time; How we express ourselves; How the

world works; How we organise ourselves; and Sharing the planet (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2013). Literacy instruction is integrated into all curricular areas. Critical thinking is encouraged in this inquiry-focused curriculum.

When I arrived at the school in August 2012 there were no downloadable audiobooks available through the school library. A year into the research, more than 150 downloadable, professionally narrated audiobooks had been catalogued and promoted to students. Unfortunately, it was at about this stage our supplier of professionally narrated downloadable audiobooks (Audiogo, 2012) went out of business, and it was difficult to find another supplier with a flexible business model that suited a small school located outside North America (copyright rules restrict many audiobooks from being downloaded outside North America). The downloadable audiobooks for this study were primarily sourced from BBC Audiobooks (Audiogo, 2012), iTunes and Audible. As teacher librarian, I was given permission to buy audiobooks from Audiogo, before they went into receivership in November 2013. I was authorised to save and share these audiobook files with my students, providing they were not stored on a networked drive (see Appendix D). I then catalogued these audiobooks, as part of the school library collection, so that all members of the school community could have access. However, audiobooks from other sources, such as iTunes, Audible.com and Downpour.com, were purchased on my personal accounts and, due to copyright restrictions, could not be made available for loan via the library catalogue. Some of the personally purchased audiobooks were made available to some of the study participants, provided I did not exceed the stipulated quota of authorised devices on which the files were shared.

The most popular genre of audiobooks requested by participants were fantasy series such as *Ranger's Apprentice* and *Brotherband Chronicles* by John Flanagan, *His Dark Materials trilogy* by Philip Pullman, *Rondo trilogy* by Emily Rodda, *Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, *Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis and humour series such *Spy Dog* and *Spy Pups* by Andrew Cope and *Mr Gum* by Andy Stanton. Many other audiobooks were also popular and students were very particular about both the story capturing their attention and a narration which was easy to listen to for long periods of time.

Participants for this study were preadolescent students, primarily in Grades 4 and 5 (aged approximately 9-12 years). A more thorough discussion of participants is included in Section 3.4. Appendix G provides a list of participants, when they were involved in the study and how many interviews were conducted. There were four participants in the first year of data collection, three boys and one girl. Another boy joined late in the first data collection

period, and continued in the second year. Including this boy, there were five participants in the second year of data collection, with one boy who continued as a participant throughout the full two years. In the second year of data collection the participant sample was two girls and three boys. Although all participants were fluent English speakers and spoke English with at least one parent, some participants were also either fluent, or at least spoke to a parent, in at least one other language other than English (Spanish, Portuguese, Norwegian, Danish, German, Hindi, Gujarati and Korean). These international school students also had their own personal electronic devices, travel overseas frequently and are generally very motivated, conscientious students. No participants had any identified learning disabilities.

Participants were those students who volunteered to be involved in the study, were interested to listen to audiobooks in their free time, agreed to sign the assent forms and whose parents were willing to sign the consent forms, as explained more fully in Chapter 3.

Certainly, the participants are not a representative sample of all preadolescent students, but rather a self-selecting and naturally occurring sample of students who were motivated to listen to audiobooks in their free time. Participants were not required to commit to a specified amount of time spent listening. They were able to opt out of the study at any time.

Preadolescent students were chosen because they are a subset of the age group with which I worked primarily in my job as elementary teacher librarian, it was the age group whose reading and listening interests I was most familiar, partially because my own two children were preadolescents at the time. It also became significant to the research that it has been shown, during this age range, reading and listening comprehension are usually comparable (Diakidoy, Stylianou, Karefillidou & Papageorgiou, 2005), which is discussed in Section 1.5.2.

1.5 Clarification of key concepts

What is an audiobook has already been defined earlier in this chapter but there are other key concepts that need clarification as they are sometimes used in very different ways. In this section literacy, as used in this dissertation, will be defined. Literacy's connection with multimodal communication will also be discussed. This section closes with an explanation of listening comprehension and its importance in literacy learning.

1.5.1 Literacy and multimodal communication

Contemporary conceptualisations of literacy are changing and becoming more complex (Cunningham, 2000; Rose & Dalton, 2006; Moyer, 2011a). Modern examinations of literacy need to include a discussion of multimodality (Jewitt, 2008; Ho, Anderson & Leong, 2010; Kress, 2012, 2013; Have & Pedersen, 2016). However, through this study I do not intend to contribute to the overuse of the word ‘literacy’ (Vincent, 2003) but to view literacy critically (Luke, 2012). I use the term ‘literacy’ as the, “Degree of *interaction with written text* that enables a person to be a fluent, functioning, contributing member of the society in which that person lives and works” (Gordon & Gordon, 2003, p. 17, emphasis mine). The focus on written text as the core component of literacy (Ong, 1982; Vincent, 2003) works well with this study of audiobooks as this mode is written text performed orally. “Audiobooks would not exist without the printed source,” as Bednar (2012, p. 8) reminds us, but she also explains that audiobooks “engage us as readers” (p. 8) in a different way than does a printed book.

This focus on the written text as the foundation for literacy is a sensitive subject to advocates of a broader definition of literacy. Some use multimodal and digital literacy to mean communication using various modes of technology (Albers & Harste, 2007; Gee, 2012). These educators see that defining literacy “in terms of alphabetic practices only” as excluding all other modes of communication and that the teachers who do this “abdicate a professional responsibility to describe the ways in which humans are now communicating and making meaning” (Selfe & Hawisher, 2004, p. 233). For this reason some educators advocate literacy instruction that does not just rely on text but includes moving pictures and sound (Tierney, Bond & Bresler, 2006; Sewell & Denton, 2011). However, the frequent “indiscriminate application” of the word ‘literacy,’ “threatens to empty it of any precise meaning (Vincent, 2003, p. 342). For clarity we could use multimodal ‘communication’ rather than ‘literacy’ and agree that there are benefits in innovative educational practices that use visual, audio and print mediums of communication, enhanced by the integration of technological tools.

Audiobook listeners have been described as “media-agnostic” or “literary omnivores who see narrated books and text as interchangeable” (Alter, 2013, para. 8). As will be discussed in Chapter 4, several participants in this study referred to listening to audiobooks as ‘reading’ and appeared to concentrate more on the story than the mode. Modern students “need to be proficient in critical literacy in order to reconcile the messages contained within

the plethora of text forms, text types and constantly evolving communication technologies that surround them” (Mulhern & Gunding, 2011, p. 6). However, the literacy activities that our students “enthusiastically engage in outside of the classroom are often not valued in their school environments” (Mulhern & Gunding, 2011, p. 7). Connecting popular culture to the literacy that is taught in the classroom, “brings a child’s everyday life outside the classroom into the process of literacy and assists the child in understanding why reading is a good social practice that has relevance to his or her everyday life” (Harvey, 2002, p. 26).

In summary, this study sees the term ‘literacy’ as having its foundation in written text but that this text can be experienced through various modes of media. More discussion follows (see Conceptual Framework Section 3.1) concerning the transformation of texts from one mode to another.

1.5.2 Listening comprehension

What is meant by listening comprehension and its importance in education needs to be considered when looking at research about the use of audiobooks by students. “Listening comprehension draws on the same language processes used to comprehend language via text, but it is free of the cognitive demands of having to decode text” explain Hogan, Adlof and Alonzo (2014, p. 202). More broadly though, listening comprehension is our ability to understand language that we hear, which can then be applied to both what we read and our daily verbal interactions. Unfortunately, “Listening does not receive the sort of emphasis it should in school, especially in the development of literacy skills” (Rose & Dalton, 2006, p. 8). Listening skills are seen as valuable by teachers but insufficient time is dedicated to the teaching of those skills (Campbell, 2011). The idea of “[i]ncorporating the use of sound into the study of literature certainly warrants more attention than we have given it to date” (Bednar, 2016, p. 12). However, not everyone agrees, and the unsupported notion that, “Studies in learning from text will continue to reveal the general inferiority of listening as a learning mode, compared with reading, at least for older good readers” (Cunningham, 2000, p. 64), persists in some circles. This perspective results in “disputes over how much school children should be allowed to listen to text rather than read it” (p. 64). Nevertheless, there is evidence that for fluent readers identical comprehension skills are utilised in reading and listening and that these fundamental skills “develop first in oral language and are later transferred to reading” (Kintsch & Kozminsky, 1977, p. 498).

The debate about the importance of developing listening comprehension skills in students stems from a possible misunderstanding of the complexity of language development. For example, it has been revealed that, “listening comprehension performance exceeds reading comprehension in the early elementary-school grades. This difference disappears in the higher elementary grades, and its direction is reversed in middle school, where reading comprehension is found to be higher than listening comprehension” (Diakidoy et al., 2005, p. 68). Moreover, not all text and speech is comparable. Tests involving fMRI scans conducted by Michael, Keller, Carpenter and Just (2001) found that different parts of the brain are activated depending if input was visual (reading text) or auditory (listening to the same text). However, the authors also found that the “increase in activation with increasing sentence complexity was similar regardless of the modality of the input,” and so deduce that the brain works harder to comprehend complexity, whether it is encountered through listening or reading (Michael et al., 2001, p. 251). The language of audiobooks is more complex than everyday speech and so research that is applied to audiobook listening would need to incorporate complex orality.

For 30 years we have relied on the ‘simple model’ of reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), that explains that the two essential components of successful reading comprehension is decoding text and listening comprehension. While decoding has received much attention the importance of listening comprehension’s effect on reading comprehension has been overlooked (Hogan et al., 2014). In a study of changes in reading comprehension in Grades 2, 4 and 8, conducted by Catts, Hogan and Adlof (2005), it was found that variance in ability was attributed more to text recognition in the younger grades and more to listening comprehension in the older grades. Based on this data further exploration was done by others and it was discovered that, “by eighth grade *all* of the reliable variance in reading comprehension could be explained by the listening comprehension factor” (Hogan et al., 2014, p. 200).

The rate of narration of audiobooks is also a consideration when it comes to listening comprehension, but once again it is a topic that is more complex when all variables are considered. For example, Cahill & Richey (2015a), citing Lionetti & Cole (2004), claim that on average, commercially recorded audiobooks are too fast for younger readers (they give the example of Grade 1) because they suggest that the narrator’s speed should be no more than 20% faster than the listener’s reading rate. However, Lionetti & Cole’s study (2004), which

did not use professional narrators, compared two narration rates with four participants in Grade 4 and 5, not Grade 1. The fast narration was about 20% faster than the participant's oral reading rate and the slower narration approximated their current oral reading rate. "Contrary to what was predicted, the slow rate did not lead to greater improvements on any of the dependent measures and it appears the fast rate may have actually been superior" (Lionetti & Cole, 2004, p. 114). The study's authors admit that there were many limitations to their study, including the amateur recording of the short passages and the "use of a metronome [which] resulted in stilted and artificial readings" (p. 127). The quality of the narrator has been found to be an important aspect of listening comprehension studies. For example, a study that involved prekindergarten students listening to recorded expressive stories resulted in improved listening comprehension compared to listening to inexpressive recordings (Mira & Schwanenflugel, 2013).

Comprehending the words we hear is an important component of comprehending the words we read. This suggests that more emphasis on listening comprehension can only benefit students' literacy development, and that extending our students' engagement with complex orality (see Conceptual Framework Section 3.1) should have more emphasis.

1.6 Research problem introduced

As explained above, this study started because I noticed that my own children were self-motivated to listen to audiobooks in their free time and they perceived that their in-class literacy activities were influenced by their extensive listening to audiobooks outside of class. I wanted to know what research there was about preadolescents, those who are fluent readers and writers with no identified learning difficulties, who willingly listen to audiobooks in their free time. Had anyone asked their perceptions about the effects that this self-motivated activity had on their school work?

Three aspects of this inquiry were of primary importance to me. Firstly, I was interested in students who were self-motivated to engage in a literate activity outside of class time; secondly, what was significant for these students about listening to the oral mode of literature (i.e. what do they gain or lose from the experience); and thirdly, what important characteristics do preadolescent audiobook listeners develop by experiencing the transformation of literature from one medium into another, particularly in a modern

technological environment where audiobooks can be downloaded onto personal mobile devices.

My research question then is: What changes do preadolescent students perceive in their literacy practices from listening to downloaded audiobooks in their free time? Through this study I endeavoured to make a unique contribution to both educational theory and practice.

1.7 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to set the context for this research. My personal reasons for conducting this study, the technological advancements that make this a timely topic and the locational context have all contributed to influence this narrative inquiry research. A definition of key terms such as audiobook, literacy, multimodal communication, and a discussion of how listening comprehension affects literacy practices, help the reader to gain a better understanding of how this research is positioned. The research problem was introduced in this chapter but will be elaborated further in Chapter 3 with discussion of the conceptual framework.

The next chapter looks at the literature available about audiobooks in education and shows how my research aims to make a small contribution to the surprisingly large gap in the research about audiobook use by students who are fluent readers and writers with no identified learning difficulties.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I show that much has been written about audiobooks in popular media, and especially in educational publications, but there is a surprising lack of significant research about using audiobooks in education, particularly for fluent readers and writers with no learning difficulties. Unfortunately, as will be shown in the first section of this chapter, too much of what is claimed to be ‘research’ is actually anecdotal reports. In this section I show that some research that is given to support the use of audiobooks in education is either research about the benefits of an adult reading aloud to a child, research that used very limited audiobook listening in class, assisted reading (reading while listening or listening while reading) research or research about audiobooks used by English language learners (ELL). None of this research is applicable to leisure audiobook listening for students who can read and write fluently and have no identified learning challenges. At the end of this chapter I show that audiobooks are not a solution to all literacy problems nor are they universally appealing to students. Through my research I am not aiming to find an easy way to improve student literacy but to provide a meaningful perspective on a very under-researched topic.

2.1 Audiobooks in education: anecdotal reports

Much of what is referred to as research about audiobooks in education is of an anecdotal, journalistic nature. An illustration of this type of reporting can be found in Wolfson (2008), who claims that the “value of incorporating audiobooks into the middle school and high school curriculum has been demonstrated in several research studies” (p. 106). Under the heading ‘Research on using Audiobooks,’ Wolfson (2008) starts by referring to an anonymously authored article in *Reading Today* dated 2004, which states that: “In 2003 the Forest Grove Middle School demonstrated that audiobooks could be used as an essential component to improve recreational reading” (Wolfson, 2008, p. 109). Nevertheless, the only mention of audiobooks in the 2004 article by the anonymous writer explains that 2000 new books added to that particular school library “included books in Spanish, easy texts for challenged readers, and audiobooks” (Anonymous, 2004, p. 17). Wolfson (2008) then refers to Brown & Fisher (2006) who describe a middle school that implemented a balanced literacy initiative that included teacher-led read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading. To assist, “the district provided some books on tape to use during shared

and independent reading” and the school then bought 400 more audiobooks (p. 39). The tapes and cassette players (later CDs and CD players) were distributed to classrooms. The authors reported that, “reading scores have risen the past four years” and that they believed, but without providing any evidence, that this was “a result of the school-wide approach to balanced literacy” (p. 40). Thus, this study could not be considered a scholarly research study about audiobooks.

In the section entitled ‘Research,’ Wolfson (2008, p. 109) refers to Goldsmith’s (2002) anecdotal report about a student book club for English language learners that incorporated audiobook listening, a report that is reviewed in Section 2.4 below. Wolfson (2008) then directs us to two regional newspaper articles, Lopez (2005) and Parsons (2005), neither of which are research studies. Lopez (2005) wrote an article about a school using audiobooks from Audible, downloaded onto iPod Shuffles lent from the library. The lending of iPods is also featured in Parsons (2005) who describes a school lending iPods to students to listen to sing-along-songs and language lessons at home. Wolfson (2008) then refers to Brown (2002) who provides anecdotal descriptions of the use of audiobook excerpts in literature and social studies classes.

Other references in the ‘research’ section of the Wolfson (2008, p. 109) article include an opinion piece by Avery, Avery and Pace (1998) suggesting ways for English teachers to make literature analysis more appealing to reluctant readers and students new to English by incorporating the use of movies and audiobooks into their lessons. Again, there is no research reported in this article, although Brock (2013, p. 28) misleadingly refers to it as “their study” in her dissertation. Wolfson’s (2008) article then briefly mentions findings from a study done by Carstens (1996), misquoted as Cartsens, a study reviewed in Section 2.2 below. In this study, Carstens (1996) identified low-achieving middle school language arts students who preferred to listen rather than read literature. Her study covered only four lessons of treatment and she found no correlation between student performance and mode of literature and therefore suggests that audiobooks be included in language arts classrooms for those students who prefer to listen rather than read. Wolfson (2008) then refers to Franklin (1996) who surveyed one of her high school English classes about their learning styles and then, based on that survey, assigned aural learners and reluctant readers to listen to the audio version and some also simultaneously followed along with the text. Franklin is quoted as saying: “The results were as I had hoped. Students who listened as they read along read more,

demonstrated a deeper understanding of the novels, and experienced an increase in enthusiasm about reading” (Franklin, 1996, para. 3). She then later surveyed another class to determine their preferred learning modality and based on this test the students were assigned to either the print, or audio, or both, of one novel. She again found the results from the students were “positive” (Franklin, 1996, para. 4). She was surprised to learn that the students who read faster than the audio version “chose to ignore the tape in order to read at their own paces” (para. 4). In summary, the article by Franklin (1996) can be described as an anecdotal report of her personal classroom observations, not a systematic investigation that could be described as research.

Further anecdotal descriptions cited by Wolfson (2008) in his ‘research’ section include articles by Beers (1998) and Locke (2001) which each describe what was observed in classes where audiobooks were used by students, but neither descriptions were based on research studies. Wolfson (2008) concludes his article with a reference to an opinion piece by Grover & Hannegan (2005), who state that: “Research has demonstrated that listening to audiobooks fosters improving fluency, expanding vocabulary, developing comprehension, and improved achievement” (Wolfson, 2008, p. 112), but there is no research cited in Grover & Hannegan (2005).

Interestingly, in their book Grover & Hannegan (2012) claim that: “There are many proven literacy benefits to be gained from listening to a well-read audiobook, and we explore them in this chapter” (p. 9). On the next page they state, “There has been a great deal of research supporting the use of audiobooks to promote vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension” (p. 10). Consequently, they quote Wolfson (2008), referred to above. Grover & Hannegan (2012) then refer to Beers (1998), cited in Wolfson (2008), who gives some anecdotal descriptions of the benefit of audiobook listening in a class for struggling readers. Following this, Grover & Hannegan (2012) include anecdotes about the listening experiences of three home-schooled children and their mother, whom the authors know. Unfortunately these sources do not constitute a “great deal of research” that the authors claim (Grover & Hannegan, 2012, p. 10). It is disappointing that the next chapter starts with, “As indicated in the previous chapter, research supports the use of audiobooks to strengthen literacy skills” (Grover & Hannegan, 2012, p. 17). Just after citing this book (but misstating the date as 2011 at one point), Brock (2013, p. 1) states that there is a “small body of existing audiobook research” and later confirms, “the vast majority of articles and studies of

audiobooks with young people is largely anecdotal and not of a scholarly nature” (p. 24). Grover & Hannegan (2008, p. 17), give no evidence of the research to which they refer when they make the following claim:

Audiobooks bring together a listening experience and a learning experience that benefit students and teachers. This recognition led us to research that repeatedly indicates that listening to audiobooks enhances comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and language acquisition, as well as overall reading achievement. What is most interesting about this research is that it confirms that listening not only helps struggling readers and English-language learners attain higher proficiency levels but also benefits those students who have strong reading skills.

This claim gives the impression that there is credible research about the use of audiobooks by fluent readers but no research is cited.

Continuing this impression that there is substantial evidence about the benefits of using audiobooks in education, Burkey (2013, p. 17) states that, “A growing body of research validates the importance of audiobooks in education” and refers us to an appendix of recommended reading. However, this appendix includes only one credible research study about audiobooks in K-12 education, that of Milani, Lorusso & Molteni (2010) who investigated the effects of audiobooks on students with dyslexia. This study is reviewed in Section 2.3 below where the compensatory use of audiobooks in education is discussed. Burkey’s (2013) appendix of recommended reading also includes a study by Stern (2011) about the role of audiobooks in university libraries, and, while not a K-12 research study, this is addressed later in the results chapter (see Section D.4.2) due to the similar technical challenges faced.

Similarly, based on the literature review of her dissertation (Moyer, 2011b), Moyer (2012, p. 340) claims to present a “thorough review of the research literature on audiobooks and e-books.” There are two sections that include ‘audiobooks’ and ‘education’ in the titles. The first is entitled ‘Audiobooks: Additional education research prior to 2006’ but it is not clear what she means by ‘additional’ as she has quoted no research about the use of audiobooks in education up to that point in her article. Before this section she had referred to publications about readers’ advisory (which helps librarians recommend titles to patrons), opinion pieces, and references to audio publishing industry surveys.

As an example of the ‘smoke and mirrors’ presentation of elusive research about audiobooks in education, in the next two paragraphs I describe in detail Moyer’s (2012)

review of educational audiobook research. In the section about educational audiobook research prior to 2006 she opens with the comment that, “Educational literature is rife with ways audiobooks have successfully been used in the classroom” (p. 343) and footnotes opinion articles by Ferreri (2000), Von Drasek (2004), Robinson (2003) and Casbergue & Harris (1996). She then mentions Goldsmith (2002) who used audiobooks with English language learners and this anecdotal account of her work as a public librarian is discussed below in Section 2.4. Byrom (1998) is mentioned next, and her ten-week study is included below in the limited listening section (2.2). Moyer (2012) then notes Casbergue & Harris’ (1996) literature review, but this does not include any research about audiobooks. She then refers to Yingling (1998) and says his Master’s thesis about audiobook users at an Ohio Public Library is “one of the only studies of library audiobooks users” but this is obviously not K-12 applicable. Next Moyer (2012) writes that Varley’s (2002) essay may help convince teachers of the value of allowing students to listen to audiobooks as much as they read text. She says of Varley (2002) that, “by combining quotations and research from both education and LIS [Library and Information Science], with excellent examples from recent audiobook productions, Varley makes her case relevant to teachers and all types of librarians” (Moyer, 2012, p. 343). However, Varley’s (2002) essay in *Horn Book Magazine* is anecdotal and does not include a reference list. Moyer (2012) next describes Diakidoy et al.’s (2005) research about reading and listening comprehension, but, although this research used tape recordings of short texts (the study period consisted of two 40 minute sessions), it did not look at audiobook listening as defined in this dissertation. Diakidoy et al.’s (2005) research was discussed in Chapter 1.

Continuing Moyer’s (2012) review of research, under the next heading, ‘Audiobooks: Education, library and information science, and psychology research since 2006,’ Moyer (2012) begins with the admission that, “Many of the recent publications about audiobooks continue to revolve around awards and new technologies, and while important developments, these items contribute little to the understanding of audiobooks and reading” (p. 344). In this section she footnotes a “case study” (Moyer, 2012, p. 344) by Fues (2009), which is an anecdotal report by a school librarian who uses Playaways (see Section 1.3.2) in her school. Moyer (2012, p. 345) describes a “well researched article” by Clark (2007), but does not give the date reference in her footnotes. However, Clark (2007), in a journal section misleadingly entitled ‘REsearch And Development’ (capitalising READ) and prepared by the ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children) Research and Development Committee, does

not quote any credible educational research but gives the unsupported statement that, “According to a lengthy body of research, experiencing a book in both formats [print and audio] increases a child’s comprehension and vocabulary” (p. 49). Moyer (2012, p. 345) describes Wolfson’s (2008) article as having “an extensive research-based section on why adolescents should be using audiobooks as part of their language arts curriculum,” but as shown above, Wolfson (2008) does not describe substantial research studies that supports this stance. Moyer (2012) then refers to Montgomery’s (2009) anecdotal article in which he suggests using audiobooks to renew enthusiasm for reading. Montgomery (2009) states that his article “highlighted significant research regarding factors influencing below grade-level reading” (p. 9) but the only audiobook research to which he refers is Blum et al. (1995) and Koskinen et al. (2000), both described in Section 2.4 (ELL), and research done by Marie Carbo (see Section 2.3 for remedial use of audiobooks). Moyer (2012) then describes Cooper’s (n.d.) anecdotal report about his experience with audiobooks in his Grade 5 class. Just after claiming “there is a small, but significant collection of purely research-based articles on audiobooks,” Moyer (2012, p. 345) refers to Winn, Skinner, Oliver, Hale and Ziegler (2006) saying that they “provide strong and convincing evidence for the use of audiobooks with struggling readers of all ages and the need for more research that studies links between listening and reading comprehension” (Moyer, 2012, p. 345). However, as she admits in her dissertation, referring to Winn et al. (2006), “This research *did not use audiobooks*” (Moyer, 2011b, p. 23, emphasis mine). While Winn et al.’s (2006) study did evaluate listening while reading, it involved adults listening to the experimenter reading aloud from a short passage and then the participant reciprocating by reading aloud to the experimenter. This research could not be applied to audiobook listening as defined in this dissertation. Moyer (2012) then refers to Esteves & Whitten’s (2011) primary research about assisted reading, which is addressed later in Section 2.3 about the remedial use of audiobooks. She also mentions Milani et al. (2010) study about dyslexia, and Lo’s (2009) research, both of which are addressed in Section 2.3 below. Unfortunately Moyer (2012)’s literature review does not reveal any scholarly research about audiobook listening by students who have no learning difficulties and are fluent readers and writers, and this current research aims to fill this gap.

Furthermore, to add to the impression that there is plenty of audiobook research available, Moyer (2011b, p.23) says of Stone-Harris’ (2008) study (misnaming her Syed Stone Harris rather than Sayra Stone-Harris) about using audiobooks for struggling readers that, “*Unlike previous studies* [she] found no significant differences in comprehension between

students who read books and students who listened to audiobooks. Some of the results do point to higher gains made by the younger students, which does match up with the results found by S. Grimshaw et al. and others,” (emphasis mine, no previous studies are identified). This is a reference to Grimshaw, Dungworth, McKnight and Morris (2007), but Moyer does not name the ‘others’ making it impossible to trace these purported studies. Grimshaw et al. (2007) studied children’s enjoyment and comprehension of printed text, electronic text and electronic text with narration. Electronic text with narration is not considered to be an audiobook because the reader’s primary focus is the electronic text but they can also interact with individual words or passages when they want to hear a narration. In some cases the narration is computerised text-to-speech that is disjointed and projects no emotion, however in Grimshaw et al.’s (2007, p. 584) research one story included “actors reading the parts of the different characters so that the story ‘comes alive.’” A CD-ROM version of the story was used, which is also referred to an electronic talking book (ETB), and sometimes called an interactive storybook (that may contain more ‘edutainment’ additions), which I distinguished from audiobooks in this thesis (see Section 1.3.1). Grimshaw et al.’s (2007) study using ETBs with “dynamic cues,” such as animation and sound effects (p. 585), cannot be compared to research about student’s comprehension of audiobooks.

The above lengthy examples leaves the overwhelmed reader with the unsatisfactory feeling that there must be substantial audiobook research somewhere. Furthermore, statements in articles about audiobooks like, “*Scientific studies* have repeatedly shown that for competent readers, there is virtually no difference between listening to a story and reading it.... *Some scholars* argue that listening to a text might even improve understanding, especially for difficult works” (Alter, 2013, para. 30, emphasis mine), leave the reader begging to know what scientific studies have been done. However, Alter (2013) gives no indication of the research to which she refers in her article, and nor did she respond to my email inquiry about her source. Similarly, Lesesne (2013), a professor at Sam Houston State University in Texas, USA, only references Grover & Hannegan (2012), described above, in her article about audiobooks. Without providing research Lesesne (2013) writes, “Recent research in the use of audiobooks is finally placing this misconception [that listening to audiobooks is ‘lazy’] to rest” (Lesesne, 2013, p. 30). Professor Lesesne is also quoted in Burkey (2013, p. 47) as saying, “Articles in journals have offered the research base for including audiobooks in classrooms,” but it is not clear to which research she is meaning.

Audio Publishers Association provide an info graphic about audiobooks and literacy on their website (Audio Publishers Association, 2016a) and a bibliography of their sources (Audio Publishers Association, 2016b). The info graphic is entitled ‘How Audio Promotes Literacy’ and three of the graphics state: ‘increases reading accuracy by 52%,’ ‘improves comprehension by 76%,’ ‘increases motivation by 67%,’ however there is no evidence for these statistics in the bibliography provided.

It is refreshing to find that some admit that there is a “dearth of research directly related to the impact of audiobooks, despite the prevalent usage of audiobooks” (Whittingham, Huffman, Christensen & McAllister, 2013, p. 1) but unfortunately the authors misleadingly mix opinion pieces in their literature review and then conclude the section with, “While the *research* reviewed here paints a positive picture of audiobooks and implies the importance of audiobooks, *little research* directly connecting the use of audiobooks and student achievement could be found” (p. 5, emphasis mine). To illustrate how misleading this can be, after writing about Beers (1998), which they do not clarify is an anecdotal article (mentioned above), they state that, “audiobooks help students develop a positive attitude toward reading” (p. 3).

Others do concur that, “There is little hard data right now about the effect of audiobooks on reading” (Cardillo et al., 2007, p. 46) and that, “The subject of audio books has been woefully unaddressed by the academic community in general” (Irwin, 2009, p. 361). Understandably, “the predictable result is suspicion and prejudice” (p. 361). Certainly, “The dearth of research investigating audiobooks for children is astounding given the widespread endorsement of their use for children of all ages” (Cahill & Richey, 2015b). Cahill & Richey (2015a) confirm that there is little research using professionally narrated audiobooks and sparse research apart from that conducted about reading while listening (RWL, see Section 2.3). Dr. Frank Serafini (personal communication) agreed that it is difficult to find research that isolates audiobooks as the variable for influencing literacy, although it is misleading when he writes about reading research and audiobooks in the same sentence, “Research has also shown that reading aloud with children provides the foundation for their development as readers and that audiobooks are an important component of a comprehensive reading program” (Serafini, 2004, para. 8). Certainly, audiobooks are “an area that remains under-researched by academics, publishers and the audio industry” (Philips, 2007, p. 294). Others agree that, “Research on audiobooks is rare, and as an everyday phenomenon it is more or less unexplored” (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 5).

2.2 Limited use of audiobooks in class time

The study reported in this thesis is concerned with leisure listening to audiobooks by preadolescent students that is self-motivated and not assigned by a teacher. However, there is some research available that covers assigned audiobook listening by students in class time and this is included here to inform how limited listening has been used in educational settings. For example, Byrom (1998, p. 4) describes the use of self-recorded audio in assisted reading (see Section 2.4) with three Grade 5 boys for ten weeks but warns, “My ten week research into audio reading was relatively short ... I would not recommend testing and measuring children’s independent reading ages after only 10 weeks as it would be akin to yanking up seedlings to check the root growth.” Similarly, Schneeberg, Mattleman & Kahn (1973) studied low-achieving readers who read while listening to audio versions but they warn that, “most projects need much more than one year in order to show growth upon which to base conclusions” (p. 903).

During a three week study Clark (2001) exposed Grade 3 students to limited use of audiobooks during class time but this “did not show any significant difference in the students’ reading levels during the study” (p. 5). Similarly, as mentioned above in Section 2.1, Carstens (1996) used very limited listening to short selections during four language arts lessons with middle school students. While, for some selections, those who read the text scored better than those who listened, she recommends the use of audio versions of text for those students who show a preference for them. In another short study, college student participants listened to just ten minutes of an assigned audiobook after which Moyer (2011b) found there was no difference in comprehension or engagement amongst readers who experienced a text in print, electronic text (Kindle) or audiobook (Playaway, see Section 1.3.2). When asked about their leisure reading preferred format, participants chose print over the Kindle, and the Playaway audiobook was their least favourite format.

After only ten weeks of listening to audio-taped stories, the acquisition of expressive and receptive vocabulary by pre-schoolers was investigated by Harvey (2002). The motivation for Harvey’s study was that schools cannot force parents to read aloud to their young children and some educators suggest that audiobooks could be used as a substitute at home. While Harvey (2002, p. 190) insists her study’s “positive results lend support for using audiobooks for young children in the home and school setting,” it is not clear why she

suggests they be used at school when there are teachers who can read aloud to students. She found that the children who already had a rich reading culture at home developed their vocabulary more than those who did not have a parent regularly reading to them. Children with a poor reading culture at home seemed to benefit most from listening to audiobooks in terms of their vocabulary development. Harvey (2002, p. 203) concludes that, for young children, “Independent listening to audio books can never compare to the many advantages of shared parent-child reading times” and I would therefore assume that teacher-child reading time at school would also be more beneficial for pre-reader children than listening to audiobooks independently while at school.

From data collected over a period of three weeks during class time, Simkins (2004) studied the ability of thirteen gifted elementary readers to comprehend 24 essays recorded using “text to voice conversion software” (p. 12). This short study found that the students preferred listening to a human voice rather than a digitised voice (p. 17) and some found the digitised voice “distracting” (p. 21). Simkins found that five participants scored at least a full letter grade higher when reading and listening, “four participants did equally well using either treatment; and four scored better on the read only treatment” (p. vii). However, Simkins (2004) points out that gifted students often do not comprehend as well as they decode (p. 3). He remarks that having to read at the same pace as the audio delivery resulted in students having to slow down while they read (p. 4), which alone could have also improved some readers’ comprehension ability. This study could be included in the assisted reading section following, and even considered remedial to improve reading comprehension, even though these gifted students were identified as very fast readers. He remarked that he noticed “low relative levels of comprehension” in his class (p. 11). In his literature review, Simkins (2004, p. 8) said he could only find one study “that was somewhat related to the topic of using audiobooks in the gifted classroom” and he makes a quick reference to Wolfson (2008) which, as shown above, only offers journalistic reports about proficient readers’ use of audiobooks.

The short studies reported in this section show the limited research available about audiobook listening. In all these studies the students were under the direction of a teacher to listen to audiobooks during class time. As explained in Chapter 1, I wanted to know what changes were perceived by students who were not required to listen to audiobooks, but who were self-motivated to do so, and who chose to listen to audiobooks in their free time. No

self-motivated leisure time listening studies were found in my review of the available literature.

2.3 Assisted reading and using audiobooks remedially

The use of audiobooks in literacy education is most often studied as a compensatory method for remedying reading problems. While not applicable to my research about fluent readers and writers with no learning difficulties, the research available that used audiobooks for assisted and remedial reading is presented here to inform the reader of what limited audiobook research is available.

Assisted reading is when a student reads a text while simultaneously listening to an audio version of the book. It is also called reading while listening (RWL, Cahill & Richey, 2015a) and listening while reading (LWR; Lionetti & Cole, 2004). Confusingly, Lionetti & Cole (2004) define LWR, as “the name implies,” giving the student an opportunity to listen or read text *prior* to instruction or testing (p. 114, 115, emphasis mine), but as their study shows they clearly mean listening and reading simultaneously. ‘Readalongs,’ where a picture book is packaged with an audio recording (typically CD or formerly, cassette) so that the child can experience “the audiobook’s narration, music and sound effects in conjunction with the text and illustrations” (Burkey, 2013, p. 14, 15), is an example of an assisted reading format. My research did not require students to read the text while listening to an audiobook, but, as shown in the results chapter, one student did choose to do this some of the time.

Assisted reading is often recommended as a way for readers to improve comprehension and as a remedial literacy aid and there is some evidence that it can have positive effects. For example, a five month study of preadolescent and adolescent students with developmental dyslexia found that listening to audio versions while reading class texts, and one fiction book of their choice, improved participants’ reading accuracy and motivation to participate in school activities (Milani et al., 2010). The study used audio recorded by volunteers or using machine generated speech.

Teachers involved in O’Day’s (2002) study believed that assisted reading helped students learn correct pronunciation, provided a model of fluent reading and helped students understand and pronounce new vocabulary in context. In her study of three Grade 5 classes, O’Day (2002) used audiobooks on tape, recorded by volunteers for Recordings for the Blind

and Dyslexic (RFB&D), and played on variable speed players (so the students could adjust the speed of the narration while reading along in the book). RFB&D, now called Learning Ally, is a nonprofit US organisation that provides audiobooks and audio textbooks to students with an eligible print disability (Learning Ally, 2016). These audiobooks are usually not recorded by professional narrators and some of the audiobooks are only available in machine generated speech. Most participants said they liked listening to the audiobooks while reading in class and they were motivated to listen because they could choose books that were appealing (p. 167). For bilingual students, listening while reading helped them hear what the words sounded like in English. For English speaking students, listening while reading helped them learn new vocabulary and how to pronounce unfamiliar words. Not all students liked listening to audiobooks however and some liked both listening while reading and reading without listening. Some participants were frustrated with technical difficulties associated with listening to audiobooks and sometimes the students complained that either the tape, player or headphones did not work. One student mentioned wanting the flexibility to switch to a different tape if he found it boring, but was told by the teacher that he was not allowed to change. Some students suggested allowing more time to read and listen to audiobooks during the school day. Some said they liked listening to audiobooks in class because it gave them an opportunity to relax on beanbags in the listening corner and the headphones isolated them from the noise of the classroom. The sound of the story was described as calming by some students and they reported that it improved their mood. Some participants were aware of errors made by the narrator and O'Day attributes this to active reading while listening and that participants were "aware of the connection between the aural language and the written text" (p. 158). One teacher involved in the study made independent reading, and listening to audiobooks, a priority and made time for it every day but the other two teachers found it difficult to allocate time in the school day. O'Day concludes that the success of audiobook listening in class reflected the teachers' individual classroom management styles.

Using assisted reading as a means for helping children with severe learning difficulties is an approach that has been developed by Marie Carbo (e.g. 1978; 1996). One of Carbo's models for reading instruction uses audio in the form of a proprietary product, the "Carbo Recorded-Book" (1996, p. 10), which is described as a short tape recorded passage of a difficult text played at a slower speed. Her methods also incorporate other techniques such as repeated reading and having the student trace the words with a finger as they repeat the text out loud. A study described in Carbo (1978) was conducted over three months and the average

gain for these students with learning disabilities was roughly three months (p. 269), which was significant for this cohort, but her results cannot be generally applied to all students listening to audiobooks. Unfortunately, results taken from her research and used by others can be misleading for educators. For example, O'Day (2002, p. 23) quotes Carbo (1978, p. 272) as saying, "nonreaders and poor readers transformed into enthusiastic learners after their first experience with talking books."

However, not everyone has found that assisted reading is beneficial for reading difficulties. For example, a comparison of assisted reading and sustained silent reading (SSR) by upper elementary students with reading disabilities was undertaken by Esteves & Whitten (2011). They found that assisted reading was more beneficial than SSR for promoting reading fluency for these students but there was no significant change in reading motivation with either approach. Moreover, "without human supervision, there is no guarantee that the child is actually visually following the text while listening" (Topping, Shaw & Bircham, 1997, p. 10). Based on a study of Grade 1 students, Reitsma (1988) notes that during assisted reading the "spoken words are presented rather automatically, and it is unknown what, exactly, the beginning readers did while listening" (p. 232). It has been noted that some audio recording reading programs used in class have limited benefit for students with severe decoding problems (Greaney, 2012). While improvements in reading ability were found for both teacher-assisted and tape-assisted reading groups of at-risk Grade 3 and 4 students, Shany & Biemiller (1995) found that the students in the tape-assisted group read twice as many books as the teacher-assisted group in the same amount of time, possibly due to lack of distractions. They surmise, that, "time on task" (p. 393) was more important than how many books were read. No significant difference was found in comprehension between struggling grade 2 and 5 readers who only read text and those who listened to text while reading (Stone-Harris, 2008, see Section 2.1).

While the compensatory use of audiobooks could bring some benefit to students with reading challenges, there is no guarantee that it is always effective. It is time to look at audiobooks as a legitimate form of literature for all readers, not just for those with decoding difficulties. For too long audiobooks have only been considered by some educators as solely a remedial tool for struggling readers (Have & Pedersen, 2016). Remedial methods are looking for a remedy, or a cure, for a particular ailment. What if there is no ailment but a fluent reader wants to listen to audiobooks because they enjoy them? It is unfortunate that no research was

found which includes students who are self-motivated to listen to audiobooks because they enjoy them.

2.4 Audiobooks used to help English language learners

Studies of English language learners (ELL) using audiobooks are often used in educational literature to support use of audiobooks in mainstream classrooms. Some studies about the use of audiobooks for ELL students are included here to provide a more informed perspective about the applicability of these studies to fluent English students.

Some English as a Second Language (ESL) students believed that listening to audiobooks increased their oral reading skills in Goldsmith's (2002) anecdotal account of working as a public librarian with a lunch group for ESL teenagers at a local high school. A teacher, who heard them read to younger students, believed their reading fluency improved after only a month of listening to audiobooks. However, there was considerable variety in the perspectives of the students about audiobooks and Goldsmith (2002) explains that, "Some students wanted to listen first then see the print version, others wanted the reverse, and still others wanted a distinct separation between their 'listening books' and their 'reading books'" (p. 53).

Grade 1 ELL participants benefitted from listening to the audio version of a book read in class while rereading it at home in Blum et al.'s (1995) study. These audio tapes were recorded by "native English-speaking adults" (p. 540) at a slow pace so that the child could follow along while pointing to each word in the text. The tape recording also indicated when the child should turn the page. However, not all five participants enjoyed listening to the tapes, and one said that the stories were "too boring and repetitious" (p. 560). In another study of Grade 1 students, both native English speaking and students who were new to English, it was found that the audio versions of books were beneficial to students learning English and "when confronted with a reading problem, students often intentionally used rereading with an audiotape to solve their problem" (Koskinen et al., 2000, p. 34). In a similar home/school listening study involving three ESL kindergarten students it was found that audiobooks can "stimulate reading opportunities" at home, but the authors "was unable to make definite correlation between listening to audiobooks and reading comprehension" (Wellner, 2010, p. 63). Interestingly, Wellner found that, "the kindergartener, parents, and siblings all listened to

the audiobooks” (p. 60) that were brought home and this shared listening promoted family discussions about the audiobooks.

Four action research studies using audiobooks (bought as CDs and loaded onto iPods) that aimed to help students learning English are reported by Patten & Craig (2007). iPod Shuffles were used by teachers in class as “companion devices to reading the print version of trade books” (p. 40). In one study, while the writing scores went up, “On average many of the Accelerated Reader test scores remained the same, with a few showing improvement after using the iPods” (Patten & Craig, 2007, p. 42). In another study, an iPod was used in one group, while the other group read the story aloud. There was no conclusive result from this study about the efficacy of using audiobooks. In the third study reported by Patten & Craig (2007), students studied a text, read the text while listening to the audiobook on the iPod, were involved in enrichment activities about the text, and watched the movie version. It was reported that 90% of the students then passed the Accelerated Reader test about the book (p. 43). It is difficult to determine if their success had anything to do with listening to the audio version of the book. In the fourth study, there proved to be too many students for the number of iPods available, and various other problems, so the teacher donated her iPods to another class. The authors conclude that, partly because iPods are considered “cool” by students, librarians “should be eager to embrace their use as a tool for promoting information literacy” (p. 44). It is unclear how information literacy can be promoted by iPod Shuffles for ELL students.

A study involving kindergarten students, including those from non-English speaking families, who listened “to a recorded story on an iPod Shuffle during daily dedicated silent reading time” (p. 49) was conducted by Boeglin-Quintana & Donovan (2013). The control group was expected to just read silently by themselves for 15 minutes. It is difficult to comprehend how silent reading would be beneficial (or indeed possible) for such young students. The study concludes with the finding that, “students who had access to the iPods did not show significant improvement over their non-iPod classmates” but that it was observed by the researchers that the students using the iPods were more focused during silent reading time than their peers who were “distracted from the reading time by talking and paying attention to things other than their own reading book” (p. 54). The researchers found that, “ELLs gained motivation from being read to in class *with or without the technology*” (emphasis mine) so it is not clear why they conclude that it is “evident that

students at this young age benefitted on many educational levels from the incorporation of technology in their classroom” (p. 54).

University students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) were studied by Chang & Millett (2013) to gauge the effect that extensive listening had on their language learning. They define extensive listening as “a lot of easy, comprehensible, and enjoyable listening practice such as listening to audio books or radio programmes” (p. 31). The authors point out that learning a foreign language after reaching fluency in a first language is usually very different from how a first language is learned when an oral foundation comes before learning to read. When learning a foreign language, “literacy and oral skills are normally introduced at the same time” (p. 32). When they compared the comprehension levels of three different treatments, namely, reading only, reading while listening and listening only, Chang & Millett (2013) found that the reading while listening group performed best on a post treatment comprehension test. They conclude that, “abundant input and consistent practice are [sic] essential to improving listening fluency” (p. 38).

While there are some positive results in studies using audiobooks to support students learning English, audiobooks should not only be seen as a tool to help those learning a language. Audiobooks can also be an enjoyable oral mode of literature for those fluent in the language to which they are listening.

2.5 Read-alouds and storytellers are not audiobooks

Some proponents of the use of audiobooks in education rely on dated research showing the benefits of parents reading aloud to their pre-reader children (e.g. Casbergue & Harris, 1996; Wolfson, 2008; Burkey, 2013). As mentioned above in Section 2.1, Wolfson (2008) claims that, “The benefit of audiobooks for improving reading skills is similar to that of reading aloud” (p. 106) by which he means to “improve fluency, expand vocabulary, activate prior knowledge, develop comprehension, and increase motivation to interact with books” (p. 105). He refers to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985) who argue that reading aloud, especially during preschool, is the most important factor in developing reading success. Burkey (2013) also uses this report by Anderson et al. (1985) to provide support for the educational use of audiobooks (but misnames the authors as Richard Allan et al.). This section of the report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report on the Commission on Reading*,

refers to very dated research conducted by Chomsky (1972), Durkin (1966) and McCormick (1977) and mainly focuses on parents reading aloud to children who were learning to read. However, this report also emphasises that the benefits of an adult reading aloud to a child are “greatest when the child is an active participant, engaging in discussions about stories, learning to identify letters and words, and talking about the meanings of words” (Anderson et al., 1985, p. 23). This research cannot be applied to fluent readers listening on their own to professionally narrated, on-demand audiobooks.

Research involving responsive reader-listener relationships cannot be applied to audiobook listening. The “reciprocal interaction” that occurs when an adult is reading and discussing a book with a child is described by Harvey (2002, p. 49). She explains that when the parent explains the story context, this “collaborative dialogue ... creates an environment of scaffolding” (p. 74). Young children frequently exposed to read-alouds have been shown to make vocabulary gains, as reported in studies reviewed Harvey (2002) who emphasises that dramatic results have been shown “where teachers gave additional explanations regarding unknown words and concepts” (p. 3). Parents who read aloud to children also strengthen emotional attachments (p. 4, 5), so we can see that reading aloud may seem similar to, but is quite different from, children listening to audiobooks alone. When teachers read aloud to a class they “use animated facial expressions, gestures, and dynamic vocal performance; they stop periodically to question students about the text and use discussion to enable students to share their expectations and predictions about the characters and narrative” (Hobbes, 2007, para. 3). A class read-aloud should never be replaced with an audiobook, according to Gamby (1983, p. 367), because “reading aloud by the teacher gives the individual pupil a literary experience which can be shared with the whole class, and the community is strengthened through the teacher’s personal way of reading aloud.” Nevertheless, Hobbes (2007) suggests that teachers who do not feel confident reading fluently to a class, especially if the story includes regional pronunciation, could use audiobooks in a similar way by “pausing to discuss the story every five to fifteen minutes to promote active listening” (para. 5).

While an enthusiastic adult may read to a child for a minimum of ten minutes (e.g. Ozma & Brozina, 2011) and probably a maximum of 30 minutes per day, this duration rarely exceeds the length of time a child can listen to an audiobook. The amount of time spent listening to audiobooks, the lack of conversational scaffolding, the professional nature of the narration and production effects (Brown, 2003; Cahill & Richey, 2015b), the permanence

(Bednar, 2012) and ‘on-demand’ availability of audiobooks differentiates the use of audiobooks from reading aloud. Furthermore, an audiobook can be easily paused or rewound (Friesen, 2008). Additionally, listening to modern audiobooks differs greatly from the Victorian era practice of reading aloud, in the areas of portability, listener control and privacy, where the listener can block out other noises and privately listen to the audiobook through headphones (Rubery, 2008). Modern audiobook technology can now “make close listening a possibility to a degree unheard of for Victorian listeners” (Rubery, 2008, p. 75).

Audiobooks, as defined in Section 1.3.1, are written text presented orally. They are not community stories where storytellers use vernacular language, respond to their audience (Kozloff, 1995; Hall & Thomson, 2010) and use body language to convey meaning (Bednar, 2012, 2010). However, this misconception persists and unfortunately some, like Irwin (2009, p. 359), describe fiction audiobooks as performances that are “much like a one-man play, taking us back to the days of traveling bards and rhapsodes.” Similarly, Burkey (2013, p. 1) insists that, “Audiobooks connect us to literature in its original form, returning the listener to the virtual storyteller’s circle.” However, every verbal telling of a story is different, which disqualifies this format from being compared to a recorded audiobook. Storytelling is usually a social activity but most audiobooks are listened to in private (Bednar, 2010). I agree with Kozloff (1995) when she describes it as “fraudulent” to think of an audiobook as a storyteller because an audiobook narrator is “not a physically-present bard, nor a snugly parent, but a well-paid, highly skilled performer of a text (usually) originally composed for a printed medium” (p. 92).

We are overlooking the unique qualities of audiobook listening if we liken it to adult read-aloud sessions with children or public readings of text. Listening to modern audiobooks is also different in many ways to tribal storytelling events. More research needs to be done that acknowledges the distinctive characteristics of audiobooks.

2.6 Audiobooks are not universally appealing

Many authors of educational publications give the impression that audiobooks are potentially the panacea for eradicating literacy challenges (e.g. Grover & Hannegan, 2005, 2012; Wolfson, 2008; Moyer, 2012; Burkey, 2013) and that they will be appealing for all students. As explained in Section 2.1 above, these, and other publications, claim

unconvincingly that their stance is supported by research. However, audiobooks are not universally appealing. For example, elementary participants in a study by Simkins (2004) found that listening to the digitised voice of some of the essays they read was “boring” (p. 21).

Similarly, in a study by Lo (2009), Grade 5 and 6 students at two international schools in Hong Kong were exposed to an online audiobook service called Naxos Spoken Word Library (NSWL). Users were required to listen to mostly classic stories and nonfiction educational books audiobooks while connected to the Internet. Of the 260 respondents to Lo’s (2009) questionnaires, about half said they had used NSWL during the five month study period. Of those that had used it about a third said they liked listening to audiobooks from NSWL. He concludes that audiobooks do not necessarily motivate students to read.

In a study using Playaways (see Section 1.3.2), Thooft (2011) found that, “In almost every situation, reading satisfaction and motivation declined despite the introduction of audio books as a choice” (p. 27). However, when students were interviewed about leisure reading while listening (when not being tested) some reported that, “‘The audio book allows me to create a better picture in my mind of what I was reading,’ and ‘it allows me to understand and remember the book better’” (p. 30). Interestingly when interviewing students about their preferred reading options (read text alone, read text while listening to the audiobook, or listen to audiobook alone), she found that, “What was one student’s advantage could be cited by another student as a disadvantage” (p. 32). She deduces that it is important to remember that, “Each reader is individual and unique” and teachers should “provide students with all reading options, and teach them the skills necessary for each” (p. 32). She also found that teachers “recognize the advantages and disadvantages of audio books” (p. 4) and while “not totally opposed to using the audio books, [they did] seem to want reassurance that students will continue to read independently and not rely solely on the audio book option” (p. 36). She concludes that teachers should not assume using audiobooks will motivate all students to enjoy reading.

It is tempting to assume that because some students like listening to audiobooks then they will have universal appeal. However, the literature presented in this section shows this is not the case. Research that shows the honest perceptions of students is needed to gain a balanced understanding of the potential of audiobooks in education.

2.7 The need for this research

The research reported in this dissertation aims to reveal the perceptions of students who are self-motivated to listen to audiobooks in their free time. Research that involves listening to audiobooks assigned by a teacher for a short amount of time in class is not applicable. This study involves students who are fluent readers and writers so research about audiobook listeners who are struggling readers or who are learning English also does not apply. Authors who liken audiobook listening to parents reading aloud to a pre-reader child or the physical performance of a storyteller are missing the distinctive attributes of modern digital audiobooks listened to on personal mobile devices.

The review of literature in this chapter has shown a need for research that hears the perspectives of fluent students who are self-motivated to listen to audiobooks in their leisure time. The next chapter introduces my conceptual framework for this research and how I use narrative inquiry methodology to solve the research problem introduced in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I present a conceptual framework for the study, explain how narrative inquiry is the right methodology for a study about perceptions and student ‘voice,’ elaborate the research question, discuss participant selection and then describe how data were collected and analysed. This chapter concludes with a discussion of relevant ethical issues, a description of how authenticity has been demonstrated in this research and limitations inherent in the study.

3.1 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the three most important elements in this study, namely, orality, remediation and self-motivation (see Figure 3.1). First, orality was chosen because audiobooks are an oral form of literature and their use is an “auditory mediated experience in everyday life” (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 5). Second, remediation was deemed important because audiobooks have become a “highly individualized, and mobile medium, adapted to individual needs and uses,” while still similar to a printed book in that they are a “one-to-many medium” that brings “standardized content to an anonymous audience” (p. 3). They should not be considered “a compensatory or second-rate experience” (p. 5). Third, this study is based on respect for student self-motivation. If audiobook listening is viewed from the perspective of students who are self-motivated to experience this modern oral mode of literature, their use can be theoretically positioned at the intersection of orality, remediation and self-motivation. Each of these elements is discussed in detail in this section.

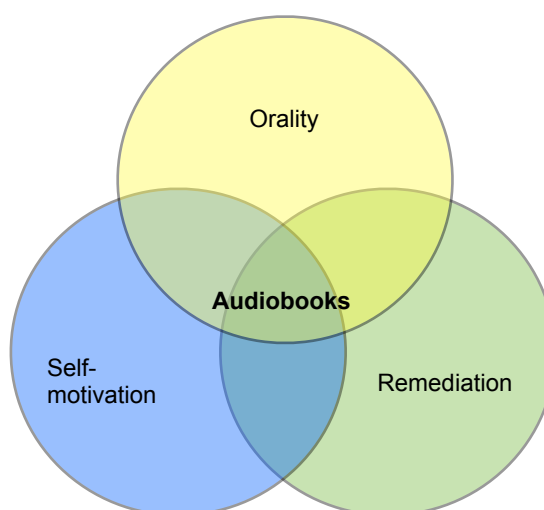


Figure 3.1 Conceptual framework: Audiobooks at the intersection

3.1.1 Orality

Audiobooks' oral interpretation of the print version can be connected to Ong's (1982) theory of 'secondary orality,' as described by Bednar (2010, 2012, 2016). Ong defines 'primary orality' as an oral culture that does not rely on text and 'secondary orality' as a new electronic oral culture, referring to examples of radio and television, that originate from print in some form. With the digital rebirth of audiobooks, listening to stories is again becoming popular, and Bednar (2010) likens this to humans' ancestral history of orality. However, "our ancestors did not have the same freedom of movement when listening that we enjoy, they did not have the library of choices that we have, nor could they hear a story on demand" (Bednar, 2010, p. 84).

Audiobooks enable reading with ears instead of eyes (Have & Pedersen, 2016). Perhaps, like Have & Pedersen (2016) we should not only consider "reading as an ability to decode visual symbolic content, but expand reading to include a decoding of mediated oral narration of literature as well" (p. 149). Audiobooks engage us as readers "not more than the printed book, but in a different way (Bednar, 2010, p. 77). Audiobook listening is a "different, though not necessarily less valid, form of reading" (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 5).

So what can students gain (or what do they lose) when they listen to the oral form of literature over a long time? What is different about this mode of reading? It is still the book that is being experienced as it is "a new kind of orality sustained by electronic devices but depending for its existence and functioning on writing and print" (Bednar, 2012, p. 5). Participants in this study are already fluent readers and writers and so they are familiar with how words are spelled and how punctuation is used. They are capable of reading the same text as they are hearing. Do they perceive that not seeing the print while hearing the story makes them less, or more, capable writers? Listeners may be able to hear more stories than they have time to visually read (e.g. while lying in bed at night, or while traveling) so they are then exposed to more story ideas to help with writing and develop more background knowledge. Audiobook listeners are hearing how language should sound and therefore have a model for verbal fluency that could potentially help in public speaking. Correct pronunciation, not available in the printed form of a story, is modelled by a professional narrator. The correct use of unfamiliar vocabulary could potentially aid learning word meanings in context.

What do participants notice about experiencing this oral form of literature for large amounts of their free time? For example, one of Have & Pedersen's interviewees, who read

the text of an audiobook to which he had listened, described ‘hearing’ the narrator in his head while reading the printed text (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 111). Do preadolescent audiobook listeners gain a different perspective of literature from hearing rather than reading the text? This study aimed to find these answers based on participants’ perceptions.

3.1.2 Remediation

Remediation is defined as “representation of one medium in another” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 45). It should not be confused with the word ‘remedial,’ meaning a remedy to cure a shortcoming. As shown at the start of this section (3.1) this study does not view audiobooks as a reading aide as this research involves fluent readers choosing to listen to audiobooks. Unfortunately the audiobook has too long been considered “compensatory and treated in terms of its ability to make shortcuts or overcome insufficiencies” (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 2). Remediation as used by Bolter & Grusin (2000) means mediation again, or the transformation of one medium into a different medium (Figure 3.2). While this is not new as “texts have always been mediated by technology - from pen on parchment to print on paper to pixels on a screen” (Bednar, 2010, p. 84), digital remediation has become more complex.



Figure 3.2 Remediation: Transformation from paper to digital sound

This complexity arises because the “digital medium wants to erase itself, so that the viewer stands in the same relationship to the content as she would if she were confronting the original medium” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 45). Bolter & Grusin (2000) label this characteristic as ‘immediacy,’ where the technology becomes transparent to the experience and the user forgets that what they are experiencing is not ‘real.’ For example, my own children have said they have become so engrossed in listening to an audiobook that they

forget that what they are experiencing is ‘just a story’ (Section 1.2). The goal for digital technology now is that the interface “would be one that erases itself, so that the user is no longer aware of confronting a medium, but instead stands in an immediate relationship to the contents of that medium” (p. 24).

However, ‘immediacy’ is counterbalanced with what the authors call ‘hypermediacy’ where the technology itself characterises the experience. Bolter & Grusin (2000) explain that, “hypermediacy makes us aware of the medium or media” (p. 34). This ‘hypermediacy’ then is what is valuable because of the medium, or what makes it unique. So how do participants engage with literature differently when they are listening to audiobooks? What is significant about the audiobook listening experience and does that change characteristics of the listeners themselves? Are they more aware of the medium or the message? What impact do surroundings have on audiobook listeners? For example, one of Have & Pedersen’s (2016) interviewees, who listened to audiobooks through headphones (unlike other interviewees who listened on the car audio system) described a more ‘immersed’ experience because she listened in isolation from other auditory stimuli (p. 113). In this example the audiobook has been ‘hypermediated’ to the point where the medium itself is acknowledged by the listener as the reason for the changed experience and the listener can “delight in that acknowledgment” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 42).

This study aimed to find out what preadolescent audiobook listeners notice about the medium itself. I wondered if they thought critically about the story or the narrator, or both. Is the medium important to them? What does the medium enable the listener to do while experiencing it? Through this research I wanted to discover if participants perceive they comprehend a story better in one medium compared to another.

3.1.3 Self-motivation

In this research participants were self-motivated to listen to audiobooks in their free time. There was no coercion to listen. For the purposes of this study self-motivation is uniquely defined as the type of motivation which results in a participant choosing independently to do an activity not assigned by a teacher. In this dissertation, self-motivation is synonymous with intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation can be defined as doing an activity because one wants to, “for its inherent satisfactions ... for the fun or challenge” (Ryan

& Deci, 2000, p. 56). Self-motivation invigorates; it is indicated by higher blood glucose levels and participants perform better on tasks when they are self-motivated (Kazen, Kuhl & Leicht, 2015). No external rewards were offered for participants in my study. It has been demonstrated that, “extrinsic rewards can actually undermine intrinsic motivation” (p. 59).

My view is that modern high-quality downloadable audiobooks might be an appealing way to expose some young people to literature in a way that is compatible with their digitally mobile lives. With recent technological improvements, digital audiobooks have the potential to promote “new reading practices linked to mobile audio listening. This may take place in different situations: in the garden, on the train, when jogging or driving, or before falling asleep” (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 5). The authors interviewed adults who were intrinsically motivated audiobook listeners but there appears to be many similarities with young and mature audiobook listeners especially concerning personal choice and the benefits of a convenient adaptation of literature.

In this study, students self-selected audiobooks and listened to them when and if they wanted. It has been found that to increase reading motivation, students should be given opportunities to self-select books that are interesting to them (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). While not addressing audiobook listening, Scholastic’s 2014 US survey (Scholastic, 2014) and their 2015 UK survey (Scholastic, 2015) showed that children aged 6-17 preferred books that they chose themselves and they were more likely to finish reading self-chosen books. If students were able to self-select from a wide range of top quality audiobooks, and download these to their personal mobile devices, would they choose to be exposed to more literature in their leisure time?

This study aimed to find out the perceptions of participants about their self-motivation to listen to audiobooks. What does this self-motivation look like in practice? However, it has been noted in Section 2.6 that audiobooks are not universally appealing. Can we understand better how some young people choose to listen to audiobooks in their leisure time and some do not find listening appealing? We are experiencing a “digital renaissance of the audiobook” (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 4) and it is time to look at this “individualized mobile audio media” (p. 14) to see how it appeals to some young people as an intrinsically motivated connection with literature.

3.1.4 Conceptual framework and overview

This section has shown how the promotion of digital audiobooks in an educational setting can be viewed conceptually at the intersection of orality, remediation and self-motivation and this has been identified as the study's conceptual framework (Figure 3.1). Figure 3.3 below provides an overview of this study and illustrates where the conceptual framework is positioned. The conceptual framework provides the basis for this study's contribution to practice. The contribution to practice includes applying the findings to improve educators' understanding of organisational structures affecting preadolescents' leisure time audiobook listening. The next section explains how narrative inquiry research is ideal for helping teacher researchers improve their practice in this way.

Engagement with literature has an impact on literacy skills.



Engagement happens when intrinsically motivated.



Educators can facilitate structures to enable students' intrinsic motivation.



Contemporary digital audiobooks provide an oral mode of literature that offers flexibility that may appeal to modern students.



This study offers students' perceptions of their self-motivated engagement with literature through audiobooks.

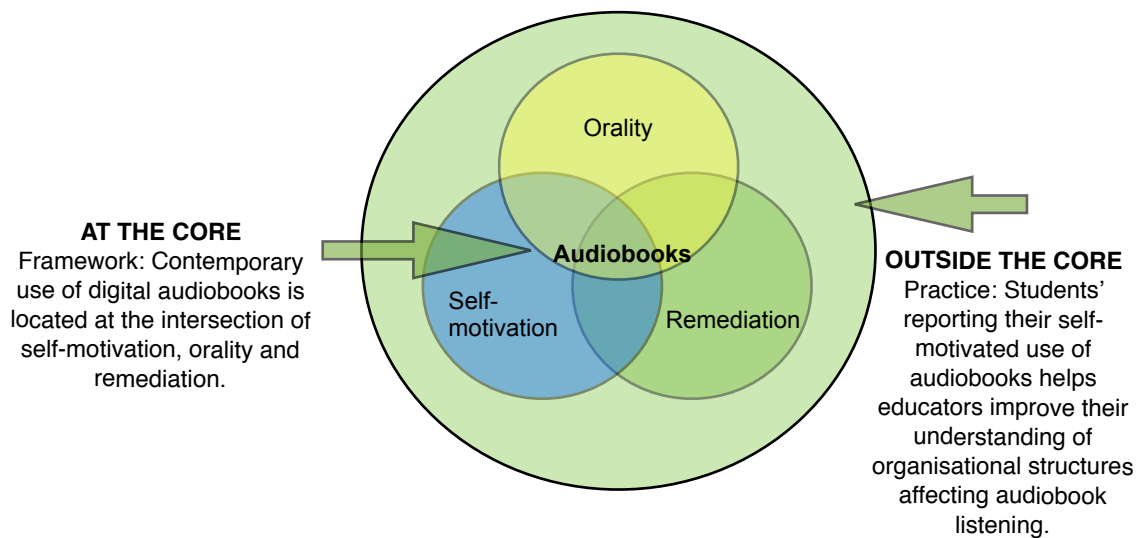


Figure 3.3 Overview: Framework is at the core of practice

3.2 Narrative inquiry and student 'voice' research

Narrative inquiry can be defined as “the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling” (Chataika, 2005, p. 2). This methodology is used to study “the ways humans experience the world” (p. 3) without “reducing people’s experiences to mere statistics (quantitative research)” (p. 5). Barone (2007) agrees that, “most narrative constructions do indeed serve quite different ends than do projects of traditional social science” (p. 464). This “innovative” methodology (Barone, 2007, p. 454) is on the “exploratory edge of educational research” (p. 466) and can give “varied (sometimes even conflicting) renditions of educational phenomena” (p. 465). By using narrative inquiry I aim to represent “the smaller voices” in education that are “in the background - invisible and drowned out by others louder, more dominant, and putatively more deemed legitimate” (Chataika, 2005, p. 4). We are familiar with reading about teachers describing their experiences, but to become better teachers we need to hear from our students too. Barone (2007) explains that, “our aim as researcher-storytellers is not to seek certainty about correct perspectives on educational phenomena but to raise significant questions about prevailing policy and practice that enrich an ongoing conversation” (p. 466).

Narratives “may be oral or written and may be elicited or heard during fieldwork, an interview, or a naturally occurring conversation” (Chase, 2005, p. 652). It is a construction or “a joint production of narrator and listener” (p. 657). Narrative is “one of our most fundamental ways of making meaning from experience” (Thomas, 2012, p. 209) because it reveals participants’ “thoughts, emotions and interpretations” (p. 209). I agree that, “the most interesting features of personal narratives lie in what they tell us about individual thinking or feeling” (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008, p. 5), or their point of view (Chase, 2005). Furthermore, narratives are “socially situated,” and are “produced in this particular setting, for this particular audience, for these particular purposes” (Chase, 2005, p. 657). These individual narratives show “difference and diversity” (Thomas, 2012, p. 212) and therefore cannot be generalised. Narrative researchers “reject the idea that the small number of narratives they present must be generalizable to a certain population” (Chase, 2005, p. 667). In narrative research we are not looking for homogeneousness in a population and this approach is well suited to research that demonstrates individual respect for participants and “highlights the uniqueness of each human action” (Chase, 2005, p. 657).

Narrative inquiry is an ideal methodology to present student perceptions about their education as it aims to “listen to the voices of the unheard and to learn from them in a representation of their voice” (Montero & Washington, 2011, p. 336). Hearing stories from a learner’s perspective can help teachers understand their individual students better (Bell, 2002). Research inquiring about student perceptions or perspectives is often referred to as student ‘voice’ research (Cook-Sather, 2006, 2014; O’Neill, 2014; Wyness, 2012; Fielding, 2004). O’Neill (2014) recommends that researchers “adopt a methodological stance of actively listening to children alongside an ethic of respecting what they say about their lives” (p. 227) because unfortunately “most schools grant students limited voice, even today” (p. 219).

Narrative inquiry is becoming a more popular methodology in educational research (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) but surprisingly, considering its storytelling nature, narrative inquiry has not often been used by literacy researchers (Montero & Washington, 2011). Narrative inquiry is a suitable methodology for this research topic about audiobooks because it can offer “contextually, temporally, and socially rich understandings” (Montero & Washington, 2011, p. 334) and these specific contexts (personal, technological and locational) were described in Chapter 1.

Narrative inquiry works as a methodology for helping educator researchers to understand how organisational structures affect their practice and Thomas (2012) calls these structures “broader institutional and social agendas” (p. 214). Additionally, Squire et al. (2008) describe narratives as a means of expressing and building “personal identity and agency” (p. 6). As shown in Chapter 4, student agency to listen to audiobooks and organisational structures in their educational environment are interrelated and narrative inquiry proved to be an ideal methodology to explore this phenomenon. This interaction and interdependence of agency and structure was surprising to discover as this research unfolded and is a good example of what cannot be predicted in narrative inquiry research. Chase (2005) explains that, “narrative interviewing involves a paradox. On the one hand, a researcher needs to be well prepared to ask good questions that will invite the other’s particular story; on the other hand, the very idea of a particular story is that it cannot be known, predicted, or prepared for in advance” (p. 662).

Narrative research proved to be the most appropriate methodology for this unique research to encourage a conversation about preadolescent perspectives on listening to

audiobooks in their leisure time. Asking their individual perceptions has raised important topics that have not been found in other literature about audiobooks in education.

3.3 The research inquiry

The purpose of this inquiry was to learn from preadolescent students about their perceptions of changes in their literacy practices from listening to audiobooks in their free time. These professionally narrated downloadable audiobooks were made available through the school library and were listened to on the students' own personal mobile listening devices. There was no coercion to listen as this study was about a self-motivated activity that the students chose to do in their free time. It was not assigned by a teacher as part of their school work. Participants were asked about their perceptions of listening to this oral form of literature and how the nature of this technology affected their literary development. These narrative perspectives were then presented to contribute to theory and practice about audiobooks in education.

Thus the research question is: What changes do preadolescent students perceive in their literacy practices from listening to downloaded audiobooks in their free time?

3.4 How participants were selected

As explained in Chapter 1, participants in this study were preadolescent students from an international school in South Korea, where I was working as the elementary school teacher librarian at the time of data collection. Purposive sampling (Palys, 2008) was used to select participants who potentially could help answer the research question. After permission was granted by the then Principal of the school, students in Grades 3 to 5 were introduced to audiobooks in a library class and invited to come and see me, the elementary school teacher librarian, if they were interested in becoming part of a research study. Previously there had been no downloadable audiobooks available in the school library but at the time this research started, the library budget was used to buy some audiobooks from Audiogo in the U.K. (see Appendix D) and these were catalogued and made available to all students, not just the study participants. When interested students came to see me I explained the purpose of the study and asked them a few introductory questions (Appendix A) so that I could better understand their background with audiobooks and their seriousness about participating. Their responses provided some background for me to gauge their access to a personal listening device, the

types of audiobooks they preferred and the likelihood of them making time to listen to audiobooks in their leisure time. Interested students then took assent and consent forms home to discuss with their parents (Appendix B & C). Students who returned signed forms to me became participants.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, data were collected for two school years from September 2012 to June 2014. During the first year of data collection, four students (three boys and one girl) agreed to become participants and received parental consent. At the end of the first year, one additional boy agreed to become a participant and he continued throughout the second year. Including this boy, there were five participants (two girls and three boys) during the second year. One boy was a participant throughout the full two years of data collection. Narrative inquiry methodology usually involves a small number of participants due to the required time commitment by the researcher to interview and transcribe the narratives (Bell, 2002). All participants were fluent English speakers, readers and writers with no identified learning difficulties. Participants were in Grade 4 and 5 during data collection, except for one girl during the first year of data collection who was in Grade 3. Appendix G provides a table of participants, year involved in the study and number of interviews.

This study was designed to be a self-motivated activity and participants were students who volunteered to be involved and keen to listen to audiobooks in their leisure time. Participants were not required to commit to a specified amount of time spent listening. There was no coercion to listen to audiobooks and participants were able to opt out of the study at any time.

3.5 Data collection

Data for this study were collected through frequent semi-structured interviews with student participants. A sample of interview prompts is included in Appendix F. These questions were influenced by my experiences with my own preadolescent children, described in Chapter 1, and my experience as an elementary school teacher librarian. A total of 22 interviews were recorded during the two years of data collection. The number of interviews per participant is provided in Appendix G. All data were transcribed by me into a diary-formatted data archive document. This raw narrative archive of over 100 pages was recorded chronologically and other notes were included to retain context for the interviews and to remind me about what was going on at the time, recalling the point made by Bell (2002) that, “Stories do not exist in a vacuum” (p. 208). Any interviews not audio-recorded were

transcribed as soon after the event as possible and checked with the participant. All interviews were coded with the first letter of the participant's pseudonym and the date the interview occurred so that all information could be cross-referenced. All interview narratives from each participant were then transferred to individual files and kept in date order ready for the analysis presented in the next section.

3.6 Analysis

In this dissertation, analysis is viewed as a way to make sense of the gathered narratives (Bell, 2002; Montero & Washington, 2011). However, the interpretation or analysis of narratives can be “a contentious issue” (Thomas, 2012, p. 213). Researchers can tend to over analyse narratives instead of really listening to what participants have to say (Hendry, 2007). As researchers we should “trust that the teller of stories does not require us to do interpretation to make meaning. Interpretation becomes an act of colonization, of violence” (Hendry, 2007, p. 494). The analysis I have done could best be described as “an act of textual arrangement” (Barone, 2007, p. 456), which is how Barone prefers to describe narrative analysis.

Data analysis for narrative inquiry essentially starts with deciding what to include in the narratives (Leavy, 2011; Saldana, 2011). Initially I included everything that was of any potential interest that I learned from participants and others, however I could only retain what was admissible data in accord with research ethics approval (see Section 3.7). I continuously compared and contrasted each participant's narrative with the others to look for topics to further explore in interviews.

Due to my familiarity with the data, or “data intimacy” (Leavy, 2011, p. 95), through two years of data collection and an additional year of transcribing and arranging the data into various formats, it became apparent that significant themes recurred in the data. “Patterns, categories, and their interrelationships become more evident the more you know the subtleties of the database” according to Saldana (2011, p. 95). Early recognition of these patterns started during data collection when I assigned initial themes (see Appendix F) and then later I extended these to the final fourteen themes and four thematic categories identified at the end of this section. Narrative analysis is a creative process that recognises “patterns and similarities in texts” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 483).

After combining the narratives for each participant and then reading and rereading each participant's combined narrative numerous times, I was able to assign thematic codes to

all pieces of data. Some data segments were labeled with more than one code and so were then cross-referenced in each applicable theme. Unique identifiers (the naming of which is explained in each theme in Chapter 4) such as CRITLIST and LITOMNI (see Figure 3.4), were used as thematic codes so that I could easily use the 'find' function in the word processing software to locate all instances of a particular theme. Qualitative research codes can "often [be] a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). Date identifiers combined with the participant's pseudonym first initial were also assigned for each data segment, and this is also shown in Figure 3.4. For example, J15Oct2013 would mean that the data segment could be traced back to the transcript of an interview on the 15 October 2013 with participant John (pseudonym).

From these individual diary narratives I then collated the data for each thematic code for each of the participants. For example, Figure 3.5 shows all instances of the theme B.4 (VERBALMEM) that appeared in John's narrative. I kept these collations in narrative diary format to retain as much context as possible. Combining the data in this way helped me to more clearly see similarities and differences. I was then able to go back to the individual participant's narratives and ensure that everything was assigned to one of the fourteen themes. When combining themes for all participants I also endeavoured to keep as much context as possible to retain the original meaning. This was not as difficult as I first imagined, primarily because I was the one who alone interviewed and transcribed all interviews and I was very cognisant with what was going on at the time of data collection. Everything from each participant's narrative diaries was included in the combined theme documents, except where I highlighted in blue text that I thought the response from the participant might be invalid (i.e. the participant misunderstood my question, I misunderstood their answer, or their answer was vague). During my interviewing I often asked similar questions about the same topic, to see if I could get consistency of meaning in the narratives.

When collating each thematic document I sometimes found more occurrences of a theme and I would then add the appropriate thematic label to the original narrative and added it to the relative thematic document. I also sometimes found data segments that I realised belonged to a different theme than I had originally allocated and some that did not fit at first into any of the themes and these were assigned as 'other.' After looking through these 'other' segments I later realised that they each could fit into one of the existing fourteen themes. Interestingly, at this time I found that some themes had an opposite and these were included

together in the one theme to present opposing view points. For example, theme C.1 (ADDICTLIST) shows instances of participants being self-motivated to listen to audiobooks in their free time. Conversely, it also includes instances where participants did not show motivation to listen but chose to read paper books instead.

Later it became obvious that these fourteen themes fit into four thematic categories. “Category construction is our best attempt to cluster the most seemingly alike things into the most seemingly appropriate groups” according to Leavy (2011, p. 91). These themes and categories were then triangulated with relevant literature. Finding appropriate literature was a time-consuming and often difficult task because I wanted to be sure to apply an authentic connection and not misapply literature to a completely different context. At this stage I also ensured all participant names were replaced with pseudonyms.

J says that when he listens to audiobooks he writes stories in class that have more expression and emotion. (J15Oct2013) STORYIDEAS including emotion in the stories he writes He says that when he is thinking of ideas to write about, “it’s kind of like the man is speaking in my head, because I remember how he said it, and he gives so much emotion.” (J15Oct2013) STORYIDEAS ideas for stories sound like AB J says that he remembers audiobooks better than he remembers stories he has read. (J15Oct2013) VERBALMEM memory of audio J thinks that, “with audiobooks they add a little bit more,” (J15Oct2013) CRITLIST J compares listening and reading by which I understand that there is an added element of emotion that gives more of an emotional connection that aids memory (J15Oct2013) VERBALMEM additional emotional connection with audio. I asked him if he liked to read the text of the audiobook to which he has listened and he responded that only if he really liked the audiobook would he read the text. (J15Oct2013) LITOMNI read text if liked audio When he read *You’re a bad man Mr Gum* he noticed that the author/narrator didn’t read the audiobook exactly as the text is written, and J gives an example he remembers; (J15Oct2013) CRITLIST (J notices if the narration is different from the text)

Figure 3.4 Excerpt from John’s narrative diary with theme labels added.

VERBALMEM memory of audio

15 Oct 2013

J says that he remembers audiobooks better than he remembers stories he has read (J15Oct2013). I understand from J that there is an added element of emotion that gives more of an emotional connection that aids memory of the audiobook (J15Oct2013). J also believes he has very good verbal memory for both audiobooks and verbal instructions from his teacher; “I listen to many audiobooks and I remember what they said, and I remember what she [his teacher] says, I remember everything.” (J15Oct2013)

10 Dec 2013

After listening repeatedly to the same audiobook, J says that he can actually remember the words spoken by the narrator and how they are spoken. He then gives an example of how the narrator would express a sentence he’s remembered (J10Dec2013). Repeated listening is covered in REPEATLIST.

Figure 3.5 Excerpt from John’s themes combined (e.g. VERBALMEM)

The fourteen themes, with sub-themes, and the four thematic categories, all described in full in the next chapter, were:

- A. Perceived gain (or not) from listening to audiobooks
 - A.1 Audiobooks not helping improve spelling and punctuation (SPELLCHAL)
 - A.2 Audiobooks providing ideas for in-class literacy activities (STORYIDEAS)
 - A.3 Verbal fluency, learning correct pronunciation (VERBALFLU)
 - A.4 Acquiring vocabulary in context from listening to audiobooks (VOCABAC)
- B. Attributes of audiobook listeners
 - B.1 Thinking critically about audiobook listening experience (CRITLIST)
 - B.2 Stories in any mode: audio, text, video (LITOMNI)
 - B.3 Doing other things while listening to audiobooks (or not) (MULTITASKLIST)
 - B.4 Memory of audio (VERBALMEM)
- C. Agency - what is controlled by participants
 - C.1 Self-motivation (or not) to listen to audiobooks (ADDICTLIST)
 - C.2 Keen to listen to the same story repeatedly (REPEATLIST)
- D. Organisational structures - what is outside participants' control
 - D.1 Influence of parents, classroom teacher and teacher librarian (ADULTINFL)
 - D.2 How audiobooks are promoted in a school library (ADVERTIZ)
 - D.3 Roles of peers in audiobook listening (PEERINFL)
 - D.4 Technology challenges (TECHCHAL)

As shown in Figure 3.6 these four thematic categories can be aligned with the elements of the conceptual framework discussed in Section 3.1. How these are aligned is discussed in detail, with reference to each category, in the next chapter. Briefly, category A, participants' perceived gain (or not) from listening to audiobooks, is aligned with the concept of orality (Section 3.1.1). From the perspective of orality, the discussion of category A themes reveal what the participants perceived was gained (or lost) through their exposure to this oral form of literature. Category B, the characteristics shown by participants who listen to audiobooks in their free time, is aligned with the concept of remediation (Section 3.1.2). Category B themes enable an analysis of the significant attributes participants display because of this transformation of literature from one medium into another. Category C, agency as expressed by the participants, is shown to be aligned with the concept of intrinsic or self-motivation (Section 3.1.3). An examination of Category C themes, reveals, from their own perspectives, how some young people display their self-motivation as they listen to

audiobooks in their leisure time. Finally, category D, represents this study’s contribution to practice by showing, from the point of view of the participants, the organisational structures that educators should be aware of that enable or constrain preadolescent students’ self-motivated engagement with audiobooks.

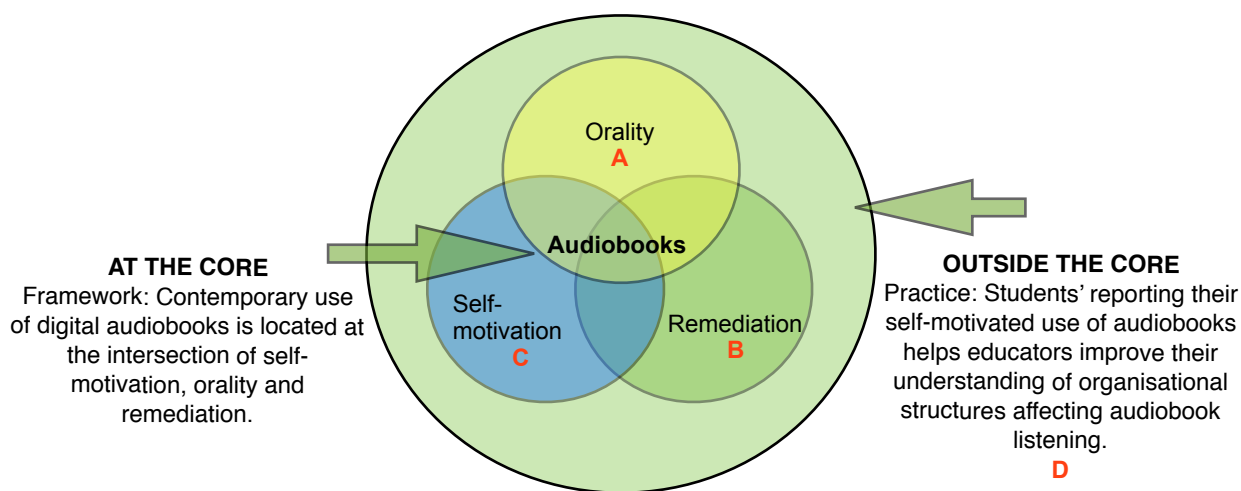


Figure 3.6 Thematic categories aligned with framework and practice

3.7 Ethics

UNE Ethics approval was received to collect data for two years (see Appendix E) after receiving child assent forms (Appendix B) and parent consent forms (Appendix C). All participant names are pseudonyms. Research involving students can be “fraught with ethical consideration” because of “issues of power, inclusion, representation, and critical awareness” (Cook-Sather, 2014, p. 137). Inherently qualitative research is messy and ethically, “a definitive, preoutlined approach for managing human affairs is not always beneficial” (Adams, 2008, p.178). Research that represents the perspectives of students views children as “competent social agents” but as O’Neill (2014, p. 219) explains, “for historical and cultural reasons institutional research ethics procedures commonly assume that children are not.” He then explains why “we should reconsider taken-for-granted limitations on children’s voice and agency in educational research” (p. 220). He reminds us that, “in a just society, all members, including children have equivalent rights” (p. 228). While teachers and students perform different roles in an educational setting we need to remember that we are interdependent (Wyness, 2012); The one role would not exist without the other.

I believe that ethics is fundamentally about ongoing respect, primarily the respect that I show the participants in my research. Ethical research to me is applying the ‘Golden Rule,’

or, ‘if I was a participant how would I like to be treated and represented in this research?’ In narrative research, “People are acknowledged and valued, not objectively mined for data” (Adams, 2008, p. 186). However, there are “no definitive rules or universal principles that can tell you precisely what to do in every situation or relationship you may encounter, other than the vague and generic ‘do no harm’” (Ellis, 2007, p. 5). I aim to do some good as a researcher and to show respect for our students. I agree that, “our studies should lead to positive change and make the world a better place” (Ellis, 2007, p. 25).

There are three types of ethics (Ellis, 2007, p. 4), firstly, “procedural ethics” that are regulated by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), secondly, “situational ethics” that are the unexpected ethical events that occur during research, and thirdly, “relational ethics” which covers interpersonal respect for participants, similar to what I described in the previous paragraph. Ellis (2007, p. 14) asks researchers, “How do we honor our relational responsibilities yet present our lives in a complex and truthful way for readers?” I try to live my life openly, so what I say to others about my research could be overheard by the participants and I imagine that they would not be offended and, possibly, proud to be the source of knowledge for adults, especially teachers. Similarly, I have anecdotally included some of the content of this research in casual conversations with teachers and students at the school. I have also informally talked to some of the parents of participants about what I have learned from their children and they have not seemed surprised, but rather confirmed my understanding with their own perceptions. It is not in the scope of this research, nor within ‘procedural ethics,’ to include these other adult conversations in this dissertation, but these conversations have reassured me that what I reveal in this paper would not be offensive to anyone, and would rather promote student participants as valuable informants that can potentially contribute to improved understanding of educators. I have written this dissertation with the mindset that everyone in this story may read it (Ellis, 2007).

3.8 Authenticity

Authenticity is about “plausibility, credibleness, or trustworthiness” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 477) and is also synonymous with validity and reliability. In narrative inquiry research, “validity relates specifically to personal meaning drawn from stories, not to an observable, measurable truth” (Thomas, 2012, p. 216). Validity is about the believability of a knowledge claim (Polkinghorne, 2007), or, the reader asking, ‘Is there sufficient evidence to

cause the reader to believe the research?’ While not objective, this research aims to be truthful, accurate, honest and reliable (Caulley, 2008).

In this research authenticity is demonstrated in several ways. Firstly, providing the reader with sufficient context and describing how the researcher’s background experiences influenced the research (Chapter 1) contributes to research validity (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 478). Furthermore, I have included excerpts from the data archive file (Figure 3.4, 3.5) in all the results and will gladly provide the full data archive file if requested. Data can then be cross-referenced to the original interview if required. Moreover, iteration (Polkinghorne, 2007) was used during the interview process to check meaning with participants. I asked similar questions repeatedly over several interviews to see if I correctly understood participants’ meaning, or if their perceptions changed since we last interviewed. Additionally, findings have been triangulated with relevant literature in Chapter 4. Validity can be achieved in narrative inquiry research by “comparing and contrasting assembled stories with one another or with other forms of social science literature” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 483). This triangulation, or “obtaining agreement or disagreement from sources” is a “a criterion of rigor” (Caulley, 2008, p. 445). Moreover, authenticity is achieved by demonstrating transparency about the analysis process. The steps taken to analyse the data have been provided in detail (Section 3.6) so that if a reader wished to do similar research they could follow the same procedure. “Readers should be able to retrace the steps” taken by the researcher (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 484). Validity in narrative inquiry research “requires evidence in the form of personally reflective descriptions in ordinary language and analyses using inductive processes that capture commonalities across individual experiences” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 475).

This narrative inquiry approach to research, while not objective, presents the process and findings transparently and honestly. As outlined in this section, a variety of techniques have been applied to ensure this research is authentic and trustworthy.

3.9 Limitations

As explained above, narrative research tells the stories of individuals’ experiences so the results cannot be generalised (Thomas, 2012). Readers looking for generalisations may see this as a limitation of the methodology but even large populations are not homogeneous and one of the purposes of this research was to show the individuality of student perspectives. Educators and students know that one size does not fit all in education. Every day we are

confronted by experiences that demonstrate how each of us are individuals with our own perspectives. The purpose of this research was to try to understand individual perspectives better and to use this knowledge to motivate us to provide more individualised educational experiences for our students.

The focus on student perceptions in this study reflects one of the study aims, that is, to represent student voices so often underrepresented in educational decisions. This study also only included participants who are fluent English speakers, readers and writers, with no identified learning difficulties. The context of an international school, where many students do not identify with just one nationality and are multi-lingual, further individualises the research data. Another criticism of narrative research is the typically small sample size; however this also supports another aim of this research, which is to look deeply into individual lives without generalising across a larger population.

It is both limiting and unique that qualitative research is always deeply rooted in context. Each narrative researcher “filters his or her writing through his or her own values” (Caulley, 2008, p. 444). My values and my contexts, as explained in Chapter 1, provide a boundary around this research. Another individual doing similar research would be limited in the same way by their own values and contexts. So while not objective, this research has aimed to be truthful, accurate, honest and reliable (Caulley, 2008), as described above.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has explained the conceptual framework used in this investigation of self-motivated audiobook use by preadolescent students. The conceptual framework locates this type of audiobook use at the intersection of orality, remediation and self-motivation in education. This chapter introduced narrative inquiry as a suitable methodology for studying student perceptions and, thus, for answering the research question. In this chapter the processes for selecting participants and collecting and analysing data were also presented. A discussion of ethical issues, research authenticity and limitations inherent in the study concluded the chapter. The next chapter shows how the data have been analysed to generate findings which align with the conceptual framework and which can be interpreted in ways that contribute to educational practice.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this chapter, the data in the fourteen themes, described in the previous chapter, is presented. This chapter shows that these themes fit into four thematic categories, namely, perceived gain (or not) from listening to audiobooks (A), attributes of audiobook listeners (B), agency or what is controlled by participants (C) and organisational structures or those elements outside participants' control (D). These can be aligned with the elements of the conceptual theory and the study's contribution to practice, as explained in Section 3.6 and illustrated in Figure 3.6. To show transparency in the analysis process, I have included the original thematic identifiers in both this results chapter and the mandala graphic below (Figure 4.1). These correlate with the excerpts from the data archive shown in the previous chapter (Figure 3.4 and 3.5).

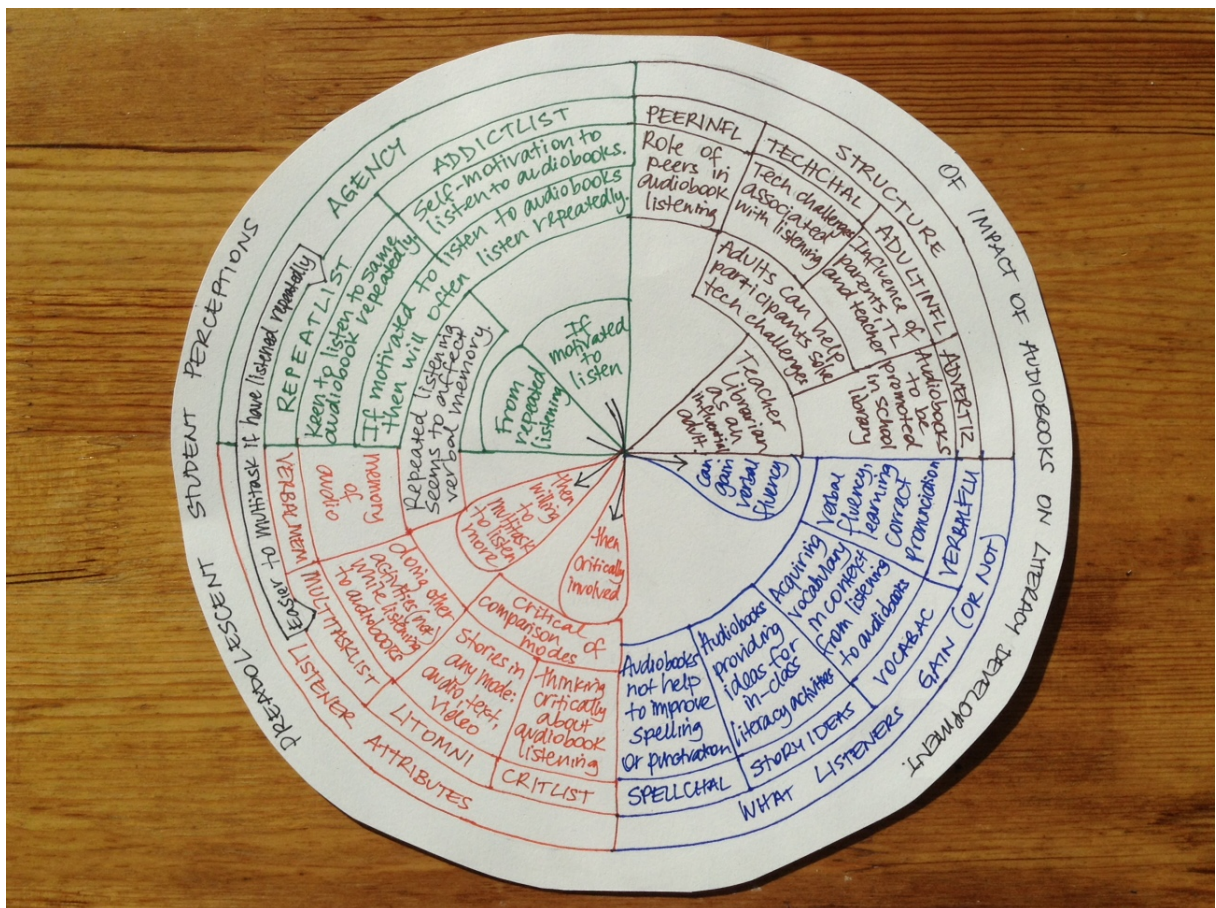


Figure 4.1 A mandala is used to symbolise the completeness of the research data and shows how themes are interconnected but also fit into four main thematic categories.

A. Thematic category: Perceived gain (or not) from listening

It is likely that hearing formal language spoken fluently for extensive periods of time is beneficial to preadolescents' literacy development. Countless articles in educational journals, websites and books proclaim the multiple benefits of listening to audiobooks (e.g. Grover & Hannegan, 2005, 2012; Wolfson, 2008; Moyer, 2012; Burkey, 2013) but often refer to anecdotal reports or misapplied research on the topic (Cahill & Richey, 2015a & 2015b), as explained in the literature review of this dissertation (Chapter 2). My research shows a more tempered version of the benefits of audiobook listening, from the perspective of preadolescent student participants.

Perceived gain (or not) from listening has much to do with audiobooks being an "auditory mediated experience" (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 5) as described in Chapter 3. Additionally, Bednar's (2012) description of digital audiobooks as "as a new kind of orality sustained by electronic devices" (p. 5), referring to Ong's (1982) explanation of 'secondary orality,' helps contextualise some of the students' perceptions of audiobooks. For example, if we read with "ears instead of with the eyes" (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 14) we are not likely to improve spelling and punctuation, however, as this theme shows, some insightful participants acknowledged that reading text is not automatically the best way to improve these literacy skills either. Participants perceived that they developed ideas for writing stories just as well from listening to audiobooks as reading text and they also got story writing ideas from watching movies, and even from their dreams. This thematic category shows that experiencing the oral mode of literature was perceived by students as an aid to learning correct pronunciation, developing verbal fluency and hearing vocabulary used in context. This thematic category focuses on orality as described in the conceptual framework (see Figure 4.2 below).

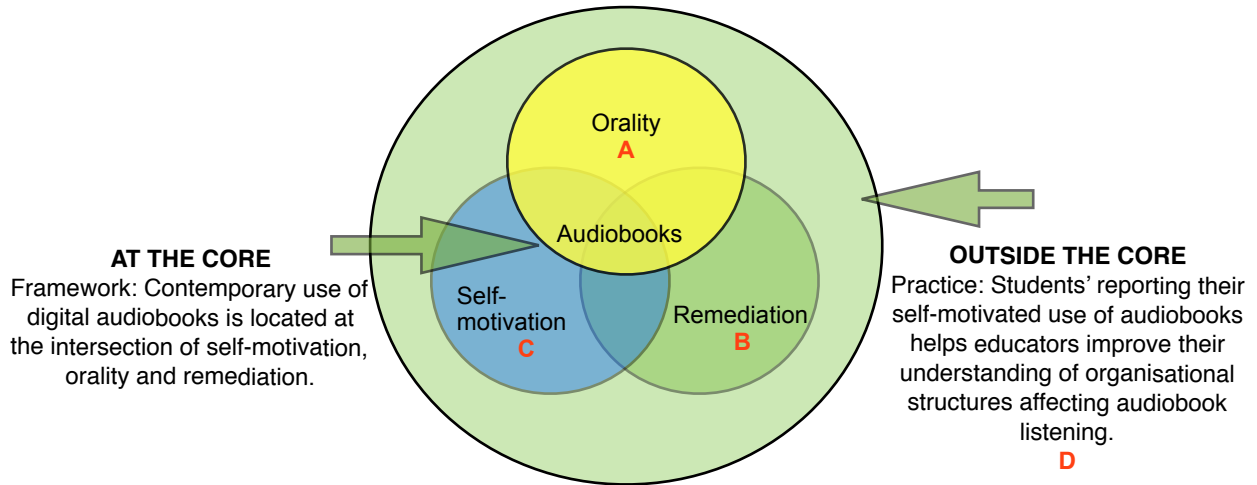


Figure 4.2 Conceptual framework: Focus on orality

A.1 Effect on spelling and punctuation (SPELLCHAL)

Three participants elicited perceptions about the effect that listening to audiobooks had on their spelling and punctuation development. This theme was identified as SPELLCHAL to indicate the challenge to spelling (and punctuation) that some participants expressed.

During this research John developed an obvious preference for listening to audiobooks over reading text but he still thought that listening to audiobooks does not help improve his spelling and punctuation. John’s impression was that his teachers wanted him to read text to see how the words are spelled and when to use punctuation (J20May2014). Similarly, when I asked Lewis if he thought listening to audiobooks helped him with his school work he said, “I think reading would probably make it better for me, vocabulary, spelling” and he did not think audiobooks helped with spelling (L23Oct2013). However, when I asked Lewis to compare reading text to listening to audiobooks he said, “When I’m reading the words just pop into my head, I don’t really take the punctuation in. It’s the words, I don’t know why, they shoot into my eyes and I don’t really know, I immediately know them” (L26May2014). Lewis made a very valid point when he explained that when he is reading text he is not taking much notice of punctuation because his reading “just creates the emotion in my head. If I’m really just looking at the punctuation then I’m not really getting the story in my head.” So listening to audiobooks may not help with punctuation and spelling, but from what Lewis said, there is no guarantee that reading text does either (L26May2014).

Mark thought that his mother would like him to read text as well as listen to audiobooks “because if you’re only reading audiobooks then you don’t learn the spelling of the words” (M25Oct2013). The influence of a parent is covered in theme D.1 (ADULTINFL). However, Mark also made an astute point when he said, “If you do read it’s easier to skip [the punctuation], things like a comma, question mark or a sentence, or who is saying it” (M26May2014). Mark’s meaning was that a reader is not necessarily going to notice punctuation or spelling if they are reading rapidly and do not stop and focus on those elements. A reader is usually reading for comprehension, for the story meaning, and so Mark thought that reading text would not necessarily help improve a reader’s spelling or punctuation skills.

Mark showed he was aware of the effect that punctuation has on a narrator’s delivery of an audiobook when he said, “If you’re listening they always make sure they stop at a comma or punctuation, makes a certain voice so that it sounds like a question” (M26May2014). Mark pointed out that a professional narrator would take more notice of correct punctuation so that the story is read well, but a reader of text can often read punctuation incorrectly, but still understand the overall meaning of the story.

Summary of theme A.1

Three participants mentioned that listening to audiobooks did not help with their spelling and punctuation skills, however, as two of these participants explained, reading text does not necessarily help either. In one study, some students who had a reasonable comprehension of written text were found to not be good spellers (Jackson & Doellinger, 2002). Two participants in my study mentioned that they thought their teachers or parents preferred them reading text because they perceived it as a way of learning spelling and punctuation. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find any research on the connection between spelling and reading that does not involve dyslexia. None of the participants in my research had any identified learning difficulties.

A.2 Story ideas from listening (or not) (STORYIDEAS)

Humans as lovers of story (Gottschall, 2012). Part of the attraction of listening to audiobooks is that it is another way to experience stories. Quoting Don Katz, Audible's

founder and CEO, Alter (2013) writes that the audiobook consumer is someone who “doesn't think of the difference between textual and visual and auditory experience” but focuses on the delivery of story in any mode (para. 10). Ideas we hear from stories can inspire us to include these stories in ones we write or tell ourselves, hence the name of this theme.

Participants in my research said that listening to audiobooks gave them ideas for writing stories in class. For example, John said he had more story ideas from listening to audiobooks and explained, “Before [listening extensively to audiobooks in his free time] it would take me a while, but now it is just so quick, like that,” and he clicked his fingers, “and I know what story I should write” (J5Feb2013). John said that when he listens to audiobooks he writes stories in class that have more expression and emotion (J15Oct2013). He explained that when he is thinking of ideas to write about, “it's kind of like the man is speaking in my head, because I remember how he said it, and he gives so much emotion” (J15Oct2013). John thought that the stories he wrote in class, before listening to audiobooks, “weren't really good, and didn't have so much creative stuff.” He said that watching movies and listening to audiobooks is “kind of similar” in that both give him ideas when writing stories in class. John thought that listening to audiobooks made him write better. He said it makes his “handwriting” better but what he meant was that when he writes stories by hand in class, they are better stories (J15Oct2013). I then questioned him about any changes that he noticed in his class work, after listening to audiobooks and he replied, “Yes, I had a dream similar to *Grk*,” an audiobook series, “and a part of other movies I have watched. So I had written that down on a piece of paper so it is a story now” (J11Mar2014). Later, John voluntarily came to me again to tell me, “I get more ideas when I listen to audiobooks. The more I listen, the more ideas I get from stories. Every night I at least dream of something I listen to. If I listen to more different audiobooks at the same time I get more of a mixed story. I get more writing ideas from stories” (J26May2014).

Lewis said that listening to audiobooks has “definitely” helped with language usage and expressing imagination, beliefs, thoughts and “way of thinking about the world.” When he listens to dragon stories he thinks that maybe there could be a world of dragons. This also happens when he is watching movies (L13May2013). The comparison of different modes of story is covered in B. 2 (LITOMNI). Lewis said that both listening to audiobooks and watching movies helps him get ideas for story writing. He sees the story, not the mode, as the medium for conveying ideas and changing the way he thinks about “the

world” (L13May2013). Lewis talked to me about how he was planning to write a book and he had ideas and pictures drawn in a notebook that he brought to show me. His ideas were influenced by books that he had read, audiobooks to which he had listened (e.g. Douglas Bader’s biography) and the movie *The Red Baron* (L9Dec2013).

Mark explained that audiobooks, “give me what the people are thinking and gives me a good idea about ways they express it.” He said that listening to audiobooks, “gives me ideas ...” and new vocabulary (M25Oct2013), which is covered in A.4 (VOCABAC). Mark said that he uses what he learns in audiobooks in his school work and explained, “I sometimes use names [of the characters] and sometimes use places and describing words and sometimes I take actions I’ve heard and kind of like fit it into another story. For example, if I’m hearing a book I really like, then I take the characteristics from that book, and put it into another book to make it the way I like it” (M26May2014).

Vera said that her in-class writing has been influenced by audiobooks to which she has listened and said, “In our class we are making a new story and before I based it on another story in the library and now I’m basing it on Rose [*Tumtum*] and *Nutmeg* audiobook. I get ideas from both places” (V18Oct2013). Vera thought that a reader could get through more books by listening to the audio versions than the paper versions, and then that person would get more story ideas because they are familiar with more books (V18Oct2013). I asked Vera if she could think of an audiobook that she has used in class and she replied, “In *Tumtum and Nutmeg* they were trying to take something, so in my story two other characters were trying to take something. So I just put twists in them, in my stories there will be different settings, but the same type of point.” She adds, “I kind of hear an audiobook [in my head]” when writing a story in class (V18Oct2013). Later Vera confirmed that, she gets “inspired by books and I take lots of books and I put them together and then make my own story.” She said that some of those ideas might have been from audiobooks too (V29May2014). Vera made a very good point that there is potential for an audiobook listener to be exposed to more stories which in turn exposes them to more story ideas that could be used for writing.

Conversely, one month into the data collection period, Beth said that she had not noticed that her listening to audiobooks was helping with her school work much and she said, “I don’t think it affects a lot of stuff” (B22Oct2013). Frank also viewed audiobooks as not being helpful to his school work but viewed listening as just a relaxing activity (F4Dec2012). Self-motivation to do something relaxing is discussed in C.1 (ADDICTLIST). However, two

months later, Frank did say that listening to audiobooks helps him learn new vocabulary (F4Feb2013) which is included in A.4 (VOCABAC).

Summary of theme A.2

Stories in any mode can inspire us to create more stories. Students learn about story writing from listening to stories. Some participants described their own writing process as hearing a silent narrator tell them a story and then they wrote it. They said they got story ideas, not only from audiobooks, but movies, books and one participant mentioned his dreams. One advantage of listening to audiobooks could be the opportunity to be exposed to more stories than one has time to read, or in situations where it is not convenient to read (see B.3). The more stories inside, the more potential writing ideas.

A.3 Verbal fluency and pronunciation (VERBALFLU)

Professionally narrated audiobooks are popularly seen as a model of verbal fluency (hence the name of the theme) and correct pronunciation (e.g. Cardillo et al., 2007; Burkey, 2013). Participants in my study agreed and they perceived that audiobooks helped them with public speaking and knowing how to pronounce words correctly. Lewis said that audiobooks, reading and watching movies have all helped him make better speeches (L23Oct2013). Beth said that audiobooks have helped her with pronunciation and explained that sometimes, when she has only read a word, she may pronounce it incorrectly (B22Oct2013). John noticed the verbal fluency of narrators and explained, “When he’s actually speaking, and has a full stop, he is giving me an example of how to do a full stop. So later when I read, and it comes to a full stop, I know how to do it.” Bomer (2006, p. 528) explains that, “One of the resources successful readers draw on as they read is the way language is supposed to sound.” Prosody, or the sound of language, needs to be right for us to draw meaning and understand the structure in what we read (Mira & Schwanenflugel, 2013). John said that when he reads text silently he tries to make it sound like an audiobook is playing in his head (J15Oct2013). John also thought that listening to audiobooks has helped him feel more comfortable when speaking in public and he explained a situation that happened in his Grade 4 class the previous year:

I remember I was really shy about my weekly talk but after I listened [to audiobooks] I improved a lot and once when we did a project, I made bullet points and then I explained it, instead of writing all the details like the others. Everyone else wrote all the words but I just wrote the bullet points and the picture for an example and then I had so many questions in the end and I answered them straight away and didn't say, 'um ... ah,' not like that, I just answered straight away (J15Oct2013).

Later he added that listening to audiobooks "makes me have more confidence with speaking out loud, being more funny" (J15Oct2013).

When I asked John if his parents had said anything about his audiobook listening he responded, "Yes, before my friends were always saying, 'like ... like ... like' but my mum says not to do it anymore, plus when I listen to audiobooks [the narrator] doesn't do it and I feel more confident to not [say] 'like ... like.'" The support of parents is included in D.1 (ADULTINFL). At the end of the interview he added, "Since I've started listening to audiobooks, the way I read is getting better. Because my articulation is better, the way I pronounce and my volume to speak" (J11Mar2014). John pointed out that, for words with which he is unfamiliar, the audiobook gives the correct pronunciation and he said, "I can hear how to say it and when I read it I get a bit confused but when I hear someone saying it then I know how to say it" (J20May2014). Later John reiterated that listening to audiobooks has helped him a lot with his public speaking, "In the beginning I was really shy to present but when I actually present I have good articulation and I speak loud so everyone can hear and I don't go 'ah, um'" (J20May2014). Vera also agreed that listening to audiobooks has helped her use less filler words when she is speaking in public, "Yes, I did public speaking with my family and [at] some concerts, and it actually affects it and I don't use [filler words] 'like, this ...'" (V18Oct2013).

Vera made the important point that the pronunciation in audiobooks may be regional so that if, for example, an American was listening to a British narrator, they might consider some words to be pronounced incorrectly. She admitted that she sometimes does not know the 'correct' way to pronounce a word as she has been exposed to so many varying accents (V29May2014). Participants' critical evaluation of narrator accents is included in B.1 (CRITLIST). A narrator can act like a translator (Yokota & Martinez, 2004), with audiobooks providing authentic cultural characterisation by using correct accent and pronunciation of place names. The authors point out that with multicultural literature teachers sometimes do not feel comfortable with reading aloud because of the chance of mispronunciation. This could be a powerful argument for the use of audiobooks in class when discussing culturally

diverse literature. It is important for audiobook production companies to find narrators who can speak the languages represented in a book (Burkey, 2013).

Lewis also said that audiobooks have helped him learn the correct pronunciation for character names and other words with which he is not familiar (L23Oct2013). He perceived that audiobooks, reading and watching movies have all helped him make better speeches (L23Oct2013). Lewis said that of these three modes of literature, audiobooks are best at helping with “speaking, pronunciation and stuff like that” (L23Oct2013). In discussing pronunciation Mark said, “I think that’s where [audiobooks] help the most, because in books there might be a hard word [but] after listening to audiobooks you know how it sounds” (M25Oct2013). He used the example of “reading” the *Harry Potter* audiobooks and said, “they are better at using expression than [me]” (M10Mar2014). Mark explained that an audiobook narrator will just keep going even if there is a word the listener does not understand but if Mark is reading and he comes to a word he does not understand he will stop and go back over it again. He explained, “The person who is reading it they don’t keep stopping, so I don’t have to wait so long,” by which he means he does not have to wait so long to understand the meaning of the word in context (M10Mar2014). This point is covered in A.4 (VOCABAC) and shows that Mark thinks the narrator is modelling fluent verbal delivery.

Summary of theme A.3

Participants found that listening to professionally narrated audiobooks provided an excellent model of verbal fluency, semantic prosody and taught them correct pronunciation. Listening to audiobooks in their free time encouraged participants to use of less filler words in their conversations and become more polished public speakers. Audiobooks were perceived to be helpful in learning regional pronunciation, character and place names.

A.4 Acquiring vocabulary in context (VOCABAC)

Most participants said that listening to audiobooks has helped them acquire new vocabulary in context (hence the name of the theme). It has been found that, “measures of vocabulary consistently emerge as strong predictors of listening and reading comprehension across the developmental span” (Hogan et al., 2014, p. 202). Print material usually contains

more low frequency words, although this is not necessarily true for comics and other popular print media, so reading large amounts of text can “provide key opportunities for advancement in vocabulary development” (Duff, Tomblin & Catts, 2015, p. 854). John also found this to be true when listening to audiobooks and explained, “Sometimes I hear different kinds of words that I don’t normally hear when people are speaking to me, but they say it in the audiobook.” He then gave the example of ‘din’ (J5Feb2013). Vera also said that audiobooks “have new words and I look for the new words and I find out the meaning. Oh, I could use this word in my story or I could use it to tell everyone this” (V18Oct2013). Similarly, Lewis thought that listening to audiobooks has helped him learn new words (L23Oct2013) and he usually asks his mother the meaning of the word and then when he reads it he knows it, and he can use it in his writing tasks in class (L13May2013). Beth also said that in audiobooks, “there were some words you don’t hear everyday and then your teacher says a word no one knows, and you say, ‘I know that word’” from listening to an audiobook (B22Oct2013). Frank gave the example of ‘lunatic’ for a word he learned and then he recognised it again when he heard it in an audiobook (F4Feb2013). He said he had not thought much about new words he learned from listening to audiobooks until I asked him about it in our interviews (F4Feb2013). The interviewing process as a catalyst for critical reflection is covered in B.1 (CRITLIST).

Studies related to reading text, not audiobook listening, show “repeated exposure” to new words in various contexts is a more efficient way of learning the meanings of new words than looking them up in a dictionary, for example (Nippold, Duthrie & Larsen, 2005, p. 94). John confirmed, “Yes, I’ve learned a few new words that I hadn’t heard of before, but I seem to forget them every so often, but then when I hear them I remember” (J20May2014). I asked how he finds the meanings of new words, and he answered that he keeps listening and assumes the meaning from the context of the story (J20May2014). John gave the example of the word ‘explosion’ and said, “then I listen and [the narrator says] ‘the whole building was grey and black and papers were flying around’ and then I can easily think what was an explosion” (J20May2014). I asked him if he uses these new words again in his class writing assignments and he replied, “When I speak, I use those words sometimes, for example ‘assume’ and sometimes when I write I also use those words” (J20May2014). Earlier John had said that when he hears a new word while listening, “I write the word how I think it is and then I search it up [on the Internet] and then I know how it is” (J15Oct2013).

Mark also said that listening to audiobooks “help you if you don’t understand a word. If I don’t understand a word [when reading text] then I will read and stop in the middle of the sentence and then start over again and soon as I go on after a little while I find out what it means, but the person who is reading it they don’t keep stopping, so I don’t have to wait so long” (M10Mar2014). This fluent verbal delivery was also covered in A.3 (VERBALFLU). Mark found it useful to listen and follow along with the text so that he could see a new word at the same time as he heard how it was pronounced. I asked him how he figured out the meaning of a new word and he said, “Well, if it’s a good book that I’m listening to, it will describe it well” (M26May2014).

While not addressing audiobook listening, Duff et al. (2015) found in their longitudinal study of students that, “Vocabulary growth rate differences accumulated over time such that the effect on vocabulary size was large” (p. 853). The authors looked at the cumulative or ‘Matthew effect’ of vocabulary learned from text starting from Kindergarten, then again when participants were in Grade 4, 8 and 10. Their study found “that the strong readers made greater vocabulary gains relative to the average and weak readers. In the language of the Matthew effect, the rich were getting richer due to their better reading, but the poor were not getting poorer due to their weak reading” (Duff et al., 2015, p. 861). They call this a “one-sided Matthew effect” (p. 861) and they give possible reasons why weak readers did not get weaker but they were unable to test these ideas in their study (for example, there were possible interventions for weaker readers that were not recorded). However, it was clear that, “above average readers experienced a higher rate of vocabulary growth than did average readers” (p. 853).

Many articles and books say that audiobooks can help students learn new vocabulary (e.g. Grover & Hannegan, 2005, 2012; Clark, 2007; Wolfson, 2008; Burkey, 2013). However, learning new vocabulary from print will not happen until readers become capable of reading words they do not hear in everyday speech which is usually around Grade 3 or 4 (Duff et al., 2015). This is also the stage in a child’s development that their listening comprehension begins to match the level of their reading comprehension (Diakidoy et al., 2005). As audiobooks are the printed words presented orally, vocabulary development then is not dependent on reading ability. The participants in my research were fluent readers and writers and primarily in Grade 4 and 5 at the time of the study. Kate was a fluent reader and writer and in Grade 3 at the time of this research. It can be assumed that participants in my study

would have been learning new vocabulary from both reading text and listening to audiobooks. It could be surmised then that increasing exposure to literature through audiobooks could have a ‘Matthew effect’ enabling participants to access more literature (Gee, 2012).

Summary of theme A.4

Participants in my research said that they learned new vocabulary from listening to audiobooks and that they used this vocabulary in other contexts. It would be reasonable to extrapolate from Duff et al.’s (2015) research that listening to audiobooks also has the potential to contribute to a ‘Matthew effect’ (Stanovich, 1986) of vocabulary development for preadolescent audiobook listeners.

Summary of thematic category A and alignment with orality

Preadolescent student participants said they have much to gain from listening to professionally narrated audiobooks. This theme aligns with orality in the conceptual framework shown in Figure 4.2. Participants said that audiobook listening does not help them improve spelling or punctuation, both of which are not important to an oral culture. However, audiobooks rely on a printed source, and the narrator certainly relies on the correct spelling and punctuation to be able to read the text. Participants also perceived that they gathered story ideas from listening to audiobooks, which would also be the case with an oral culture, and participants said these ideas were then used in their class story writing and public speaking. Learning correct pronunciation and modelling verbal fluency, relying less on filler words, are also qualities that could be aligned with orality and these are included in the findings of this category. Participants added that listening to audiobooks helped them understand vocabulary in context, which occurs in both oral and print cultures.

B. Thematic category: Attributes of audiobook listeners

The data revealed surprising characteristics about the participants as audiobook listeners. These preadolescents showed remarkable maturity in their critical thinking about the audiobook listening experience, some were shown to be true ‘literary omnivores’ (see theme

B.2) keen to immerse themselves in story regardless of mode, usually multitasking while listening and some showed exceptional verbal memory for the story and narration.

These characteristics of audiobook listeners correlate with the discussion in the conceptual framework (see Figure 4.3) that audiobooks ‘remediate’ literature (Bolter & Grusin, 2000) in a way that, “transforms the act of reading” (Bednar, 2012, p. 5). Audiobook listeners engage with literature in a way that is different from readers, because of remediation (see Section 3.1.2). Participants showed that they thought critically about the medium itself (‘hypermediacy’ as described by Bolter & Grusin, 2000), including the narration. However, as the discussion of ‘literary omnivore’ suggests (see B.2), the medium itself was not as important to participants at the connection with the story (‘immediacy’ as described by Bolter & Grusin, 2000). Have & Pedersen (2016) point out the impact that our surroundings have on us as we listen to audiobooks and in this thematic category participants talked of their perceptions of multitasking while listening to audiobooks on personal mobile listening devices.

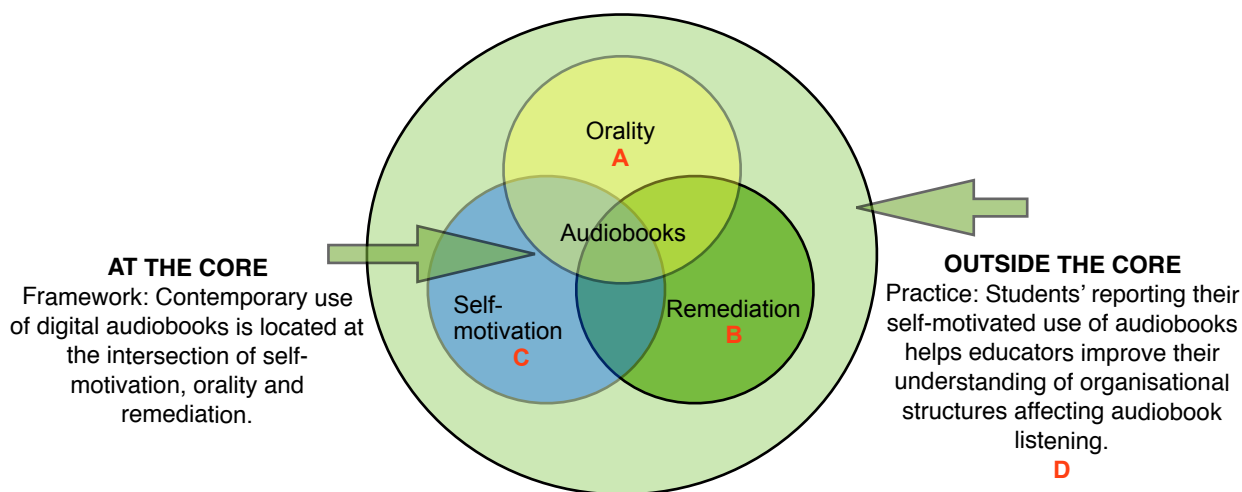


Figure 4.3 Conceptual framework: Focus on remediation

B.1 Thinking critically about the listening experience (CRITLIST)

A notable result from the data was the extent to which the preadolescent participants thought critically about their listening experience, hence the name of this theme. As shown in C. 1 (ADDICTLIST), it has been found that students, who are highly motivated to read, exhibit “high cognitive recall and comprehension of text” (Guthrie, et. al., 2007, p. 305). Intrinsically motivated participants in my study showed they critically analysed the narration

and story of audiobooks, could appreciate the various accents of narrators and recount the story in detail. Participants were able to critically compare the listening experience to reading text and watching the movie version of the story, which overlaps with the next theme, B.2 (LITOMNI). The interview also became a catalyst for critical thinking about audiobooks.

B.1.1 Critical analysis of story

When Mark had finished the *Harry Potter* series of audiobooks he started listening to *The Hunger Games* but at first he did not like it as much as the *Harry Potter* stories. He thought it would be hard to find something as good as *Harry Potter* (M24Jan2014). Later Mark described the types of books he likes as, “a mixture of magic and future” and with continuous suspense (M10Mar2014). Mark gave a really extensive comparison of *The Hunger Games* and *Harry Potter* which showed exceptional critical analysis for a preadolescent student:

The Hunger Games and *Harry Potter* is really similar. Main character, friends and action but they also have small stories behind it. At the same time they are really different. In *Harry Potter* there is a dedicated evil villain, that's Voldemort. In *The Hunger Games* there is not a dedicated evil person, it's more like an evil city. It's kind of like North Korea because the capital is being ruled by a president called President Snow who basically owns the whole country of Panem with its 12 districts. The 12 districts, 2 from each district goes into the hunger games every year to fight just for President Snow and his city's entertainment. So therefore Katniss Everdeen, the good person, the hero, wants to have him killed, wants to put an end to everything so she can have peace but the thing is the capital has control over everything. They destroyed district 8, they even destroyed her home and they destroy other places, she twice proved the capital wrong. In the first movie, by tricking the capital, they tricked her first, so the capital lied to them and she wanted to save someone else's life and he wanted to save her life so they were going to do suicide so that the capital would have no choice but to save them both because they need a winner. So that was once, so they tricked the capital once. And the second time Katniss ends the hunger games by destroying the games so that there were lots of survivors that came out and that annoyed President Snow so President Snow wants her and her family and friends dead. She wants him killed so that she can save everyone else, that's pretty much what it is about (M10Mar2014).

It is interesting to me that Mark referred to the audiobook as a 'movie' but he actually listened to the audiobook series. Mark's reference to North Korea is significant because it shows his political and social awareness and his critical thinking about literature. This comment was also certainly influenced by his environment as an expatriate living in South Korea.

Mark enjoyed discussing audiobooks with me during our interviews and explained why he liked listening to the *Ranger's Apprentice* series:

All of the characters have a funny way of their own. You feel a certain satisfaction of the characters. None of them are too weak or too strong... It's really like you are in it. Even though it doesn't say, 'you' or 'I.' For me the best stories have the kind of detail that you can imagine how it looks. For some of the other audiobooks, for example *Harry Potter*, there were a few places where they didn't describe the places very well. Maybe they just said, 'he was in a dark forest' but in this [*Ranger's Apprentice*] he always spends maybe around a paragraph just explaining a place and I think this is very, very useful, maybe spends two sentences explaining each character, even if they are not important (M26May2014).

As will be explained in C.1 (ADDICTLIST), Mark analysed the combination of humour and suspense of the *Ranger's Apprentice* audiobook series and concluded, "It's the right style for me, there is always enough happening, there's not too much talking, it's a good mixture of both" (M26May2014).

As will be mentioned in D. 3 (PEERINFL), Mark was first attracted to audiobook listening because he discovered his friend listening to an audiobook. When Mark found out that his friend was listening to the 7th *Harry Potter* book, Mark shared the headphones with his friend. Here he recalls what he heard at the time:

He was at the part where they went to Xenophilus Lovegood's home. Xenophilus Lovegood is the father of not one of the main characters, Luna Lovegood. Everyone thinks she's stupid but she's really clever and she always thinks about things twice. ...I had no idea what this is about, I hadn't read [the books] or watched the movies. I really liked the narration it sound[ed] very good and I decided I would come to the library and get some. I listened to the first one and it sounded so good. So I listened to all of them and then I came to the 7th one and I came to the part about the Lovegoods and it was so funny. I could understand [then] why I didn't understand it before (M26May2014).

Mark's memory of that section of the series and his analysis of why he had not previously understood the context, shows his analytical thinking about his audiobook listening.

Mark told me of an experiment he did to learn if missing a part of the story would impact his understanding of the rest of the story. He explained how he purposefully skipped part of book 2 of *Harry Potter* and he said, "the rest of it I didn't understand at all, and when I was done with 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 then I went back to the second and I listened to that part and it all made sense. I think that's kind of funny ..." I asked if he liked experimenting with the story in this way and he demonstrated his tremendous ability to retell and analyse a story with this explanation:

So basically if you kind of skip one part it doesn't make sense so that was kind of a clue to me that if you have a good story, everything links together to the end part, even at the very beginning at the introduction where they come to the school or they meet someone that person is always part of it in some way, even if you think it's not so important.

There is a guy you just meet and you don't think he's very important, from Hufflepuff, I can't remember his name, you don't think he's very important, but Malfoy, he's the kind of bully in it, he makes a snake out of magic and Harry doesn't know but he can talk in snake language, so he orders the snake to not harm anyone, but everybody thinks that he means to hurt that guy from Hufflepuff because the snake looks him in the eyes and walks away and then you find after that the guy from Hufflepuff has been petrified by a snake that can kill if you look them in the eyes, and he's part of making Harry look like he is the bad guy, so yeah, it all sort of fits together. Apparently he only got petrified because he wasn't looking the snake right in his eyes. One of my favourite parts is from the second [book] where it is all kind of like a puzzle where they talk about why everyone has gone petrified and not killed. There was a ghost that can't be killed because he's already dead, but living at the same time, he got petrified, and the guy from Hufflepuff got petrified because he was looking at the snake through the ghost and there was a cat, the caretaker's cat, got petrified because it looked through the water reflection. Hermione, one of Harry's best friends, looked through a mirror and a camera guy from the first grade who was a really good friend of Harry's, he looked at the snake through the camera, so that's kind of my favourite part because it's all linking together (M26May2014).

As explained below, Mark said he really enjoyed talking to me about the audiobooks to which he listened. In this way, the interview was a catalyst for his critical thinking. He further showed this when he continued, in the same interview as above, his analysis of the *Ranger's Apprentice* series,

In the beginning, I didn't think I would be very interested, it's like the introductory. Morgareth and his army and I thought that would be cool, and then it goes to Will and he's just an ordinary person and then he's excited and scared about becoming an apprentice and no one wants to choose him because he's small and weak because he hasn't reached his growth spurt yet and then nobody chooses him but everyone else gets chosen and then the Ranger steps up and he says he is good for the ranger thing but the Baron, who is kind of like the leader, thinks it isn't a good idea because he's too weak and small. So then the Ranger gives him a note and the Baron takes it and Will has always been kind of famous for sneaking but nobody knows how, apparently he moves with the wind and the shadows so that while their eyes are moved a tiny bit to that way, he moves a tiny bit to that way so that it doesn't look like he moves, and also because of the shadows he blends in. And then he gets up to the Baron's office that is really heavily guarded, but he isn't seen, then apparently the Ranger who is a professional and very well known for blending in, he can blend in full daylight because of his cloak and his massive skill so apparently he was in the Baron's office and sees Will take the letter and gets a hold of him and takes him to the Baron's office and you find out that the letter didn't say anything, it just explained why the letter was there but didn't explain anything about the letter. Apparently that was the trial, so then he becomes the apprentice because he was able to sneak into the office to get it. He could prove to the

Baron that he was fit for it, that's where the part that I love starts. He gets practice, he defeats everyone in single combat, and he gets his horse Tug who is a really nice pony but he is big and tough and super fast and apparently Ranger's horses can only be ridden by the Ranger himself. If it's anybody else it will go wild and bang them into the trees and hop on his hind legs and kick him off (M26May2014).

Beth described her favourite audiobook at the time, *Spy Dog*, as "really exciting and funny and sad at the same time" (B22Oct2013). When I asked her what she has done or would do if she considered an audiobook to be boring she said she might listen a little more and then stop (B22Oct2013). Later, Beth said that her preference was for audiobooks that are "diaries, and books that make you laugh" (B4Dec2013), but as will be explained in D.4 (TECHCHAL), our library was not able to provide her with enough of the audiobooks that she liked and consequently her enthusiasm for audiobooks waned. John gave an example of a boring audiobook, *Return to the 20,000 leagues under the sea* and said, "I've forgotten it because it was so boring. I even watched the movie, it is horrible, looks like they are just staring at the green screen" (J20May2014). When I asked if Vera had ever been bored by an audiobook she said, "Yes, sometimes I've had an audiobook that has had less conflict and less vocabulary words and then they quickly went to the main point and would end." She could not think of a specific example at the time but then described, "They introduced it for fairly long and it was boring, and they didn't describe much" (V18Oct2013).

Lewis described *The Lord of the Rings* as interesting because it has fighting, religion and culture in it (L13May2013). Later he said *Wolven* was the first audiobook that has made him laugh but he also liked that it has serious parts (L29May2013). His self-motivation to listen, because he enjoys the story, is covered in C.1 (ADDICTLIST). When I asked Lewis to describe some audiobooks that he really loved he responded that *The Hobbit* "was the most fascinating one. I had so many questions to ask ... When I read the book some of those questions were answered, even though I understood every word I read, sometimes I still didn't get it. I didn't get the meaning. When I read the book in my own pace I was able to answer those questions" (L23Oct2013). Reading of books, to which he also listened, is covered in B.2 (LITOMNI).

B.1.2 Critical analysis of narration

Participants recognised that narration was an important part of the audiobook experience, as evidenced in this theme. Shokoff (2001, p. 176) writes that, "The audiobook is

a discreet work, different fundamentally in its form from the quieter printed page.” Rubery (2008, p. 64) agrees and thinks that it is important to “recognise that the audiobook is a distinct medium in its own right rather than a poor relative of the printed book.” Reading is a dual relationship between writer and reader, but audiobook listening is a three-way interaction between the writer, narrator and listener (Frum, 2009). Audiobooks are considered adaptations of the original texts, as they “involve a creative, interpretive step in the narration and recording” (Friesen, 2008, p. 22). Bednar (2016, p. 9) adds that, “listeners can also become hyper-aware of the quality of the narration, since this dimension, which adds a layer of interpretation to the experience of listening, is the essence of the new medium.” However participants in my study agree with Bednar (2016, p. 10) that, “not all narrative interpretations are created equal.” The “narrator’s style is crucial to the success of a given audiobook, to the extent that many audiobook readers look for their favorite narrator before they look for their favorite author when searching for a new audiobook,” according to Have & Pedersen (2016, p. 70). Later, they explain that the “voice of the performing narrator holds a central position in audiobooks; it becomes a new medium of the narrative ...” (p. 81).

Beth told me she felt that sometimes the narration of *Spy Dog* suits the story and sometimes it does not (B22Oct2013). She said there was one book, but she had forgotten the name, where she thought the narration did not fit the story. Beth added that she probably would not listen to an audiobook if she did not think the narration suited the story (B22Oct2013). We then talked about narrators that make annoying gasping noises during the recording and she agreed that this is “horrible” (B22Oct2013). Later Beth said, “The narrator is really important to me, if the voice isn’t comfortable to me or it’s too complicated I really don’t feel like listening to it, it gets on my nerves” (B27May2014).

When John and I were discussing that his favourite audiobook at the time was written and narrated by the same person, John said that he thought that in that situation the author could give an accurate narration for the characters he had created and he believed this made the audiobook more interesting (J15Oct2013). I reminded John that previously he had said that the quality of the narration was just as important as the story and he agreed that he still thought this was true (J10Dec2013). I then asked if John had ever noticed a narrator making a mistake, saying a word wrongly, and he said no he had never noticed (J20May2014).

For Lewis the narration is not as important as the story and when I asked what he would do if he listened to an audiobook that had a narrator he found annoying, he answered, “I try to

get used to it, because it's such a good story. And if it was a good story, then from my point of view I probably wouldn't notice" (L23Oct2013).

I asked Vera if the sound of the narrator is important to her and she replied, "Yes it is, it gives more expression and tells you more. If you just had 'she screamed, I found the ball,'" which she said in an expressionless tone, "or [the same] with more expression, it's better" (V18Oct2013). When I asked her if she had ever tried listening and reading the text at the same time she said, "No, because if the narrator is too fast and I'm not that good at reading, or the narrator is too slow then it would not really fit to my speed" (V13Mar2014). No other participant mentioned the speed of the narrator, but this might have been because most listened to audiobooks without simultaneously following along with the text.

Mark explained that it takes him some time to get used to a different narrator for a new audiobook:

For every new book I start reading I first have to get used to the narration. When I was listening to *Harry Potter* it was a male voice and he didn't have such a strong accent and when I come to *The Hunger Games* it is such a strong accent. Now I really like it. I never stop being used to it. If I went back to listening to *Harry Potter* I would still like the voice but the very first time I have to get used to it (M10Mar2014).

Mark explained that the quality of the narration adds appeal to an audiobook. He said he really enjoyed listening to *Ranger's Apprentice* (covered in C.1, ADDICTLIST) because he thought that both the story and the narration was funny and he explained that the narrator has "such a good way of talking, he has such a good way of expressing to show how they are feeling" (M26May2014).

B.1.3 Accent recognition and evaluation

While not specifically addressing audiobooks, Cope & Kalantzis (2009) might include recognising and evaluating narrator accents under "negotiating discourse differences" (p. 166) because listeners learn how English is pronounced in various regions of the world. The authors write that instead of saying that English is becoming a world language we should more precisely say that it is "diverging into multiple Englishes" (p. 166). It was found by Bednar (2016) that some students who listened to audiobooks "enjoyed listening to several varieties of English different from the American English they grew up with" (p. 10). The

international students who were participants in my study also noticed the various ‘Englishes’ in audiobooks to which they listened.

For example, when I asked Vera if she had ever noticed a mistake in an audiobook she responded, “Sometimes the pronunciation is the American way and instead of ‘vase’ or ‘varse’ it gets mixed up ... I am normal to the American way, but ... my cousins they have [a] more British way.” When asked if she preferred American or British narrators she responded, “I prefer both, when I get mixed up I ask someone. I would prefer a less British accent, not posh British accent, or American. Sometimes they have really slangy American. I like normal American or normal British.”

Beth said she prefers an American accent (B22Oct2013). When I asked if she liked the narrator of the two audiobooks she listened to from our library she said, “I didn’t really like the narrator. It was a British accent and it got me mixed up and sometimes it had the voices and it got me really mixed up with what it was doing” (B27May2014). Conversely, Lewis told me he prefers a British accented narrator, “because it links more with me,” as he identifies himself as British (L23Oct2013). Mark also commented on the accent of the narrator and said, “If it’s easy to listen to then I’m happy. If it’s a strong British accent, me, I can’t lie in my bed and listen, it’s too annoying. If it’s a tiny British accent, or an Australian accent then I’m happy with it” (M25Oct2013).

I wanted to know if John noticed a difference in narrator accents and he said that he remembers listening to one Norwegian language audiobook before he came to this school that had a narrator with an accent that he found difficult to understand. I asked if he wanted to listen to more Norwegian audiobooks but he said no, he would rather listen to audiobooks in English. He does recognise the difference between a Scottish and English accent because he has friends from those areas. I asked about American accents and he said he did not like a strong American accent and he imitated it by saying, “hey, y’all, how ya doin’ today.” He said an Indian English accent would be okay to listen to (J15Oct2013). Later I asked John what annoyed him about a narrator and he answered, “It depends who is the narrator. When I listened to *A Dog Called Grk* narrator, his speaking is good, I can understand what he is saying, but with an American accent I really don’t like when they go ...” and he imitated a strong American accent again (J20May2014).

B.1.4 Critical comparison of audiobook and text

The critical comparison of the listening and reading experience overlaps with the next theme B.2 (LITOMNI) but is also included here as it demonstrates participants' critical thinking. The examples shown in this, and the next theme about movies, demonstrate that participants know, "Meaning expressed in one mode cannot be directly and completely translated into another" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 180) and that the various modes of literature offer different experiences.

John explained what he sees as the difference between text and audio modes and said, "with audiobooks they add a little bit more" (J15Oct2013). He gave the example of *You're a Bad Man Mr Gum* when he noticed that the author, who is also the narrator, did not read the audiobook exactly as the text is written, and John described an example he remembered:

In *You're a Bad Man Mr Gum* he took out the 'the end' and he added, 'oh, I forgot, there is a big whopper ... actually guys let's start a new chapter, sorry about this,' then he added a new chapter. It doesn't say that in the book, it just says, 'the end' (J15Oct2013).

John did not always listen while simultaneously reading the text, "only sometimes. If I have the same book I might do that. The [paper] books that I ordered of *Grk* I might listen and read at the same time and see what is different" (J20May2014).

After listening to the *The Lord of the Rings* audiobook, Lewis said he wanted to read the text and compare it (L13May2013). He thought it was good that he did not get to see the audiobook cover because then he could not judge the book by its cover (L13May2013). However, Vera said she likes to see the cover of the audiobook on her iPhone. She explained that she was listening to *The Black Queen* and wanted to see what the Queen looked like so she looked at the cover, but for everything else she has to imagine it (V26Sep2013). This shows that she is visualising while listening to audiobooks.

Lewis said that he noticed that the audio version of *The Lord of the Rings* audiobook to which he listened, which was the abridged version, was not the same as the text version he read, which was the unabridged version (L23Oct2013). He explained why he likes to listen to audiobooks in complete silence, "[An] audiobook isn't like a song. You need to concentrate a bit to really understand what is happening. That's why I sit at the front of the bus [while listening], because it's quieter. When I used to live [far away], the bus was packed and it was so loud and I [would] just go crazy. You are trying to focus on something and listening to an

audiobook you have to remember what number you're up to, if you pause it to remember where you're up to" (L23Oct2013). Lewis' preference for doing one thing at a time (i.e. listening to the audiobook) is also covered in B.3 (MULTITASKLIST).

Early on in the data collection period, Beth was quite enthusiastic about the novelty of listening to audiobooks and she said that when she hears a story, "You can really see what it means better, rather than seeing with your eyes" (B22Oct2013). At the time she said that, "When I choose books now, I really try to see if there is a book and an audiobook because I like to compare, listening and reading at the same time. Sometimes they change the words" (B22Oct2013). Later she found that she preferred reading to listening, as will be discussed in C.1 (ADDICTLIST).

Mark found it interesting that the audio version of *Harry Potter* to which he was listening was from a British publisher and the text that he was reading was published in the US and he noticed that there were a few differences. He gave the example of the type of sweets described (M7Oct2013). This observation shows he is critically comparing the audio and text versions of the books.

I asked Vera if she sometimes gets confused if she is reading a book and listening to another audiobook at around the same time and she said, "No, I don't get the stories messed up in my head, but I try to make connections between them." She then gave an example of reading *The Lightning Thief* and listening to the audiobook of *Mr Gum*, "They are two completely different books. In *Lightning Thief* they say, 'this suddenly happened' and in *Mr Gum* I find out that they also have something humorous like, 'I suddenly saw Mr Gum instead of the moon,' then *The Lightning Thief* they said, 'I suddenly saw Clarisse on the ground and the bathroom filled with water'" (V18Oct2013). It surprised me that she would make these seemingly abstract connections between different stories in different modes.

B.1.5 Comparing audiobook to movie

This section, similar to the one above comparing audiobook listening and reading text, is also included in B.2 (LITOMNI) but overlaps with B.1 (CRITLIST) as it also demonstrates critical comparison. Comparing text and movie, Cope & Kalantzis (2009) write that, "reading and viewing require different kinds of imagination and transformational effort in the re-representation of their meanings to oneself" (p. 180). While participants in my research liked

to watch the movie version, one showed a clear preference for the audiobook experience, and this preference is described in more detail in B.2 (LITOMNI).

John said he likes to watch the movie version of an audiobook to which he has listened and he explains, “the only difference between a movie and an audiobook, I find, is that there is a narrator, he says what’s happening. With a movie you see what is happening, you don’t hear the narrator’s voice, you hear the actor” (J20May2014). Beth also said she likes to compare the audiobook or the book with the movie version, “With movies, they mix up the words and change a lot. I like comparing” (B22Oct2013).

Mark said he also liked to compare the movie version of *Harry Potter* with both the audiobook and text. He said, “I don’t think [the movie] explains so much and it’s interesting to figure out” (M25Oct2013). He explained that in the audiobook, “You have more detail. For example, *Harry Potter 1*, in the book the man is really mad, but in the movie he is just mean” (M25Oct2013). “I prefer to listen to the audiobook, that’s my first choice. If you watch the movie I don’t like it when it’s straight away given to you. It’s like kind of takes the fun out of it. You don’t really think about it, you just watch it, but with an audiobook you’re still relaxed and you get to picture it in your own way. No one can tell you how it’s put, no director to put in a certain way, and there is more detail given [in audiobooks] than in movies.” He also said that he likes it that the audiobook takes longer than a movie, and he said, “Yes, the longer the better” (M26May2014). This self-motivation to listen to audiobooks, and the longer the better, is also discussed in C.1 (ADDICTLIST). His awareness of different modes of the story is discussed in B.2 (LITOMNI).

B.1.6 Interview as catalyst for critical reflection

As evidenced in the previous sections, Mark showed tremendous capacity for retelling and critical analysis of audiobooks to which he had listened. After one interview, Mark told me that he really liked being able to explain a story to someone (M10Mar2014). Later I asked Mark if me asking him questions about his audiobook listening had changed the way he views audiobooks and he replied, “Yes, it’s helping a lot. If no one was asking me questions about it I wouldn’t realise how much I enjoy it and I wouldn’t be thinking about what do you like, what do you not like and what would be better or worse. It really helps me to think about what are you actually doing, what are you actually listening to.” He assured me that my questioning

him was not annoying him! (M26May2014). The process of interviewing then resulted in a more critical approach to his audiobook listening.

Similarly, I asked John if my questioning him had changed anything he thought about and he replied, “It makes me think what I have actually listened to” (J20May2014). In this sense then interviewing is a form of critical reflection. John said he liked discussing audiobooks during our interviews (J20May2014). Lewis also said he liked talking about audiobooks (L13May2013). Later, when I asked if he thought that me asking him questions about audiobooks had changed the way he views them, Lewis said, “It makes me think about it. It discusses more of the advantages and highlights more of the disadvantages to me. Like when you want me to highlight them I realise it more and then when I go back to the book or the thing I was reading before, I highlight those advantages and disadvantages” (L26May2014).

The interviews acted as a catalyst for critical thinking. They enabled participants to “describe the situation from their own perspective and to interpret events in their own terms” (Stringer, 2008, p. 56). Stringer (2008) describes this as a “double hermeneutic - or meaning making process” (p. 56), helping both participants and researchers to extend understanding of the learning experience.

Summary of theme B.1

It surprised me that preadolescent students thought so critically about their audiobook listening and reflected on their listening experiences. It was validating that the interview process itself helped them analyse their listening experience. Participants were intrinsically motivated to listen to audiobooks which resulted in their high levels of cognitive engagement. Their critical analysis included their recognition of various narrator accents and the comparison of listening, reading and watching experiences. Multimodal experiences of literature is covered more fully in B.2 (LITOMNI) next.

B.2 Stories in any mode - audio, text, video (LITOMNI)

While the theme above includes participants’ critical comparison of different modes of a story, this theme is about participants’ willingness to access multiple modes of a story.

While not addressing audiobooks, Zhang & Kudva (2014) found that, “The most frequent readers are those who read both print books and e-books, signifying that those who like to read will read books in any medium” and that for keen readers “content matters more than medium” (p. 1705). As will be discussed in C.1 (ADDICTLIST), preference for mode depends on context and purpose. ‘Literary omnivores’ is a descriptor used by Alter (2013) to explain that many modern audiobook listeners “see narrated books and text as interchangeable” (para. 8), hence the name for this theme.

B.2.1 Connection to television show or movie

As shown in B.1.5, participants were interested in comparing audiobooks and movie versions of a story. John was excited to see that our library was able to offer audiobooks of one of his favourite TV shows, *Doctor Who* (J23Oct2012, J23Apr2013, J7May2013). Mark told me that he wanted to listen to the audiobook of “any long books that I’ve seen as a movie” (M25Oct2013). Later he said he wanted to listen to audiobooks that are well known, by which he meant ones that had been made into a movie. He wanted to experience a ‘good story’ in multiple modes (M10Mar2014). As will be discussed in C.1 (ADDICTLIST) and shown in B.1 (CRITLIST), through his involvement in this research Mark discovered that he preferred listening to the audiobook rather than watching the movie version because he thought the latter is too short and he can not get to visualise it in his own way (M26May2014).

B.2.2 Advantages of audiobooks over paper books

Participants found that there were some advantages of downloadable audiobooks compared to paper books. Similarly, in one study it was found that Grade 5 students showed no significant difference in their reading speed and comprehension when they read on paper or electronic tablets but students preferred an electronic tablet rather than multiple heavy paper books and cited ergonomic advantages including the weight of the tablet (Dundar & Akcayir, 2012).

Late in the data collection period Vera said that she discovered she preferred reading books to listening to audiobooks. However at the start of data collection, while she enjoyed the novelty of audiobooks, she thought that audiobooks were, “actually better because you can carry it around with you and it’s small, you don’t need to carry a big thick book and

sometimes you're sleepy and the book falls and you forget which page you are on ... An audiobook ... keeps on going but you remember what chapter you're on" (V18Oct2013). She also thought that audiobooks are better for travelling as they are lighter. She thought that a listener would get through an audiobook quicker than reading as "it would be finished quicker and you would have [an] idea of what happened but if you're reading a physical book then you have to stop at each chapter, but an audiobook just quickly reads it to you" (V18Oct2013).

Similarly, Beth explained why she thought audiobooks are good; "If I don't have the energy to get up and get a book, see which page I was at. Sometimes in cars or the bus I cannot read anything because I get dizzy and then I throw up. The audiobooks really serve when that happens" (B22Oct2013). Lewis said that one advantage of an audiobook is that it is easier to carry around an iPod than a book (L26May2014), which could be a motivation to listen to audiobooks while travelling. For really long books, John would rather listen to the audiobook than read the text because it is less tiring (J10Dec2013). Mark also found that listening to the audiobook more relaxing than reading the text version (M26May2014).

B.2.3 Reading paper after listening

Two participants mentioned that they would like to read the paper version of a book to which they had listened to as an audiobook. Certainly, we miss out on the physical interaction with the pages of a print book when we experience a book digitally (Mangen, 2008).

John told me that, "After I've listened to the audiobook of *A dog called Grk*, I've wanted to read the book and see how it looks," and he said that his father had bought the books for him. He confirmed that he wanted to see any illustrations in the books (J20May2014). Lewis said he loved the *Wolven* audiobook and wanted to then read the text (L13May2013). He said he would like to read the paper version of *The Lord of the Rings* after listening to the audiobook as he would like to compare it (L13May2013). Lewis said that if he liked the story, it would be worth both reading and listening to it, and this example is also included in B.1 (CRITLIST). He listened to the audio first and then read the paper book of *The Hobbit* and said he understood it better by experiencing it through the two formats (L23Oct2013). Lewis said that, at that time, he preferred to read the text after listening to the audiobook (L23Oct2013). Later, he confirmed that listening to *The Hobbit* and then reading

the text helped him to “absorb the story more” (L26May2014). Similarly, Whittingham et al. (2013) found that most of their Grade 4 and 5 participants said they believed that they became better readers due to their exposure to audiobooks.

B.2.4 Does both: Reading and listening ‘the same’

Three participants, John, Lewis and Vera referred to listening to an audiobook as ‘reading’ an audiobook (J15Oct2013, L29May2013, V18Oct2013). It could be assumed then that they are focusing on the story to the extent that the mode of input is not a significant factor (Alter, 2013; Zhang & Kudva, 2014). As explained in remediation (Section 3.1.2), “Audiobook listeners often become so caught up in listening to a book, fiction or nonfiction, that the narrator becomes transparent” (Bednar, 2016, p. 9).

Early in the data collection period, Lewis said he liked both listening to an audiobook and reading other books, “about 50/ 50” (L13May2013). Later it became obvious that Lewis just loves stories, in any format. Lewis told me that when he is older he wants to be a librarian; “I have all these books and I know all these books and I can recommend them to people, and I would be helping people to know” (L23Oct2013). Later he showed that he is equally comfortable with audiobooks or text, “Listen or read ... it depends on the type of book” (L20Mar2014).

Similarly, John thought that reading and listening is the same for him and said he does not prefer one mode over the other but it depends on his mood whether he chooses to listen or read (J20Nov2012). He said he understands the same whether he is listening or reading (J20May2014). John said he can discuss books with other people, whether he has listened to the audio version or read the text; “If I’m listening to the book that they are reading, I know what is going on” (J20May2014).

Vera said that the author is most important for her. She is happy to read or listen, as long as it is an author she likes (V26Sep2013). She explained that if she forgets where she put her paper book she thinks, “that’s alright, I can read my [different] audiobook instead” (V18Oct2013).

Similarly, John said he was happy to read the text of one story and listen to a different audiobook (J10Dec2013, J11Mar2014). He said he does not get mixed up with reading one or

two books and listening to a different audiobook; “I have three stories, *Hatchet*, *A Dog called Grk* and *Beast Quest*. Sometimes I forget what’s happened but then I think hard and I remember.” I confirmed that *Hatchet* was for his class reading groups, *Beast Quest* was his self-selected class reading book, and *A Dog Called Grk* was the audiobook to which he was listening in his free time, not assigned by a teacher (J20May2014). He is clearly comfortable reading both text and listening to audiobooks in his leisure time.

Mark said he wanted to have a balance of reading text and listening to audiobooks and explained, “I sort of agree with [his parents and his teacher] that it’s still good to be reading rather than just listening but I don’t think that I should listen less, if anything I should listen more, but just read more too” (M26May2014).

B.2.5 Confusing to have two stories at one time

Lewis was the only participant that said that he found it too confusing to have two stories in his mind at the same time, for example, one audiobook and one written text (L13May2013, L25Sep2013). The only time he is willing to listen to an audiobook, when he is part way through another book, is when he has listened repeatedly to it and is very familiar with it. He explained that he has an audiobook series *The Famous Five* and, “I like listening to that on journeys when I’m still reading a book” (L23Oct2013). This is also covered in C.2 (REPEATLIST). Lewis also said that if he has started reading the text of a story he does not want to switch to listening to the audiobook version (L14Jan2014).

B.2.6 Advantages of text over audiobook

Two participants mentioned situations when they thought reading text would be better than listening to an audiobook. John thought that practicing reading would help him to read faster (J15Oct2013). Vera said that, “Audiobooks would be good for people in EAL [English as an Additional Language] so if they don’t have proper English and they can’t read it might be better for them to listen” (V18Oct2013). I replied that it would depend on their English comprehension level and she responded, “But if they like to read, but can’t, it would help them” (V18Oct2013). Later she added, “Maybe people who don’t read that many physical books, they might like an alternative” (V29May2014).

B.2.7 Prefer text

As will be addressed in C.1 (ADDICTLIST), three participants, Vera, Beth and Lewis, learned through this study that they preferred to read text rather than listen to audiobooks. Familiarity, the tangible nature of print and the reading situation (Mangen, 2008; Gerlach & Buxmann, 2011; Zhang & Kudva, 2014) were reasons these participants said they preferred to read paper books.

Vera is a keen reader and explains that she is frustrated that she does not have enough free time to read for pleasure; “I see that I have homework to do, but I want to read, but I have homework to finish and it has a due date. I have to do that first” (V5Dec2013). Later her excuse for not listening to any more audiobooks was that, “I’m reading big books right now, and they take up more of my time. I’m more of a physical reader than an audiobook reader” (V13Mar2014). Later she confirmed that, “I like reading physical books better, I’m just really comfortable with them, but I also like audiobooks” (V29May2014).

After trying audiobooks Beth said, “I still prefer to read the actual book, because you can feel what you’re reading. It’s just different when you listen” (B22Oct2013). Explaining her initial enthusiasm for listening to audiobooks, Beth said, “Well I first wanted to give it a try because I thought it would be a good idea for travelling, but I discovered that I need the book in my hands” (B27May2014).

Lewis said that if an audiobook does not sound interesting, then he would rather read (L13May2013). At one point Lewis said that he prefers reading books when travelling rather than listening audiobooks (L23Oct2013). Later Lewis explained, “I am not listening to audiobooks because I’m trying to read as much as I can. I’m doing book club and want to finish books I have at home. I want to read my own books as well. I like audiobooks but I like to take a break from listening sometimes ...” (L20Mar2014). Taking a break from listening to audiobooks is covered in C.1 (ADDICTLIST). Still later he explained, “I would listen [to audiobooks] but I want to read. I’ve been listening but I prefer reading. It depends on what situation, what I’m thinking about. It’s a matter of what you like and don’t like. My perspective changes sometimes” (L26May2014). He said that the last audiobook he listened to was Douglas Bader’s *Reach for the Sky*. He said that he would have rather read the book

(but the library did not have a copy of the text) as he likes seeing the printed words on a page (L26May2014).

B.2.8 Listening has given confidence to read longer books

Mark was the only participant that said that listening to audiobooks had given him the confidence to read longer print books. He excitedly came to talk to me one day and explained that because he had listened to all the *Harry Potter* audiobooks, it had shown him how fun it is to read long books and he was now more willing to try reading longer books, like *The Hunger Games* series (M10Feb2014). He read the first book of *The Hunger Games* (without listening to the audiobook) and at first he thought it was not as good as *Harry Potter* and harder to understand. He only realised how good it was after listening to the audiobook for while. He then went on to read and listen to the second book in the series (M10Feb2014). Later, when I reminded him that he told me previously that listening to audiobooks had helped him have confidence that he could read longer books, he confirmed, “Yes, the first book of *Harry Potter*, I read the first page and I thought I didn’t want to read it, but then I read the audiobook (M10Mar2014). Later he reiterated that listening to long audiobooks had given him more confidence to read thicker books (M1Apr2014). He said again that he used to think that long books were too difficult and at the start of some thick books he found them quite boring, but now, after listening to audiobooks, he knows that the story will get better as he gets into it, and he is more willing to try reading them (M1Apr2014).

B.2.9 Simultaneous listening and reading

Listening to the audio version of a book while simultaneously reading the text is often called assisted reading. As detailed in the literature review (Section 2.3), several studies have looked at assisted reading as a remedial solution for struggling readers (e.g. Shany & Biemiller, 1995; O’Day, 2002). Assisted reading was not suggested for participants in my study but they were free to try it if they chose and I asked some of them if it was appealing to them.

Lewis said he had never tried to listen to the audio version and read the text version of a book at the same time (L23Oct2013). Mark very cleverly thought to follow along in the text version of whatever audiobook to which he wanted to listen, so that he could count it for his

reading homework. He said that he thought he would 'read' for much longer each day this way. As will be mentioned in D.1 (ADULTINFL), his teacher required him to read 20 minutes each day and she said that just listening to audiobooks did not count towards this quota (M10Sep2013). Mark said that he did not mind reading along while he was listening to the audio version (M7Oct2013). He saw the advantages of doing this as he got to keep listening to the audiobook he liked, and he satisfied his teacher's requirement that he read text for 20 minutes a day. However, he explained, "If I'm on the bus or in the car I usually read while listening, but if I'm tired, in my bed and about to fall asleep I just listen without reading along" (M9Dec2013). Explaining how he did not lose his place when doing this he said, "If I want to read when I'm listening and I've been listening without reading, then I usually just wait for the next chapter and read from there" (M9Dec2013). I asked if he found simultaneous reading while listening to be annoying and he responded, "It depends on what time. If I'm tired then I just want to close my eyes and listen but if it's in the middle of the day then I usually want to read along," and then he added, "I don't like reading without listening" (M9Dec2013).

Later, Mark said he never listened without reading. He said he was so 'into it' and did not want to miss even one word (M10Feb2014). However, the next month, I asked Mark if he still always read along with the text while listening to the audiobook and he explained, "Sometimes I do, but sometimes I'm too tired. ... Sometimes I lie in my bed listening and I close my eyes and I remember what chapter I'm on when I close my eyes and I suddenly fall asleep, but the next morning I know what chapter I'm on and I just go back to there" (M10Mar2014). This was a change from the previous interview where he said he did not listen to the audio version without reading along with the text.

As discussed in A.4 (VOCABAC), Mark said he thought that he learned vocabulary in context from listening to audiobooks and said that when he is following along in the text while listening to the audiobook he is able to see and hear the new vocabulary simultaneously (M26May2014). Talking of simultaneous reading and listening, Mark explained, "It really helps because I get a mixture. If I listen to the audiobook first then I know, I can imagine who sounds like what" (M26May2014). Later, he said he was mainly just listening to the audiobook now "because it is really relaxing" but he does mix reading the text with listening when he is not able to listen to the audio (for example, in class) (M26May2014).

B.2.10 Better comprehension with multiple modes of literature

Multimodality in education is addressed more fully in Section 1.5.1 (e.g. Kress, 2012, 2013; Jewitt, 2008; Ho, Anderson & Leong, 2010; Have & Pedersen, 2016). While there is no evidence for learning style theory (Willingham, 2009), there is consensus that, “Some learners may be more comfortable in one mode than another” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 180) and to maintain student interest, “Learning is most effective when it is a multisensory experience” (Cardillo et al., 2007, p. 43).

For some, accessing more than one mode of a story appeared to improve comprehension. As mentioned above, Mark said that he was so ‘into’ the story that he wanted to simultaneously listen and read so that he would not miss a word (M10Feb2014). Later Mark said that he thought he understood the story better when he heard the audio (M10Mar2014, M26May2014). When Beth first tried listening to audiobooks she found that, “Sometimes it gets easier to understand what [the narrator is] saying, to get what the book or that sentence means” (B22Oct2013), but later, as described above, she found that she preferred to read text.

John thought that listening to the audio version of long books was less tiring for him, and it appeared that he comprehended the audiobook better than the text version. He explained, “The *Percy Jackson* book is really long, like 400 pages ... I get really confused ... and I don’t know what’s going on” (J10Dec2013). However later, John assured me that he thought he comprehended the same whether he was listening or reading (J20May2014).

Summary of theme B.2

Participants showed they were willing to access multiple modes of a story. Preference for a mode depended on context and purpose. Participants showed that they liked to listen to an audiobook that they had watched as a television show or movie. Some remarked on the advantages of audiobooks over paper books but wanted to read the paper version after listening to the audio. Some participants considered reading and listening was the ‘same’ and some referred to listening as ‘reading.’ For one participant it was confusing to have more than one story ‘in his head’ at any one time. Three participants learned through this study that they preferred to read text rather than listen to the audiobook and some saw the advantages of the text version over the digital audio mode. One participant found that listening to long

audiobooks gave him the confidence to try reading longer books and he also found that he could simultaneously read and listen to satisfy the requirements for his reading homework. Accessing multiple modes of literature was generally perceived as advantageous.

B.3 Other tasks while listening (or not) (MULTITASKLIST)

Multitasking while listening to audiobooks was mentioned by all participants. The most popular tasks were travelling, resting in bed and while playing games on the device on which they were listening. There was one participant who, at times, said he performed several other electronic tasks on his devices while listening to audiobooks. It was also found that the portability of the device determined, in part, the multitasking activities.

Media multitasking can be defined as “multitasking involving at least one media-based stimulus or response” (Wang & Tchernev, 2012, p.494). However, Shih (2013) is more specific about types of media multitasking and gives abbreviations for media-media multitasking (MMM) and media-nonmedia multitasking (MNM). Most of the multitasking that was done by participants in my research would be classified as MNM, except when participants described playing an electronic game while listening, as discussed later in this theme. Voorveld & van der Goot (2013) only look at MMM, although they do not specify it as such, but then distinguish a user having a primary and secondary, or background, media (e.g. music) while multitasking. While also not making the distinction between types of multitasking, Jeong & Fishbein (2007) studied MNM and MMM with their definition of media multitasking as the person being involved in at least one media while doing another activity (not necessarily media related).

Numerous studies, illustrated in a meta-analysis by Aagaard (2015), have shown that media multitasking can negatively affect young people’s ability to learn, usually from the point of view that the mind is only capable of a limited amount of processing at any one time and that if there is more than one simultaneous activity, then attention and processing power is diverted. However, some activities, particularly non-media activities, should not be defined as a task when talking about multitasking. For example, we are multitasking all the time if we consider automatic activities such as breathing to be a task. Studies about multitasking’s effect on performance should be more specific about distinguishing between cognitively demanding tasks and automated ones (Aagaard, 2015). However, I would also imagine then that a distinction needs to be made about what is a cognitively demanding task for each

individual studied. For example someone learning to drive might find it cognitively demanding to both drive and listen to the radio, whereas an experienced driver would probably not consider it distracting at all. Similarly, someone trying to take notes on a computer without being able to touch type would find it more mentally demanding than someone who is an experienced touch-typer.

Interestingly, most research about multitasking's detrimental effects on task performance and learning is about participants trying to recall information while an unrelated media task is in the background. However, the distractibility of that background task also needs to be considered. As Aagaard (2015, p. 888) explains, "Media multitasking is experimentally designed to pull in opposite directions." Background media tasks that involve "text communications (e.g. emailing, social networking, texting) that feed frequent interruptions (e.g. new alerts) and encourage prompt responses" (Shih, 2013, p. 1) would require different cognitive demands than listening to an audiobook while travelling. Being a passenger or resting in bed are obviously not considered high performance tasks. Lee, Lin & Robertson (2012, p. 101) found that, "[Successful] multitasking is possible when a low-element interactivity task is coupled with another low-element interactivity task or a high-interactivity task with a low-interactivity task."

Most studies concerning media multitasking are mainly targeting young people and their ability to learn (Voorveld & van der Goot, 2013). However, "Media multitasking is a phenomenon that is not reserved for young people," and Voorveld & van der Goot (2013) found that the 50-65 age group came in second to the 13-16 age group for time spend media multitasking (p. 403). Furthermore, "The teens combined music with online activities, whereas the oldest age group was unique in combining radio with e-mail or newspapers" (p. 403). For the youngest age group Voorveld & van der Goot (2013) studied (13-16 years) the prevalent multitasking activities were listening to music while using the Internet.

Interestingly, "cognitive needs are not gratified by media multitasking, [but] emotional needs are, such as feeling entertained or relaxed" (Wang & Tchernev, 2012, p. 509). However, "Emotional needs are not actively sought in media multitasking" (p. 509) but they are a powerful motivator to continue multitasking. Considering some of my participants said they were 'addicted' to listening to audiobooks, there appears to be an overlap between multitasking while listening (B.3, MULTITASKLIST) and self motivation to listen to audiobooks (C.1, ADDICTLIST), as noted on the mandala graphic (Figure 4.1).

B.3.1 Listening while travelling

Most participants mentioned listening to audiobooks while travelling, and this multitasking seemed to become habitual in this context. It has been found that, “Habits play an important role in media multitasking behavior” (Wang & Tchernev, 2012, p. 510). Participants described it being habitual for them to listen to audiobooks during certain activities such as travelling and listening while they lay in bed before sleep. Cislak (2012, p. 10), in her focus group of four boys found that they too, “Liked the idea of being able to listen while lying in bed at night and while travelling.”

Lewis said he had one audiobook series to which he frequently listened while travelling but then said he preferred to watch movies while on an airplane (L23Oct2013). When listening to audiobooks for the first time he said he liked to listen in complete silence. As quoted in B.1.4 he said, “An audiobook isn’t like a song, you need to concentrate a bit to really understand what is happening ...” (L23Oct2013). Lewis said he had trouble listening to an audiobook on the bus because his friends wanted him to talk to them, so he agreed that it was important to find the right time to listen (L26May2014). Here, Lewis showed that listening to an audiobook was a cognitively demanding task for him (Aagaard, 2015) and that he wanted to completely focus on this one activity. Even while he is able to multitask with a low interactivity task such as travelling, Lewis does not want to be disturbed with conversation, a high interactivity task. This supports the argument made by Lee et al. (2012) that multitasking with media can be successful if a task that requires concentration is performed at the same time as a routine task.

Even though at the time Beth said she preferred reading text she planned to get some audiobooks “for the summer holidays, for the airplane” (B5Mar2014). She thought that audiobooks are “a good option when I go travelling” and explained, “I don’t want to carry all five books from a series in my backpack this year. I was thinking of getting some ebooks and getting some audiobooks because in the airplane I sit down before it goes up and I already sleep and I wanted something to keep me a bit waken up because it’s 12 hours difference to the place I’m going.” She said that she has to fly for 14 hours (B27May2014). It appears that she thinks that listening to audiobooks is somewhat cognitively demanding and that listening would keep her awake a bit more than normal on the plane to alleviate jet lag.

Frank said he listened to audiobooks on the bus on the way to school (F4Dec2012) and on the way home (F30Jan2013), which is likely showing habitual multitasking as defined by Wang & Tchernev (2012). John said he listened to audiobooks when he was bored, “on the bus when I come home, or when I go to school” (J20Nov2012), when he needed something cognitively engaging (Aagaard, 2015), but he was still be able to “sit back and relax” while listening (J15Oct2013). During a four day class trip John confirmed that he listened with his headphones while travelling and in the hotel (J15Oct2013). Later he said he also listened when travelling on an airplane (J10Dec2013). Kate said she liked to listen to audiobooks on long car journeys (K7Mar2013). Mark listened to audiobooks “on the way to school, on the way home, I listen in the morning if I have time. If I wake up too early and I’m tired, and in the evening” (M26May2014). Vera said that she listened to audiobooks while “on the bus while everyone is talking to someone else” (V18Oct2013). These examples show what Wang & Tchernev (2012, p. 500) found that, “Cognitive and habitual needs significantly predict multitasking.” As illustrated in this theme, participants displayed individual preferences for when they chose to listen and in what context.

B.3.2 Listening before sleep (or sick in bed)

Most participants described listening to audiobooks as a relaxing activity (and this is described as an intrinsic motivation in C.1, ADDICTLIST) that can be done while lying in bed before sleeping. Mark told me that he listened to audiobooks, “sometimes before school, sometimes after school and almost everyday around 8pm,” before he goes to sleep (M10Mar2014). He said that listening to audiobooks at bedtime, “helps me sleep a lot because they get rid of all my other thoughts” (M10Mar2014). He also said that he listens to audiobooks if he wakes early in the morning and cannot go back to sleep (M10Mar2014). Similarly, John explained that he listens to audiobooks every night before he goes to sleep, “Every night I bring out my iPad and then I put on my portable speakers and I listen” (J15Oct2013). This self-motivation to listen is included in C.1 (ADDICTLIST). It appears that it is habitual for him to listen to audiobooks at bed time (Wang & Tchernev, 2012). For an upcoming holiday John predicted that, “I bet when I go to bed I’ll put my headphones on and listen” (J10Dec2013). Later he also confirmed that he was still listening to audiobooks every night, “before I go to bed” (J11Mar2014). Still later he said he was mostly listening to audiobooks in bed before he went to sleep and said that this “makes me sleepy

and then I fall asleep, then the next day I remember what happened” (J20May2014).

Similarly, Simon said he liked to close his eyes and listen to audiobooks on his iPad until he falls asleep (Si9Jan2013). Cislak (2012, p. 10) learned from the boys in her focus group that they also liked listening to audiobooks in bed at night. Similarly, one of Have & Pedersen’s (2016, p. 113) interviewees (Sheila) explained that, “if she had difficulty falling asleep audiobooks were a great help to her.”

Kate said she usually listens to audiobooks on her speakers before she goes to sleep (K7Mar2013), but at one point her speakers were not working and she was not able to listen (this will be covered in D.4, TECHCHAL). Although Lewis said he usually does not listen to audiobooks at bedtime, he explained that, “One night I just couldn’t go to sleep. I’d tried everything, counting sheep, so I asked Mum if I could listen to my audiobook and then my audiobook put me to sleep” (L23Oct2013). At one point Frank said he does not listen when it is bedtime, or he would never get to sleep because the story is too exciting (F4Dec2012), which shows that audiobook listening might not always be considered relaxing but could depend how cognitively engaged the listener is at the time (Aagaard, 2015). Later Frank said he liked to listen to audiobooks when he was sick in bed. He said he enjoyed just lying in his bed with his eyes closed and listening (F1Mar2013). Relaxation is considered an emotional need that is gratified when media multitasking, as found by Wang & Tchernev (2012), and is addressed fully in C.1 (ADDICTLIST) because it contributes to the self-motivation of participants to listen to audiobooks.

B.3.3 Listening while playing games on device

Both Simon and John mentioned playing games on their iPad while listening to audiobooks (Si9Jan2013, J29Jan2013). Frank said he sometimes plays games while he is listening to audiobooks on his phone (F30Jan2013) but usually he likes to just listen and not do too much else. He also said that sometimes he likes to play *Minecraft* when listening and create the ‘world’ in *Minecraft* that matches the story (F4Feb2013). Beth said that she thought her friend would like to play games on her phone and listen to audiobooks at the same time, which is also included in D.3, PEERINFL (B22Oct2013). Listening to audiobooks whilst simultaneously playing an electronic game is what Shih (2013) defines as media-media multitasking (MMM). It is out of the scope of this research to determine which of the two activities is the primary task in these cases, as defined by Voorveld & van der Goot (2013).

However, I would assume that listening to the audiobook is the more cognitively demanding of the tasks, however this may change depending on many factors including which part of a story the listener is at, if they have listened before to that particular audiobook or if the electronic game is repetitive. Creating the scene of the story in a simulation game, as Frank described above, might be a complementary task while listening to an audiobook. In this case the game could be halted to enable a player to concentrate on a scene description in the audiobook, or the audiobook could be paused to allow a listener to craft a particular area.

Multitasking is successful when we are performing one task that is cognitively demanding (Lee et al., 2012) combined with other more routine tasks. However, due to the nature of audiobooks it is also very easy to replay sections of the story if the listener becomes aware that their concentration has been diverted.

B.3.4 Extreme multitasking

At one point John told me that he liked to listen to his audiobook in one ear while watching and listening to a movie in his other earphone (J29Jan2013). I found John's ability to multitask with so many activities quite remarkable, but wondered if it was effective (J29Jan2013). John assured me that it was possible and said, "I can hear the voice in the story and the voice of the movie is not the same, so I know which one is which." I found this hard to believe, but I asked him several times and he insisted he could (J5Feb2013). Later he confirmed, "Sometimes, only sometimes, I play my game and listen to it, and watch a movie and do a Skype call at the same time" (J10Dec2013). However, later John told me that he liked to, "concentrate ... so I see something, hmm, I didn't see that in the audiobook, or I didn't see that in the book" (J20May2014). No other participant talked about such extreme multitasking while listening to audiobooks. This extent of multitasking might suggest John is a "high sensation seeker (HSS)" as Jeong & Fishbein (2007, p. 368) define, "HSS ... have a stronger need for varied, novel, and complex experiences, are more likely to seek other activities while attending to one or more media unless the medium or content is fully engaging." It was out of the scope of my research to determine if participants are low or high sensation seekers.

B.3.5 Portability of device determines multitasking activity

Frank said he listened to audiobooks at school at break time and especially while playing hide and seek with his friends at recess. He found that, due to the nature of the game, he did not need to converse with his friends but instead could listen to an audiobook while playing (F30Jan2013). This supports Aagaard's (2015) position that multitasking is determined by the cognitive stimuli required by the context.

When Frank is listening to audiobooks on his iPod Shuffle he found it easier to run around because the device is so small (F30Jan2013). He compared this to his friend Simon who listened to audiobooks on an iPad mini and had to carry it around in his front pocket, which made it difficult because it was too big (F30Jan2013). Initially Beth was just listening to audiobooks on her computer but said that she thought she needed to get the audiobooks working on her phone so that she could listen when on the bus to and from school (B22Oct2013). The size and portability of the device seems to determine, in part, the multitasking activities.

Cislak (2012) surveyed 141 boys in Grades 7 and 8, and four boys were interviewed, to find out if digital audiobooks helped motivate boys to read. Her premise was that boys have trouble sitting still to read a book and so she surmised that audiobooks (specifically on Playaways, see Section 1.3.2) might allow boys to engage with literature while moving their bodies. However, I have noticed that boys are capable of sitting for long periods of time playing computer games, and as the multitasking preferences of participants in this current study showed, most multitasking activities are sedentary. I did not purposefully focus on boys in my research, but it was interesting that the three participants who were the most enthusiastic audiobook listeners were boys. They did not often listen while doing activities that involved movement though. The most mentioned times for listening was just before going to sleep at night and travelling.

Summary of theme B.3

Travelling, resting in bed and playing electronic games were the tasks most mentioned by participants while listening to audiobooks. However, it is not clear whether listening to audiobooks was always the most cognitively demanding task while doing other media and non-media activities.

Significantly, the device itself partly determined the multitasking activities. Due to the nature of a digital audiobook it is possible to pause or replay sections of the audiobook if attention was distracted from listening. Further research into the specific contexts of multitasking events could reveal deeper insights into what constitutes successful multitasking with audiobooks.

B.4 Memory of audio (VERBALMEM)

Memory of audio, or verbal memory (hence the name of this theme), is included as a characteristic of listeners because two participants mentioned the topic briefly. However, this study did not test for listening comprehension, or compare listening with reading comprehension. In this research there was no one preference shown by all participants for either written or audio modes of literature. Each found their own preference depending on purpose and context but as shown in B.2 (LITOMNI), participants also appreciated if a variety of modes were available.

John said that he remembers audiobooks better than he remembers stories he has read (J15Oct2013). I understood from John that he thought this is because there is an added element of emotion which gives more of an emotional connection and aids his memory of the audiobook (J15Oct2013). John also believes he has very good verbal memory for both audiobooks and verbal instructions from his teacher; “I listen to many audiobooks and I remember what they said, and I remember what [my teacher] says, I remember everything” (J15Oct2013). After listening repeatedly to the same audiobook, discussed in C.2 (REPEATLIST), John said that he could remember the words spoken by the narrator and how they are spoken. He then mimicked how the narrator would express a sentence he remembered (J10Dec2013).

Lewis said that repeated listening to the audiobook, also covered in C.2 (REPEATLIST), helped him remember the story but at the time he was noncommittal about whether his memory of the audio after listening the first time is better compared to reading the text the first time (L13May2013). A year later he said that he could better explain a book he had read rather than one to which he has listened (L26May2014). By expressing it this way, it seems likely that he thought his reading comprehension was better than his listening comprehension. It has been found that oral and written comprehension is comparable for

Grade 4 to 6 students (Diakidoy et al., 2005), which is similar to the age of the participants for this research. Misleadingly, Burkey (2013), in her book for educators and librarians, states without support that, “A person’s listening comprehension is at least two years above their reading comprehension,” and that is why she believes that listening to audiobooks “stretches [listeners] reading comprehension.” This idea is not supported by Diakidoy et al.’s (2005) research, nor evidenced by participants in my study.

Summary of theme B.4

Two students mentioned the topic of their memory of the story or narration. One thought he had a good verbal memory and one said he thought he could explain the story better from reading the text than listening to the audio. This study did not compare listening and reading comprehension but research covering this topic is included in Section 1.5.2.

Summary of thematic category B and alignment with remediation

Participants evidenced some notable characteristics as audiobook listeners and these attributes reveal how audiobooks have transformed their experience of reading. These preadolescents demonstrated critical thinking when discussing audiobooks they had experienced. They were motivated to engage with story in any mode but some discovered a preference for either print or audio, depending on context and familiarity. All participants multitasked while listening to audiobooks and the most mentioned times to listen to audiobooks were while travelling and resting in bed. Participants noticed that it was the medium itself that enabled much of their multitasking behaviour. Some showed considerable memory of their audiobook listening experiences, while only one mentioned that he remembered the story better from listening than reading. These attributes shown by participants characterise their experience of the transformation of literature from one media to another and is aligned with the conceptual view of remediation (see Section 3.1.2).

C. Thematic category: Agency

Agency is defined uniquely in this dissertation as what is done, or desired to be done, as a result of self, or intrinsic, motivation. This definition is grounded in the self-motivation literature of Kazen, Kuhl & Leicht (2015) and Ryan & Deci, (2000) referred to in Section 3.1.3. Agency can be demonstrated by what people do when they have free, unstructured time

and it is characterised in this study as what was under participant control. Conceptually, as discussed in Section 3.1.3, this thematic category aligns with the theoretical discussion of intrinsic motivation in education (see Figure 4.4). Two choices completely under the control of the students became recurring themes in the data. The first was the choice to listen to audiobooks (including what they listened to and for how long) and the second was the choice about whether to listen to the same audiobook repeatedly. Participation in the study was designed to be a self-determined activity and the participants were not coerced to listen to audiobooks at any time.

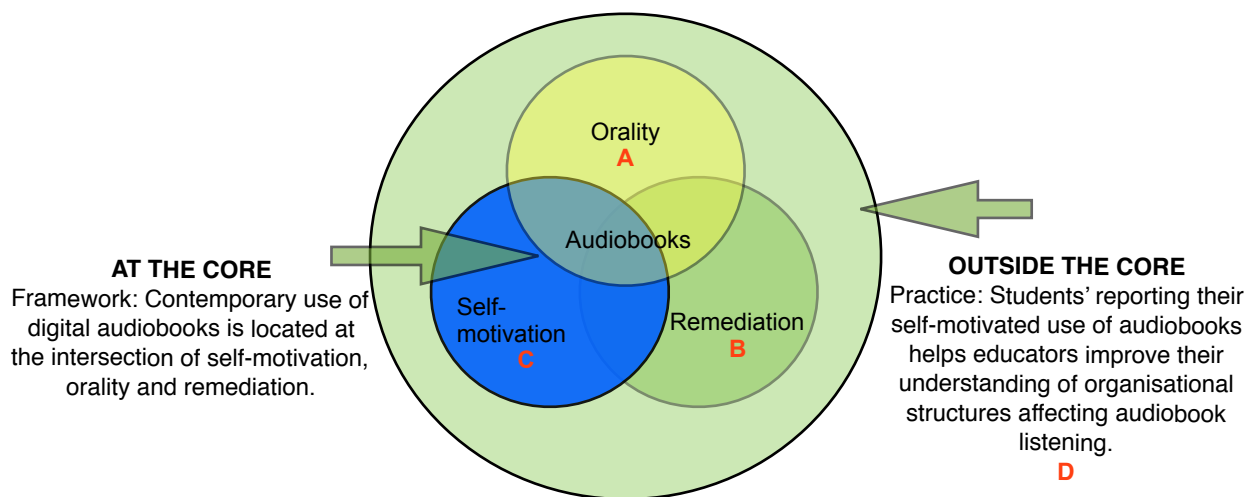


Figure 4.4 Conceptual framework: Focus on self-motivation in education

C.1 Self-motivated (or not) to listen (ADDICTLIST)

This study showed that keen audiobook listeners are attracted to stories that make them laugh and that they consider to be exciting. In addition, some participants found the listening experience to be relaxing. However, not everyone likes to listen to audiobooks all the time, and some participants learned from this study that they preferred reading paper books. The name for this theme came from three participants who described their audiobook listening as “addictive,” and this is explained in the next section.

C.1.1 “I just love listening to audiobooks!”

Three participants (Mark, Frank and John) all described listening to audiobooks as “addictive” (M10Mar2014, F4Feb2013, J20May2014). ‘Addictive’ can imply that there is no self-control but the way these participants used it implies that they are extremely self-motivated to listen to audiobooks in their free time. Interestingly, two of Have & Pedersen’s

(2016, p. 108, 113) interviewees also described themselves as being ‘addicted’ to listening to audiobooks. In my research, Frank explained that it is sometimes hard for him to stop listening and he wanted to listen “all the time” (F4Feb2013). John added that listening to audiobooks “makes me listen to it more” (J20May2014). This self-motivation to listen to audiobooks was a recurring theme throughout the data. For example, one day I came into Mark’s art class and he yelled out to me, in front of his classmates, “I just love listening to audiobooks!” (M13Sep2013). Mark told me later that he listens to audiobooks everyday, “and I’m still not getting tired of them” (M10Mar2014). I asked Mark if he sometimes got bored of listening to audiobooks but he said, “No, I never get bored from listening” (M26May2014). He then explained that if he was very tired, and gave the example of coming home at 2am from a flight, he would not listen to audiobooks if he needed to sleep, “because when I put it in I wouldn’t want to stop. So it’s actually that I try to prevent myself from listening to it too much” (M26May2014).

Similarly, Cislak (2012, p. 10), in her research about boys listening to audiobooks, was told by one of the focus group participants that, “Reading print books are kind of boring, but audiobooks — you can listen to — so it’s not so boring.” She found that the boys who chose to listen to audiobooks “became aware that they read for a longer period of time,” compared to reading printed books (Cislak, 2012, p. 10). One boy showed his obvious enjoyment of audiobooks when he remarked, “Books make you smarter but audiobooks are just for pleasure,” Cislak (2012, p. 10).

My research was designed so that listening to audiobooks was participant directed, as explained in the research methodology (Chapter 3). I wanted to see the effect that a self-motivated activity would have on their self-reported educational development. It is common in research involving an intrinsically motivated task to use self-reported data from participants about their activity of choice (Ryan & Deci, 2000). I aimed to provide participants with any audiobooks that they wanted, that was in my power to give them (see D.4, TECHCHAL, for a discussion about access restrictions). John estimated that he listened about one hour everyday (J20Nov2012), and later said he averaged more than one hour a day (J29Jan2013), which illustrates his intrinsic motivation to listen. His motivation is further illustrated by his comment, “Every night I bring out my iPad and then I put on my portable speakers and I listen” (J15Oct2013) and he reconfirmed this a few months later (J10Dec2013). Listening to audiobooks before sleep was covered in B.3 (MULTITASKLIST). Lewis said that when he

listened to audiobooks on the bus to school it made him want to keep listening and not get off the bus (L13May2013). Listening while travelling was also covered in B.3 (MULTITASKLIST).

Due to the system for accessing audiobooks in our library (explained in D.4, TECHCHAL), participants also demonstrated their motivation to listen to audiobooks by coming to me, as teacher librarian. Mark showed that he was very self-motivated to listen to audiobooks because he made it his priority to get the audiobooks he wanted from me (M21Jan2014). This reliance on me to provide audiobooks is covered in D.1 (ADULTINFL). John also showed that he anticipated listening to audiobooks during upcoming holidays (J10Dec2013, J20May2014). Similarly, Lewis said he planned to get more audiobooks from me before his vacation, but by this stage his enthusiasm for listening was waning (see C.1.5 below) and he did not come to get any more (L9Dec2013). At one point, John said he had finished all his audiobooks, but did not come to ask for anymore. He said he would really like some more, but he had not thought to ask me (J23Apr2013). This was not necessarily a lack of willingness to listen, but more likely indicated his preadolescent proclivity not to plan in advance.

In a study involving Grade 3 and 5 students it was found that the “amount of reading for enjoyment is primarily determined by motivation” (Cox & Guthrie, 2001, p. 127). The authors explained that if aspects of motivation such as, “involvement, curiosity, preference for challenge, recognition, and competition” were strong then children would read for enjoyment (p. 127). Additionally, in a study of Grade 4 students, Guthrie et al. (2007) found that, “It was quite apparent from students’ responses that interest and positive affect for reading invariably were associated with high cognitive recall and comprehension of text” (p. 305). High cognitive engagement is what B.1 (CRITLIST) is about and, as noted on the mandala graphic (Figure 4.1), intrinsic motivation to listen to audiobooks correlates with critical listening.

C.1.2 Humorous stories preferred

When participants talked about which audiobooks motivated them to listen most, humorous stories were mentioned. For example, Vera said she really liked *Mr Gum* stories because they were funny (V25Sep2013). Beth also expressed a preference for humorous audiobooks (B22Oct2013). Vera said she liked listening to funny stories over and over but

explained that if an audiobook, “is adventurous, it kind of loses the story, you know what is going to happen next. But with comedy, you know the story but it actually makes you laugh each time, which is the main point” (V13Mar2014). This willingness to listen repeatedly to humorous audiobooks was covered in C.2 (REPEATLIST) and participants comparing genres was included in B.1 (CRITLIST).

Mark described the *Ranger’s Apprentice* audiobook series as “really funny” (M26May2014). He said it was not only the story but the way the narrator read the text that he found funny. Talking of the narrator he said, “He has such a good way of talking, he has such a good way of expressing to show how they are feeling” (M26May2014). This analysis of narration was covered in B.1 (CRITLIST). Mark added, “Also the author is really funny in general. Like, at random points you don’t expect anything to be funny, but someone says something funny that makes you laugh.” He went on to explain that there was enough suspense in the story too, “It’s the right style for me, there is always enough happening, there’s not too much talking, it’s a good mixture of both” (M26May2014). Analysis of the audiobook was also covered in B.1 (CRITLIST) but is included here as it shows why Mark is self-motivated to listen to the audiobook series. Similarly, both Scholastic’s 2014 US survey (Scholastic, 2014) and their 2015 UK survey (Scholastic, 2015) showed that children aged 6-17 preferred books that made them laugh.

C.1.3 Audiobooks as entertainment

The pleasure of listening to an audiobook, as a form of entertainment, was described by most of the participants. This supports Wang & Tchernev’s (2012) finding that emotional needs such as entertainment and relaxation were not sought by multitasking with media but nonetheless contributed to intrinsic motivation to continue. Mark explained his motivation to listen to audiobooks when he said, “In the audiobook you get a whole different experience, you learn different interesting facts” (M25Oct2013). It appears from the interview context that Mark was comparing audiobooks to all other modes of literature, including reading text and watching movies. Similarly, one boy, in Cislak’s (2012, p. 10) focus group of four, likened listening to an audiobook as entertainment when he described listening as ““like the movies but ... you can still use your imagination, which is better.””

I asked John what he thought was his motivation for listening to audiobooks and he responded, “I listen to audiobooks because it’s really fun the way the author gives the expression, always emotion comes through” (J15Oct2013). John added that he liked the feeling of being involved in the conversation of the audiobook, “I kind of feel like a person is talking about his experience. I’m sitting here and he’s talking to me” (J15Oct2013). I wanted to know about John’s favourite audiobooks and he gave examples from *You’re a Bad Man Mr Gum* by Andy Stanton because he said the narrator expresses so much emotion when he is narrating the character dialogue (J15Oct2013). In this example the narrator is also the author. John explained that he also really liked the *Grk* adventure stories. He said that he likes stories where “you think something you know what’s going to happen but it doesn’t” (J10Dec2013). John likes to repeatedly listen to these entertaining stories because, “[in the] *Grk* stories, [the narrator] changes the voice for every character, but it’s the same reader, and he makes a crash and boom, things like that” (J10Dec2013). I asked John if he thought that he was learning from listening to audiobooks or was it just entertainment for him, and he replied, “I think I’m learning new words, and it is also a bit entertaining” (J20May2014). Learning new vocabulary from listening to audiobooks was included in A.4 (VOCABAC).

Beth said that her main motivation to listen to audiobooks was that, “I like to hear people talk” (B22Oct2013), and she added, talking of me as the teacher librarian, “I love when you tell the stories to us [in library class] because we can imagine” (B22Oct2013). At one point, Frank said that he could not fall asleep listening to some audiobooks because he found the story too exciting (F7Nov2012), and this was covered in B.3 (MULTITASKLIST). Similarly, with the *The Lord of the Rings* audiobook Lewis said he really liked the narration and that the listening experience was “really exciting” (L13May2013). Vera said she used audiobooks as entertainment and explained, “I often listen to audiobooks when I have free time or when I’m bored. So then I have something to do or think about (V18Oct2013). Mark explained his preference for longer stories (minimum 10 hours for one audiobook) and audiobooks in a series. He described the listening experience like going to a fast food restaurant and explained, “You want to savour your shake but they are trying to move you out of the restaurant too quickly.” He said he likes to spend a long time enjoying the characters and setting in the story and does not want the experience to end too quickly (M1Apr2014).

C.1.4 Audiobooks can be relaxing

Audiobooks were described by participants as exciting entertainment, as shown in the previous section, but they were also described by some as relaxing. It appears that it depends on the story, or even the part of the story to which participants were listening. As described above, Wang & Tchernev's (2012) study found that emotional needs such as relaxation and entertainment are unintended motivators to multitask with media. John showed he was self-motivated to listen to audiobooks because listening was intrinsically relaxing for him (J29Jan2013). Similarly, Beth said she liked to listen to audiobooks on the weekends while sitting in her bed with her computer because it was relaxing (B22Oct2013). Frank said he enjoyed listening to audiobooks because he thinks he reads text fairly slowly and he explained that listening to audiobooks is more relaxing for him than reading (F7Nov2012). Mark said that he preferred listening to audiobooks rather than reading because, "With an audiobook you're still relaxed and you get to picture it in your own way" (M26May2014). At one point I asked Frank if he thought listening to audiobooks helped him with his school work, but he said no, "it is just a relaxing activity" (F4Dec2012). Theme A.2 (STORYIDEAS) includes further discussion about Frank's view of the influence of audiobook listening on his school work. Frank explained that he liked to relax on the couch at home and listen to audiobooks and when he was sick he told me it was, "so nice to lie in bed with my eyes closed" and listen to audiobooks while recovering (F4Dec2012). Doing other activities, including resting in bed, while listening to audiobooks was addressed in B.3 (MULTITASKLIST).

Similarly, Kate explained that she liked to listen to audiobooks because they are "quiet and relaxing" (K7Mar2013). Simon said his preference was just to listen to audiobooks at night time before sleep because he said it was something that he can look forward to at the end of the day (Si9Jan2013) and this was covered in B.3 (MULTITASKLIST). Similarly, Cislak (2012, p. 10) also received comments from her participants that indicated Grade 7 and 8 boys thought that listening to audiobooks was relaxing.

C.1.5 Taking a break from listening, preferring to read paper

My research found that audiobook listening is not for everyone, echoing the comments by Ryan & Deci (2000) that, "not everyone is intrinsically motivated for any particular task" (p. 56) and that the properties of the task and its inherent interest to an individual is

what determines whether someone wants to do it or not. In other words, “intrinsic motivation will occur only for activities that hold intrinsic interest for an individual” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 59). Some participants in my study found that they were more intrinsically motivated to read paper books than listen to audiobooks.

Being too busy to listen to audiobooks was mentioned by two participants. For example, Beth said she did not listen because, “I have too much homework and activities and stuff” (B22Oct2013) and later said she had not listened “for a long time” because she was busy with homework, was tired and then sometimes just forgot about them (B4Dec2013). Similarly, Vera, who went on an extended trip with her family during the study period, said she did not listen to audiobooks while she was away “because I didn’t have time” (V5Dec2013). Vera explained that she wanted a long block of time to listen to audiobooks and that, “If it was good I wouldn’t want to stop and just keep reading, and something else would be happening and I wouldn’t want to stop. So yes, I need a long block of time” (V5Dec2013).

The intangible nature of a digital audiobook was also given as an excuse not to listen. Beth said she had other activities and “I just kind of forget” about listening to audiobooks (B5Mar2014). She thought that for her it was a case of not remembering them because she did not see digital audiobooks around (B22Nov2013) as she did paper books. Similarly, Lewis offered that maybe he had not thought about audiobooks for a while because he did not see them lying around and it was a case of “out of sight, out of mind.” He thought it was the same with ebooks. He said that he thinks of an iPad as technology you play games on, not to use to read (L20Nov2013), which was addressed further in theme D.2 (ADVERTIZ) regarding ‘haptic dissonance.’

Three participants, through their involvement in this research, discovered that they preferred to read paper books rather than listen to audiobooks (e.g. L14Jan2014, B5Mar2014, V13Mar2014). Earlier in the data collection period Beth said she liked hearing the voice of the narrator because it kept her company, but later she said she had changed her mind and explained, “I find I don’t really like when people read me the story and I can’t see them, and can’t say, ‘you know what ...’” (B27May2014). She said she now liked to, “read it on my own so I can make the character’s voices in my head and play the movie,” which is how she describes visualising the story (B27May2014). Lewis, after showing some enthusiasm for listening to audiobooks, explained that he had not listened for a while because he had been

“distracted” with reading paper books (L20Nov2013). He explained that he sees paper books lying around and wants to read them and then gets hooked on them. Lewis also explained that during the data collection period he had learned to read books on the bus without getting sick (L20Nov2013), so he no longer needed to rely on audiobooks. Later Lewis said, “I’m not listening to audiobooks because I’m trying to read as much as I can. I’m doing book club and want to finish books I have at home. I want to read my own books as well. I like audiobooks but I like to take a break from listening sometimes” (L20Mar2014). Similarly Vera suggested, “maybe when I get more audiobooks I could come back into the project but right now it is like a break” (V13Mar2014). Preferring to read text was also covered in B.2 (LITOMNI) where different modes of literature was discussed.

That some participants showed a preference for reading paper books for pleasure is also found in other studies. For example, Moyer (2011b) asked college students about their preferred format for leisure reading and print was their first choice, followed by electronic books on the Kindle and their least favourite was audiobooks on Playaway devices (discussed in D.4, TECHCHAL). Similarly, Scholastic’s US 2014 survey (Scholastic, 2014) and their UK 2015 survey (Scholastic, 2015) both showed that children aged 6-17 preferred print books to ebooks. These extensive surveys did not give digital audiobooks as an option, nor ask why children preferred print to ebooks.

Situational context determines preference for media (Zhang & Kudva, 2014). Situational context is an organisational structure, or one of the outside influences that affect a participant’s agency to listen, and this is addressed next in thematic category D. Two participants (Lewis and Beth) remarked on the physicality of paper books and that when they see them it reminds them to read (L20Nov2013, B22Nov2013). Two participants (Lewis and John) said that when their parents came back from business trips they brought back paper books as presents (L23Oct2013, J20May2014). Our school library has a much wider variety of paper titles available than audiobook titles, which could also be a structural influence for a participant’s preference for print. Lack of choice of appealing titles could be a reason for participants preferring print over digital audiobooks (e.g. B22Oct2013).

Participants who wanted to ‘take a break’ from listening to audiobooks during the study period also mentioned that they would perhaps like to try them again in the future. For example, Beth explained that she wanted to get “a bit more into” listening to audiobooks again but that, “sometimes it gets a bit boring, and you stop for a while, and then think, ‘I’m

just going to try it again” (B22Oct2013). After telling me that she preferred to read text, Beth asked to see what audiobook series we had so she could get some before she goes on holiday for the summer break (B27May2014). She confirmed that she preferred to read paper books, but she would like some audiobooks in case she changed her mind (B27May2014). During one interview Vera said that she would now rather listen to music on her iPad than listen to an audiobook on it, but after that interview I was talking to her friend and Vera heard me say that I had the audio version of a book that another friend was borrowing. Surprisingly, Vera said she would like the audiobook version on her iPad (V29May2014).

C.1.6 I like them, but not for everyone

Two participants acknowledged that audiobook listening is not for everyone. Even after telling me that he preferred to read text, Lewis said he really likes audiobooks and thinks other kids would also like them if they try them (L13May2013). Mark thinks that not everyone would love listening to audiobooks but, like him, “A few people think they are very amazing” (M26May2014). This response echoes Cislak’s finding (2012, p. 10) that audiobooks, “will not replace the print format for some of the participants.”

There appears to be a recurring sentiment that listening to audiobooks can somehow help students enjoy reading text more. For example, Cislak (2012) conducted her research with the goal of finding out if listening to audiobooks would increase student motivation to read text, but there was no evidence of this found. Similarly, Wolfson (2008) writes that listening to audiobooks has similar benefits to reading aloud and can be used to “increase motivation to interact with books” (p. 105). However, as my research has shown, some students prefer to read text, some prefer to listen. Listening to audiobooks does not necessarily increase intrinsic motivation to read. Ironically, listening to audiobooks helped some participants in my study realise that they preferred to read text.

Summary of theme C.1

When a person is self-motivated they perceive they expend less effort, exhibit ease of concentration and describe tasks as fun (Kazen et al., 2015). This could be a reason that some participants, as shown in this theme, preferred humorous stories and perceived listening to audiobooks as entertaining and relaxing. Some students are intrinsically motivated to listen to

audiobooks and organisational structures (addressed in thematic category D) enabling them to listen should be provided in schools. However, audiobooks “should not be expected to function as an immediate ‘cure’ for reluctant readers” (Lo, 2009, p. 21) nor will they “magically increase student involvement with reading” (Thooft, 2011, p. 37).

C.2 Repeated listening to the same story (or not) (REPEATLIST)

Four participants mentioned listening to a particular audiobook more than once. John particularly liked listening to the same audiobook multiple times. At one point he told me that he had listened to *You're a Bad Man Mr Gum* three times (J15Oct2013). He explained why he liked to listen to this story repeatedly when he said that the author, who was also the narrator, added unexpected humorous parts into the narration; “I like it when he has some pauses, and where he says, ‘we should start a new chapter.’ It’s like he’s the audition guy, he’s going for an audition and he’s saying, ‘I think we should start a new chapter, people, I’ve very sorry about that’” (J15Oct2013). John’s ability to imitate the narrator was also mentioned in the theme about verbal memory (B.4, VERBALMEM). This repeated listening and consequent memory of the narration is a good example of overlap between themes and, in this case, thematic categories too.

It appears that John is particularly keen to listen to audiobooks repeatedly when the narration adds value to a story that he likes. For example, he told me that he had listened to the *Grk* audiobook series “about four times now” (J10Dec2013). He explained that he did not want to listen to all audiobooks multiple times, “If there is too much talking, big chunky details all the time, and then it wouldn’t be so interesting all the time. But [in the] *Grk* stories [the narrator] changes the voice for every character, but it’s the same reader, and he makes a crash and boom, things like that” (J10Dec2013). The self-motivation to listen because he enjoys listening was included in C.1 (ADDICTLIST) above, but is included here because it shows overlapping themes. Months later John talked more about the *Grk* series to which he was still listening. Interestingly, John did not seem to distinguish between the author and narrator when he said, “... the author, the way he speaks is really good. He expresses really well and he has articulation and when he is changing to other characters he speaks in a different voice and he has different accents” (J11Mar2014). His pleasure in listening to audiobooks was covered in C.1 (ADDICTLIST) while B.1 (CRITLIST) included his analysis of different narrator voices and accents. I asked if he thought that his repeated listening had resulted in him memorising parts of the story and that he knew what was about to be said, and

he agreed (J11Mar2014). When I ask if he wanted to listen to different audiobooks he confirmed, “I’m quite happy with just *Grk*” (J11Mar2014). He confirmed his contentment again when I asked him if, when he hears people talking about *The Hunger Games* or other stories he has not read, he thought he would like to read other books. He replied that he did not mind not listening to other audiobooks and said, “I am quite happy with the author who is reading *The Dog Called Grk*” (J11Mar2014). Two months later he again confirmed he was happy listening repeatedly to the same audiobooks when he said, “I like it very much. I can understand it more” (J20May2014).

There is overlap with repeated listening to the same audiobook and a listener’s ability to multitask. As discussed in B.3 (MULTITASKLIST), John described a case of extreme multitasking while listening to an audiobook and I asked him if this was only possible because he knew the story so well from multiple repetitions. He agreed and said, “Yeah. If I’ve listened to it before I can remember what it is, but sometimes I forget and then I say, ‘Oh, that is what happened’” (J10Dec2013). I prompt him with, “You can actually remember the words and how they are spoken?” and he agreed and then gave an example of how the narrator expressed a sentence he had remembered (J10Dec2013). His ability to mimic the narrator was covered in B.4 (VERBALMEM).

Three other participants only briefly mentioned listening repeatedly to the same audiobook. Lewis’ memory of the audiobook was covered in B.4 (VERBALMEM) because I asked if he remembered the story better by listening or reading the text. Lewis explained that he remembered more of the story from listening to the audiobook if he had listened to it repeatedly, but he was not necessarily better at remembering an audiobook the first time compared to reading the text the first time. Lewis also mentioned listening repeatedly to an audiobook series when he travels. He knows the story well and it seems that he does not need to concentrate on it so much (L23Oct2013). Mark mentioned once that he listened to the first *Harry Potter* book several times during one holiday (M23Sep2013). Vera said that she liked to listen to humorous stories repeatedly, “But the rest, if they are adventurous, it kind of loses the story, you know what is going to happen next, but with comedy, you know the story but it actually makes you laugh each time, which is the main point” (V13Mar2014). Motivation to listen to humorous audiobooks was covered in C.1 (ADDICTLIST).

The responses presented in this section show that some participants are intrinsically motivated to listen repeatedly to audiobooks. However, most studies about repeated reading

involve externally motivated, or coerced, repeated reading of text (e.g. Carbo, 1978; Dowhower, 1987; Conte & Humphreys, 1989; Van Bon, Bokseveld, Freide, Van den Hurk, 1991; Penno, Wilkinson & Moore, 2002; Winn et al., 2006, and many more). No studies were found where students were intrinsically motivated to read the same text repeatedly by themselves. In an opinion piece, Potter (2012, p. 590) talks of her Grade 8 son's love of listening to audiobooks and says, "Repetition is what children long for: they need to hear the same words over and over again." However, in this context Potter was talking of repeated read-alouds when her son was young. As explained above, intrinsic motivation to do a task is not the same for everyone. Not all participants in my research said they listened repeatedly to the same audiobook. Nevertheless, Potter's (2012) opinion is that, "Listening to literature over and over again is invaluable for growing minds of every age" (p. 590), and a similar belief has led to numerous studies of coerced repeated reading (see Section 2.3).

Summary of theme C.2

By its nature, a digital audiobook easily allows for repeated listening, whether that be to sections of the book, or the entire book. Participants demonstrated agency to listen repeatedly to the same audiobook as many times as they wanted. There is overlap between this theme of repeated listening to the same audiobook and listeners developing verbal memory (B.4, VERBALMEM), an ability to critically analyse the story and narrator (B.1, CRITLIST), and the ability to multitask with audiobooks more easily (B.3, MULTITASKLIST).

Summary of thematic category C and alignment with self-motivation

Participants showed agency to listen to audiobooks and in some cases to listen repeatedly to the same audiobook. This thematic category aligns with self-motivation discussed in the conceptual framework (Section 3.1.3). This study was designed to provide participants with the autonomy to listen, or not, in order to reveal their self-motivation to listen. Because some students are intrinsically motivated to listen to audiobooks and they self-report that their listening positively affects their in-class literacy activities, organisational structures should be provided in schools to enable audiobook listening (thematic category D). However, audiobooks should not be viewed as a magical cure for all literacy problems and

some participants learned, from being involved in this study, that they would rather read paper books than listen to audiobooks.

D. Thematic category: Organisational structures

This study found that a participant’s desire to listen to audiobooks is not sufficient on its own to lead to strong engagement with audiobooks. Organisational structures are the influences outside an individual’s control that enable or constrain (Hays, 1994) that individual’s agency. I refer to organisational structures in the same way Ryan & Deci (2000, p. 58) describe “immediate contextual conditions that either support or thwart the needs for competence and autonomy.” These structures have an influence on agency just as, “Classroom and home environments can facilitate or forestall intrinsic motivation by supporting versus thwarting the needs for autonomy and competence” (p. 59).

In this study these structures were found to come from influential adults in a student’s life, such as parents, teacher librarian and classroom teacher (D.1, ADULTINFL), the provision and promotion of audiobooks through the school library (D.2, ADVERTIZ), the role of peers influencing (or not) audiobook listening (D.3, PEERINFL) and the significant technical challenges associated with listening to digital audiobooks (D.4, TECHCHAL). The results from this category contribute to practice, as shown in Figure 4.5 below, by informing educators of the enabling and constraining influences on students’ self-motivated engagement with audiobooks.

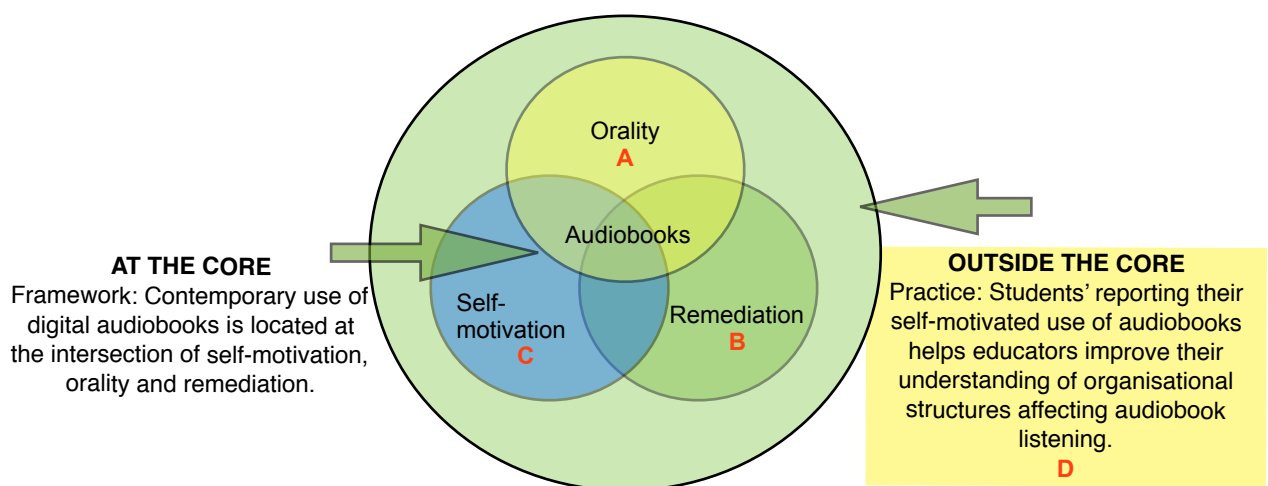


Figure 4.5 Focus on contribution to practice

D.1 Influence of parents, librarian and teacher (ADULTINFL)

Influential adults (hence the name of the theme) were shown to provide structures that enabled or constrained the agency of participants to listen to audiobooks. From the data it appears that there needs to be an adult helping preadolescents source audiobooks and load the digital files onto their devices until they know how to do it themselves (J23Apr2013).

Influential adults in this study were parents, the teacher librarian and to a much lesser degree, the classroom teacher. This theme overlaps with D.4 (TECHCHAL) where adults provided enabling organisational structures by helping with technical challenges faced by participants.

Parental support has shown a positive correlation with reading and is specifically “associated with greater amounts of voluntary reading by students in the intermediate grades” (Baker, 2003, p. 89). By parental support Baker means a positive attitude by parents towards reading and includes, “such factors as the availability of reading materials in the home, parental reading behavior, and the frequency of reading to the child” (p. 89). In my research, parental support was shown to include helping solve technical challenges associated with having a working listening device and transferring the audiobook files onto that device. “Supportive environments” means that the parents, “more strongly endorse the view that enjoyment is an important reason for reading” (p. 89-90). Additionally, Baker & Scher (2002) found that mothers in their study who viewed reading as pleasurable activity reported that their first graders took an active interest in learning to read.

D.1.1 Adults enabling structures by solving technical challenges

While adults helping to solve technical challenges for participants overlaps with D.4 (TECHCHAL), it is also included here to show the influence of adults on participant audiobook listening. For example, when I asked Beth if she thought she would listen more if she had audiobooks on a small device like an iPad or iPod (at the time she listened on her computer) she responded, “I’m still trying to ask my Dad, because he’s not always at home, he’s always working. I think I might get him to put it on my phone in the holidays, and then I’ll be able to listen on the bus” (B22Oct2013). I told her that I was happy to help if she brought in her phone and computer and that I could sync them (B22Oct2013), but she never took me up on this offer. She clearly saw her father as the influential adult who helped solve technical problems for her. Similarly, Lewis told me his Dad could not fix his iPod, so that he

could listen to audiobooks, but his Mum had “taken on the job” (L9Dec2013). More about this is included in the parent section below and in the theme D.4 (TECHCHAL).

Kate said she mainly listened to audiobooks on her portable speakers in bed at night time. However, when her speakers broke her Dad had difficulty replacing them (K7Mar2013). Kate said that her Mum did not like her using headphones while she listened to audiobooks in bed because she considered the chance of getting tangled in the headphone cords to be dangerous (K7Mar2013). More than a month later Kate was still not listening to audiobooks because her speakers had not been replaced (K29Apr2013). This inability of parents to provide the technical equipment required to listen to audiobooks is then a constraining structure that denies participants’ agency to listen.

D.1.2 Parental support for audiobook listening

Parents of participants were generally very supportive of their children listening to audiobooks, which was particularly evident because they needed to sign the consent form (Appendix C) for their children to participate in the study. Beth said that when her parents heard about the study they supported her because they know she likes to try new experiences and to be involved in everything she can at school (B22Oct2013). When I asked Beth if her parents had ever said that listening to audiobooks was a lazy way of reading a book she replied, “No they say it is good, because when you’re in a train and you don’t want to read a book, then they say it is fun” (B22Oct2013). Simon, when he said he looked forward to listening to audiobooks at night before he went to sleep, explained that at bedtime his parents allow him to play games on his iPad while listening to audiobooks until his mother tells him it is time to turn off the screen, at which time he closes his eyes and just listens to audiobooks until he falls asleep (Si9Jan2013). Clearly the nighttime routine allowed by parents provides an enabling structure for Simon to listen to audiobooks.

Similarly, John described his night time routine and said his parents, “check on me before they go to bed. If I’m asleep they will turn the audiobook off. I kind of lose track, but my iPad goes to the bookmark. My parents think it’s really good for me, they let me do it every night” (J15Oct2013). When I asked if John thought his parents consider audiobooks as a lazy way of reading a book, he said no, they do not think it is lazy, and they believe that audiobooks provide a model of verbal fluency that they want him to achieve. John explains,

“My friends [are] always saying, ‘like ... like ... like’ but my Mum says not to do it anymore, plus when I listen to audiobooks [the narrator] doesn’t do it and I feel more confident to not [say] ‘like ... like’” (J15Oct2013). This point about not using filler words was also covered in A.3 (VERBALFLU) but this quote shows that he has the support of his mother to listen to audiobooks. Furthermore, John said he shares his interest of audiobooks with his father and he wanted to choose *Doctor Who* audiobooks because they watch the TV shows together (J23Oct2012). Later John told me that his Dad was buying the paper versions of the books that John has listened to as audiobooks (J20May2014). Listening to audiobooks and reading the text version was covered in B.2 (LITOMNI).

Lewis also has the support of his parents. He told me that before this study, when he was younger, his mother supplied him with audiobooks (L16Apr2013). About his father he explains, “My Dad likes me reading and listening to stuff. My Dad does get me a lot of books” (L23Oct2013). Earlier Lewis told me his Dad was encouraging him to listen to more audiobooks (L13May2013). For example, Lewis said he had never known the complete story of *The Lord of the Rings* and his Dad wanted him to know it, so Lewis wanted to listen to the audiobook version we have in the library (L13May2013). Lewis explained that he and his Dad were watching *The Lord of the Rings* and his Dad kept asking, “Is this part in the audiobook?” but Lewis found the interruptions annoying (L13May2013).

Kate confirmed to me that her mother has provided audiobooks for her and her brother for as long as she can remember (K31Jan2013). Throughout the study Kate’s mother would often contact me to source more audiobooks for her children so that they had plenty to listen to when they finished the ones to which they were currently listening. It appeared very helpful to have a supportive parent sourcing audiobooks in advance because most preadolescents do not plan ahead sufficiently. Throughout this study I learned that a constant supply of audiobook stories requires a parent or teacher librarian to facilitate and make suggestions that the listener might like (K18May2013).

According to Mark, his mother changed her perspective of audiobooks during the study period because Mark responded to listening so favourably. Early in the data collection period, I asked him what his parents thought about him listening to audiobooks and he responded, “My Dad really appreciates it, I also showed him and he really likes it. My Mum, she doesn’t really get audiobooks” (M25Oct2013). His impression is that his mother wants him to read text so that he learns correct spelling, which was also covered in A.1 (SPELLCHAL). Later

Mark communicated that listening to “really long” audiobooks had given him more confidence to read thicker books (M1Apr2014). Connecting audiobooks to reading text was included in B.2 (LITOMNI) but is also included here because sharing this confidence appeared to Mark to please his mother and resulted in her becoming more willing to let Mark listen to audiobooks. Mark was more comfortable listening to audiobooks when both his parents approved. Later Mark said, “Well some people, for example my parents, think that maybe I should listen to audiobooks a tiny bit less because they think that if I listen to audiobooks too much I might ... they don’t want me to get addicted to listening instead of reading (M26May2014). Frank also found that listening to audiobooks too much caused his mother to become annoyed, especially when he did not want to stop listening to an audiobook and do chores (F4Feb2013).

These examples from the data shows that parental support for audiobooks provides an organisational structure that supports participants’ agency to listen. In a manner similar to what Baker (2003) found with reading motivation, intrinsic listening motivation is free to develop with an enabling home environment.

D.1.3 Teacher Librarian

Along with parents, I, as the teacher librarian researcher, provided an influential structure for participants’ agency to listen during this study. Due to technical restrictions, discussed in more detail in D.4 (TECHCHAL), it was the teacher librarian who provided access to most audiobooks to which the participants listened. Due to this system, participants were reliant on me as the teacher librarian to supply audiobooks (J23Oct2012). For example, I helped Vera by putting 15 audiobooks onto her iPad mini while she was in Art class, guessing what type of stories she would like (V12Sep2013).

Early in the study, students would email me when they found audiobooks they liked on the Audiogo website, then I bought them online and downloaded the files to one library stand-alone computer (due to the copyright restrictions explained in D.4, TECHCHAL). I also chose audiobooks to buy from the website because I am familiar with the types of stories that many children prefer based on my experience as a teacher librarian (J23Oct2012). However, this system changed when I discovered in November 2012 that the audiobook supplier, Audiogo, went bankrupt. The details of these technical challenges are discussed fully in D.4

(TECHCHAL). During the study Frank, John and Mark synced their devices to my personal iTunes account (explained in D.4.1) so that I could give them audiobooks I had personally bought for my own children (F30Jan2013, J11Sep2013). Due to the storage size of Mark's iPod he had difficulty keeping many audiobooks simultaneously so he had to keep coming back to me for more. As he finished one he deleted it and then I added another from my library (M21Jan2014). Mark and I talked about what audiobooks he wanted for upcoming holidays and how he planned to get me to put more stories on his iPod after he deleted the ones he finished (M26May2014). Mark was very self-motivated to listen to audiobooks and made it his priority to get the audiobooks he wanted from me, when he needed them (M21Jan2014). This was also included in C.1 (ADDICTLIST) because of his motivation to come to me for more audiobooks, however he was dependent on me, as teacher librarian, to supply him with audiobooks to which he enjoyed listening. My role as teacher librarian also includes making suggestions for books that a student might like to read in the future depending on their preferences (J10Dec2013). As teacher librarian I not only enable the technical access to audiobooks, but I can recommend audiobook titles that I think the student would enjoy and these topics were also covered in D.2 (ADVERTIZ).

Similarly, Cislak (2012) also found that it was important to encourage students at the boys' school where she worked as a teacher librarian, to become interested (and presumably to stay interested) in engaging with literature by offering both text and audio as options for patrons. Brock's (2013) study provides the first published research to investigate school librarians' perceptions of the value of providing audiobooks to children and young adults. Her survey of nearly 300 school librarians in Texas revealed that nearly 95% of participants believed that audiobooks should be part of school library collections. At the time of the survey, just over 80% of participants had audiobooks in their school libraries. However, one-third of respondents said that their audiobook collections were not well utilised, and a quarter said their collections were only available to teachers (p. 108). The "obstacles for acquiring audiobooks were funding (52%), lack of interest from faculty (24.8%) and format restrictions (21%)" (p. viii). Format restrictions were also a technical challenge in my research and are included in D.4 (TECHCHAL).

D.1.4 Classroom teacher

The least influential adult in this study was the classroom teacher. Mark was the only participant to talk about the influence of his teacher on his audiobook listening. Mark said that his teacher's homework requirement was for him to read text for 20 minutes and he had been told by his teacher that audiobooks did not count toward this quota (M10Sep2013). The requirement of his teacher provided a constraining structure within which Mark worked to satisfy his agency to listen to audiobooks. However, Mark turned this constraint into an enabling structure when he decided that he would read along while listening to the *Harry Potter* audiobook and this simultaneous following in the text would then count as his 20 minutes reading per day (M7Oct2013). Accessing different modes of literature was also covered in B.2 (LITOMNI).

Summary of theme D.1

Influential adults, who were shown to be parents, teacher librarian and, to a small degree, a classroom teacher, provide structures that enables or constrains preadolescents' audiobook listening. Parental support has been found to correlate with improved motivation to engage with literature. This support from parents was particularly evident in helping to solve technical difficulties associated with listening to digital audiobooks. My research focused on the perceptions of students about their audiobook listening so the influence of adults was only revealed through their responses. An area for further research could be to understand the perspectives of parents and teachers about students' listening to audiobooks.

D.2 Audiobook promotion by the teacher librarian (ADVERTIZ)

My role as teacher librarian includes making suggestions for books that a student might like to read depending on their preferences. In a sense I am 'advertising' books, hence the name for this theme. For example, John said he likes books that are not predictable and for this reason I suggested that he might like to listen to audiobooks by Michael Morpurgo (J10Dec2013). As a teacher librarian I can provide students with technical access to audiobooks and recommend audiobook titles that I think the student would enjoy. My role as an influential adult was also covered in D.1 (ADULTINFL).

D.2.1 'Out of sight, out of mind'

During this research I learned that, as digital files are not physical items on a shelf, downloadable audiobooks in a library need to be promoted differently than paper books (J23Oct2012). As mentioned in C.1 (ADDICTLIST), two participants said that seeing paper books lying around helped reminded them to read (L20Nov2013, B22Nov2013). Similarly, Scholastic's US 2014 survey (Scholastic, 2014) and their UK 2015 survey (Scholastic, 2015) both showed that children aged 6-17 preferred print books to ebooks, but the study did not give a reason why this was the case.

Haptic perception (Mangen, 2008) is the feel of a physical item, like a paper book and this has been found to influence readers attitudes towards ebooks, especially for leisure reading when relaxation is important (Gerlach & Buxmann, 2011). The authors reviewed limited research about product packaging that showed some people are more influenced by the feel of an object than others. They then coined the term 'haptic dissonance' to explain the unpleasant feelings that many readers experience when reading ebooks. They surveyed 30 bookshop customers and compared the tactile feeling of reading a hardcover print book and a Kindle. Most participants said they liked the natural feel of the paper compared to the screen when turning pages and the unique feel of a paper book, compared to the same feeling for all titles on an ebook reader. They found that these haptic preferences influenced participants' preference for print over electronic books and over 80% of participants said they preferred to read a paper book for leisure. Mangen (2008) explains that, "reading is a multi-sensory activity" and that readers have a "tactilely richer experience when flipping through the pages of a print book" (p. 404). This could also be expanded to include the interaction of all five senses and not just touch (Gerlach & Buxmann, 2011). My research about digital audiobooks found participants mentioned seeing paper books lying about and then becoming interested to read them. Not just sight, but smell, could also affect a reader's preference and Gerlach & Buxmann (2011) found that 7 out of 30 participants commented that they preferred the smell of the paper book.

A main reason for librarians not offering audiobooks in their school library was found by Brock (2013) to be "lack of interest from students" (p. 145). However, I found that if accessing audiobooks is not very easy for students, or right in front of them like a physical book, they often do not seek audiobooks, even though they say they would like to listen to them. It could be an 'out of sight, out of mind' situation (J23Apr2013). As mentioned in C.1

(ADDICTLIST), Lewis thought other students would like audiobooks if they tried them (L13May2013), implying that he thought many students did not know much about them. Mark was not so sure, and said that, like him, “A few people think [audiobooks] are very amazing” (M26May2014), but they are not for everyone.

From my experiences during this study I have learned that it is best if our school library has the paper version of every audiobook to which we have access and advertise the two formats together as alternatives (V29May2014). In this way the physical item seen on the shelf can help advertise the digital, intangible item. This is a good example of this study’s contribution to practice.

D.2.2 Sharing results of the study when promoting audiobooks

When I was promoting audiobooks to several library classes I found I was able to share with the students the results of my research so far (e.g. audiobooks seem to be able to help listeners learn vocabulary in context, a listener tends to listen to more than they can read, many listeners find it relaxing to listen to audiobooks, preadolescents seem to be able to multitask while listening) and I was able to check these findings with the participants who were in the class. For example, John was enthusiastically nodding each time I said something about audiobooks to the class. John agreed that he thought that listening to audiobooks did not help with spelling or punctuation but did help with getting plenty of story ideas. He said that when thinking of story ideas, his ideas sounded like an audiobook in his head and then he could just write them down. It is important to be able to include participants in disseminating and confirming findings from the study (J11Sep2013). All of these findings are discussed in more detail within this chapter.

Educational research is intended to improve services for children but, “Research alone seldom brings real benefits without time and effort being spent on disseminating and implementing the findings” (Alderson & Morrow, 2011, p. 24). It was satisfying to be able to disseminate the early findings with other students, as exemplified above. Implementation of the findings, such as ensuring we have the paper copy of audiobooks and advertising them together, ensures the research has been able to contribute to practice and bring tangible benefits for our students.

D.2.3 Try something new

I asked John if he thought that any of his friends would like audiobooks and he mentioned two that he thought might like them because “sometimes they don’t really like reading” (J15Oct2013). He thought that audiobooks might be a good alternative for them to try. However he said that he thought, “They don’t really want to try so much” (J15Oct2013). John then explained that some of his friends do not know what audiobooks are and he thinks that as a teacher librarian I should be telling people about them (J20May2014). When I asked him for specific suggestions he replied, “If you read a book then you can also tell people this book is available in audiobook version and ‘ask me if you want it’” (J20May2014). I have been able to implement this suggestion in my work as a teacher librarian. Considering the influential structure parents can provide preadolescent student listeners, I realise how important it is for me as teacher librarian to ensure parents know which books are available in audiobook format too (J20May2014).

When I asked Beth if she thought I, as teacher librarian, should promote audiobook listening she responded, “I think how you’re doing it now is good, but maybe if you put some signs or send emails to the school more kids would come, because a lot check their emails.” Beth said that she had not heard of audiobooks before she tried them during this study (B27May2014). Some signage and advertising in our library is the result of these suggestions. One of the reasons Beth said she joined the study was that she likes to have new experiences (B22Oct2013). Similarly, Lewis thought it would be good for more students to try audiobooks so that they try something different (L26May2014). Mark added, “I think that audiobooks is one of the things that ... a few people think they are very amazing,” which was also included in C.1 (ADDICTLIST), “and [they] don’t understand how others don’t like it, but there are not many people that do like audiobooks. They think you don’t get to do anything. ... Before I heard about audiobooks and how it actually was, I was like, wait is someone reading it for you?” (M26May2014). In response to whether I should be promoting audiobooks Vera said, “Yes, because some people might like them, but they don’t know where to get them or how to get them.” She confirmed that she did not know about audiobooks before I told her about them in class (V29May2014).

Summary of theme D.2

From this research I have learned that an important role of the teacher librarian is to provide access to audiobooks for those students who would like to try them, and advertise this option when suggesting titles that might be interesting. As digital books are not tangible objects they can be promoted alongside paper books as an alternative mode for readers. It has been satisfying to have already shared the initial results of this study with students and have participants confirm the findings with their classmates to encourage others to try a different mode of reading that they may not have tried before.

D.3 Roles of peers in audiobook listening (PEERINFL)

Peers were not a major influence for these preadolescent participants. However, one participant became interested in listening to audiobooks because he heard that his friend was listening. One participant chose not to share his audiobook listening with friends and preferred to keep it private.

D.3.1 Heard about audiobooks from a friend

For Mark, a friend was the catalyst to get him interested in listening to audiobooks. He still takes recommendations from that friend about what audiobook to listen to next (M9Dec2013). Later Mark told me that he wanted to listen to audiobooks to which his friend has listened because he thinks they like similar audiobooks (M12May2014). Mark then explained that when he first heard about audiobooks, he did not think he wanted to listen to them. He described what happened when he discovered his friend on the bus listening to audiobooks; “It was on the camp. I was sitting next to him once and he wasn’t talking and I didn’t know why and then suddenly I decided to look over and see what he was doing and he had earplugs in his ears and I was like, ‘Shaun what are you listening to?’ and he said he was listening to audiobooks” (M26May2014). From that point on, Mark has really enjoyed listening to audiobooks and it is interesting to think that he may never have discovered this activity if he had not asked his friend what he was doing. This chance encounter was a structure that enabled audiobook listening for him.

D.3.2 Would recommend to friends (or not)

I asked Beth if she has friends who she thinks would like audiobooks and she responded, “I know my friend Emily, she really likes reading, but she doesn’t have a lot of time and then on the bus she is just going around with her phone [playing games],” and Beth thought that she might rather listen to an audiobook if she knew about them (B22Oct2013). She thought that her friend Emily would like to listen to audiobooks and play games on her phone at the same time. Beth has also done that (B22Oct2013) and this was covered in B.3 (MULTITASKLIST). Late in the data collection period, Lewis came in to the library with a friend to talk to me about getting audiobooks. His friend had just finished a year of English as an additional language (EAL) but some books were hard for him to read, so Lewis thought that listening to audiobooks might be a good option for him during the holidays. It is significant that Lewis sharing his enthusiasm for audiobooks has obviously influenced his friend’s interest in listening to audiobooks (L6Jun2013).

Interestingly, John said that he keeps his audiobook listening a secret from his friends because, “They probably might tease me, but some of them, they mostly read books, but they say it’s a bit boring” (J15Oct2013). Later he confirmed, “They don’t know that I listen to audiobooks everyday ... I would rather keep it to myself” (J20May2014). In contrast, both Beth and Lewis said that it would not affect them if their friends listened to audiobooks or not (B22Oct2013, L23Oct2013).

Summary of theme D.3

The influence of peers appears to be a minor structural influence in most participants’ narratives, however it was a significant influence for one participant. This finding may be correlated to participants’ age and it could be assumed that adolescent participants may perceive peers to be more influential (Wentzel, 1998; Klauda, 2009), than these preadolescent participants. This finding correlates with Guthrie et al.’s (2007, p. 306) study of Grade 4 students that found, “collaboration with others did not appear a necessary condition for all children to engage fully in reading.”

D.4 Technology challenges (TECHCHAL)

This study showed that technical challenges pose an influential organisational structure that affects a participant's agency to listen. As the study concerned digital downloadable audiobooks, that participants listened to on their own devices, it was predicted that there would be numerous technical difficulties to overcome. However, the extent and the variety of technical challenges proved surprising.

D.4.1 Copyright and cost restrictions resulting in a lack of choice

It was frustrating when some participants' favourite books were not available to them, in audiobook format, through the school library. For example, Beth wished that we had audiobook versions of the *Dork Diaries*, or similar series, but I explained that there are many other audiobooks but they are not all available for us to access through our library (B22Oct2013). This restriction regarding access to specific audiobooks is due to copyright (outside North America) and cost of subscriptions to audiobook suppliers that exceed the budget of a small school library. While not addressing audiobooks specifically in his article, Harris (2014) gives two reasons why school libraries do not have enough digital resources, "First, not all of the content that we would want to use in schools and libraries is available in a digital format. Second, much of the available content is locked behind onerous contract terms that make effective educational use impossible" (p. 22). Certainly, books that are no longer copyrighted are available, often also with amateur audiobook narration, and "Project Gutenberg (<http://gutenberg.org>) and Google Books (<http://books.google.com>) have vast collections of pre-20th-century literature that most of us will never read" (Harris, 2014, p. 22). However, most of these books are not as appealing as professionally narrated books available from commercial suppliers.

When our school library was buying MP3 audiobook files from Audiogo, before their bankruptcy, I bought the audiobooks requested by students and then stored the files on a stand-alone computer in the library. Due to copyright regulations we were not allowed to store the files on a networked computer, but the MP3 files could be shared with anyone via a USB thumb drive, or similar (see Appendix D). To transfer these MP3 files to students' personal Apple listening devices, the files needed to be uploaded into a student's iTunes library and then transferred to their Apple device. For MP3 players, the files could be transferred directly from the library computer to the listening device. This process proved complicated for

students (J23Apr2013, L6Jun2013). While this system was cost effective and flexible (students could keep the files forever and could share them with others) it was disappointing that our students could not get online and just download any book they wanted (L6Jun2013). Following the bankruptcy of Audiogo (October / November 2013), I asked Blackstone Audio about purchasing options for our small school library in South Korea and they responded that they currently only supply libraries with CDs. When asked what we should do about students wanting to play audiobooks on their individual devices (not CD players) I was told, “Unfortunately we don't currently have a download solution that can meet your needs. Technically the mp3 cd files are only supposed to be ripped/downloaded by one student for each edition of the mp3 CD purchased” (personal communication).

To add to the audiobooks we had bought from Audiogo, I emailed iTunes in November 2013 to request permission to share my personal files with several participants but no answer was received. Following copyright regulations at the time, I could have ten devices authorised to play files from my iTunes library, which allowed me to give access to my personal audiobook library to some participants who were willing to sync their device to my computer. Obviously I could not make this available to all students. At the time, Audible and iTunes restricted their files from being lent by libraries in their site terms and conditions and stated that they are only for noncommercial personal use (National Copyright Unit, n.d.; Audible, 2014; Apple, 2015). However, due to lack of viable alternatives many schools have ventured into this ‘grey’ copyright area. For example, Allmang (2009) set up a trial selection of audiobooks downloaded from iTunes and loaded onto, initially two iPods, then expanded to eight, that were lent to students. Noonoo (2012) describes another school that created a complicated system of more than 400 iTunes audiobooks bought by the school and lent out on 50 iPods. One disadvantage with lending devices is that I have found some students would prefer to use their own devices with which they are familiar. The added responsibility not to damage the relatively expensive device (compared to a paper book) could also possibly deter borrowers. A solution needs to be found where libraries, at a reasonable cost, can allow patrons to download audiobooks that are compatible with all personal devices and provide a wide range of titles. It is certainly a “format fiasco” for libraries to provide access to audiobooks distributed by different suppliers using different formats and “hardware and software incompatibilities” abound (Allmang, 2009, p. 174).

“License agreements are the real reason why you cannot get any book you want as an e-book for your classroom or library,” explains Harris (2014 p. 23), and the same is true for digital audiobooks. If digital items are licensed and not sold, then possession has not changed hands and there are restrictions on use. For a personal subscription model, most digital content is available and as individuals we are usually quite happy to abide by the terms of the subscription for the convenience of access. For individual renters, “finding, purchasing, and listening to an audiobook has never been easier” (Maughan, 2010, p. 11) but copyright and formatting restrictions placed on audiobook downloads can make purchasing a very complex decision for librarians (Hoy, 2009; Farrell, 2010). Library subscription service providers such as Overdrive, BolindaDigital and OneClickDigital offer expensive plans where audiobook files are only available during the subscription period and the library loses access to the files if they choose not to renew the service. “If e-books are licensed, and the licensee goes out of business, there may be no recourse for the end user to legally access secured e-books,” explains Harris (2014, p. 24) and the same is true for downloadable audiobooks. Access to digital content through these subscription services are time limited, usually only available to one patron at a time (except for more expensive multi-use access licenses) and not all titles are available through a single supplier. Students using these subscription services would also need to remember access passwords, plus the various formats of software for each vendor make it difficult to become familiar with how to transfer audiobooks to their particular device. Vendor software can often only run on specific models of devices. Digital copyright is region specific and often does not extend to customers in other geographical regions (e.g. outside North America). Additionally, Harris (2014) explains that the cost for these subscription services can be prohibitive for individual school libraries and he suggests using a “consortium model to create an economy of scale” (p. 24), however, this is usually not available for small independent international schools, which is where my research took place.

In our situation, until there are better options, I recommend to all of our students that they become members of their local public library in their home country which usually has access to consortium models of digital material, as Harris (2014) suggests above. Ironically, Harris (2014, p. 24) concludes his article with the statement that he has “shown there are many reasons why school libraries have struggled to implement more digital content,” but earlier he made the point that, “the true value of the modern school library is limiting the information resources to just the best resources” (Harris, 2014, p. 22). Currently small

independent school libraries outside North America are primarily being limited by cost and copyright regulations.

D.4.2 Device and format restrictions

As mentioned earlier, Brock's (2013) study of school librarians found that a significant reason for not buying more audiobooks for their libraries was format restrictions. Stern (2011, p. 86) surveyed academic libraries wishing to supply audiobooks to their patrons, and also found file formats and device compatibility to be a significant obstacle to their adoption. Some comments that participants made indicates their concerns:

'We've considered them, but have not yet found a good plan or format for them.'

'We want items that are compatible with iPod and mp3 players and are not expensive.'

'It's a complicated process to set up.'

'We don't want to have audiobooks that are only on CD; we want students and faculty to be able to listen to them on their iPods, too.'

'We would like to expand into e-audiobooks, but have not yet determined what format or file type to get. It seems that most of our users have iPods and none of the audiobooks are compatible.'

Similarly, my research found that facilitating listening to audiobooks was often very difficult for some participants. At times understanding the varying format restrictions and the process of loading his listening device with the files was overwhelming to Lewis and sometimes he chose to read books rather than sort out the difficulties (L13May2013). It is complicated to explain to students that they can listen to the MP3 files on any device, but if they are using an Apple device they must first transfer them to a computer that syncs with that particular device (L6Jun2013).

Frank wanted to sync a device to my iTunes library but did not have a suitable device so I offered to lend him my iPod Shuffle. However, he really wanted to have his own device and went and bought a suitable one. This preference could have implications for libraries lending devices (e.g. Playaways, see Section 1.3.2) on which to listen to audiobooks. However, the device that Frank bought did not have a screen on which to keep track of the order of the files and, until he got used to it, this restricted him from listening to audiobooks (F10Sep2012).

To work around copyright restrictions, digital content is sometimes “locked to specific hardware” explains Harris (2014, p. 25) which is the function of Playaways (see Section 1.3.2). While several authors find that students like using this proprietary product (Grover & Hannegan, 2012; Cislak, 2012; Fues, 2009; Fellerer, 2009) my research found that participants have their own devices on which they listen to music, and do other tasks, and would also like to use them to listen to audiobooks. When using their own device their peers assume they are listening to music (M26May2014), and it is not obvious they are listening to an audiobook. As mentioned in D.3 (PEERINFL), John said he preferred to keep his audiobook listening private and he did not want his friends to know (J20May2014).

The size of the listening device is also a structure enabling audiobook listening while multitasking (discussed in B.3, MULTITASKLIST). I asked Beth if she had a more portable device on which to listen but she said no and at the time she only listened to audiobooks on her computer (B22Oct2013). As explained in D.1 (ADULTINFL), Beth was waiting for her Dad to get the time to help her transfer the audiobooks to an iPad or iPod. She was then hoping she would be able to listen to audiobooks in the bus on the way to school if she had a more portable device (B22Oct2013). Later, when Beth said she was listening to audiobooks on her iPod, I offered to transfer some files onto it but she did not take me up on the offer (B4Dec2013). My interactions with her to help solve her technical challenges are also covered in D.1 (ADULTINFL). Later Beth excused herself from getting more audiobooks from me by saying, “I’m going to change my iPod soon so I would prefer not to put it on now” (B5Mar2014). As discussed in C.1 (ADDICTLIST), at this stage Beth was losing enthusiasm for listening to the audiobooks we had on offer in the library, as they were not the titles she wanted, due to copyright restrictions (B22Oct2013).

Other device restrictions that participants encountered included lack of storage space on their listening device, lost device or charger cable, or a listening device not working. For example, at one point I asked Frank if he was listening to audiobooks and he said he was not at the time because he had lost his iPod that was synced with my computer (F5Jun2013). He had some German audiobooks on his phone and he was listening to them, as he is also fluent in German. He did not want to connect his phone to my computer in case his iTunes library synced with mine and caused a problem on his phone (F5Jun2013). Mark also lost his iPod for a time during the data collection period, and then later when he had found his iPod again and said he could not find the charger so he still could not use it (M12May2014). When John

told me his iPad was getting full he agreed that he needed to choose which audiobooks to delete so we could add some more (J20May2014). Lewis could not listen to audiobooks while his iPod was not working and it proved much less complicated for him just to read a book and not listen to audiobooks (L9Dec2013). He said that if his iPod was working he would be listening to audiobooks every morning (L9Dec2013). When I asked if he had another device on which he could listen he explained that his iPod was synced to his Dad's computer and his iPhone was synced to his Mum's and his Mum did not want him to use his phone for anything except phone calls and emergencies (L9Dec2013). The structures put in place by his parents are also covered in D.1 (ADULTINFL). Not long after this, Lewis' mum was able to fix his iPod and he then said how glad he was to be able to listen to audiobooks again (L13Dec2013). When I gave Mark the first book of *The Hunger Games* he did not have enough room for the other two books in the series on his iPod (M21Jan2014). This technical restriction meant that Mark had to come back to me for the other books in the series after he was able to delete some files (M21Jan2014). His dependence on me to provide more audiobooks was covered in D.1 (ADULTINFL). Once when Vera came to ask me to put audiobooks onto her iPad mini, she did not bring the required cable, so I needed to find one to use. At the time she also told me that she did not have a computer that was working at home that she could use, so she could not transfer the files onto her iPad that was originally synced to the now non-functioning computer. However she had not used her iPad mini for anything else yet, so I was able to then sync it to my iTunes account and she could get audiobooks from my computer, as I could authorise up to ten devices to share what is in my iTunes library (V12Sep2013). As mentioned in D.1 (ADULTINFL), Kate's speakers broke and her Dad did not buy any more (K7Mar2013) so during this time she was no longer able to listen to audiobooks at night time before sleep (K29Apr2013).

Throughout the study I often lamented that technical challenges are considerable for a small school library to get access to a wide variety of appealing and cost-effective audiobooks for students (e.g. J23Oct2012, L6Jun2013, J11Sep2013). Considering all these technical challenges that need to be overcome to enable audiobook listening, I could sympathise with Vera when she said she was reading more books now because, "Sometimes when I really want to listen to a book, but your battery goes down you can't listen to it, but with your book you can just take it out of your bag and you can read it whenever you want, wherever you want" (V29May2014). Often the less technical the option, the less chance of something not

working. Currently in our school library the structures to enable reading physical text are easier to maintain than digital files.

Bemoaning, more than 70 years ago, Wells (1943, p. 68) seems to have had similar trouble with advancing technology that we do today; “Because of the disorganized and rapid growth of recording, the public hardly realizes the scope already achieved.” He proudly explains that, “Schools are increasingly discovering the high value of the phonograph as aid to literary appreciation” (p. 71). Even during a time of war, “The phonograph has been found to be of distinct value in aiding morale and in contributing to the education of a democracy” (p. 72). Technical difficulties was an issue during O’Day’s (2002) study of audiobooks more than a decade ago. She found that some participants were frustrated with tape machines that broke down or tapes that did not work and some participants complained that the headphones were uncomfortable.

Summary of theme D.4

With each wave of advancing technology there will be technological frustrations and it is hoped that over time the technical challenges faced in this study will be reduced so that school libraries will be able to offer students a wide variety of downloadable audiobooks within a reasonable budget. Perhaps also format issues will become solved in the future with compatible files and devices. This theme illustrates that technical challenges are significant constraining structures for audiobook listeners.

Summary of thematic category D and alignment with practice

While a participant may desire to listen to audiobooks, organisational structures outside an individual’s control influence their agency to listen. Adults in a participant’s life, supply of audiobooks through the school library or other sources, significant technical challenges, and to a lesser degree, peers, all have an impact on a preadolescent’s desire to listen to audiobooks. This research has shown that, as Hays (1994) describes, agency and structures are interconnected. It has been shown that the structures described in this theme are “enabling as well as constraining” (p. 61) and that, “agency is made possible by the enabling features of social structures at the same time as it is limited within the bounds of structural constraint” (p.

62). An understanding of this can inform educators about the influences on students' self-motivated engagement with audiobooks and therefore contributes to practice.

Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study grouped into four thematic categories, namely, perceived gain (or not) from listening to audiobooks (A), attributes of audiobook listeners (B), agency or what is controlled by participants (C) and organisational structures or those elements outside participants' control (D). Category A aligns with orality in the conceptual framework (Figure 4.2) and includes findings such as audiobook listening is perceived not to improve spelling or punctuation but does provide story ideas, a model of fluent pronunciation and participants also perceived that they learn vocabulary in context from listening to audiobooks. Category B aligns with remediation in the conceptual framework (Figure 4.3) and includes participants' critique of audiobooks, their motivation to engage with story in various modes, multitasking activities while listening and verbal memory, all of which celebrates the uniqueness of this mode of literature. Category C aligns with self-motivation (Figure 4.4) and includes the elements that were found to be under the control of participants such as their willingness (or not) to listen to audiobooks and whether they chose to listen repeatedly to the same audiobook. Category D includes the organisational structures outside participants' control (Figure 4.5) that enable or constrain audiobook listening, including the influence of adults and technical challenges, and is this study's contribution to practice. The implications of these findings are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION and IMPLICATIONS

This study has contributed in a small way to fill the gap in literature about student use of audiobooks, particularly preadolescent students who are proficient readers and who are not identified as having learning difficulties. It is hoped that my research will contribute to audiobooks being recognised by teacher librarians and other language and literacy educators as a legitimate, alternative source of literature for students, even for those who are capable readers with no learning challenges. The main purpose of this research was for me to learn from preadolescent students about their perceptions of changes in their literacy practices from listening to downloaded audiobooks in their free time and the findings in the previous chapter show this has been achieved.

This research aimed to contribute to theory by showing that the use of modern digital audiobooks can be positioned theoretically at the intersection of self-motivation, orality and digital remediation of literature. It aimed to contribute to practice by informing educators about the organisational structures that affect preadolescents' engagement with literature through audiobooks. Narrative research was chosen as the best methodology to present student perspectives on this topic. This study was not about trying to find ways to motivate young readers to engage with literature, although providing high quality audiobooks may have the potential to do that, but rather to represent student perspectives about audiobooks and to encourage educators to really listen to students about their educational environment. I believe those of us involved in education should be actively learning from our students and adapting education to suit their needs and preferences. This research involved a self-motivated activity in which there were no external incentives and no coercion to listen. As educators we can learn much from what students are self-motivated to do in educational contexts.

In this concluding chapter I recap on the key findings of the research and evaluate what was learned through this narrative inquiry. I close the chapter by giving some brief personal reflections at the end of this journey.

5.1 Key findings

The purpose of this research was to answer one main research question, namely, what changes did preadolescent students perceive in their literacy practices from listening to downloaded audiobooks in their free time? The results in the previous chapter showed four main categories of findings, specifically, what students perceived they gained (or not) from listening to audiobooks, the characteristics of listeners, students' agency to listen and organisational structures that either constrained or enabled audiobook listening for students. The key findings from these four categories have been summarised in this section.

5.1.1 Perceived gain (or not) from listening to audiobooks

This study was about exploring student perceptions, or their perspectives, their 'voice'. Preadolescent student participants perceived they had plenty to gain from listening to professionally narrated audiobooks. While participants said that listening does not contribute much to improving their spelling and punctuation skills, they said that reading text does not necessarily guarantee they learn those skills either (A.1). They perceived that listening to audiobooks in their leisure time helped contribute to their creative story writing ideas, along with reading text and watching movies (A.2). Well-narrated audiobooks also provided them with a model of verbal fluency which they thought helped them improve their public speaking confidence and skills. Learning correct pronunciation, and a reminder not to use filler words, was also mentioned as benefits of listening to audiobooks (A.3). Participants also said that listening to audiobooks was a good way to learn vocabulary in context (A.4).

These results can be viewed conceptually from an understanding of orality. Listening to audiobooks is reading with ears instead of eyes (Have & Pedersen, 2016). A primarily oral culture does not require a knowledge of spelling and similarly participants said that listening to an audiobook did not help improve their spelling or punctuation skills (A.1). However, obviously the narrator requires the correct spelling and punctuation in the original text to be able to give an accurate audio performance. Participants said they gained ideas for their own stories from listening to audiobooks (A.2), which would also be true in an oral culture. The story ideas gained could then either be used in writing or public speaking. Participants also said that they learned correct pronunciation and were encouraged not to use filler words because of their extensive listening to audiobooks in their free time (A.3). This verbal fluency may also be learned in a primarily oral society. Acquiring vocabulary in context (A.4) comes

from hearing stories in an oral culture, or from reading text in a print culture. However, audiobooks are not storytellers (Section 2.5) and without an original printed text there would be no audiobook (Bednar, 2012).

5.1.2 Attributes of listeners

Participants in this study showed some outstanding characteristics. While my purpose was to learn from student perceptions about audiobooks, the narrative data also revealed characteristics of listeners. These characteristics tell us much about how audiobooks have transformed the reading experience of these participants.

The concept of ‘remediation’ (Bolter & Grusin’s, 2000) can be positioned as a lens through which to view the uniqueness of audiobooks as a form of literature (Bednar, 2012). To explain ‘remediation’ Bolter & Grusin (2000) describe the dichotomy between ‘immediacy’ and ‘hypermediacy.’ Immediacy is when the medium is at times invisible and hypermediacy describes those moments when the medium itself is under scrutiny. Remediation is evident when analysing the characteristics of listeners in this study. Participants showed that at times they thought critically about the audiobook listening experience (B.1), especially the effect of the narrator, and at other times the medium itself appeared irrelevant to experiencing the story (B.2). However, the medium is what allows multitasking behaviours exhibited by the participants (B.3) and is what aids in developing an audible memory for words and stories (B.4).

5.1.3 Agency

In this study, agency is what is done, or desired to be done, and is the product of self, or intrinsic, motivation. Agency was demonstrated by participants in this study when they chose to listen to audiobooks in their free time. Two choices under the control of the students was the choice to listen to audiobooks (including what they listened to and for how long) and the choice about whether to listen to the same audiobook repeatedly. These findings align with the theoretical discussion of intrinsic motivation in education (see Figure 4.4). The study was participant driven and there was no coercion to listen to audiobooks.

This study found that some students were self-motivated to listen to audiobooks because they saw them as entertaining (C.1.3) and relaxing (C.1.4). Some participants showed a preference for humorous stories (C.1.2). However, sometimes participants expressed their

agency by taking a break from listening to audiobooks and reading paper books instead (C.1.5). Participants also acknowledged that audiobooks are not for everyone (C.1.6). Some participants were self-motivated to listen repeatedly to the same audiobook (C.2).

These findings show that students can identify what motivates them. They know that they are intrinsically motivated to do an activity that they see is entertaining, particularly when it involves humour, and when an activity is relaxing. By exposing young people to positive ways to exercise their agency in this way, educators are potentially facilitating an individual's lifelong engagement with literature.

5.1.4 Organisational structures

As defined in thematic category D, organisational structures are those factors outside an individual's control that enable or constrain their agency. The findings from this category contribute to educational practice by helping educators understand what enables and constrains preadolescents' self-motivation to listen to audiobooks. This research found that adults in a preadolescent student's life (D.1), provision of audiobooks through the school library or other sources (D.2), significant technical challenges (D.4) and, to a lesser degree, peers (D.3), all had an impact on a participant's agency to listen to audiobooks. Some structures were enabling (e.g. adults helping solve technical challenges D.1.1 and parental support for listening D.1.2) while others were constraining (e.g. technical challenges D.4). Influential adults in a student's life were found to be parents (D.1.2), teacher librarian (D.1.3) and to a lesser degree, classroom teacher (D.1.4). Peer influence (D.3) was significant for one participant in this study, but at this age peers did not appear to be a major structural influence for preadolescents listening to audiobooks. Technical challenges (D.4), especially device and format restrictions (D.4.2), were an organisational structure that was shown to have a significant constraining influence on participants' agency to listen to audiobooks.

Young people are motivated to fulfil emotional needs such as a desire for entertainment and relaxation, which some participants expressed as their motivation to listen to audiobooks, but structures need to be available to enable students to engage with literature in this way. This study aimed to contribute to educators' practice by improving their understanding of the organisational structures affecting students' intrinsic motivation to listen to audiobooks.

5.2 Contribution to educational theory and practice

This study's contribution to educational theory is the conceptual framework discussed in Section 3.1. This theoretical discussion positions the use of audiobooks at the intersection of orality, remediation and self-motivation. These three elements were chosen as they provided the best solution to the research problem introduced in Section 1.6. Theory is at the heart of practice and this theoretical 'core' is the foundation of this study's contribution to practice (see Figure 5.1). How the findings from this study have contributed to both educational theory and practice is discussed in this section.

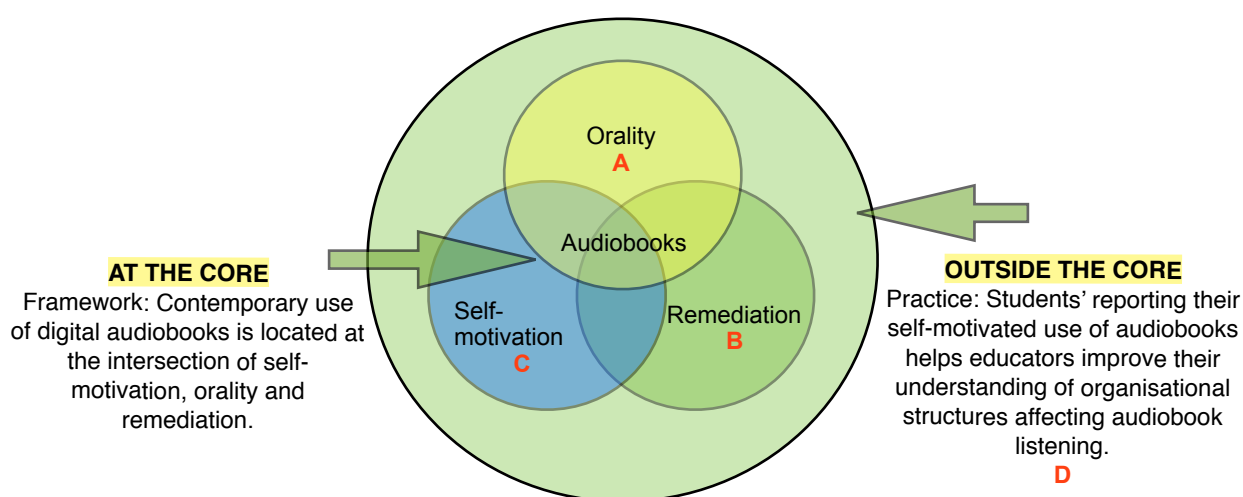


Figure 5.1 Theory is the core of practice

5.2.1 Implications for educational theory

The theoretical view that the use of audiobooks can be placed at the intersection of orality, remediation and self-motivation helps us understand that audiobooks should be considered “a contemporary first-class listening experience” (Have & Pedersen, 2016, p. 5). Modern downloadable audiobooks have the potential to engage young people with literature in a way that has never before been possible. Technological advancements, particularly the prevalence of mobile digital devices, and the improvement in distribution of high-quality audiobooks can potentially change the way some of our students experience an oral form of literature. Seeing this experience from a preadolescent perspective, as this study has provided, can help educators form a new conceptual view of audiobooks in education.

Narrative research presents individual experiences and recognises that there is not just one student voice (Fielding, 2004; Cook-Sather, 2006; Wyness, 2012). While the data are not generalisable, this study's theoretical contribution could extend to encouraging educators in other contexts to continue to seek individual student perspectives about their schooling.

Exploring student perceptions of an educational experience can give educators a very different perspective than their own. This student-centred view should be at the core of our practice as teachers. “To listen to students, to build relationships, is to better understand, to be more engaged, to be [a] more successful” teacher (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 381). Research eliciting “student voice forces us to confront the present realities and future aspirations of those for whom the system of formal schooling exists” (Fielding, 2004, p. 206).

This research has also added to participants’ knowledge that their voices are important in our school. From being involved in this research they have learned that teachers in our school are making an effort to hear individual students and learn from them. This could potentially have a longer lasting effect on these participants, as Cook-Sather (2006, p. 363) explains: “Having a voice—having presence, power, and agency—within democratic, or at least voting, contexts means having the opportunity to speak one’s mind, be heard and counted by others, and, perhaps, to have an influence on outcomes.” As part of a democratic community, they are learning that their voices count.

What I have learned from this research has added to my own theoretical knowledge of my particular context. I have learned that participants perceive a change in their literacy practices from listening to audiobooks. They are self-motivated to listen in their leisure time and they think this had a generally positive effect on their literacy development, such as helping to provide creative story writing ideas and helping to improve their verbal fluency. This information has been useful to me in my work as an elementary teacher librarian and I have been able to share what I have learned from this research with interested staff members.

5.2.2 Implications for educational practice

While the conceptual framework is the theoretical core of this study, an understanding of the organisational structures that enable or constrain audiobook listening is this study’s contribution to practice. This study found that some students are intrinsically motivated to listen to audiobooks and I therefore propose that schools provide structures that enables students to listen to audiobooks in their free time. If there are educational activities in which students are intrinsically motivated to participate, then schools would do well to provide organisational structures that enables this motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

It is a recommendation from this study that downloadable audiobooks should be made available in school libraries and this research suggests that the teacher librarian is the optimal person to promote and enable access to audiobooks as an alternative and additional form of literature. However, technical challenges for digital files, particularly copyright regulations and format inconsistencies, are considerable, especially for small school libraries that do not belong to a consortium. Fielding (2004) reminds us that, “student voice activities, however committed they may be, will not of themselves achieve their aspirations unless a series of conditions are met that provide the organisational structures and cultures to make their desired intentions a living reality” (p. 202).

Our schools should be providing and promoting as many different forms of literature as possible to help educators encourage student enthusiasm for lifelong engagement with literature. However, the addition of a wide range of audiobooks in the school library should not be considered a panacea for all literacy difficulties. Contrary to what is implied in some educational articles (see Section 2.6), audiobooks cannot be considered a magical cure for literacy challenges. My study showed that not all participants preferred to listen to audiobooks extensively. Some wanted to listen repeatedly to the same audiobook or series. Some learned, through their participation in this study, that they preferred to read paper books that they could see and feel. Some mentioned that they sometimes did not think about downloadable audiobooks because they are not a physical item they see lying around. This creates challenges for teacher librarians to promote audiobook listening as an ‘unseen’ alternative. Some participants recognised that even though they might really like listening to audiobooks, it might not appeal to everyone.

5.3 Personal reflections

As explained in Chapter 1, my personal context, that of learning from my own children, has heavily influenced this narrative research. I appreciate that I have had the opportunity to learn from my own school-age children and that what they have taught me has motivated me to listen to what students tell me. It would be good to see more schools create a “listening culture” (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 367) where educators actively listen to their students. Students sharing their perceptions about school has helped me in many areas other than this research about audiobooks. Listening to my students has certainly made me a better teacher.

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Appendix A: Sample questions for recruitment of participants

1. Have you ever listened to audiobooks before?
2. If yes, can you name some titles or authors that you remember?
3. Do you currently listen to audiobooks every day, most days or occasionally?
4. Do you have access to a personal listening device - ipod, ipad, tablet, mp3 player?
5. Can you access it anytime or do you share it with someone else?
6. When do you think you will have time to listen to audiobooks?

Appendix B: Student Information and Assent

(August 2013-June 2014)



School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone: 61 2 6773 4221
Fax: 61 2 6773 2445
Email: education@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/education

Information Sheet for Students

I would like to ask you to help in my University research project.

My name is Mrs Sue Toms and I am doing this research as part of my Doctor of Education at the University of New England, Australia. My supervisors are Dr Eveline Chan, Dr Susan Feez and Dr Mary Macken-Horarik.

Research Project

Listening to the library: Preadolescent student perceptions of the impact of downloadable audiobooks on their literacy development.

Aim of the research

This project hopes to find out if you think listening to a lot of audiobooks in your free time changes how you use language in your English classes. I also want to find out how teacher librarians can help you find and download audiobooks that you like.

Interviews

I would like to have some meetings with you in the BIFS library throughout the school year (August 2013 – June 2014), when the time is right for you. These 15 minute casual conversations once or twice a month will help me understand which audiobooks you would like to listen to next and your thoughts about your listening experience. With your permission, I will make audio recordings of our meetings to make sure that I remember what you said. Following the meetings, notes about what we said will be available to you if you wish to see it.

Confidentiality

Any information or personal from you will remain private. No one will be identified by name in any of the papers I write. All names will be replaced by invented names (that you can help me choose!).



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Participation is Voluntary

Your involvement in this study is voluntary and you can drop out at any time without telling me why and without any consequence.

Questions

The questions I ask you during our meetings will be general and help me understand how you view your audiobook listening, whether you like the books or if you would like more, if you would recommend some to your friends and in what ways do you think listening to audiobooks has helped or not helped you in your school work.

Use of information

I will use information you as part of my studies, which I expect to complete in January 2016. This information may also be written up in magazine articles and at teacher librarian meetings before and after this date. At all times, I will keep your identity safe by presenting the information in a way that will not allow you to be identified.

Upsetting issues

It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does please contact me, or head of BIFS, Mr Stephen Palmer.

Storage of information

I will keep recordings and notes of the on a password-protected computer. Only the research team will have access to the data. Any paper copies of documents will be kept in a secure cabinet in my library office.

Disposal of information

All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after I have finished my studies, after which I will delete the computer files and shred any papers.

Approval

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE12-148, Valid to 30 June 2014).



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Fax: 61 2 6773 2445
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Contact details

Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at suetoms@bifskorea.org

You may also contact either of my supervisors, Dr Eveline Chan: echan4@une.edu.au or Dr Susan Feez: sfeez@une.edu.au or Dr Mary Macken-Horarik: mmackenh@une.edu.au

Complaints

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact

Mr Stephen Palmer, BIFS Principal at spalmer@bifskorea.org

or the Research Ethics Officer at:

Research Services

University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351

Tel: (02) 6773 3449 Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Regards,

Sue Toms, M.Ed. (Teacher Librarianship)



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STUDENT ASSENT

Listening to the library: Preadolescent student perceptions of the impact of downloadable audiobooks on their literacy development.

Please write your name after 'I,' and circle the yes/no answer you want.

I,, have read the Information Sheet for Students and any questions I asked have been answered and I understand them.

Yes/No

I agree to participate in this study, and I know that I can change my mind at any time.

Yes/No

I agree that anything we talk about will be written about using an invented name.

Yes/No

I agree that the interviews will be recorded and written down.

Yes/No

.....

Student Date

.....

Researcher Date

Appendix C: Parent Information and Consent

(August 2013-June 2014)



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University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone: 61 2 6773 4221
Fax: 61 2 6773 2445
Email: education@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/education

Information Sheet for Parents

I wish to invite your child to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Mrs Sue Toms and I am conducting this research as part of my Doctor of Education at the University of New England, Australia. My supervisors are Dr Eveline Chan, Dr Susan Feez and Dr Mary Macken-Horarik.

Research Project

Listening to the library: Preadolescent student perceptions of the impact of downloadable audiobooks on their literacy development.

Aim of the research

This research aims to investigate student perceptions of changes in their literacy practices from extensive listening to audiobooks outside of class time. The role of the teacher librarian in promoting and providing downloadable audiobooks to students will also be explored.

Interviews

I would like to conduct several face-to-face interviews with your child in the library throughout the school year (August 2013 – June 2014), at times convenient to them. These 15 minute casual conversations once or twice a month will help me understand which audiobooks they would like to listen to next and their impressions of their listening experience. With your permission, I will aim to make audio recordings of the interviews to ensure that I accurately recall the information they provide. Following the interviews, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.

Confidentiality

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure that your child is not identifiable.

Participation is Voluntary

Please understand that your child's involvement in this study is voluntary and I respect their right to withdraw from the study at any time. They may discontinue participation at any time and do not need to provide any explanation and without consequence.

Page 1



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University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
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Fax: 61 2 6773 2445
Email: education@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/education

Questions

The interview questions will not be of a sensitive nature: rather they are general, aiming to enhance my knowledge of your child's listening experience.

Use of information

I will use information from the interviews as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in January 2016. Information from the interviews may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all times, I will safeguard your child's identity by presenting the information in way that will not allow them to be identified.

Upsetting issues

It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does please contact me, or head of BIFS, Mr Stephen Palmer.

Storage of information

I will keep recordings and notes of the on a password-protected computer. Only the research team will have access to the data. Any paper copies of documents will be kept in a secure cabinet in my library office.

Disposal of information

All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after successful submission of my thesis, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant computer files, and destroying or shredding hardcopy materials.

Approval

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE12-148, Valid to 30 June 2014).

Contact details

Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at suetoms@bifskorea.org

You may also contact either of my supervisors, Dr Eveline Chan: echan4@une.edu.au or Dr Susan Feez: sfeez@une.edu.au or Dr Mary Macken-Horarik: mmackenh@une.edu.au



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Complaints

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact

Mr Stephen Palmer, BIFS Principal at spalmer@bifskorea.org

or the Research Ethics Officer at:

Research Services

University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351

Tel: (02) 6773 3449 Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Regards,

Sue Toms, M.Ed. (Teacher Librarianship)



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PARENT CONSENT

Listening to the library: Preadolescent student perceptions of the impact of downloadable audiobooks on their literacy development.

Please write your name after 'I,' and circle the yes/no answer you want.

I,, have read the Information Sheet for Parents and any questions I asked have been answered and I understand them.

Yes/No

I agree for my child to participate in this study, and I know that my child can change his/her mind at any time.

Yes/No

I agree that anything we talk about will be written about using an invented name.

Yes/No

I agree that the interviews will be recorded and written down.

Yes/No

.....
 Parent Date

.....
 Researcher Date

Appendix D: Approval from AudioGo to lend downloadable files

Busan International Foreign School Mail - [AudioGo Limited] Re: purchase for school library

3/11/13 1:09 PM



Sue Toms <suetoms@bifskorea.org>

[AudioGo Limited] Re: purchase for school library

1 message

DAWN <notifications-support@audiogolimited.zendesk.com>
Reply-To: AudioGo Limited <support+id2071@audiogolimited.zendesk.com>
To: Sue Toms <suetoms@bifskorea.org>

Tue, Oct 2, 2012 at 4:51 PM

Please type your reply above this line



Your request (#2071) has been deemed solved. To re-open, reply to this email.

DAWN, Oct 02 08:51 (BST):

Dear Ms Toms
Thank you for your enquiry.
We have no restrictions on our downloads, so yes this is fine.
Kind regards
AudioGO Customer Services

Sue Toms, Oct 01 23:42 (BST):

Hi there,

I'm so glad you have so many downloadable audiobook files! Thank you!

Can I purchase and download them for a 500 student international school library here in South Korea?

I'm actually researching the effect of extensive listening (outside of class time) of audiobooks on student literacy, as there is no research done on this (even though many people say there is research, when you look into it there is not).

I would really like to make your fantastic bbc audiobooks available to our students, but we are NOT interested in buying and storing CDs, we need downloadable files.

I will definitely be buying for my own family, but I want to know if I can lend them out to students too.

Thanks!
Sue

Thank you,
AudioGO Customer Service Team

This email is a service from AudioGo Limited

Message-Id:3RFJG9M7_506a9d14dc5ab_24f81d00a7412023b2_sprut

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=c0bd376e40&view=pt&q=audiogo%20dawn&q=qs=true&search=query&th=13a2075a15f7b9f3>

Page 1 of 1

Appendix E: UNE Ethics Approval



Ethics Office
Research Development & Integrity
Research Division
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 02 6773 3449
Fax 02 6773 3543
jo-ann.soizou@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/research-services

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Dr Eveline Chan, A/Prof Mary Macken-Horarik, Dr Susan Fez & Mrs Susan Toms

School of Education

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

PROJECT TITLE: Listening to the Library: Pre adolescent student perceptions of the impact of downloadable audiobooks on their literacy development

APPROVAL No.: HE12-148

COMMENCEMENT DATE: 03 September, 2012

APPROVAL VALID TO: 30 June, 2014

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/researchdevelopmentintegrity/ethics/human-ethics/hrcforms.php>

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.



Jo-Ann Sozou
Secretary/Research Ethics Officer

02/08/2013

A12/196

Appendix F: Discussion prompts for semi-structured interviews

Initial themes in blue

1. How often each day/week do you get to listen to audiobooks? Anything that stops you from listening more? [addictive/relaxing/self motivation to listen](#); [maintaining enthusiasm/provision of enough books](#); [multitasking/ travelling](#); [technical challenges/ copyright issues](#); [influence of parents/ librarian](#)
2. How do you compare listening to audiobooks to reading a printed book? [format/ mode agnostic/ 'literary omnivore'](#)
3. What motivates you to listen to audiobooks? Which ones in particular? [addictive/relaxing/self motivation to listen](#)
4. Describe a story that you have really enjoyed and how it affected you. Did you notice anything memorable with the way the author used language in the story? How would you use this example in your own writing? [active/critical listening](#); [story/conversation ideas](#);
5. What have you done if an audiobook has been boring? Has there been a story you did not like, but you continued to listen? What was it that you didn't like? [maintaining enthusiasm/ provision of enough 'good' books](#); [active/critical listening](#)
6. Have you ever noticed when an author has made a mistake in a story? Can you describe it to me? [active/critical listening](#)
7. What changes have you noticed in your school work since you started listening to audiobooks? [active/critical listening](#); [story/conversation ideas](#);
8. Can you describe any changes in your memory for verbal instructions (eg from your teachers)? [aural memory](#); [active/critical listening](#)
9. Describe why you think your friends might like audiobooks. Which books in particular do you think they would like? Does it bother you that some of your friends don't like listening to audiobooks? [Peer influence](#);
10. What do you remember about some of the stories you've listened to recently? [verbal memory](#); [active/critical listening](#)
11. Anything surprising you have noticed since you started listening to audiobooks? [reading/oral fluency, vocabulary, spelling & punctuation challenges, any of the other themes and maybe some I haven't considered yet.](#)

12. What are typical activities you do while listening to audiobooks? Do you focus on the story or is it background noise for you? [multitasking/ travelling](#)
13. How does listening to audiobooks influence the way you read out loud to others? (reading to a partner, reading to teacher) [oral fluency](#)
14. How does listening to audiobooks influence the way you write? [story/conversation ideas](#)
15. What pictures do you have in your head when you listen to different audiobooks? [active/critical listening](#)
16. Can you describe an example of an audiobook that you've thought about in class (eg in a writing assignment, background knowledge when another book). [active/critical listening](#)
17. Are there any audiobooks that you have listened to more than once? [repeat listening for comprehension?](#)
18. Does a parent or teacher saying that listening to audiobooks is a 'lazy' way of reading influence your view of audiobooks? Do you think it's lazy? [active/critical listening](#)
19. What do you think of the different accents of narrators? Do you prefer one over another? Can you usually identify where the accents come from? Can you give examples. [active/critical listening](#)

* The purpose of these discussion prompts is not primarily for answering the questions, but for participants to be forthcoming in their own perspectives.

Appendix G: List of participants, year involved and interviews

Pseudonym	Year 1 participant (2012/2013)	Year 2 participant (2013/2014)	Interviews total (written + audio recorded)
Beth		Grade 5	6 (2 audio recorded)
Frank	Grade 5		7 (1 audio recorded)
John	Grade 4	Grade 5	12 (7 audio recorded)
Lewis	end of Grade 4	Grade 5	12 (4 audio recorded)
Mark		Grade 5	13 (4 audio recorded)
Vera		Grade 5	7 (4 audio recorded)
Kate	Grade 3		5 (0 audio recorded)
Simon	Grade 5		1 (0 audio recorded)

N.B. Not all interviews were audio recorded due to participant preference (I wrote notes instead about our conversation, that they checked) or due to the spontaneous nature of the interaction when no recording device was immediately available.