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Reading bumper stickers critcally: a teaching and research project with Grade 12 students at Randfontein secondary school

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ABSTRACT

This study mainly sets to explore how English second language students grade 12 learners at Randfontein Secondary School develop critical literacy awareness (CLA) by reading 'bumper' stickers found in mini-bus taxis commonly known as *taxis.*

Data used in this project was mainly collected through interviews with research participants namely; students, taxi drivers, bumper sticker manufacturers and taxi commuters. The teacher/researcher required students to collect literary texts from their environment for use in their critical literacy class.

This research project mainly employs Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model as an analytical model, which holds that CDA should include the socio-cultural contexts in which texts are produced and read. Data was analysed by all the students in class, especially the six students who were selected for the focus group. The researcher (myself) analysed the students' reading of texts so as to establish the extent to which they were developing critical literacy awareness.

The research found that my students resisted bumper stickers as a discourse that differed from their own ideological positions. Data in this study reveals that the students approached the bumper stickers from a position of estrangement because they were reading from an urban social context that differs from the taxi drivers' rural social context. This study showed that getting students to be researcher themselves can be a very fruitful and developmental learning experience.