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READING BUMPER STICKERS CRITCALLY: A TEACHING AND RESEARCH PROJECT WITH GRADE 12 STUDENTS AT RANDFONTEIN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Rockie Sibanda

READING BUMPER STICKERS CRITCALLY: A TEACHING AND RESEARCH PROJECT WITH GRADE 12 STUDENTS AT RANDFONTEIN SECONDARY SCHOOL

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

Johannesburg, 2007

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to thousands of taxi drivers through out South Africa whose unwavering service to the commuters is often misunderstood. Their choice of bumper stickers is a representation of what they firmly believe in.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all the staff who taught me at various levels in Department of Applied English Studies (AELS) at the University of Witwatersrand. My profound gratitude goes to Professor Hillary Janks who encouraged me to pursue this choice of texts for this research study. Professor Janks, together with Dr Adler of the English Department, read my research proposal with constructive criticism. I particularly, single out Ms Stella Granville (AELS) who was my research supervisor in both my Honours and Masters studies and she helped me develop into a researcher. It was through her mentorship and constructive guidance that I managed to come up with this research work. My last gratitude goes to my Grade 12 English class of 2006. Their dedication and participation in this project was a learning experience for them and a greater learning experience for me as well. Lastly, I would like to thank my family for being supportive as I worked through out the nights trying to string together data I had gathered.

DECLARATION

This research report is my own original work, unless specified to the contrary in the text. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other institution.

Rockie Sibanda _____

20th day of December, 2007

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.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Context
1.2.1 Research site and learners
1.2.2 The Honours study
1.2.3 The Masters study
1.2.4 The need for critical literacy and the English syllabus

1.3 Rationale
1.3.1 Critical literacy in the classroom
1.3.2 Bumper stickers
1.3.3 Minibus taxis
1.3.4 The importance of critical literacy to this project
1.3.5 Personal Motivation

1.4 Research question

1.5 Research aims

1.6 Limitations

1.7 Outline of research report

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to explore the possibilities for teaching critical literacy to Grade 12 learners at Randfontein Secondary School. I have chosen to focus on getting learners to read various discourses available in their immediate communities hence I use bumper stickers found in most taxis[1]. These texts are easily accessible to my students, who use taxis as their major mode of transport on a regular. I approach this teaching project on a premise that bumper stickers, as texts, are not self-contained products but produces in social, cultural and other contexts.

[1] Shared mini-buses that can carry 14-18 passengers and they are termed a ‘taxi’ or ‘taxis’ or ‘itekisi’in South Africa.

1.2 CONTEXT

1.2.1 Research Site and the Learners

This research study is based at Randfontein Secondary School, Randfontein, Gauteng Province of South Africa.. This school is on the West Rand, in the former 'Coloured' township of Toekomsrus. The school used to be Afrikaans medium, enrolling only Coloured students, because of the group Areas Act of 1950[2] but it has since become a dual medium of instruction school (English and Afrikaans). It now enrols children from surrounding Black townships such as Mohlakeng, Bekkersdale, Finsbury, Rietvallei and Kagiso.

From 1996-2002, Randfontein Secondary School was classified as a PPS (poorly performing school) by the Department of Education (DoE). This labelling was based on the school's poor Matric[3] results. When I started teaching in this school in 2000, the Matric results were very poor and few students attained a university exemption pass. The quality of work the students produced in English, in particular, suggested a lack of critical thinking skills. As a teacher at the school, I rejected the construction that the students were incapable of attaining higher order critical thinking skills. I believe that if learning and teaching make use of texts from a familiar environment, students can relate more meaningfully and positively to the learning process.

1.2.2 The Honours study

With the learning difficulties cited above as a starting point, I embarked on a

[2] This Apartheid legislation required different racial groups to live separately.
[3] Matriculation is the school leaving level in Soth Africa. A full certificate consists of a minimum of six subject passes.

sociolinguistic study for my Honours Degree in Applied English Language Studies at the University of Witwatersrand in 2004. Using a class of 40 Grade 11 students at Randfontein Secondary School as researchers and as subjects, I investigated how students' social environment influences their learning of English as a second language. These students completed a questionnaire, interviewed people in their communities and discussed their findings in a focus group. The results I obtained in that report suggested that the children's environment strongly influenced the learning of English. My findings were that the children's out-of-school literacy practices influenced their performance in the learning of English.

1.2.3 The Masters study

During a focus group discussion, in the honours study mentioned above, one student noted with pessimism:

"Children in this school don't read Afrikaans. How can you expect them to read English?"

Using this observation as an objective, I decided to embark on an intervention strategy meant to get students, not to only read more widely, but to also read critically. This was followed by this MA research project, which I started in 2006. The intervention strategy entailed children reading material drawn from their environment. Its purpose was to expose students to a wide repertoire of texts that introduced them to critical reading practices. In chapter four, I present a full discussion of these activities, which proved

productive in introducing students to critical reading, prior to embarking on this MA research project.

1.2.4 The English syllabus and need for critical literacy

This research project draws on the **New Curriculum Statement [NCS] Grades 10-12 (Languages)**[4] which is a new education system consisting of two phases. The first phase, General Education and Training (GET) covers Grades R[5]-9. The second phase is the Further Education and Training (FET) in which learners do Grades 10-12. This second phase has different learning areas (subjects), one of which is English First Additional Language, which I teach.

This new curriculum policy is based on Outcomes Based Education (OBE), which focuses on learning outcomes a learner is expected to achieve at the end of a learning experience. In order to achieve effective assessment in English Language, four learning outcomes have been identified as framing statements for learning and teaching in this area. In this research, I will focus on Learning Outcome Two (LO2), *Reading and Viewing* that specifies:

> ***The learner is able to read and view for understanding and to evaluate critically and respond to a wide range of texts.***

In this project, I focus on the following learning objectives for the above learning outcome:

[4] This is a new curriculum is implemented from grade 10 starting from 2006.
[5] Reception or pre-school phase

1. To use language as a tool for critical and creative thinking (This objective recognizes that knowledge is socially constructed through the interaction between language and thinking).
2. To interact critically with a range of texts (Learners will recognize and be able to challenge the perspectives, values and power relations that are embedded in texts).

1.3 RATIONALE

1.3.1 Critical Literacy in the classroom

The rationale for this research project is to investigate my own teaching practice and research the development of my students towards becoming critical thinkers. Critical literacy in South African classrooms is still an under-researched educational issue. However, this project is located specifically in the Toekomsrus area of the Gauteng Region and will not be representative of all South African high school students.

In South Africa, the teaching of Critical Literacy is now part of the New Curriculum Statement (NCS). At the end of the Further Education and Training band (FET), students are expected to have developed into critical thinkers who can take an assertive stance against a text's assumptions. The English language examination requires them to have developed competence to respond critically to different texts in a range of genres. Developing critical literacy in students, as individual selves and society, will transform this language of critique and possibility through social action. As Lankshear and McLaren (1993) put it,

> In addressing critical literacy, we are concerned with the extent to which, and the ways in which, actual and possible social practices and conceptions of reading and writing enable human subjects to understand and engage the politics of daily life in the quest for a more democratic social order. Among other things, critical literacy makes possible a more adequate and accurate 'reading' of the world, on the basis of which, as Freire and others put it, people can enter into 'writing' the world into a formation in which their interests, identities and legitimate aspirations are more fully present and present more equally (Lankshear and MacLaren 1993:xiii)

1.3.2 Bumper stickers

The texts used as the bases of the study are called **bumper stickers** (see figure 1)**.** They are not pasted onto the bumpers of cars or taxis but inside the taxis where passengers can read them as they ride. In this project, I also refer to them as **stickers** as I think that the word 'bumper' gives them a different contextual meaning. Generally, **bumper stickers** are self-adhesive labels or stickers often made of PVC, measuring about 80 mm by 300 mm, and intended to be pasted onto the bumper of an automobile-although they are also pasted onto other objects or parts of vehicles. They display messages, which may be commercial, religious, humorous, or in support of a sports team or organization or may promote or oppose a particular philosophical or political position and meant to be read by occupants of other vehicles or commuters inside the taxis.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bumper-sticker [accessed 2006/12/06]. The stickers in figure 1, below, are taken off unrelated website. This suggests that bumper stickers are generic in nature but localised in content as they are meant to adapt to particular contexts.

FIGURE 1: Bumper Stickers

	 **Big Girl Panties**	 **Fuck You**
 **Hang Up and Drive**	 **Just a Theory**	 **You're an Asshole**
Source: http://www.stickergiant.com/page/sg/CTYGY/fun [accessed 2007-06-15]		

The students I teach, irrespective of their social background, use taxis on a regular basis. Most taxis have stickers, which are pasted on the inside of the vehicles. These stickers are relevant to this study because they draw on a context that is familiar to the students. The rationale for using stickers is my assertion that effective teaching recognises everyday knowledge and uses texts accessible to students.

Stickers used in this study are a communicative genre, embedded within several discourses such as feminism, gender disparities, violence, sex and AIDS awareness. They are constructed around the different identities of township people and taxi drivers (discussed later in the project). Messages on bumper stickers are short and pithy statements or phrases of a witty, humorous or satirical nature, intended to entertain passengers inside a taxi. They are in a language that students are likely to understand.

I therefore, set to investigate and establish what social values and assumptions the students bring to the reading of the bumper stickers. My contention is that messages on the bumper stickers reflect how taxi drivers and taxi commuters perceive the world and subsequently position themselves and others.

This research explores the teaching of critical literacy through the reading of bumper stickers. I do not investigate the practices or malpractices in the operations of the taxi industry although such phenomena may feature prominently in the data. The students will explore the belief systems embedded in the production and reception of bumper stickers as they proceed through the course.

1.3.3 The mini bus taxis

In South Africa, black entrepreneurs pioneered the Minibus Taxi Industry. They provided a shared taxi service, convenient for residents of the major cities' outlying Black townships during the days of apartheid. Breier and Prinsloo (1996) view this industry as providing sources of employment for Black people, specifically men.

The 'taxi' or '*itekisi* (see figure 2) as known in South Africa, is a mode of transport that falls between private transport and conventional bus transport, with a fixed route, but with the convenience of stopping anywhere to pick up or drop off passengers. It differs from a regular taxicab as a *taxi* is not hired but is a shared form of public transport. Registered South African *taxis* often have unfixed time schedules but the law requires them to have a fixed route. The violation of these routes by some drivers often results in

feuds or gun battles between rival taxi associations, which are a constant source of newspaper headlines and television footage *(Cape Times* and *Argus,* 1992-1995). Taxis often create problems as most of the drivers are reckless and their vehicles are unroadworthy. A report in *The Star, Thursday 8 February 2007* says of them

> "The speedometer isn't working…tyres are bald…seats are torn…brakes, lights and steering wheel are defective… (it is) a piece of rubbish".

In many developing countries shared taxis are the main system of public transport. Even though they are an important form of mobility (and job creation) in many parts of the world, they are poorly understood and not well integrated into the overall transportation projects of cities and regions. In part, this is the case because they are privately owned and have an operating style, which does not lend itself to regulation or central control. They also pollute the environment and are often dangerously overloaded. In some countries, these vehicles are illegal but operate anyway, attracting customers with lower fares and this results in overloading (Newton, 1994).

FIGURE 2 (a): Taxi rank and taxis



2(b) Minibus taxi / Teksi (South Africa) at Cape Town minibus taxi rank



Cameroonian bush taxi of the minibus type

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:TaxiBusesKigali.jpg [accessed 2007-06-15]

1.3.4 The importance of critical literacy to this project

I believe that exploring the meaning of bumper stickers will be an interesting field of critical literacy study as they reflect on the way taxi drivers, as a segment of society, make meaning of the world. These stickers are a unique genre embedded in the social literacy practices of a community of taxi drivers that Breier and Prinsloo (1996) found in their study to be illiterate or semi-literate in the sense of formal schooling. I however, consider this finding controversial and subject to contestation, as I will highlight later in the project (see chapter 5). Information that I obtained from interviews with taxi drivers suggests that escalating unemployment levels in this country 'push' people with Matric or post Matric education to join the taxi industry as drivers or *touts*[6].

By being critically literate, students can analyse, transform and understand texts and act on the knowledge that texts are not neutral. Critical literacy requires students to analyse and construct texts to achieve particular effects, and develop aesthetic sensitivity and criteria to appreciate, enjoy and learn from experience with texts (Luke and Freebody1999).

A changing social structure and social and cultural diversity has led to the development of new literacy practices that reflect on text producers' perceptions of the world. Everyday, knowledge is imparted to us in many different ways, as we are swamped by masses of information from both formal and informal sources across our society. We

[6] These people direct commuters to taxis to their destinations. At some taxi ranks, they guide passengers how to be seated in taxis and pack their luggage in the boot or trailer.

need to deal critically with this complex mass of material that confronts us in order to establish its meaning (Luke and Freebody, 1999).

1.3.5 Personal Motivation

I became interested in the teaching of critical literacy from my teaching experience and insight I gained when I did Applied English Language Studies (AELS) modules for my Honours and the Masters study at the University of the Witwatersrand. My teaching experiences in many resource-depleted schools enlightened me to the fact that effective learning and teaching could occur through improvisation of resources from the students' environment. After doing a Masters course in materials development, I looked at possibilities for developing teaching materials to which my students could relate.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main Question

Can grade 12 learners read taxi bumper stickers critically and how do they do so?

Subsidiary Questions

- Can learners identify socio-cultural factors that influence messages written on the bumper stickers?
- How do taxi commuters, in particular my students, at Randfontein Secondary School in Toekomsus Township, read taxi bumper stickers and what factors influence their responses to them?

- What activities best promote the level of Critical Literacy Awareness and what does the teacher learn about the teaching of critical literacy?
- What linguistic or textual reading skills did the learners acquire in the process of the project?

1.5 THE AIMS

The primary aim of this research is to investigate my own teaching of critical literacy in a South African context. It aims to enable my students to gain an understanding of the production and reception processes of bumper stickers. Through a range of activities, students are introduced to critical reading skills that Harris and Hodges (1981) define as the process of making judgments in reading and evaluating the relevance and adequacy of what is read. Through reading the bumper stickers, I hope that my students will learn to question the content and ideological assumptions presented in them. Such assumptions draw from discourses such as gender disparities because bumper stickers are constructed by male drivers.

Gender discourses about the South African minibus taxi industry tend to construct it as a symbol of male domination. This is the focus of my concern in this study as I set out to unveil the social conditions that inform the construction of bumper stickers and choices made by text producers in an industry dominated by men. I do this through different roles that my students and I play, as described in the methodology section in chapter three. My students and I will examine the attitudes ingrained in the taxi drivers, informing the construction and choice of stickers.

The study of the bumper stickers will serve to meet the following **aims** of the project**:**

- To teach grade 12 English learners at Randfontein Secondary School, how to read texts (bumper stickers) critically and through these to examine power relations embedded in texts.
- To teach students to conduct a mini-research project and analyse the data collected.

1.6 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations must be mentioned:

- *Sampling:* This research, designed to investigate developing CLA amongst students at Randfontein Secondary School as participants in the study, utilises a sample, which renders it not representative of all South African high school students.
- *Geographical sampling:* Due to lack of financial resources and limited time allocated to this study, it is limited to one class of Grade 12 students at Randfontein Secondary in West Rand area. It therefore excludes other students in the same school and other outlying areas.
- *Language:* Most of the data from the interviews was in Afrikaans or African languages so I translated it into English with some help. Translations do at times have shortcomings, as the original meaning could be unintentionally lost in the translation.
- *Representativeness:* Once again, due to lack of resources this study had to be limited to investigating developing CLA in children schooling at Randfontein Secondary School. The results of this investigation should be viewed with

caution, as they are representative of a single Grade 12 class in one high school. They cannot, therefore be extrapolated onto the South African students who learn in different contexts.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The chapters of this report are as follows:

Chapter 2: Theoretical Background
Chapter 3: Research Methods
Chapter 4: Previous Critical Literacy Learning and Signs from the Township
Chapter 5: Conditions of Production and Reception
Chapter 6: Summary of results and conclusions

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis Approach
- 2.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis
- 2.2.2 The theoretical framework of Fairclough in CDA
- 2.2.3 Key Concepts in Critical Discourse Analysis
- 2.2.4 Critical Literacy Awareness in South Africa
- 2.2.5 Critical Literacy Awareness Pedagogy in Australia
- 2.2.6 Other influences on Critical Pedagogy
- 2.2.7 The Language of Jokes

2.3 Conclusions

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To frame my analysis, I use the theories of Fairclough (1989), Freebody and Luke (1990) and Janks (1997. Fairclough's (1989) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model is used to analyse bumper stickers. Because of the relevance of Janks' work to CDA study in a South African context, I use it to inform some aspects of data analysis. Luke and Freebody's (1990) Four Resources Model will be used as a pedagogical framework to teach students to read bumper stickers critically. I also make close reference to the works of Barbara Comber (2001) and Catherine Wallace (2003) whose works entail the teaching of critical reading in schools in Australia and the United Kingdom respectively. For a closer critical analysis of my data, I will use Patricia McFadden's[7] work on gender issues in an African context.

[7] An academic and columnist in 'Southern Africa Political and Economist Monthly' (SAPEM)

2.2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACH

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an important field in the study of linguistics that includes many aspects of language use. It is different from traditional discourse analysis, which focuses on structures of specific instances of communication such as written texts or conversations. Critical Discourse study includes the study of socio-cultural contexts in which texts are produced and received. In recent years, discourse studies have gone beyond the study of texts alone to the study of the broad social discourses and social practices, which are realised in specific texts such as the bumper stickers, which will be analysed in this study. Both social theorists and analysts (e.g. Foucault, 1972; Fraser, 1989) and linguists (e.g. Stubbs, 1983; Van Dijk, 1985) use 'Discourse', as a category. Fairclough uses discourse to refer primarily to spoken or written language use, and investigates it as a form of social practice.

2.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

The following theorists provide a definition of CDA: Fairclough (1993), van Dijk (1998), Janks (1997), Lankshear (1996) and Gee (1992). Fairclough (1993:135) defines CDA as a form of discourse analysis, which aims systematically to explore, the often taken for granted, opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. CDA investigates how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power. It explores how opacity of these

relations between discourse and society is a factor securing power and hegemony (p. 135).

Van Dijk (1998) describes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a field concerned with study and analysis of written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. CDA examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts.

Janks (1997) views discourse in relation to power and how a text is positioned or is positioning and whose interests it serves. She says that when analysis seeks to understand how discourse is implicated in relations of power, it is **critical.** This compares critical discourse analysis to a critical theory of language, which sees the use of language as a form of social practice.

This research report is an investigation of the function of language as a social practice in itself and particularly constituting other social practices such as 'township' discourse, gender discourse, cultural discourse etc. When applied to my research study, Critical Discourse means exploring belief systems that inform the construction and reading of bumper stickers. The main objective of bumper stickers, as my data, is to enable my students to investigate and analyse how language is employed in the construction of bumper stickers as a social tool serving the purposes of taxi drivers and bumper sticker manufacturers.

2.2.2 The theoretical framework of Fairclough in CDA studies

This research uses the model for the critical analysis of discourse developed by Norman Fairclough (1989). In this approach, there are three analytical focuses in analysing any communicative event. They are the text itself (in this case bumper stickers), discourse practice (i.e. the process of production and consumption of bumper stickers), and sociocultural practice (i.e. social and cultural structures which give rise to the communicative event) (Fairclough, 1995, p. 57; Chuliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 113). The text is the product of the discursive practice whose elements in turn vary with the conditions of particular social practices.

In my study the analysis of the bumper stickers, cannot be separated from the analysis of the discursive practice itself as well as the analysis of the social context in which it happens (Fairclough, 1989). Fairclough (1989:4) considers the objective of his approach as “a contribution to the general raising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language”. He articulates a complex model for CDA that consists of three interdependent dimensions of discourse, represented as boxes embedded one within the other. Fairclough’s model (1995: 98) is reproduced below:

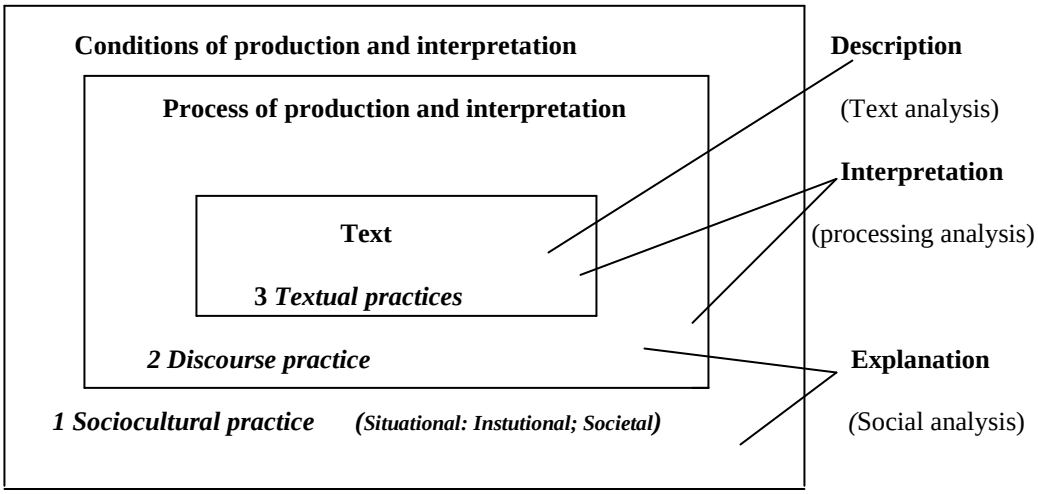


Figure 3: Fairclough's model for Critical Discourse Analysis

This model is useful for discourse analysis in that the description and analysis of a text(s) is related to its immediate context (the process of production and reception), which in turn is embedded in socio-historical context, which influences these processes. Janks says

> "This is another way of saying that texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained" (19973: 29).

This model represents three dimensions of analysis and each dimension requires a different kind of analysis. Analysis uncovers the relationship between each of the dimensions. Fairclough (1992: 10) describes this link as interaction, which mediates between social action and text. He summarises these three (texts, interaction and contexts) in the following way:

- **Description** is the stage concerned with formal properties of the text.
- **Interpretation** is concerned with the relationship between the text and interaction with processes of production.

- **Explanation** is concerned with the relation between the interaction and the social context-with the social determination of production and interpretation, and their social effects (Fairclough, 1989: 26).

In this research project, my students will be describing and analysing a number of written texts from their environments. Their analysis of the bumper stickers will be embedded in the context of the taxi industry ideology, which in turn is determined by processes of production and reception. I will use these three dimensions to structure each stage of the analysis of my data as discussed in the following sections.

Description

The first dimension represented by the inner block on Figure 3, involves 'description', which is the first analytical focus of the formal properties of the written text or the spoken text. Systematic Functional Linguistics claims that texts simultaneously have 'ideational', 'interpersonal' and 'textual' functions. According to Fairclough, texts simultaneously represent aspects of the world (the physical world, the social world, and the mental world). Texts enact social relations between participants in social events and the attitudes, desires and values of participants; and coherently and cohesively connect parts of texts together, and connect texts with their situational contexts (Halliday 1978, 1994). As Fairclough (1995) sees it, linguistic analysis is concerned with presences as well as absences in texts that could include 'representations, categories of participant, constructions of participant identity or participant relations" (p.58). Texts do not exist or make meaning apart from the social and political relations in which they are embedded. To understand how texts participate in the exercise of social power that result in gender, racial or class inequality, we need to understand the notion of discourse, and how discourses operate in the text.

Brodkey (1992) cited in Kamler (1994) argues that discourses can be understood as a range in social attitudes, values and beliefs related to particular institutional practices which have for a long time been understood as natural and proper ways of seeing, knowing and talking about things. The language features of bumper stickers, interviews and discussions used as texts in this research can be analysed as traces of or cues of the discourses operating in social sphere of both the producer and the reader.

The taxi drivers' choices of bumper stickers suggest their perceptions of the world and particular assumptions regarding power relations, informed by different discourses at work. Taxi drivers assume that commuters share their knowledge so they can be able to respond to the linguistic cues in the stickers. As participants in the production process, taxi drivers provide manufacturers of bumper stickers with feedback and ideas of what to write. This feedback is in form of comments they relay to the manufacturers and retail outlets such as spare-parts dealers and garages that sell bumper stickers. The choice the taxi drivers make in the production and reception processes is informed by assumed shared knowledge between them and their readers/passengers.

Cultural influences

The values of both the constructor (taxi drivers) and receivers (students) may reflect some of their cultural influences. Cultural influences refer to the implicit beliefs, norms, value and customs, which are inherent with direct conduct in society and lead to common patterns of behaviour. As defined by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:322) culture is a set of learned beliefs, values, attitudes, habits and forms of behaviour, which are shared by society and transmitted from one generation to another

through language, symbols, actions and other social practices like dance. Deon Rousseau shares a very interesting view of South Africa:

> Cultural values in South Africa are mainly of Eurocentric and Afro centric origin and include issues such as individualism, materialism, work ethic, achievement, status and success, as well as freedom, solidarity, group recognition, acceptance and accountability to the community (*ubuntu).* Despite the diverse range of cultural values, a process of cultural synergy is also taking place in the country, based on shared values for the nation. These values are developed through the adoption of demonstrated values of others we admire, using experience to evolve a set of values that are functional, and responding to social pressure from people with whom we mix" (Rousseau, 1999:340).

The construction and reading of texts (bumper stickers) reflects the attitudes displayed by both writers and readers. Du Plessis (1999) defines attitudes as learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favourable way. Since the taxi industry is male-dominated, the messages in the stickers may reflect gender biases. According to Daudi Kweba (1995:96) gender

> …refers to those characteristics of women and men that are socially defined. It is people who define certain characteristics as being masculine or feminine and identify certain activities as being appropriate for men or women in a specific society. For example, what is women's work in one social environment may be men's in another….gender characteristics are based on legal, social, economic and political relations and are anchored in family relationships"

The language choices of bumper stickers display the taxi drivers' beliefs and attitudes towards social issues. Most bumper stickers are in township lingua or slang called *Tsotsi Taal*[8] or colloquial lingua employing clichés, which township people might easily understand. Interestingly, most of them are in English or isiZulu, which are the major *lingua fracas* in South Africa, while a few are in seTswana. Breir and Prinsloo (1996) assert that most taxi drivers have little or no formal education and this explains the simplicity of linguistic features in the bumper stickers. Taxi drivers assume that their target reader is an ordinary township person who is also at their social level. As I mentioned in

[8] This is a township language containing a mixture of African languages with English and Afrikaans. It is historically associated with gangsters, but it is now common among township youth.

Chapter 1, this observation might be contested, based on my findings, outlined later in my discussion of interviews with taxi drivers.

Interpretation

Fairclough calls the second dimension in the model 'interpretation'. This dimension is concerned with two types of interaction; first, the analysis must consider what is in the process of production and the process of reception of texts and interpretation entails understanding the interaction between these processes and the formal properties of the text itself. Second, the analyst must consider a further interplay between these relationships, which include knowledge of language, other texts (intertextuality), values, beliefs, assumptions and representations of the natural and social worlds that people experience. The analysis of a text cannot be separated from the social context in which it happens.

One way of interpreting texts such as bumper stickers is **lexical classification** of items in them. Lexical classification schemes are a kind of linguistic analysis, which can unpack the discourses operating and the part they play in constructing a text. According to Halliday (1985), lexical items are the content words in a text, the nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. According to Fairclough (1985, 1989), discourse analysis practice is concerned with sociocognitive aspects of text production and interpretation, as opposed to social-institutional aspects.

Explanation

Fairclough terms the third dimension of his model 'explanation'. According to Fairclough (1995: 62), analysis in this dimension involves three aspects of the sociocultural contexts of communicative

events: economic, political and cultural. One does not have to carry out analysis at all levels but at any level that might "be relevant to the understanding of a particular event". As far as the bumper stickers are concerned, their construction and reading mainly focus on cultural and political aspects, which depict representations of real life.

> Representations are textual constructions, which refer to habitual ways of thinking about or acting in the real world. Representations seem to refer to the real world, but in fact refer to the cultural world, which members of society inhabit (Moon, 1992:109).

The concept of representation is important to this study as it entails the reading and interpretation of texts. Denise Newfield (1992) describes representation as a term used to

> …describe the way media construct images of people and the world for the reader. The representation of people and the world then becomes the reality, the way things are, unless challenged by critical readers.

In this research project, students were required to discover how texts are produced and then investigate the factors that inform the production and reception processes. For the purpose of 'explanation', the students needed to consider questions such as:

- What power relations help shape this discourse at situational, institutional and societal levels?
- Does the discourse contribute to sustaining existing power relations, or transforming them (Fairclough 1992:166).

2.2.3 Key Concepts in Critical Discourse Analysis

In this project, I employ three key concepts in Critical Discourse Analysis namely: **Discourse, ideology** and **intertextuality.** These concepts are interacting components in the process of

production and reception of texts. In the section below, I try to illustrate how the above key concepts are interrelated.

- **Discourses**

Discourse studies go beyond the study of texts alone to the study of the broad discourses and social practices, which are realised in and through specific texts. The important point in discourse analysis is that linguistic structures and linguistic meaning cannot be analysed based on simple words but must be integrated into a study of larger contexts in which those words appear. When applied to my study the above concept would mean that it is important to analyse not only what texts mean and how they come to mean it, but also to analyse how texts reproduce the social order of societies within which they occur.

In critical literacy we are presented with different discourse types such as advertisements (Cook, 1992), graffiti (Blume, 1985), and jokes (Chiaro, 1992). Gee (1990) asserts that we learn the ways of making meaning of the different discourse communities to which we belong. He argues that Discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific *groups of people* (xix). According to Gee, each of us is a member of many Discourses, and each discourse gives us one of our ever multiple identities.

- **Intertextuality**

Discourse processes can be best explained through discussing a core concept in Fairclough's (1992) approach: **intertextuality**. This concept points to the productivity of texts, to how texts can

transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones. To further discuss the same concept Bernstein (1990) developed **'recontextualisation'** in the sociology of education meaning the appropriation of elements of one social practice within another, placing the former within the context of the latter, and transforming it in particular ways in the process (Bernstein, 1990; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

Fairclough (1992: 84) defines **intertextuality** as, "basically the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth". He identifies two types of Intertextuality: 'manifest intertextuality' and 'constitutive intertextuality'. The former refers to the constitution by which "specific texts are overtly drawn upon within a text", while the latter refers to the "heterogeneous constitution of texts out of elements (types of convention) of orders of discourse (interdiscursivity)" (p.104). According to Fairclough (1995), intertextual analysis focuses on the borderline between text and discourse practice in the analytical framework. Intertextual analysis is concerned with looking at a text from the perspective of discourse practice, looking at the traces of the discourse practice in the text (p.16). According to Fairclough, 'linguistic analysis is descriptive in nature, whereas intertextual analysis is more interpretive (p.16).

The concept of intertextuality is relevant to the interpretation of the texts/bumper stickers, which is situated within the discourse of local literacies. This means that my students' interpretation of bumper stickers draws on a variety of factors such as attitudes and perceptions towards social issues such as gender equality. Not only do stickers draw on a variety of discourses but the reader's interpretation of bumper stickers draws on knowledge of local literacies such as graffiti, street signs,

and a variety of discourses with which they are familiar, such as sexism, domestic and sexual violence, customary law, urbanisation and crime, and cultural African beliefs. This connectivity of discourse, is referred to as intertextuality in which,

> …participants in any discourse operate on the basis of assumption about which (series of) previous discourses the current one is connected to, and their assumptions determine what can be taken as given in the sense of part of common experience, what can be alluded to, disagreed with, and so on (Fairclough 1989:145).

- **Ideology**

The taken-for-granted assumptions, which are the basis on which discourses operate, relate to the notion of **ideology**, which is imperative to the understanding of the social conditions of production of bumper stickers. In this study, I direct my students to 'common sense' assumptions, which portray men and women in relation to different beliefs and ideologies.

Ideology is closely related to power

> Ideology can be said to refer to ways of thinking and acting, which work to the advantage of particular groups of people but which are thought to be neutral or 'natural, and true' (Moon, 1992: 64).

Ideology is important because it is

> …a system of representation-including beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour patterns which appear to be natural and normal, but which are underpinned by power relations or vested interests of particular and/or dominant groups. Ideology thus serves the purpose of propagating and perpetuating or reproducing the values of these groups. In other words, it ensures the continued survival and dominance of a group's notion of the world as it sees it, or wished it to be seen (Watson, P. 1997).

Fairclough suggests that

> To show that meanings are working ideologically, it is necessary to show that they do indeed serve relations of domination in particular cases (1995: 14).

When applied to my research this suggestion would refer to power relations between text/bumper sticker producers and the ideal readers/commuters. The bumper stickers can be said to result from a taxi industry ideology, as Allan Luke (1993) notes that Literacy is as much about ideologies, identities and values as it is about codes and skills. Wendy Morgan (1997) notes the influence of ideology in the construction and reading of texts:

> Any ideology organises the knowledge, belief and desires, the conscious and unconscious thoughts and attitudes of a group in such a way as to shape and maintain certain social and cultural arrangements (p. 3).

In this project, I explore the ideology that informs the construction of bumper stickers and the purposes they serve through the way my students interpret them.

2.2.4 Critical Literacy Awareness in South Africa

In order to describe Critical Literacy Awareness in South Africa, I use Janks' (1997) adaptation of Fairclough's model to frame my analysis. Her adaptation is constructed around sets of questions that can be used to elicit a critical orientation towards the texts under analysis. Figure 4 below illustrates Janks' (1997) adaptation of Fairclough's model.

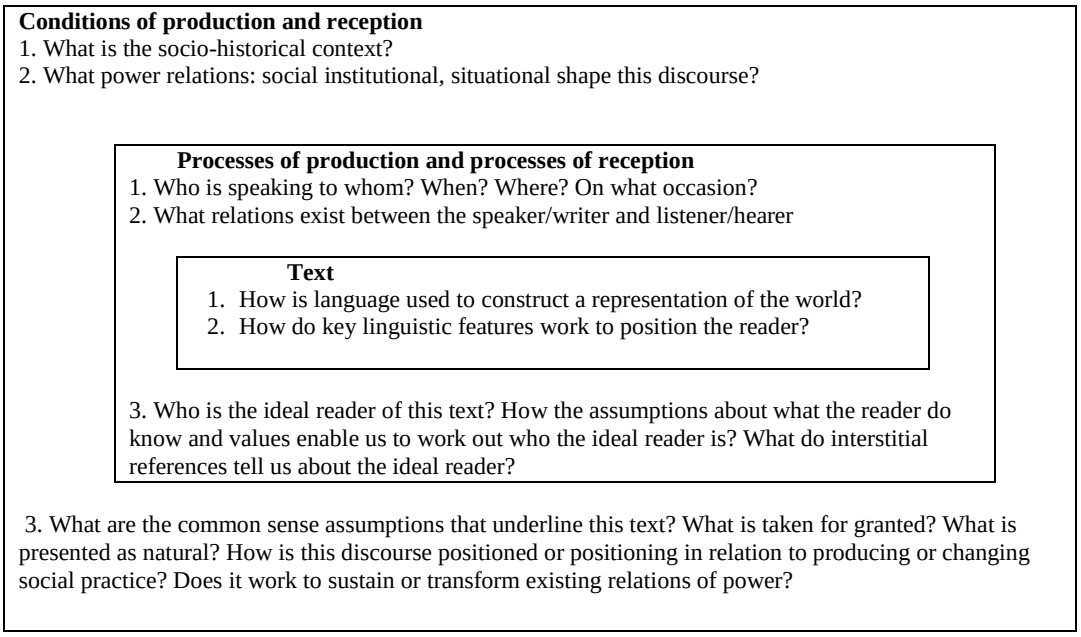


Figure 4: Janks' adaptation of Fairclough's model.

Janks' (1997) extension of Fairclough's and other critical literacy work in the South African context is a useful tool for discourse analysis. She argues that discourse is a socially constructed social practice in which speakers and writers *select* particular words and grammatical constructions from a range of possible options (Janks 1991: 191).

Janks' work includes critical linguistics (1988, 1989) and the production of the *Critical Language Awareness* (1993) materials for classroom use. Her materials incorporate Fairclough's three levels of interpretation in a form adapted for use in schools and colleges of education. Janks (1995) explores how to develop resistant readers while teaching students to be critical readers. In her materials, she encourages learners to look critically, not just at texts themselves, but also at the whole practice and processes of reading as dependant on social context (62). This is relevant to my study since I aim to teach children to be critical readers.

Different reading positions: reading against or reading with the text

Janks (1991:192) argues that teaching Critical Literacy Awareness should aim to make students aware of the interface between language and power. This empowers them to deconstruct discourse and resist attempts to subject them through language. According to her, this approach to language teaching is 'critical' as it provides students with linguistic knowledge which enables them to explore the relationship between language and power: the ways in which language is 'mobilised' in defence of domination' and the ways in which such practices may be contested (Thompson, 1984, p. 35).

A useful approach to CLA developed by Janks (1991) involves the concepts of 'estrangement' and 'engagement'. Janks (2001) argues that Critical Literacy involves reading 'with' the text and reading 'against' the text (p. 10). This means that students who read 'with' a text start from a position of estrangement and those who read 'read' against a text start from a position of 'engagement'. However, Janks warns that engagement without estrangement is a form of submission to the power of the text regardless of the reader's own position. Estrangement without engagement is a refusal to leave the confines of one's subjectivity, a refusal to allow otherness to enter. She notes that students may produce ideal readings or oppositional readings. Critical literacy requires both. Each on its own is a form of entrapment (10). "Without the entry of the other, can we be said to have read the text at all? What then might we be resisting?" (Janks 1995: 133).

On the same issue of reading position, Widdowson (1984) cited in Catherine Wallace (1992) views reading as a process in which readers interact with the text. He argues that in this interaction a reader can take up an assertive or submissive position. If the reader is too submissive, Widdowson claims, he may accumulate information without accommodating it into the structure of existing knowledge.

If he is too assertive, he may distort the writer's intentions and deny himself access to new knowledge and experience (p. 60).

In my study, I examine the different levels of 'engagement' or 'estrangement' presented by my students in their responses to the bumper stickers. They are expected to elicit different reading positions, some producing 'ideal' readings and others producing oppositional readings.

2.2.5 Critical Literacy Awareness Pedagogy in Australia

A great deal of innovative work in producing critical literacy teaching materials for secondary schools has been done in Australia (Mellor, Patterson and O'Neill, 1991, 1994; Moon, 1990, 1992; Forrestal, Cook and Dainutis, 1992; Morgan, 1992; Corcoran, 1994).

Important contributions are theorists who have produced materials with direct bearing on classroom pedagogies. Some of these materials have been developed to help students understand the nature of texts, contexts and reading from poststructuralist perspective (Morgan, 1992). They have been used for examining the ways the texts produce meanings and position readers (Mellor, Patterson, O'Neill, 1991), interrogating texts as essential feature of critical literacy that can be used to unmask the ideological operation of texts and cultures (Freebody, Luke and Gilbert, 1991).[9]

Luke and Walton (1994) make a useful distinction between more conventional and conservative approaches to critical literacy defined in terms of personal response to literature, and in terms of critical social literacy. This approach involves the analysis and evaluation of textual ideologies and

[9] All works cited in Kamler (1994).

cultural messages, and an understanding of the linguistic discursive technique with which texts represent social reality (McKinney 2003:189). Lankshear (1997) says critical literacy should aim at developing powerfully literate readers and writers who can approach texts and social life critically.

Barbara Comber (1992, 1993) developed materials for use in primary schools in Australia. These materials explore ideas about challenging the taken-for-granted construction of children's texts by asking new sets of questions: by invoking 'disrupted reading'; by looking at gender and power issues; by examining the selection procedures used by writers and looking at different versions of fairy tales[10].

Ray Misson has produced ideas for work in classrooms, dealing with aspects of popular culture such as advertising (1994a), teenage magazines (1994b), and sexuality issues (1994c).
He explores the reading of teenage magazine and asserts that readers are particularly open to the ideological imposition of the magazine material. He argues that students going to buy a magazine choose what they expect will give them the greatest entertainment, instruction and/ or delight. Such readers possess an *a priori* expectation of agreement with the magazine's view of things. The purchase of the magazine seems to be a submission and acceptance of its ideology. This makes them particularly uncritical of implicit messages being transmitted and confers on the text a particular authority to shape them to its purpose.

Misson's notion is important to my study as I examine how texts may impose themselves on the intended reader, dictating the position the reader takes when confronted with such texts. In his analysis of magazines, Misson looks at the subject position they offer in terms of the way they

[10] Granville (1995)

project a certain view of the target reader. When applied to my study this concept means that bumper stickers also intend to position the commuters in certain ways. Both magazines and bumper stickers create an image of an intended reader.

In this study, I also use Luke and Freebody's (1990) *Four Resources Model* as a pedagogical framework. The *Four Resources Model* is a useful pedagogical framework to help students engage with texts drawn from their environment as they read them critically. In the *Four Resources Model* Freebody and Luke (1990) describe four related roles that successful readers need to be able to perform:

1. *A code breaker*: As a code breaker, the reader is expected to decode a given text such as turning marks on a page or computer screen into something sensible.
2. *Text user*: As a text user the reader has to establish the purpose for reading and ask what she or he has do with what she or he has read.
3. *Text participant*: This involves engaged reading and asking what the text means.
4. *Text analyst*: This involves critical or estranged reading of a text. The reader does not accept the assumptions made by the text but views them critically.

The use of the framework of the *Four Resources Model* facilitates development of an inclusive learner-centred literacy program, which provides a platform for the acquisition of critical literacy skills. The model recommends that learning be linked to the students' life experiences, through the role of *Text Participant* in which students' past experiences (in this case experience with bumper stickers) are incorporated into literacy learning. Literacy learning is linked to students' lives and

focuses on literacy as a social practice, contextualising learning and developing literacy skills through meaningful social interactions (Luke, 2001).

The *Four Resources Model* is used in order to meet the complexity of reading and the challenging task of developing students into successful readers. This model develops the concept of ‘being literate' amongst students simultaneous with being critical. This is important because

> In contemporary education, it is vital to provide learners with the skills to interpret critically the images and messages that are part of their lives. Learners need to be able to use language to compose creatively and comprehend critically. They need to recognise its impact on them and make judgements about what is being said and shown to them. (Luke 2001)

Being literate is a key element outcome that requires students to understand, use and critically evaluate the non-verbal, spoken, visual and print communication practices of the world in which they live. In the teaching context, Luke and Freebody (1999) assert that Critical Literacy in all its forms should enable teachers, students and communities to explore alternative ways of structuring practice around texts to address new social, economic, technological and cultural contexts.

Although there are several versions of critical literacy, each underpinned by different theoretical perspectives, all of them involve an active, challenging approach to reading and textual practice (Luke and Freebody, 1999). These writers provide a pedagogical framework to the teaching of critical literacy in the classroom. The points below suggest ways that a teaching intervention may proceed:

1. Examining meaning within texts
2. Considering the purpose for the text and the composer’s motives

3. Understanding that texts are not neutral, but they represent particular views, silence other points of view and influence peoples' ideas
4. Questioning and challenging the ways in which texts have been constructed
5. Analysing the power of language in contemporary society
6. Emphasising multiple readings of texts so that students can take stance on issues
7. Providing students with opportunities to consider and clarify their own attitudes and values (91).

The above points clearly articulate skills that I have attempted to teach my students at Randfontein Secondary School.

2.2.6 Other influences on Critical Pedagogy

When exploring issues of gender and feminism, I refer to work on gender and language by Barbra Kamler's (1994), *Lessons about Language and gender*. As a linguist, she approaches text with a close attention to grammatical analysis and the way text arises out of and is ideologically shaped by relations of power. Using the representation of women and men in media, text is a powerful site for developing critical literacy (Gilbert, 1993). Kamler's work aims to develop student understanding of how gender is textually constructed. She asserts that although students know about gender relations, and construction of masculinity and feminity at the level of lived experience, it is often difficult to seriously engage them in classroom discussions of discourses, which are part of their lives (1).

Closely related to Kamler's gender approaches, I use the ideas of Patricia MacFadden, a regular

columnist in a now defunct Zimbabwean publication SAPEM[11]. In her works she explores gender issues, power relations and feminism in an African context concerning the position of 'modern' African women and how traditional African beliefs impact upon them. She asserts her feminist position as she critically explores African men's perceptions towards gender issues. MaFadden's work is relevant to my study as students explore the attitudes and perceptions in texts produced by men.

In order to explore and inform my research on South African perceptions of gender and sexuality I refer to Marius Pieterse's (2000) work in which he explores different traditional practices and aspects of customary law. He examines sociocultural perceptions, misconceptions, attitudes and beliefs relating to sex, condom use and HIV/AIDS. Pieters' research is relevant to my study because it is based in South Africa where my work is also focused.

2.2.7 The Language of Jokes

The structure, form and purpose of most bumper stickers can be located within the genre of jokes. Their main purpose, which is to draw laughter, relies on shared knowledge between the constructer and recipient. Jokes are a form of word play, inextricably linked to circumstances, which belong to the world, which exist beyond words (Freud, 1905:5). For word play to be successful, it has to play on knowledge, shared by the sender and the recipient (p. 10-11). Shared knowledge is important because if a comic situation is so culture specific it will not be so amusing outside the culture of origin. Jokes are subjective (Freud, 1905) and socially constructed (Chiaro, 1992). The same things

[11] Southern African Economic and Political Magazine

are not funny to everybody. The recipient of a joke must possess certain sociocultural knowledge needed to understand it.

Another characteristic of jokes, which is also found in bumper stickers, is brevity, which is the body and soul of wit. It is 'its self' says Jean Paul (1804). Being brief serves a purpose in sending the intended message instantatiously. Lipps (1898, 90) says of brevity in jokes:

> A joke says what it has to say, not always in few words, but in too few words-that is, in words that are sufficient by strict logic or by common mode of thought and speech. It may even actually say what it has to say by not saying it (Freud p. 13).

Like jokes, bumper stickers bring forward what is concealed or hidden. It is through critical literacy that students try to uncover this latent meaning. As in jokes, the message in bumper stickers is identifiable by the frame around which they are constructed-the recipient is not expected to interact but simply to read and finally, it is hoped, to laugh (Chiaro, 1992). Most of the messages in the stickers are short, almost spineless one-liners consisting of clichés and jokes. In addition, like jokes, bumper stickers may contain a pun. Most have a punch line or punch, which is a point in which the recipient notices something, incongruous with the linguistic or semiotic environment in which it occurs, but which at first sight had not been apparent (Chiaro, 1992).

2.3 CONCLUSIONS

The researchers from whom I draw the framework of this study conceive critical literacy as a social practice best understood in its social context. Since my primary aim in this research project was to help my students to develop CLA, it could be achieved through encouraging them to ask critical questions that could unveil the hidden meanings in texts. In addition to Fairclough's questions

referred to in section 2.2.2, I make extensive use of questions in Janks's adaptation of Fairclough's model for its simplicity and applicability to my students' situation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Research Methodology
3.2.1 Qualitative Research
3.2.2 Outcomes Based Approach

3.3 Research Participants
3.3.1 Grade 12 Students
3.3.2 Student Focus Group
3.3.3 Taxi Drivers
3.3.4 Bumper Sticker Manufacturers
3.3.5 Taxi Commuters

3.4 Framework for analysis

3.5 Research Instruments

3.6 Data Collection

3.7 Students as researchers

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I describe the methods used in conducting this research project. The research process was complex in that it involved a range of teaching activities in my class as well as data collected outside the classroom. It also involved a number of interviews, some conducted by myself and others conducted by my students.

The project involved twenty Grade 12 English Second Language students from Randfontein Secondary School. It was a learning project done over a ten-month period, from January to October 2006, the purpose of which was to develop students into critical readers of texts of various kinds. As mentioned previously in Chapter 1, prior to undertaking this MA research project, a varied range of critical literacy class activities was done by the students in my Grade 12 class. The following sections describe the research methodology, the research instruments and the phases of the project.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, I discuss the rationale for my choice of research methods. The choice of research methodology is determined by the purpose of a research study. The approach for each type of research differs in terms of data collection, sample design, type of data collection instruments used.

This project uses field research and data collection methods, which Knobel and Lankshear (1999:85) describe as observation of 'real life practices' such as bedtime story telling or 'real life' events such as teacher talk in classrooms to events at home, or recounts of 'real life' such as interviewing people about a practice. The aim of field research is to collect evidence that is *contextualised.* Such data takes into account the kind of school and the community in which the research study takes place and the history of the community.

In this approach, researchers often want to try to understand the world from the perspective of other people, a person or group (Knobel and Lankshear 1999:84-85). Shiffman and Leslie (1997) note that if descriptive information is needed, and then *quantitative* study is likely to be undertaken; if the purpose is to get new ideas, then *qualitative* study may be appropriate (p. 28). The research approach used in this project is discussed below.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Designs

Knobel (199:84) argues that most of what we commonly term *'qualitative research'* is, in fact, field research. Field research relies on data gathered from natural or 'real life' settings as the 'action' happens. This method can better uncover the attitudes and perceptions of respondents or

participants without limiting their choice of answers but allowing them an opportunity to express themselves freely, in an unobtrusive environment.

The purpose of this study is to investigate attitudes and opinions elicited by students when reading texts critically. The data collection techniques employed in this *qualitative* study includes interviews and focus groups. Although these research methods may differ in composition, they have roots in psychoanalytic and clinical aspects of psychology, and they stress open-ended and free-response types of questions to stimulate respondents to reveal their innermost thoughts and beliefs (28). In the sections below, I discuss the two data collecting methods: interviews and focus group.

3.2.1.1 Interviews

The research consists of interviews with manufacturers of bumper stickers, taxi drivers, taxi commuters and a student focus group. In the interviews conducted by the students and myself, the respondents are encouraged to talk freely about their activities, attitudes and interests. With the interviews, I intend to try to understand the world from the participants' perspective. I collected contextualised data, which takes into account the school and community in which the research study takes place; the socioeconomic status of the community in which the school is located; the history of the community and the lifestyle of the community (Knobel 1999:85). After the interviews the transcripts, audiotapes and notes are carefully studied; together with notes or reports of respondents' moods, gestures or body language they might use to convey attitudes and motives' (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997, p. 30).

3.2.1.2 Focus Group

Usually, a focus group consist 5-10 respondents who meet with a moderator/analyst for a group discussion 'focused' on a particular subject of research interest. Respondents are encouraged to discuss their interests, attitudes, reactions, motives, lifestyles, feelings about the subject or issue in question (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997, p. 31). In this research study, the focus group consists of six of students who discuss the conditions of production and reception of bumper stickers. The researcher (myself) mediates the discussion.

3.2.2 Outcomes Based Approach

As a teaching project, this research uses the Outcomes Based approach to teaching, which involves discovery learning and enabling students to participate actively in the learning process. This involves students collecting and processing information from interviews, discussions and reading a range of texts critically.

3.3 THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The following five constituencies participated in this project:

- Twenty Grade 12 students of Randfontein Secondary School
- Six of the above twenty students, forming a focus group
- Four taxi drivers from the Randfontein Area (West Rand).
- Three representatives of bumper sticker manufacturing companies
- Forty taxi commuters of Toekomsrus Township in Randfontein.

3.3.1 Grade 12 students

Since this is a teaching and learning project, I identified twenty Grade 12 students as major participants in the project. They use taxis regularly so I chose them for the cultural and geographical relevance of the minibus taxi industry to their social context. They are black students who speak two or more indigenous South African languages such as IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, SeTswana and SeSotho. These children can also speak Afrikaans since they stay in Toekomsrus, which is a historically Coloured township.

These children's ages ranged from 16-19. They were born in the 90's which means that they are the so-called 'born free' Y-generation. According to Cordrington and Penstone (2000:10-12) the Y-generation is far more racially, culturally and ethnically diverse than the previous generation in which most taxi drivers fall into. The students live in a technologically and culturally changed world to which they need to adapt. They exuberate in their independence and they have core values such as optimism, confidence, and sociability and are a lot more 'street smart' than their parents are. They are also better educated and they elicit more gender equity among them. Modern issues such as the global technological advances, rise of feminism and recognition of women and children's rights have a critical influence in their development.

3.3.2 Student Focus Group

The student focus group consists of six students randomly selected from a class of twenty students, which participated in this study. This focus group interviewed bumper sticker manufacturers and participated in the two focus group discussions that I mediated.

3.3.3 Taxi Drivers

The ages of the four taxi drivers who participated in this project ranged from 20-50 years. They operate taxis that ply the routes of Randfontein to townships such as Toekomsrus, Mohlakeng, Bekkersdale or Finsbury. During the interviews with them, I could not discern their mother tongues because they switched from seTswana to isiZulu and English.

3.3.4 Bumper-sticker Manufacturers

My students interviewed three bumper sticker manufacturers who were represented by two marketing managers and a public relations' officer respectively. All the three interviewees were black men.

3.3.5 Taxi commuters

The students interviewed forty taxi commuters (25 female and 15 male) that from Toekomsrus Township. According to my instructions, these interviewees should have been acquaintances of my students such as relatives, friends or neighbours.

3.4 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

I have used Fairclough's Model of CDA to frame the analysis of my data. In this model the four stages of analysis, which inform the data collection processes, are as follows:

- The object of analysis - bumper stickers
- The process of production describes and explores the role played by taxi drivers in the production of bumper stickers.

- The processes of reception describe how my students and other commuters read, analyse and interpret bumper stickers
- The socio-historical conditions govern these three processes above

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The following instruments were used in the four phases of the project:

- Questionnaire used by all the 20 students to obtain 40 people's views on signs found in their township, such as those found at the gates of houses and public places
- Questionnaire used by all the 20 students to individually interrogate the signs found around Toekomsrus Township
- Questionnaire used by the student focus group, to interview three bumper sticker manufacturers.
- Questionnaire that the researcher (Rockie) used to interview four taxi drivers
- Questionnaire used by all the 20 students to interview 40 taxi commuters from their township.
- Two questionnaires used by teacher/researcher (Rockie) to interview the focus group on two separate occasions.
- The students' reports and notes concerning every stage in their investigations
- My field notes when students did class activities.

Data is made up of:

- Critical reading activities done by students as introduction to Critical Literacy Awareness

- Signs collected from around Toekomsrus Township by all of the 20 students
- Information collected by students from people expressing their views on signs found in Toekomsrus Township.
- Information collected by the focus group from interviews with bumper-sticker manufacturers
- Information I collected from interviews with taxi drivers
- Bumper stickers collected by students as they travelled on taxis
- Information collected by students from interviews with taxi commuters
- Information I obtained from two focus group discussions.
- My lesson observation notes when students interviewed bumper sticker manufacturers and when they did class activities such as: categorisation of signs and bumper stickers and when having focus group discussions after interviews with bumper sticker manufacturers, taxi drivers and commuters.
- Students' analysis of data: signs from their communities and bumper stickers
- Students' notes and reports concerning investigations they did in every class or out-of-class activity such as categorisation of signs and bumper stickers.
- My analysis of all the above

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

3.6.1 Phase One: Introducing Critical Literacy learning

Phase One was administered for three months between 23 January and 11 March 2006. Its main purpose was to expose students to a wide repertoire of texts that introduced them to critical reading

practices. In this phase, my class of 20 Grade 12 students did the following critical reading activities in class:

- They analysed different newspaper headlines, from 'The Star' and 'Sowetan'. This activity was meant to help them identify key concepts such as metaphor, hyperbole, saliencies, pun, different points of view, fact and opinion and emotive language.
- They read newspaper articles relating to rape allegations, which were made against Mr Jacob Zuma.[12] The students had to identify pro or anti-Zuma sentiment expressed in letters to the editor, in order to establish different points of view. They commented on them by writing their own letters to the editor. These activities were meant to teach students to read 'with' or 'against' texts.
- The students identified and explained satire depicted in a cartoon (see figure 5) that appeared in 'The Star' newspaper of 9 May 2006 as comment on the Zuma rape case. That activity was supposed to encourage students to read extensively around the Zuma case so that they could reconstruct its details.

3.6.2 Phase 2: Reading signs from around Toekomsrus Township

Phase Two was administered from 12 May to 20 May in which the students did a critical literacy project, working with signs from their townships. This was the first stage to prepare them for the bumper sticker project. This project required students, operating as researchers, to collect, classify and analyse signs found in their township such as those at the gates of houses, tuck-shops, shops, houses or streets. The purpose of this phase was to equip students with initial critical literacy skills needed to interrogate the production and reception process of these signs as they analysed

[12] The former deputy president of South Africa who was dismissed from his post in 2005 when he was implicated in a corruption case of trying to solicit a bribe in an arms deal. Later, a 31-year-old HIV-infected family friend of his accused him of raping her. Mr Zuma was later acquitted of this charge in a highly publicised controversial decision.

them. In this phase, the students were equipped with data collecting and data analysis skills. This phase involved the following processes:

- The students gathered signs from around Toekomsrus Township from areas such as gates of houses, shops and streets.
- Before categorising the signs, the students practised categorisation by classifying different pieces of cardboard paper using criteria like texture, colour, shape and size. These skills of categorisation needed to be done to prepare students for the categorisation of bumper stickers in the actual project.
- With my mediation, the students analysed the signs by categorising them according to the different purposes they serve and how they are interpreted
- In order to inform and enrich the students' individual analysis of signs, they asked people from their township to express their views on them. This interview was meant to establish attitudes and meanings attributed by township residents towards these signs. It was also intended to prepare students for the interviews they had to conduct in the bumper sticker project. Students asked them questions such as:
    1. What do you find interesting about signs found in your township?
    2. What disturbs you about them?
    3. What social issues do they portray?
- Finally, each student analysed one sign from each of the three categories the class had identified.

The purpose of this section was to have students practice being researchers, piloting the main research. They worked with people in their communities and analysed texts (signs) from their surroundings.

3.6.3 Phase 3: Critical literacy project

Phase Three operated from 17 August and ended on 7 September during which my students and myself conducted interviews. This marked the beginning of the bumper sticker project. As a teacher, I had to play a supportive role in the learning process so I observed three separate occasions on which six (focus group) of the twenty students who participated in this project conduct interviews of bumper sticker manufacturers. I chose only six students to be my focus group because the school did not allow me to take all 20 students unless I hired a bus, which was going to be too expensive. I also considered a smaller group manageable for a more focused learning and teaching process. The following steps outline the details of these interviews:

- Firstly, the students interviewed three bumper sticker manufacturers on three separate occasions while I observed the process. I only intervened in the process to probe the interviewees for clarification on some of their answers. These interviews were intended to enrich students' knowledge of the social conditions or processes of production of bumper stickers. Information from the above interviews was recorded on tape and in students' notebooks. The questionnaire below, was used in these interviews:

1. What factors influence your choice or design of bumper stickers?
2. Do you ever change an original concept if the idea is not yours? If so, why?

- Secondly, after observing the above interviews, I then interviewed four taxi drivers myself, from 23 August to 7 September, because I feared for the students' safety as taxi drivers are often considered violent so they needed an adult interviewer to handle them. I myself recorded the information I obtained from those interviews in my notebook. Recording it on tape might have put me in danger because drivers would have thought that I am a journalist whom they detest, probably for allegedly reporting 'lies' about their industry. The purpose of the interviews with taxi drivers was to investigate the conditions of production and processes of reception of bumper stickers. My role as a teacher was to feed some information into the teaching process and model the research. I then made available to the students my findings from these interviews. The questionnaire below, used in the interviews with taxi drivers, was meant to help me interrogate the factors that influence the production process of bumper stickers.

1. Why do you have bumper stickers in your taxi?
2. How did you choose this/these particular sticker(s)? What message(s) do you intend sending?
3. Do these stickers on your taxi portray a particular image that you want to project of yourself?
4. Do you think your passengers get the message you intend to send? (If not, why do they misunderstand it)? What is the actual message the sticker is sending?
5. Do your passengers ever comment on the stickers? What do they say?

- Lastly, on 22 August, I had my first interview with the focus group, made up of the same six students who participated in interviews with bumper sticker manufacturers. In that interview students discussed information, they had obtained from their interviews with bumper sticker manufacturers, as well as that which I obtained from my interviews with taxi drivers. The focus group's responses were intended to establish for me the extent to which students were

displaying critical literacy in the process of interrogating the bumper sticker manufacturers. These were the questions I set for my students:

1. What kind of person, and with what interests and values, composed the text?
2. What view of the world and values does the composer of the text assume that the reader/viewer holds? How do we know?

3.6.4 Phase 4: Processes of reception

3.6.4.1 Students working with bumper stickers to develop Critical Literacy Awareness

This phase has two parts. In the first part, the students collected bumper stickers and analysed them. This phase entailed students working with texts themselves (bumper stickers). It was conducted from 6 August to 13 October 2006, during which Students analysed data they accumulated through various activities they performed in class and out of class in the following ways:

(a) Students collect bumper stickers

As I was conducting the interviews with taxi drivers, from 23 August to 7 September, all my 20 students were collecting bumper stickers as they travelled in the taxis. They noted the inscriptions on bumper stickers, in their notebooks. The purpose of this task was to enable them to assume a researcher's role of gathering data (bumper stickers) forming the core of this MA project.

(b) Students categorise bumper stickers

This part of the project, required students to classify bumper stickers into different

categories as they had done earlier in Phase One, with the classification of township signs. The whole class did this activity, from 11-14 September and they identified five categories during the following processes of classification:

- Firstly, the students wrote out messages they had noted on bumper stickers, on small work cards
- Secondly, the students worked in groups of four, classifying messages from bumper stickers. They wrote out these messages on work cards and stuck them into different columns on large flip chart papers.
- With my intervention in the categorisation process, the class identified a number of categories such *as sexist/racist stereotypes, taxi rules and road safety, religious connotation* and *nature/identity of taxi drivers.* In a class brainstorming session that I also mediated, the students subsequently narrowed them to five categories. This categorisation process was intended by me, as teacher to be an initial critical literacy analysis exercise. It aimed at having students identify common or contrasting features in the messages they found on bumper stickers.

(c) <u>Students analysing bumper stickers</u>

- I placed the students into five groups comprising of four students each and allocated each group a category to analyse.
- With my mediation, each student analysed two bumper stickers from the category I allocated their group.

- Every student worked with a set of bumper stickers that differed from that chosen by others. The purpose of this activity, which was done from 18-22 September, was to have students ask critical questions of the bumper stickers using some of the questions below:

1. What kind of language is used in the text?
2. What do the words suggest?
3. What does the composer of the text want us to know?
4. How are children, teenagers, men or women constructed in this text?
5. Are there 'gaps' and 'silences' in the text?
6. What knowledge does the reader/viewer need to bring to this text in order to understand it?
7. How is the reader or viewer positioned in relation to the composer of the text?
8. What other readings are possible?

I structured the activities in this section in terms of Fairclough's CDA model, as the students' responses aimed to establish:

1. The Text
2. Conditions of production
3. Processes of reception

The students' activities were meant to examine whether they could identify trends in the data. In my own analysis as teacher/researcher, I set to identify to what extent students could read critically.

(d) <u>Students interviews with commuters</u>

Assuming the role of researchers, students interviewed taxi commuters residing in their

township in order to investigate commuters' attitudes towards the bumper stickers. This process, beginning on 26 September and ending on 11 October was as follows:

- Firstly, students used the same questions they were to use to interview commuters in their townships to carry out pilot interviews of their peers from 28 to 30 September. They wrote down their findings in their notebooks.
- Secondly, each student interviewed two taxi commuters from Toekomsrus Township (from 4 to 11 October). They showed commuters a sample of five bumper stickers, so that they would know on what they were required to comment. For security reasons, I instructed them to interview people they were acquainted with such as relatives, family members, friends or neighbours. In these interviews they used the questionnaire below:

1. What do you like about bumper stickers on taxis?
2. What do you hate about them?
3. What social issues are they portraying?

The responses from these interviews were meant to identify any trends in commuters' responses towards the production and reception of bumper stickers. After these interviews, all students wrote short reports describing the processes described above.

(e) First Focus Group Interview

On 22 August, I had the first interview with the focus group. Present were all the six students who interviewed bumper sticker manufacturers. The following questionnaire was used in this interview:

1. What do you think of people who make bumper stickers?'
2. What interests and values do the composers of bumper stickers have?'
3. 'What do you think the stickers tell you about the nature of drivers or manufacturers?'

(f) Second Focus Group Interview

On 13 October, I interviewed the same student focus group, which participated in the first one on 22 August. This interview was supposed to identify what students had discerned in their analysis of commuters' responses to questions in interviews conducted by all 20 students. Information obtained in this focus discussion was intended to enrich that gathered in the interviews with bumper sticker manufacturers and taxi drivers. The following questionnaire was used in this interview:

1. How do you and other commuters receive and respond to bumper stickers?
2. How do you think the taxi drivers think of the way commuters receive bumper stickers?

3.6.4.2 Analysis of students' data

In the second part of Phase Four, I analysed all the data collected from the project. This analysis comprises information from questionnaires used in interviews, my lesson observations and field notes and students' notes and reports. I obtained detailed information about processes of production and reception from the two focus group interviews as well as students' individual reports. At the conclusion of the teaching/learning process, I had accumulated substantial data from the following processes:

- The activities undertaken by the students in phase one and two in which they were, respectively introduced to Critical Literacy Awareness and piloted the main project working with signs they collected from around Toekomsrus Township.
- The 20 students' categorisation and analysis of bumper stickers

- The information obtained from two interviews conducted by the focus group on bumper stickers manufacturers and information that I obtained from my interviews with taxi drivers.
- The data obtained from the two focus group discussions.
- The information obtained by all 20 students from interviews with 40 taxi commuters from Toekomsrus Township.
- All 20 students' individual analysis of 2 bumper stickers each.

I used this data to help me address one of my research aims: to evaluate the extent to which my students had become critical readers, as the teaching project unfolded

3.7 STUDENTS AS RESEARCHERS

The students played the role of researchers for the following reasons:

- They could speak the language of the people they interviewed. Relying on interpreters may result in added layers of meanings, biases, and interpretations, which may lead to disastrous misunderstandings (Freeman, 1983).
- Since this was a teaching and learning project, students had to play an active role in the learning process by collecting and analysing data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PHASE ONE AND TWO: INTRODUCING CRITICAL LITERACY LEARNING

4.3 Introduction

4.4 Phase One: Introducing Critical Literacy Learning
4.2.1 Critical Literacy Learning Activities

4.3 Phase Two–Reading signs found around Toekomsrus Township
4.3.1 Categorisation of signs done by students
4.3.2 Interviews with residents of Toekomsrus Township
4.3.3 Students' analysis of signs
4.3.4 My analysis of Phase Data
4.3.5 Discussion of Phase Two Data

4.5 Conclusions

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I describe the first and second phases of the critical literacy teaching-learning project beginning on 9 January and ending on 20 May 2006. I first reflect on what students learnt when I introduced them to critical literacy in Phase One in which they were exposed to a variety of critical literacy activities. This is followed by a description of Phase Two in which the students worked with signs they had collected from around Toekomsrus Township. All the activities described in this section were done in class during normal learning-teaching time or as homework.

4.2 PHASE ONE: INTRODUCING CRITICAL LITERACY LEARNING

As mentioned in Chapter Three, before participating in the MA research project, students did a series of critical literacy activities, from 23 January to 20 March 2006. Those activities were the first attempts to teaching students to become critical readers. They prepared them for critical analysis of a wider repertoire of texts, which was to be the actual MA research project.

4.2.1 Critical Literacy Learning Activities

This section gives a detailed account of critical literacy activities constituting Phase One of the project. In this Phase, the students worked with a range of literacy texts such as newspaper headlines, newspaper articles, cartoons and letters to the editor from newspapers.

- ***Newspaper headlines***

When introducing critical literacy awareness, I aimed to teach students to read beyond the mere words in a text. The starting point in trying to achieve this aim was presenting students with different newspaper headlines, (see Appendix 10). When reading the headlines, the students leant to identify emotive words and omission. They were able to make predictions on the messages that the headlines would convey if some prepositions and pronouns or nouns were added or omitted from them.

- ***Newspaper articles***

After reading newspaper headlines, I decided the students were ready to deal with longer texts. Students were asked to read newspaper articles relating to the Zuma,[13] rape allegations, in order to establish different points of view. Since some of the articles were written before the case went to trial, my students could speculate the outcome of the case. Those written after Zuma was acquitted of the rape charges provided an impetus for the students to debate the merits and demerits of the case. They identified pro or anti-Zuma sentiment expressed in the articles and commented on them by writing their own letters to the editor. The students made very interesting comments. Of particular note were the following comments:

[13] The former deputy president of South Africa who was dismissed from his post in 2005 when he was implicated in a corruption case of trying to solicit a bribe in an arms deal. Later, a 31-year-old HIV-infected family friend of his accused him of raping her. Mr Zuma was later acquitted of this charge in a highly publicised controversial decision.

Mandy: *"I think that Zuma is not a good example to us youngsters. He must be punished for his crime. He betrayed the trust of a poor woman who is HIV positive*

Nono: *I think there is more to this case than just rape. The writer of the article I read seems to think that Zuma is guilty because she hates him. Let's wait for the court outcome*

These activities yielded their intended outcomes as they taught my students to read 'with' or 'against' texts. They made very critical and controversial observation as noted in the above comments. This illustrated the notion of different reading positions.

- ***The Jacob Zuma cartoon***

A controversial Zuma cartoon (see figure 5) appeared in a Johannesburg newspaper The Star 9 May, 2006, after Jacob Zuma was acquitted of the rape charges of which he had been accused. During this period, a lot was said about the outcome of this case. In the eyes of many people, Zuma could have been found guilty. On the other hand, Zuma's staunch supporters had a different opinion as they alleged that his accuser had falsely accused him.

This cartoon drew a lot of comment from the students as it gives an account of events surrounding the rape allegations leveled against Mr. Zuma, which was a topical issue in South Africa at the time. The students identified and explained satire in the cartoon. Most students described Zapiro, the cartoonist, as prejudiced against Zuma. Only one student, Michael had a different opinion as he noted, *"I think Zapiro deliberately drew this controversial cartoon so that people would debate on the case"*. I chose this cartoon for this activity because of the controversial readings I knew it would

invite. This was meant to encourage students to follow the case and read extensively around it to be able to reconstruct its details.

FIGURE 5: Jacob Zuma Cartoon



[Source http://www.mg.co.za/ContentImage/2561/09-may06x.gif [accessed 2007-06-15]

In their analysis of this cartoon, my students were critical of what emerged from this highly publicised Jacob Zuma (JZ) rape case.[14] They made a scathing attack on male chauvinism and the way the South African culture seems to demean the position of women. In their written responses, all my students observed that it appears as if South African 'culture' still condones rape and abuse of women.

[14] A 31 year-old family friend of his alleged that he raped her. Jacob Zuma was dismissed as South African deputy president in June 2005 when he was implicated in corruption charges of trying to solicit a bribe in an arms deal.

My students were very critical of the conduct of Zuma's supporters (mostly women) who stood outside the Johannesburg High Court during the trial, holding aloft images of Zuma's accuser and chanting *'Burn the Bitch!'* Meanwhile, inside the courtroom, Zuma's lawyers were 'grilling' the 31-year-old HIV-positive woman, who brought the case, about her own sexual history-the prurient details made public for the whole world to hear (Caroline Dempster, 20 May 2006 report of Institute for War and Peace). Ironically, Zuma's conduct of having unprotected sex outside marriage was not made an issue of as his supporters construed it a normal act of manliness located in the Zulu culture. Thando, a girl in my class noted with disdain, *"I think those people who were dancing in the street have blind faith like Boxer in 'Animal Farm'"*.

In their analysis of the court-proceedings, the students generally adopted a feminist stance. Even the boys expressed empathy to the plight of the woman who brought the case against Jacob Zuma. One boy wrote in his report, *'People in high office abuse women and get away with it'*. A critical divergent view came from one girl, Lusanda who observed, *'With a rape case, no one will ever know the truth except the two- the alleged rapist and his victim'*. In her notebook, Thembi, one of my most outspoken students in class wrote, *"What we read in the newspapers is an example of how men misuse their libido and power. They just let it run amok as they abuse powerless women. All these fat cats are the same. Look at how Goniwe harassed his 21 year old secretary for refusing to sleep with him."*

The 'Goniwe' case that Thembi refers to involved former ANC chief whip Mbulelo Goniwe, whom it was alleged asked a 21-year-old parliamentary administrative assistant to have sex with him, after she helped serve dinner to guests at his home on 25 October 2005. When she refused, he allegedly

told her, "*I thought you were a real Xhosa girl. How can you say no to your chief whip as if I am an ordinary man?"* (Commission on Gender Equality Report, Friday 15 December 2006).

4.2.2 Reflection on critical literacy activities

Although not avid newspaper readers, my students found the texts from 'The Star', relevant to their life experiences. After doing the critical reading activities in Phase One, Menzi wrote in her report, *'All these stories tell of the sick and miserable life we face in the townships. It's scary, these killings, rapes, theft…they are like daily bread"*. Another student, Giddy was more critical, "*When doing these activities, I was able to identify the mood and the tone in the emotive language the reporters use. I feel like a victim of crime. It's sad and makes me cry"*.

The Jacob Zuma cartoon (see figure 5) helped them to examine satire in texts by 'rubbing' texts against each other. The students were fascinated by the cartoon because they had prior knowledge of the case that it satirised. By analyzing the highly abbreviated genre of the cartoon it demonstrates the extent to which readers were able to infer or 'fill in' from their own experiences, beliefs and assumptions in order to comprehend the text (Granville, 2001).

After undertaking these activities meant to introduce them to critical literacy awareness, the students made comments such as:

* The articles on the Zuma case were interesting, as we all know of the case.
* The articles gave us something to think of.
* The cartoon is the joke of the year as it explains all that happened to Mr Zuma.

The activities done in this section proved productive in introducing students to critical reading prior to embarking on this MA research project. As the phase unfolded, I observed how every experience the students gained in each activity influenced their performance in the next one. I concluded that this activity encouraged criticality because it related very closely to the students' own environment.

4.3 PHASE TWO-READING SIGNS FOUND AROUND TOEKOMSRUS TOWNSHIP

In this phase, students worked with signs they had collected from around Toekomsrus Township, in areas such as at the gates of houses, shops, and streets. I chose those signs because of their similarity to bumper stickers, in linguistic form, structure, content and context of construction. The activities, which students did in this Phase, were meant to investigate how they could use local texts to develop critical reading skills. Also very importantly, these activities involved students exploring processes of production and processes of reception.

For the students to analyse the signs, the following three steps were followed:

1. Firstly, students worked in groups of four to classify signs from Toekomsrus Township into different categories in a process they repeated as a class to narrow the categories.
2. Secondly, each of the 20 students interviewed two people from Toekomsrus Township to obtain views and attitudes towards signs found in their township. Information obtained at this stage was intended to enrich the students' knowledge of the production and reception process of signs and prepare them for the next stage.

3. Lastly, each student analysed one ‘sign’ from each of the three categories the class had identified. They then wrote brief reports of their findings.

4.3.1 Categorisation of signs done by students

During the categorisation process, described in section 4.3 students initially identified categories such as *vulgar, swearing, educational, goods and services, gangsters, violence, AIDS awareness, dogs, crime and domestic signs.* I then mediated a class activity in which students reclassified the signs in order to narrow the categories. They finally identified three categories as illustrated in Table 1 (see Appendix One).

4.3.2 Interviews with residents of Toekomsrus Township

Each of the 20 students in my class interviewed two residents from Toekomsrus Township. The interviews were meant to help my students get a better understanding of attitudes and perceptions about the signs found around their township. Table 2 on the next page illustrates the results of these interviews.

Table 2 –Toekomsrus residents' views about signs in their township			
Questions	No of residents	No of responses	Responses
Q1: What do you find interesting about signs found in your township?	40	38	-They give directions -Some are funny -I don't know -They teach us young people to behave -I love the positive message like to condomise because like us young people we must protect from Aids -Signs are Toekies culture -Visitors get direction not to get lost -Children learn to read -I can understand them because they are written in Afrikaans and English -Signs tell us where we coming from -We can see the prices at spaza shop and buy happy -They warn of dogs not to bite us
Q2 What disturbs you about them?	40	40	-They encourage to kill others -They are written by gangsters -using strong language and hate speech -Encourage us to be gangsters -Gangsters rule Toekies -They make our township dirty -It is graffiti -The signs are useless -Men insult women -Gangsters write to frighten us -How will my grandmother get the message she cant read -Some signs give us bad name -The signs learn our children bad manners -I don't understand some of them
Q3 What social issues are they portraying?	40	39	-They talk about crime in our township -We learn the rules of our township -Gangsters rule Toekies -No one is safe Toekies problems of crime and drugs -Relations between men and women -Women are still discriminated

Table 2 will be analysed in conjunction with Table 3 (section 4.3.5).

4.3.3 Students' analysis of signs

Each of the 20 students analysed two signs from each category. Table 3 on the next page, only illustrates the pertinent responses that I chose, as others were repetitive.

Table 3-Students' analysis of signs from Toekomsrus Township			
Category	**Message in sign**	**Where found**	**Students' interpretations and inferences**
Dogs and security	Beware of the dogs, never mind the owner	At the gates of houses	The owner maybe he is weak and his dog is protecting him better
	Owner not responsible for loss of life	At the gates of houses	The owner will not take you to hospital because you came to his house to steal his property
	Trespassers will be shot and survivors will be shot again	At the gates of houses	He is serious about security and wants to send a strong message to us.
Informative	Blue Magic	Outside a night club	This sign tells of corrupt nightclub in Toekies. Some people call it 'Blue Movie' because it has strippers, drugs and people have sex there
	Gangsters' paradise	Wall of community hall	This sign is from American rapper's song 'Gangsters' paradise'. It tells people that Toekies gangsters are free to do what they want. The police fear them and we fear them.
	West side, don't enter	At a street corner	The *Tsotsis* copy this from American black township. They mark their territory. This west part of Toekomsrus is a no-go area. They can rape, rob and kill you.
Sexist/insulting	Fuck Toekies bitches	On wall of public toilet	Gangsters wrote this graffiti directed at girls and women that men call bitches always.
	Jou ma se poes	On the wall of night club	This is Afrikaans and means 'Your mother's vagina'. It is a common insult in Toekies. It insults our mothers' private parts. It's vulgar and teaches children to swear too much. They sing it like an anthem.
	Fuck the Toekies virgins	At a street corner	These gangsters rape young girls who are virgins. They believe that sex with a virgin cures AIDS.
	Fuck ANC	On wall of public toilet	The writer does not favour ANC. He is angry about empty promises that ANC makes.

The responses displayed in Table 3 also gave insight into the students' own 'processes' of reception. Their critical approach was informed by social factors and personal experiences.

4.3.4 My analysis of Phase Two data

In this section, I focus on the two themes that emerged in Toekomsrus residents' and my students' responses to signs found around their township (see Table 2 and Table 3).

- **Violence and crime**

All my students thought that some signs found in Toekomsrus Township denote crime and violence

(see Table 3). These are signs such as, ‘Gangsters’ Paradise’, ‘Mafia country, you enter you die’ and ‘Wild, wild Toekies’. Students’ comments on the violent signs denote that, ‘*Toekies gangsters are free to do what they want. The police fear them’*...

Discussion

I noted that the ‘*dogs and security’* category the students came up with, had the most number of entries (49 out of 87). This high number of entries suggests that violent crime is a serious concern in Toekomsrus Township. The presence of dog-warning signs also suggests that housebreaking is the most prevalent and feared crime in Toekomsrus Township. The signs denoting violence and gangsterism portray Toekomsrus as a place with high incidents of violence, alcoholism and drug abuse.

- **Sexism**

The students believe that sexual explicit signs are directed at women, as illustrated in messages such as ‘Fuck Toekies bitches’, ‘Son of a bitch’ and ‘Jou ma se poes’ (see Table 3). The students believe that sexist signs are meant to degrade women as they made comments such as *‘men insult women’* and *‘signs talk about women’s private parts’*.

Discussion

In their interview of Toekomsrus residents, the students discovered that most respondents (30 out of 40) found the signs in Toekomsrus Township sexist and insulting to women. Although women head many households in Toekomsrus, the sexist signs found on residential properties reflect male perceptions of the world. This suggests that in Toekomsrus Township the construction of signs is a gendered knowledge system, in which men still decide what to write. However, the presence of

positive sexually explicit messages suggests that the Toekomsrus community is concerned with educating people about the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

4.3.5 Discussion of Phase Two data

Phase Two data comprises students' categorisation and analysis of signs and results of students' interviews with Toekomsrus residents. The students initially identified ten categories of signs, which they later narrowed down to three. They used a wide frame of reference drawn on different discourses available to them. The importance of discourse is noted by Gee (1990), and according to him, each of us is a member of different Discourses. Each Discourse gives us our ever multiple identities. The signs that students collected are located within a 'Toekomsrus Township' discourse.

The categorisation process is evidence that children in my class were beginning to read critically as they could identify different categories based on the purpose served by the signs as literacy texts. It has to be noted that as objects, texts carry within them the particular histories of their composition, and consequent possibilities of meaning (Nick 1990:156). The term *text* therefore implies both a reader and a writer. Students were able to read signs from around their township, which is an environment familiar to them. This reading was done within a *context*, which conditions a reader's expectations and makes interpretations appear possible. When reading texts, the context is one part of the meaning that is communicated. The students' interpretations emanated from 'reading against' the texts and from inferences they drew on the context of township life and local literacy practices.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

The reading of signs in Phase One and Two set out to discover to what extent the students have become critical readers in order to prepare them for the main MA project. There is evidence that the students were developing critical literacy awareness as they could identify intertextuality in the construction and reception of signs based on the common knowledge between the constructor and the reader. They linked signs to popular culture and gangster practices deriving from American media, which they perceived to glorify gangsterism and casual sex. One learner noted, "*Men and women having sex in most American videos is a common thing. It's disgusting"*.

There is a strong assertion that teaching CLA can be effective if teachers use texts drawn from contexts with which students are familiar. However, there is a possibility of different reading by people within or outside this context. Teachers should recognise cultures, languages, social habits and local literacies to which students can relate. From the activities undertaken by students in this Phase, I can draw the following conclusions about teaching CLA (Critical Literacy Awareness) using local texts (signs): signs found in the children's townships are socially constructed texts, which are located within a social context most residents are likely to understand.

After undertaking the critical literacy activities in this phase, I observed the following conclusions about my students' previous and present critical literacy experiences:

- They learnt critical reading through different strategies used to develop reading skills for different purposes in different contexts.

- They learnt not to blindly accept the ‘obvious’ statements in a text but to challenge overt statements whilst taking an assertive stand against a text’s assumptions (Freebody, 1992).

CHAPTER FIVE

PHASE THREE AND FOUR

PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION AND RECEPTION

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Phase Three-Processes of Production
- 5.2.1 Students' interviews with Bumper Sticker Manufacturers
- 5.2.2 Researcher's interview with Taxi Drivers
- 5.2.3 Researchers' first interview with student focus group
- 5.2.4 Analysis of processes of production
- 5.2.5 Discussion of processes of production

5.3 Phase Four-Conditions of Reception
- 5.3.1 Students categorising bumper stickers
- 5.3.2 Students' interviews with taxi commuters
- 5.3.3 Analysis of bumper stickers
- 5.3.4 Second interview with student focus group
- 5.3.5 Analysis of processes of reception

5.4 Conclusions to Phase Three and Four

5.1 INTRODUCTION

During Phase One and Two described in Chapter 4, I observed some progress regarding the level with which students were developing into critical readers and researchers as they collected, classified and analysed signs from their communities. In Phase Three, described in this chapter, the students, together with me, explore the processes of production. This is followed by Phase Four, which describes how the students investigate the processes reception as outlined in Fairclough's model of CDA.

5.2 PHASE THREE: PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION

The starting point in Phase Three was the students' interviews with three bumper sticker

manufacturers, followed by my interviews with four taxi drivers. After these interviews, I interviewed the student focus group for the first time. This section describes the different roles that my students and I played in this phase, which are as follows:

1. A focus group of six students selected from the 20 students in the class, interviewed three different bumper sticker manufacturers, in my presence. The interviews intended to widen the students' knowledge of the production process.
2. I later interviewed four taxi drivers myself, for the reasons stated in the methodology section (see 3.3.3). I then made available to the students the information I obtained from these interviews so that they could get a deeper insight into the production process of bumper stickers.
3. Each of the 20 students in the class interviewed two taxi commuters from Toekomsrus Township.
4. I had two discussions with the student focus group with the intention to examine the extent to which my students had developed to critical readers.
5. I then analysed the results from the above interviews, which the students had also recorded in their notebooks.

The interviews described below, are analysed in section 5.2.4.

5.2.1 Students' interviews with bumper sticker manufacturers

As a teacher/researcher, I observed six students: Thembi (g)[15], Thelma (g), Thandi (g),

Thando (b), Themba (b) and Tom (b), who were the selected focus group, interview three bumper sticker manufacturers. Assuming the role of researchers, the students interviewed PR, Mark1 and Mark2,[16] who respectively represented three different companies that manufacture bumper stickers. The students posed to them three questions, which were intended to explore the processes of production (see Table 4 in Appendix 4).

5.2.2 Researcher's Interviews with Taxi Drivers

Since this was a teaching project, I interviewed the taxi drivers myself to obtain from the constituency information that I would 'feed' into the research process. I posed them 5 questions in order to investigate their role in the production process of bumper stickers (see Table 5 in Appendix). This was supposed to establish the factors that influence their choices of bumper stickers.

5.2.3. Researcher's first interview with student focus group

On 22 August, I interviewed the focus group for the first time. Present were the same six students, who interviewed bumper sticker manufacturers. There was great excitement in class as I prepared to tape-record the interview. I began the interview with the question:

> ***'What do you think of people who make bumper stickers?'***

The following conversation ensued:[17]

> Thandi (g): *I think that the government must stop them. They spoil our democracy by insulting South African women.*

The other students reacted to Thandi's response with laughter but I probed her for more clarification, as I asked, ***'How do they spoil our democracy?'***

[16] PR (Public Relations Officer), Mark1 (Marketing Manager1), and Mark2 (Marketing Manager2).
[17] This is a shortened version of the interview transcript. A complete version is in the appendix

This question drew an animated reaction from Thembi instead

> Thembi (g): *We fought for our rights but these bumper (sticker) manufacturers make stickers that discriminate. They speak badly of women and make us feel bad. There are women out there that work hard to make a change. We don't rely on men's money.*
>
> Tom (b): *I support what they write in the stickers. It tells us about what's happening here in South Africa especially in Toekomsrus. Many girls are after money. They leave school to get pregnant and get maintenance money and grant.*[18]
>
> Thelma (g)[19]: *I don't agree with some points made. Stickers don't talk about money only. They make those that talk about other problems that we in the townships face like Aids and women and child abuse.*
>
> Thando (b): *I think the manufacturers are men because they talk about sex. Men like talking about sex too much. This is wrong. Just imagine when you are travelling with your parents and you see a sticker written,* 'Sex under age is a test'. *Your father will think you are sexual active and won't allow you to sleep over by your friend's house or go to parties.*
>
> Thembi (g): *And I think that these drivers don't believe in condomising. They have stickers that say* 'I love flesh on flesh'. *This is unfair. They teach us youngsters to have unprotected sex.*
>
> Themba (b): *I also agree. I think the taxi drivers tell them (manufacturers) to make such stickers with vulgar and hate speech. They are always fighting and insulting passengers. They are very rough to us. That's why they have stickers that say* 'You make trouble I make war, I make trouble you keep quiet'.

I then shifted the focus of the discussion by posing the question:

[18] This is a government social grant meant for children from poor families
[19] (g)=girl; (b)=boy

'What interests and values do the composers of bumper stickers have?'

> Thando (b): *As I said before, these people are interested in sex. They like using women as their things. For example, I saw a sticker, which says,* 'Sex instructor, first lesson free' *Just tell me, what is this?*

> Thembi (g)*: I'm disturbed that at this age taxi drivers like fighting. They put stickers that talk about violence.*

As I realised that the group was focusing on taxi drivers, I asked *'**But you don't say anything about companies that make the stickers'***

> Thembi (g): *Exactly! They also belong to the same squad. They still believe that women are less important to men. They are still using those old beliefs that women are like children. I don't buy it.*

> Tom (b): *But they are right. This 50-50*[20] *is causing divorces.*

Tom's observation is a controversial issue in most African communities as feminists advocate that women be given equal rights, which contradicts African attitudes that women should be 'under' men.

> Thelma (g): *Don't be old fashioned, Tom. Everyone has rights. Taxi drivers and these companies don't have a right to print stickers that talk about our private parts.*

> Themba (b): *I agree with you girls. No one has a right to insult our sisters. If you look at the stickers, they don't say nothing about men. I think people who make them hate women full time. For instance, I saw a sticker that says* 'If women were good God would have married'. *You see what I mean. They don't even respect or fear God.*

[20] It is reference to equality in terms of gender.

Thandi (g): *They force us to collect money when we sit at the front as if we work for them and if the money is 'short', they can eat you.*

Thembi (g): *Generally, the people who make these stickers want to tell us that taxi drivers are rough and like fighting. Most are traditional African men who confuse respect with fear. They think that they have a right to touch every woman's body. That's why they want women to sit at front and they will be touching your thighs all the way.*

Thandi (g): *Most of these drivers are old enough to be our fathers but you find them proposing love to us and touching our breasts. They do it the Zulu way and saying those silly praises about me. It makes me shy.*

Thandi's observation drew laughter from the other students.

Thembi: *I support what Thandi says. I saw a sticker in one taxi, which says 'Y*imina ngedwa enginelungelo lokushela lapha etekisini' (*I am the only one who has a right to propose love to women in this taxi*). *They think that we travel in the taxi to be proposed. If you refuse them, they insult you and threaten to kill you.*

Thelma (g): *I'm disgusted by the people who make stickers. They must be educated to respect human rights. Most of them did not go to school.*

As I was preparing to close the interview, I asked the students, '***What do you think the stickers tell you about the nature of drivers or manufacturers?'***

Themba (b): *In two words, I can say they are old fashioned and barbaric. What I mean is that they don't want to move with the times.*

Thelma (g): *I think what they write in the stickers is what they were taught when growing up that women must be beaten always. Let me finish- it's not only taxi drivers who have this idea. Even in our township, we see men beat their wives and boys rape their girls. It's common and like normal.*

Thelma's comment marked the end of the session, as every student was quiet as if thinking about what she had said about violence.

5.2.4 Analysis of processes of production

At the end of Phase Three, three interviews were conducted with bumper sticker manufacturers (see section 5.2.1), taxi drivers (see section 5.2.2), and the focus group (see section 5.2.3). Three overall themes emerged from the findings of these three sets of data.

- Economic related issues
- Perceptions on gender issues
- Culturally related perceptions towards women abuse

In the sections below, I present a full discussion of the above themes:

- **Economic issues**

In this section, I present the students' views about economic factors that inform the production process of bumper stickers. As set out in the focus group interviews (see section 5.2.3), the students' comments illustrate their views about the influence of economic factors in the production of bumper stickers such as, 'Please, pay your fare. It supports my family' and 'In this taxi it's healthier to pay than to exercise'.

In their written reports, students noted the following economic comments made by bumper sticker manufacturers:

> PR: *We are in business to make money. Our intention is to serve our market, those who buy or order stickers. We aren't concerned with those who are offended by what we write because they wouldn't buy our products anyway.*

Mark1: *We design what we think will sell. We design what customers prefer*

Mark2: *Stickers that we produce are meant for the South African market.*

Discussion

Evident in the focus group discussion is the extent to which the students were becoming aware of economic factors informing the production process of bumper stickers. They described bumper-sticker manufacturers and the taxi drivers as just profit-oriented who did not care about commuters but only served their interests. The students' observation is evident in the stickers that taxi drivers display in their taxis (see Table 4 in section 5.2.1) and (Table 5 in section 5.2.2).

- **Perceptions on gender issues**

During the first focus group discussion, the students were very critical of prejudiced beliefs informing bumper-sticker messages (see focus group interview). They were critical of the comments such as "(stickers send) *a message towards women of loose morals*" (PR) and "*These creatures (women) talk too much and they are the ones that spread AIDS"* DR2. Nomsa makes a critical observation of bumper stickers as she questions, "*How can taxi drivers blame women for the spread of AIDS when they display their sexual preference for unprotected sex in stickers such as* 'I love flesh on flesh', 'I love sex' and 'I am a sexaholic?"

An observation similar to Nomsa's emerges in students reading of bumper stickers (4.3.4) as they reveal that some bumper stickers portray a negative image of women as noted in stickers such as 'All women are gold diggers' and '90% of all women are after money' and 'The only time a woman listens is when money speaks'. Contrary to the assumption that the male manufacturers are sexist, the

students surprisingly identified stickers that construct a negative image of men such as 'A bachelor is a man who has missed an opportunity to make a woman miserable' and 'Women don't make fools of men-most of them are the do-it-yourself type'.

Discussion

The above data suggests that the students were developing more critical literacy awareness as they could identify implied meaning in the bumper stickers. They noted that despite the assumption that manufacturers are men, some stickers surprisingly portray a defiant woman who resists male chauvinism and negative labelling. This is evident in a sticker that reads, 'Yes I am a bitch but not yours'. Although most of the students are critical of stickers that demean women, Tom, a boy in my class presents a divergent view. He condones the taxi drivers' positioning of women as economic parasites, "*This fifty-fifty is causing divorces. Many girls are after money. They leave school to get pregnant to get maintenance money, and grant*".[21] He perceives women and girls as financially dependent people who deliberately fall pregnant in order to access the government's child-support grant. As an African boy, Tom is probably socialised to believe that women are inferior to men. His divergent view may me explained by the fact that, unlike the other 5 students who are from Toekomsrus Township, he hails from rural KwaZulu-Natal and only came to Gauteng for his secondary education. The other 2 boys from Toekomsrus seem not to agree with Tom's attitudes towards gender equality. I noted that Tom was consistent through out this project in his stereotype beliefs about women.

- **Culturally related perceptions towards women abuse**

The students are critical of traditional African cultural perceptions informing the construction of

[21] A government grant meant for children whose parents are poor or earn below a stipulated minimum wage.

stickers that condone women abuse. Thembi made the following observation about taxi drivers indecently assaulting women,

> *"They think they have a right to touch every woman's body. Most are traditional African men. That's why they want women to sit at the front and they will be touching your thighs all the way…you find them proposing love to us and touching our breasts. They do it the Zulu way…"*

Thembi's observation suggests that taxi drivers perceive women as sex objects whose bodies they have a right to touch. She is critical of the practice of *ukushela,*[22] which she views as encouraging indecent assault of women. She strongly warns that to refuse any male taxi driver's sexual suggestive advances is like insulting his manhood as *"They insult you and threaten to kill you"*.

Discussion

When discussing the issue of gender violence, the students displayed some degree of critical literacy as they linked bumper stickers denoting violence to the violent attitudes they observed of taxi drivers. Their comments suggest that taxi drivers 'learn' violence when growing up. Thelma observes that stickers carrying violent messages depict attitudes ingrained in the taxi drivers, '*What they write in the stickers is what they are taught when growing up that a woman must be beaten always. Even in our Township, we see men beat their wives and boys rape their girls…it's common and like normal.* Thelma's observation is supported by McFadden's (1999) who suggests that a man beats a woman to remind her of her place as a woman and a wife.

The students recognise that the issue of sexual abuse and violence towards women seems

[22] This is a practice of proposing love to women and asserting masculinity. Traditionally, young men would dance and chant praise poems in front of a maiden they were interested in. At times men would twist women's arms to prevent them walking away, as they professed their undying love to them.

to be common in South Africa. When growing up in a black township, I also witnessed men and boys fondle women's breasts or caress any part of their body in public, and no one seemed to care about it. Although many black South African cultures accept and condone this practice, my students express disgust of it. This suggests that the children's beliefs are different from those of taxi drivers. My students are urban[23] youths whose beliefs draw from a modern culture in an urban context, whereas most taxi drivers generally hail from traditional rural villages and most probably draw their ideology from a 'peasant patriarchal culture' (McFadden 2001). Taxi drivers expect female passengers to accept as normal when they touch them indecently.

The high magnitude of sexual abuse in South Africa is also noted by Rose Moteme, a famous South African actor who was a victim of sexual abuse, who says "[violence against women is] *almost seen as the norm…a lot of people turn a blind eye. A lot of men think its fine to grope a woman's bum, lick someone's cleavage or make sexist jokes. And women are often too scared to stand up for themselves"* (Sunday Times11 December 2005).

On the issues of rape, Mbuyiselwa Botha,[24] the head of 'South African Men's Forum against Violence' has uncovered two divergent views: some men concede that it is an issue long overdue while others believe that these are Eurocentric ideas which have no place in an African setting where men can decide how, when and where to have sex. Dr Rachel Jewkes,[25] the head of the South Africa Medical Research Council's Gender and Health Unit also reveals that rape is more common in countries with more pronounced gender hierarchy and in a culture where violence is used to exert

[23] During apartheid era, all black people were supposed to have a village. Most of my students were born and brought up in urban settings.
[24] The Institute of War and Peace 6 May, 2006 report.
[25] The Institute of War and Peace 6 May, 2006 report

dominance. These observations suggest that the high incident of rape and violence against women seem to lie in a complex mix of factors to do with male identity and sexuality, gender inequality and distorted cultural and traditional practices.

5.2.5 Discussion of processes of production

In this section, I evaluate the extent to which the students develop CLA. The students' responses in the focus group interview (see 5.2.2) present a resistant critical reading. They critically interrogated the attitudes and actions of taxi drivers that seem to manifest in the construction of bumper stickers. The attitudes of taxi drivers could be informed by ideologies derived from their upbringing and socialisation. Morgan (1977: 96) argues that people do not have personal responses to texts but they have responses shaped by the way they have been brought up and values and beliefs they hold. Bumper stickers can be said to be produced and read within the context of the culture of the producer and the reader.

As the students were reading the texts, they identified a strong presence of cultural influence in their construction. Cultural issues may shape bumper-sticker producers' perception of social issues like gendered roles, equality and sexuality. Culture is influential in the construction of bumper stickers as it is a set of learned beliefs, values, attitudes, habits and forms of behaviour shared by society and transmitted from one generation to another through language, symbols, actions and other social practices like dance (Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:322). On cultural attitudes that inform the production of bumper stickers, my students argue that most taxi drivers' attitudes draw on African culture. McFadden (1999: 26) sayss such culture to displays a patriarchal arrogance of a traditional

Black man, who assumes that as a man in this deeply misogynist society, he can say or do what he wants to any woman.

> …after all he has a woman at home who kneels before him every night, calling him 'father' accepting his authority, almost without question; accepting his claim that her children are rightfully his; serving him the best part even of the most meagre meal; and taking whatever punishment he dishes out when he feels like reminding her of her place as a 'woman' and 'a wife'. And when he wants sex on demand, she allows her access to her body, usually without a condom or any by your leave; after all, he paid for her (p.26).

Bumper stickers are constructed around the context of traditional African beliefs, which my students as urban taxi commuters perceive to contradict modern views on issues such as gender sensitivity and violence against women. My students describe taxi drivers as 'traditional men' who choose bumper stickers that demean women. They assume that commuters subscribe to such views. DR4 (a taxi driver) notes, '*I choose stickers that ordinary black people in the township will understand…not those 'white' black people who live in suburbs'*. This observation suggests that when producing bumper stickers, manufacturers consider factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status and place of residence of the intended reader.

5.3 PHASE FOUR: PROCESSES OF RECEPTION

In this section, I describe the reception process of bumper stickers. What follows is an outline of the student activities in this phase:

- In a process that I mediated, students categorised the bumper-sticker messages according to their linguistic features.
- Each of the 20 students in class interviewed two commuters from Toekomsrus Township.
- Each of the 20 students analysed two bumper stickers each, from a category I allocated to their group (students were divided into 5 groups of 4 members each).

- I had a second focus group discussion in order to help students interrogate and integrate their findings from interviews with bumper sticker manufacturers and taxi commuters.

5.3.1 Students categorising bumper stickers

After collecting the bumper stickers, students started the first critical reading of bumper stickers by classifying them into categories following the processes and procedures described in Chapter Three. The categorisation process was the first step of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) where students worked with the actual data-**bumper stickers.** They identified common trends, which they considered in the classification of data illustrated in Table 6 (see Appendix 6). This process resulted in students identifying five categories: Stereotypes-sexist/racist**,** Taxi & road rules, Religious, Sayings/information and Nature/identity of taxi drivers

5.3.2 Students' interviews with taxi commuters

All of the 20 students interviewed two taxi commuters, each student posing three questions each in order to investigate attitudes and views towards bumper stickers. Table 7 on the following page, illustrates selected taxi commuters' views on bumper stickers.

Table 7-Commuters' views on bumper stickers	
Q1-What do you like about stickers on taxis?	
David	They are very funny and interesting. They keep me busy when I ride in a taxi.
Helman	They inform passengers about increases in taxi fares. They have jokes and prayers that can inspire passengers.
Julia	I don't pay attention to them but I think they are the drivers' mouthpiece.
Mercy	Some of the stickers are philosophical and make someone think deeply about life and everyday problems.
Nomad	They give passengers messages about what they to do and what not to do in the taxi.
Q2-What do you dislike about them?	
Goddy	I hate some of them as they are swearing and insulting to women. These young drivers don't even consider that older people use these taxis. They show no respect to older people. The words in those stickers are a bad influence to the youth who take those words and use them in public.
Mercy	I don't like those that talk badly about how women dress. Women are free to dress the way they want
Verona	I hate racist and sexist stickers.
Q3-What social issues are they portraying?	
Goddy	The stickers portray a sick South African Society that is obsessed with pornography. Since the stickers hurt other people, it shows how insensitive the sticker printers are as they are only concerned about money and they ignore moral issues like decent language, respect and culture.
Helman	It's a world where men have no respect for women and show insensitivity to women's feelings. I think that's why there is a lot of women abuse in our country.
Mercy	I think they portray a sexist society.
Verona	Men still think they are superior and better than women are. Other groups think they are better than others. People still use stereotypes to have fun of others.

A notable pattern in Table 7 above is the taxi commuter's perceptions on gender issues and violence. This pattern will be analysed in conjunction with the children's analysis of bumper stickers in section 5.3.3 below.

5.3.3 Analysis of bumper stickers

In Table 8 on the next page, I present a summary of 5 students' analysis of bumper stickers. I selected only the pertinent readings, which I considered detailed and displaying children's criticality. I left out those in which students attempted only less than 3 of the questions below; as such responses rendered the analysis relatively unreliable. Of the initial 8 questions that I drafted (see section 3.6.4.1 c), they used only the 5 questions below, which seemed relevant to this exercise. The data I shall discuss in section 5.3.5 is elicited from Table 7 and Table 8.

- What kind of language is used in the text?
- What do the words mean?
- What does the composer of the text want us to know?
- How are children, teenagers, men or women constructed in this text?
- How is the reader or viewer positioned in relation to the composer of the text?

In Table 8, below, I present my students' analysis of bumper stickers.

Table 8 Students' analysis of bumper stickers

Student	Sticker analysed	Category	Total in category	Comments
Mumi	Black is beautiful but too black is a crime	Stereotypes sexist/racist	83	*-There is discrimination of our Black brothers. If you are too black, people in our township call you 'Shangaan' or 'Kwerekwere'. .People from outside are taken as criminals* *-The reader is positioned as a black person who can be mistaken for foreigner.* *-Reader must know about the problem of xenophobia*
Thembi	In good old days girls used to cook like their mothers now they drink like their fathers	Stereotypes sexist/racist	83	*-Man and women roles have changed. Girls drink like nobody's business.* *-Women are constructed as belonging to kitchen. Men are constructed as drunkards* *-The reader must know traditional gender roles.* *-African culture does not allow women to drink but to take care of family.*
Tom	Is there life after death, mess with a taxi driver and find out	Taxi driver's nature/ identity	67	*-This is a Christian language referring to life after death* *- taxi drivers are violent killers-you mess with them they kill you* *-People are constructed as defenceless victims of taxi drivers* *- Must know isiZulu and that taxi drivers will not think twice to kill you. –Don't ever argue with a fool that like fighting*
Menzi	If women were good God would have married one	Stereotypes sexist/racist	83	*-Religious language He hates women wholeheartedly Women constructed as evil and cursed even in bible before God.* *--Knowledge of bible and that God is said to be a man.*
Matthew	Say no to drugs that will bring the price down.	Sayings/ information	80	*-Law of drugs and demand. If we stop buying price will go down* *-Law of supply and demand. If we don't buy, price will go down but many people will buy because it will be cheaper.*

5.3.4 Linguistic analysis

Data in Table 8 reveals that the students' analysis of bumper stickers has traces of knowledge drawn

from other subjects that they do at school such as a pun in Matthew's comment the '*law of drugs and demand'*. Mumi also shows awareness of the problem of xenophobia among South Africans. Janks (1991) advises that critical literacy texts chosen for classroom activities should illustrate the linguistic features at work in discourse, which is relevant to the students' social and political life.

The bumper stickers display complex linguistic features. Unlike English, indigenous African languages are complex, as they do not have well defined gender-denoting pronouns such as *him, her, she, and his*. The students noted that most messages are elliptical with pronouns being omitted. In instances where the pronoun is used, as Mark notes, *"The use of 'you' does not need someone to go to a prophet to tell that the finger is pointing at women. Where they use 'me' and 'I' they speak highly of themselves"*.

There is evidence of ellipsis in the bumper sticker discourse, which illustrates assumed knowledge between the text constructor and the reader. The omitted pronoun or agent can be deduced from the context in which the taxi drivers try to assert their position of power. The messages are in form of commands, which illustrates that the taxi drivers are trying to assert and impose their ideological position. The bumper sticker discourse is mostly in the first person, which makes the author more visible. As the taxi driver forground themselves, the authority of the text is increased as it tries to impose their ideological position. The use of timelessness statements portrays the taxi drivers' ongoing position (Janks, 1988). Interestingly, the students' analysis reveals negativity in the bumper stickers, which phenomena explored further in the

l5.3.5 Second student focus group interview

After the students had interviewed taxi commuters and analysed bumper stickers, I interviewed the focus group for the second time. Present were the same six students who participated in the first focus group discussion (see 5.2.3). In this interview, I aimed to establish how my students read bumper stickers. I focused the discussion on the questions in the questionnaire but included follow up questions to probe more information. I started the interview with the question:

'How do you and other commuters receive and respond to bumper stickers?'

The following conversation ensued:

> Thandi (g): *Many commuters, including myself, think that stickers are insulting to women.*
>
> Themba (b): *I think commuters learn a lot about the bossy attitudes of taxi drivers to keep away from their rude and violent behaviour.*
>
> Thembi (g): *Besides those that are insulting to women, they are humorous and reflect on the lives of ordinary South Africans from townships.*
>
> *Tom (b): I agree with Thembi. Many of us passengers learn a lot from these stickers especially those that speak about Aids and violence against women.*
>
> Thando (b): *From the responses of commuters we interviewed it is clear that most women felt insulted by the messages in these stickers, which portray women as sex objects that are responsible for all the problems men face.*

After discussing how commuters respond to the stickers, I wanted to establish what students thought were taxi drivers' attitudes to the reception of the stickers. I posed the following question**:**

'How do you think the taxi drivers think of the way commuters receive bumper stickers?'

The group made the following observations:

Tom (b): *Frankly speaking, most of these taxi drivers I know are local hooligans who dropped out of school. Their stickers show that they enjoy making other people's life miserable.*

Thelma (g): *From what they said in your interview, I think they only think of protecting their traditional beliefs.*

Themba (b): *You are right. These taxi drivers are only concerned with telling us that they are from a Zulu culture.*

Thando (b): *They choose stickers that show us that they are violent people. One even said that they use* 'isagila[26]' *to solve their problems.*

Thandi (g): *But there are some drivers who are respecting and they display positive messages that can benefit the reader.*

Thando (b): *Yes, there are. Some messages are educational. They give us advice on how to avoid life problems.*

Tom (b): *I usually enjoy those stickers that have jokes, which we in the townships understand.*

Thelma (g): *Still on the issue of jokes-some jokes are not funny. They are not our culture and the English is difficult.*

[26] A knobkerrie or fighting stick.

Thando (b): *Many people enjoy those that speak about God. They inspire us and we feel safe that God will protect us in the journey.*

Thembi (g): *The idea behind these stickers is for the taxi drivers to create an image that they are in control. I think they succeed in doing so because we don't say anything because of fear. Most of the taxi drivers are gangsters who can beat you up at the slightest provocation like to ask for your change or asking to be dropped-off.*

Thando (b): I think they don't care as long as they are taken as somebody in life like being an actual man or to be feared.

Themba (b): *They think that we enjoy their dirty jokes and vulgar language.*

Thandi (g): *The stickers only warn us not to do this and that in the taxi.*

5.3.6 Analysis of processes of reception

The following 3 patterns emerged from the students' reading and analysis of bumper stickers:

- Most students (15 out of a total 33) believed that most bumper stickers have sexist derogatory jokes biased against women (83 out of 217 stickers).
- Most students believed that most messages in bumper stickers (12 out of 33) portray a negative attitude of taxi drivers such as:
  i) violence e.g. *Is there life after death, mess with a taxi driver and find out*
  ii) reckless driving e.g. *If you don't like my driving fuck you.*
  iii) obsession with sex e.g. *I'm a sexaholic*
  iv) lack of concern for passengers e.g. *I'm not deaf but I'm ignoring you*

5.3.7 Discussion of processes of reception

From the students' reading of bumper stickers the following patterns emerged:

- Culturally related social issues of gender and sexism
- Perceptions on power relations
- Township lifestyle
- Converging of discourses
- Linguistic features
- Context of understanding of bumper stickers

The above patterns are discussed further in the following sections.

- **Culturally related issues of gender and sexism**

Students read the bumper stickers in the context of cultural attitudes ingrained in taxi drivers who belong to a male dominated taxi industry. Issues of gender disparity emerge in students' analysis of bumper stickers. This suggests that such attitudes are deeply ingrained in the consciousness of men and women. The importance of gender is noted by Daudi Kweba (1995:96) who says that gender

> …refers to those characteristics of women and men that are socially defined. It is people who define certain characteristics as being masculine or feminine and identify certain activities as being appropriate for men or women in a specific society. For example, what is women's work in one social environment maybe men's in another…

My students' astute observations reveal that most gender-stereotyped messages found on bumper stickers are directed at women as Themba observes, *"I think people who make these stickers hate women full time"*. This observation suggests that my learners are analysing bumper stickers from a feminist perspective located within a discourse of gender disparity. This reading is within the context of African cultural beliefs as Thelma critically observes, *"I think they only think of protecting our*

traditional beliefs". Themba identifies a strong cultural influence in the bumper sticker messages, *"These taxi drivers are concerned with telling us that they are from a Zulu culture"*. The stickers also display men's perceptions of women. From a male perspective, women's identity is 'the other'. Tom is strongly against granting women equal opportunities *"…but this 50-50 is causing divorces"*. He advocates that a woman must be confined to the kitchen where she is supposed to play a nurturing role dictated by African traditional beliefs. This attitude is located within a masculine superiority complex, which constructs a woman as, what I term a PhD (Permanent Home Dependant). One of my students, Mandy is critical of gender bias evident in a sticker that laments the days when African women were child minders and caregivers

'In the good old days girls used to cook like their mothers. Now they drink like their fathers.'

She notes, *"Although I don't favour alcoholism in general, I am totally against this idea that men are permitted to drink. This sticker also shows that our culture expects us girls to do all the house work when men drink and lazy around"*.

The student's observation reveals that gendered social practices exist in most Black communities. In such African cultural contexts, drinking is perceived as a masculine activity and women who dare partake in it are perceived as straying into a gendered social sphere preserved for men. The issue of gender relations features prominently in the students' analysis of bumper stickers because as a social construct, gender defines one's personal identity, transmitted in daily interactions between men and women in their families, communities and wider social arenas. When analysing the stickers, my students focused on language use and gender issues. Bonvillain (1995:9-10) says of language use

> The content of the language itself may reflect and reinforce cultural constructs of gender by the way people and their activities are named or described. Language can be used to enhance the social status of people viewed positively or to trivialise, restrict, and demean members of negatively valued groups

As a form of knowledge system, bumper stickers incorporate cultural, economic, and personal perceptions.

> Cultural values and social encouragement not only mould people's behaviour but also more importantly, contribute to forming their attitudes about themselves and their relations to others (Bonvillain 1995:10).

Gender disparities are not confined to South Africa but are also prevalent in other countries. McFadden (1999:29) gives an account of her experience in Harare (Zimbabwe) in which a Black man said to her *"…you are full of shit, and after all you don't have money, you are just a Black bitch."* My students believe that stickers that contain messages that aim at humiliating women and striping them of feminine dignity express men's deep-seated hatred of women, especially those who are financially independent or have careers.

The traditional cultural practices portrayed in sexist stickers construct an African woman's identity as private property, a wife and a man's commodity. The students located the bumper stickers within traditional African beliefs drawn from a 'peasant culture or peasant existence' originating in a village. During the apartheid era, every African had a village or had links with one. Even those in an urban setting were socialised in peasant culture, which their parents possessed.

- **Perceptions on power relations and identity**

My students identified power relations that surface in the taxi drivers' choice of bumper stickers that portray women as financially dependent social evils of loose morals causing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Taxi drivers use bumper stickers as a 'tool' and 'voice' to exert power over commuters as one of my students, Grace explains, *"Most taxi drivers are losers who lack self-confidence and positive identity. We don't look at them that way but they come up with such vulgar material and we*

don't respect them anymore. McFadden (1999) argues that violence (depicted in bumper stickers) is common in countries with a more pronounced gender hierarchy and a culture this culture of violence is used to exert dominance. One of my students, Nomsa also notes, '*Taxi drivers confuse taxis with their homes. They want to play father figure on every passenger especially women. They ill-treat us like their wives at home'.*

The issue of power relations and dominance seems to be reason for the taxi drivers' arrogance as DR2 alleges that, "*Most passengers think that we are stupid because we are not much educated…in order to earn respect one has to be arrogant…"* The results of interviews with taxi drivers reveal that messages that taxi drivers chose portray their identity. As Janks (2001) notes, language is a socialisation and the discourses we inhabit play a crucial role in constructing our multiple identities (p.3). Mark1, a manufacturer of bumper stickers, explains that, *"…the highest demand of bumper stickers is from those of low educational standard…they would be trying to establish a particular identity"* (see Table 4). DR2 confirms this observation (see Table 5) *"…most passengers think that we are stupid because we are not much educated…in order to earn respect one has to be arrogant at times and not be too soft"*. The above comments suggest that taxi drivers have an identity crisis originating from an inferiority complex they possess. The arrogance they display in their messages may be resisting of the negative labeling by commuters.

- **Township lifestyle**

The students noted that most messages in bumper stickers express township social problems "… *that we in the townships face like AIDS and child abuse…"* (Thelma). Thelma's observation is echoed by one of the drivers, DR4 who says he chose *"… stickers that ordinary black people in the township*

will understand (not) 'white' Black people who live in suburbs…they don't share the same jokes with us from the townships". DR2 says *"I chose those that talk about social problems because most people face the same problems conveyed in these stickers"*. The construction of bumper stickers reflects on what happens in townships, especially "*…what people talk about or do, especially slang gimmicks and slogans"*.

My students think that most bumper stickers portray the high rate of sexual and physical violence, which is a common phenomenon in townships. Themba (one of my students) is very critical of this phenomenon, *"… in our township we see men beat their wives and boys rape their girls…it is common and like normal"*. This phenomenon appears deeply rooted and ingrained in attitudes of taxi drivers and township people as well. The children's above observations suggest that they were developing critical reading skills, as they were able to link the messages in bumper stickers to the processes of production: the township lifestyle.

- **Converging and diverging of discourses**

The students' analysis of bumper stickers portrays a convergence of discourses such as violence and sexual abuse of women and African cultural beliefs and social practices. Fairclough (1989) says the construction of texts draws from a variety of discourses and their analysis relies on readers' knowledge of a variety of discourses. He terms such connectivity, intertextuality in which,

> …participants in any discourse operate on the basis of assumption about which previous discourses the current one is connected to, and their assumptions determine what can be taken as given in the sense of common experience, what can be alluded to, disagreed with, and so on (Fairclough 1989:145).

The students' association of African cultural practices with the behaviour of taxi drivers suggests a convergence and conflict of discourses of modernity and African culture. As mentioned in 5.3.6,

most taxi drivers in this study hail from rural areas whereas my students except Tom are urban youths. Their urban perception of the world differs from that of taxi drivers whom they think possess conservative traditional beliefs.

- **Linguistic features**

The activities undertaken in this project elicited an important observation about reading texts critically: the knowledge of linguistic cues is essential in interpreting any verbal data. The bumpers stickers are in either simple English or indigenous black languages. There is possibility that students could misunderstand them if they were too African culture sensitive or Eurocentric in context. There is also a possibility that the students could have misunderstood some messages in Black languages, because they possess a limited knowledge vocabulary of African languages. Some messages contain IsiZulu proverbs that are from a rural setting that my students may not understand. Unlike in a Western setting, the so-called 'uneducated' rural people possess a rich vocabulary of African languages. The prejudice with which they read bumper stickers is attributed to an African language linguistic deficiency. They overlooked stickers that with positive messages such as 'Induku ayiwakhi umuzi'.[27]

Janks (1991) provides an important observation that those students who bring to class an understanding of the social conditions that the language reveals or hides, are likely to be interested in understanding the linguistic encodings of these conditions and become empowered to resist this discourse.

[27] Wife-beating never strengthens marriage.

- **Context of understanding of bumper stickers**

The students' classification of stickers, such as 'No credit until 30 February' and 'A free ride to all over 60, provided accompanied by both parents', as humorous, suggests shared knowledge between the constructor (taxi driver) and the reader (commuter/student). The students had to possess the sociocultural knowledge around which such messages are constructed. To draw laughter, jokes play on shared knowledge between the sender and the recipient. Shared knowledge is important because jokes cannot be so amusing outside the culture of origin (Freud 1905:10-11). DR4 believes that black people in the townships share the same jokes as they do.

As I mentioned earlier in my discussion of production processes, producers and readers (commuters) may have different value systems, which may cause the latter to find some messages, meant to be jokes, derogatory. The use of derogatory jokes directed at women suggests that taxi drivers possess a superiority complex, which conceals male chauvinistic feelings of fear and anxiety over the independence exuberated by educated female professionals. These jokes are meant to make the victims of the jokes (usually women) feel inferior. One commuter noted that, 'some jokes are meant to hurt other people's feelings'.

Most sexist jokes are centred on sex as Chiaro (1992) observes that in western societies dirty jokes are considered amusing, especially when men are gathered for a drink or any gendered activity such as watching a rugby match. Sexually explicit language in jokes is considered to be a male bar-language, which overlooks social norms.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS TO PHASES THREE AND FOUR

- **Influence of socialisation on construction of texts**

The students identified a strong influence of the taxi drivers' socialization on the formation of attitudes that they display in the texts. Thelma affirms the observation that taxi drivers' choice of messages is strongly influenced by their socialization, *"I think what they write in the stickers is what they were taught when growing up…"* DR2 supports this notion, *"I got the wisdom I have about life from my parents, especially about how to behave. In order to earn respect one has to be arrogant at times and not to be too soft"*.

- **Attitudes towards sexual abuse and violence against women**

The students discovered that the construction of bumper stickers is gender biased and display the attitudes and perceptions of men. DR2 condones violence on women as he believes that "*…most problems, we men face are caused by women…they are the ones that spread AIDS"*. However, Thembi has a different opinion on who is responsible for the spread of AIDS, "*And I don't think that these drivers believe in condomising. They have stickers that say* 'I love flesh on flesh' (see section 5.2.3).

- **Social practice of communication**

The data reveals that the construction of bumpers stickers is a social practice of communication as DR1 notes, *"They are a way of communicating… social problems with my passengers"*. The bumper stickers act as a social commentary of what happens in townships where both the taxi drivers and my students live (5.3.6).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

6.2 To what extent did my students become critically literate?
6.2.1 Resisting the power of the print
6.2.2 The context within which texts are produced and understood
6.2.3 Resistant and estranged reading
6.2.4 Reflections for teachers of Critical Literacy Awareness

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this project, my aim was developing Critical Literacy Awareness among my students, in particular their ability to interrogate texts. In this chapter, I shall examine the extent the students have become critical readers.

6.2 TO WHAT EXTENT DID MY STUDENTS BECOME CRITICALLY LITERATE?

6.2.1 Resisting the power of the print

My students rejected the ‘mirrored image’ or ‘positioning’ posed by the bumper stickers (Misson, 1994). The resisted being ‘shaped’ or ‘constructed’ by the bumper stickers as particular sorts of social subjects such as women or men (Talbot 1992: 174). They fiercely resisted the taxi drivers’ negative positioning of women in bumper stickers. As critical readers, my students ‘resisted the power of the print’ as they refused to believe everything, they read in the bumper stickers (Janks, 1993). They started their reading from a position of ‘strategic doubt and weighed texts against their own ideas and values as well as those of others’ (Janks,1993). It is in this sense to this extent that the research suggests that my students have become critical.

6.2.2 ‘Submissive’ and ‘estranged’ readings

Most of the evidence in this research project reveals students ‘reading against’ the bumper stickers.The students displayed a militant attitude as they ‘read against’ the texts constructed by taxi drivers whom they both detest and fear. Although my students understood the jokes in the bumper stickers, they resisted their intended humour as they found them to be derogatory and insulting, particularly to women. Resisting ‘humorous’ bumper stickers suggests that these two constituencies, taxi drivers and students, belong to ‘different worlds’ guided by different ideologies. They resisted jokes that were ‘too culture sensitive’ (Chiaro, 1992) as they were reading from outside the taxi drivers’ ‘peasant culture’.

My findings from the study reveal that I did not anticipate the extent of the ‘estranged’ reading that came from the students. They resisted the taxi drivers’ intention to exert power on them through their messages on the bumper stickers. They read the texts from an urban social context which they associate with modernity, whereas the taxi drivers constructed the texts from a rural social context which the students associated with being ‘uncivilized’. However, the students could not see the taxi drivers’ positions since they were so intensely critical of the taxi drivers’ beliefs. The students could not shift from their own points of view and deeply held beliefs. Their interpretation of messages on bumper stickers tended to be largely subjective because of their prejudice against taxi drivers. It can be said that the students gained limited critical literacy awareness as could be seen in their focus group discussions where they focused more on the taxi drivers themselves and less on the linguistic features of the bumper stickers.

Two studies involving the teaching of critical literacy in South Africa found that students were unable read texts from perspectives other than their own. In a study done by Granville (1995) the researcher found that different students read texts from different social contexts. She presented her black and white students with an advertisement promoting the work of the police in the1990's. As this was a time (1993) when South Africa had a lot of political tensions, Black students adopted 'estranged' and resistant readings as they saw the police as a symbol of brutality. On the other hand the white students viewed the police as a symbol of peace and protection. Similarly in my study my students viewed the bumper stickers as a symbol of backwardness and taxi driver brutality yet taxi drivers view them as a way of preserving culture.

In another study, Janks (1995) uncovered a similar finding when she worked with students on issues relating to boy/girl gender roles. She found that students interpreted her language from a social context different from her own. She then warns that teachers who teach students to resist texts should expect to their own texts to be resisted by the students (322). Janks argues that CLA materials are themselves positioned and positioning and that they should therefore not be exempt from critical de-construction. Findings in my study support this view as the bumper stickers positioned the students and the taxi drivers in different ways. It is this positioning that caused my students to adopt resistant reading.

What emerged from these three research projects is that people's ideological positions influence their reading positions (Granville, 1997). The 'gap' between my students' reading of the text and the taxi drivers' reading/construction is a result of the ideological differences between the two constituencies. The taxi drivers constructed the texts from their rural social context whereas the students read the

stickers from their own more urbanised and modern social context. The taxi drivers seem threatened and demeaned because of their 'low' social position so they use these stickers as a way to protest against this positioning and try to exert their own power on readers. All the three research projects I cited, reveal how difficult it is for people in genera and my students in particular to move away from their own deeply held beliefs.

6.2.3 The context within which texts are produced and understood

When I began this research, I was convinced that I would facilitate CLA with the use of materials (bumper stickers) that were familiar to students. However, the conflicting attitudes of my students and taxi drivers and my students reveal that these two constituencies come from 'different worlds' as it is evident in their positions towards issues such as gender equality. Such conflict exists for many women between their 'ways of being in the world' and the dominant discourse of male-based public institutions (Gee, 1990).

The students' reading of texts suggests that meanings do not lie at the surface of language but far more in the minds of the users of language. My students were able to see beneath the surface of the bumper stickers as they were familiar with and could interrogate the context from which they are constructed. As urban youths, my students were critical of most messages in bumper stickers because they had traces of the taxi drivers' 'traditional rural' culture which is different from their urban context. My students displayed considerable awareness of 'modern' issues such as women abuse, violence against women and gender equality of which they believe taxi drivers disregarded in their stickers because of their traditional beliefs derived from a rural context. There was evidence that the taxi drivers and taxi drivers belong to different discourses. The taxi drivers and my students

interpreted the texts differently because their beliefs draw on the different discourses that they possess (Gee (1990). The students' beliefs draw on an urban context whereas the taxi drivers' draws on a rural context. Since each of us is member of many Discourses, and each discourse represents one of our ever multiple identities. The above finding was an unanticipated outcome of the research as I strongly believed that as black students (readers) and black taxi drivers could have beliefs deriving from same discourses.

6.2.4 Reflections on developing Critical Literacy Awareness in South African classrooms

Reflections from this teaching intervention may help inform the teachers of Critical Literacy Awareness, about their teaching practices on how to develop students to critical readers.

When teaching critical literacy, teachers have to recognise students' reading position. I found that the students could not understand the taxi drivers' culture and beliefs. Scholes (1985) argues that a reader who projects his or her own mode of thought on to the text can fail to acknowledge the writer's position. When undertaking this research I had a strong belief that the everyday texts that students bring to the CLA classroom have a bearing on the experiences to which they relate. What I **did not** anticipate was that they would interpret the texts in such a vehemently estranged and resistant manner.

I believe that effective teaching is not about bringing to the classroom a complex state of the art material. Learning and teaching should but about using simple materials such as street signs, graffiti or bumper stickers to which students can relate. Such texts that students can collect themselves from their environment and bring to class may be meaningful to them as they may reflect on their lives

and the challenges they face in their communities. It is pointless to bombard students with complex advertisements that are not necessarily within their frame of reference. Lawton (1983) terms such a choice of texts a ‘selection from the wrong culture’.

As researchers, my students were presented with an opportunity to interrogate texts to which they have access and are able to bring to the English class. The research process taught the students many skills such as collecting and classifying data, and analysis and interpretation of data. They also could interrogate the processes of production although they did not do much on the analysis of processes of reception because of reasons cited earlier in this chapter. The students were taught to question social issues critically as they interrogated the knowledge systems they confront in their everyday lives. I presume that that even before participating in this project my students were critical to a certain extent. I think that everyone who is able to ask a question is critical.

The limitation to this research was that the students read the texts from their own social context and they stuck to their perspective. They could not read them from other positions such as the taxi drivers’ positions. The students intensely interrogated the taxi drivers’ beliefs because they did not subscribe to them.

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APPENDICE

APPENDIX ONE

Table 1-Categories of Signs from Toekomsrus Township		
Dogs and security	**Informative**	**Sexist/insulting**
* Hate me see if I care * My dogs are hungry, come in and see yourself as food to them * You enter you die * They wont mind eating you * Enter at your own risk * Beware of the dog * Beware of the gun * Beware of the dogs, never mind the owner * Beware of the owner, never mind the dog * *Pass op vir die hond* * Don't get in, its risky, the owner will kill you * You play with my dog, it will bite you * I don't forget to bite people * If you want to see that I'm alive come in * I'm always hungry for you * You don't close the gate you will deal with the owner * Enter at own risk-killer dogs * You mess with my dogs you will deal with me * Dogs! You enter at your own risk. * I have a sexy body I don't bite sexy people * Dogs don't play but kill * Don't jump me I'm a gate * Don't jump, he will bite you * I'm not a human being don't try to come in * I can make it to the gate in 5 seconds, can you? * I have sexy strong teeth * If you come in your bones will be broken * I eat human meat only * If you get into my house with a bad attitude you will meet mine * If you want pain, feel free to enter * I'm on guard * Vimba armed response	***** Save water drink beer * Prevent aids-use a condom * Drink responsibly * Don't ask for credit, I'm also looking for one * No under 18's * No alcohol sold to persons under 18 * No dumping * Danger, *gevaar, ingozi* * Electrical fence and gate * No parking * The morning after the night before * Never fear when I am near * Cut for the girls and grill for the boys * Cut for the girls and grill for the fucking ninjas * Don't talk to me talk to my lawyer * Public phones *Airtime available * Diamond street * Banana street * Kumatirivierstraat * Papaya street * No credit till 30 February ***** Caltex garage * Blue Magic * Club 925 * Surgery operating *Crazy store *Rotatrin *Oxford *****Airtime sold here * Tousie se specials * West side * Mafia City * Gangsters' paradise * Ninja town	* I don't bite beautiful women * Only sexy girls may enter * I just want beautiful ladies * Ugly girls don't enter the gate * I don't have a wife, feel free to come in ***** When I die bury me upside down so that the world can kiss my ass * Vagina sweet *Blood in blood out * White niggaz * Niggaz don't cry * Fuck the Toekies bitches * Fuck Toekies virgins * Black ass * Black bitches * White trash * Fuck ANC

APPENDIX TWO

Table 2 –Toekomsrus residents' views about signs in their township

Questions	No of residents	No of responses	Responses
Q1: What do you find interesting about signs found in your township?	40	38	-They give directions -Some are funny -I don't know -They teach us young people to behave -I love the positive message like to condomise because like us young people we must protect from Aids -Signs are Toekies culture -Visitors get direction not to get lost -Children learn to read -I can understand them because they are written in Afrikaans and English -Signs tell us where we coming from -We can see the prices at spaza shop and buy happy -They warn of dogs not to bite us
Q2 What disturbs you about them?	40	39	-They encourage to kill others -They are written by gangsters -using strong language and hate speech -Encourage us to be gangsters -Gangsters rule Toekies -They make our township dirty -It is graffiti -The signs are useless -Men insult women -Gangsters write to frighten us -How will my grandmother get the message she cant read -Some signs give us bad name -The signs learn our children bad manners -I don't understand some of them
Q3 What social issues are they portraying?	40	40	-They talk about crime in our township -We learn the rules of our township -Gangsters rule Toekies -No one is safe Toekies problems of crime and drugs -Relations between men and women -Women are still discriminated

APPENDIX THREE

Table 3-Students' analysis of signs from Toekomsrus township

Category	Message in sign	Where found	Explanation and meaning
Dogs and Security	I can make it to the gate in 5 seconds, can you?	At the gates of houses	The dog is fast and catch you before you run away
	I'm hungry for you	At the gates of houses	The dogs are hungry and tell us to watch out
	You mess with my dogs you deal with me	At the gates of houses	The owner loves his dogs and is overprotective
	Beware of the dogs, never mind the owner	At the gates of houses	The owner maybe he is weak and his dog is protecting him better
	I am on guard	At the gates of houses	Dogs are protecting the property
	Owner not responsible for loss of life	At the gates of houses	The owner will not take to hospital because you came to his house to steal his property
	Beware of the gun	At the gates of houses	This person has a gun or he is lying to just scare criminals.
	Danger, gevaar, ingozi	On an elect meter box	It is useful signs so that children wont play with electricity
	Trespassers will be shot and survivors will be shot again	At the gate of houses	He is serious about security and wants to send a strong message to us.
Informative	Save water drink beer	At a bar	It is bad sign that encourage young people to drink too much
	Safe sex saves life	At a street corner	It's a useful message to us young people to practise safe sex always
	Wise people condomise	On the wall of a stadium	All the clever boys and girls use condos every time they have sex with many partners
	Fools love flesh on flesh	On wall to stadium	Every one knows about Aids and only fools have sex without a condom.
	Don't ask for credit, I am looking for one	At a spaza or shop	He is trying to tell us that he does not sell for credit. He is right coz may Toekies people cant pay because they don't work and some are crooks.
	No credit until 30 February	At a shop	It's funny because February ends on 28 or 29. the sign is creating a joke
	No alcohol sold to persons under 18	At a night club	It is assign trying to discourage us to drink. But here in Toekies most youngsters drink and buy beer from shops displaying this signs
	Blue Magic	Outside a night club	This sign tells of corrupt nightclub in Toekies. Some people call it Blue Movie because it has strippers, drugs and people have sex there
	Club 925	Outside a night club	This sign must read-nine-to-five. It is written in SMS language.
	Don't talk to me talk to my lawyer	At a door of houses	Many people belong to legal wise and are proud that they get lawyers when they have a case.

	No parking in front of gate	At the gate of a church	The church wants people to get in freely. They don't want boys to park at the front of church and open volume full-blast and disturb people in God's house.
	Mechanic, same day service	At the gate of house	The mechanic will fix your car in one day.
	Gangsters' paradise	At wall of community hall	This sign is from American rapper's song 'Gangsters' paradise. It tells people that Toekies gangsters are free to do what they want. The police fear them and we fear them.
	West side, don't enter	At a street corner	The *tsotsi* copy this from American black township. They mark their territory. This west part of Toekomsrus is a no-go area. They can rape, rob and kill you.
	Ganja land	At a street corner	Ganja is dagga. It's one of the drugs abused in our township.
Sexist/insulting	Fuck the Toekies virgins	At a street corner	These gangsters rape young girls who are virgins. They believe that sex with a virgin cures AIDS.
	Vagina sweet	At a bar	The men is crazy about sex.
	Ugly girls don't enter the gate	At the gate of houses	This man is discriminating and thinks he is special. Ugly girls will be heartbroken because they did not choose to be ugly.
	Fuck ANC	On wall of public toilet	The writer does not favour ANC. He is angry about empty promises that ANC makes.
	Fuck Toekies bitches	On wall of public toilets	Gangsters wrote this graffiti directed at girls and women that men call bitches always.
	Jou ma se poes	On the wall of night club	This is Afrikaans and means 'Your mother's vagina'. It is a common insult in Toekies. It insults our mothers' private parts. It's vulgar and teaches children to swear too much. They sing it like an anthem.

APPENDIX FOUR

Table 4-Responses from interviews with Bumper Sticker Manufacturers	
Q1: What factors influence your choices or designs of bumper stickers?	
PR	*The first thing that you have to understand is that we are in business to make money. We design according to customer specification. The design on the products (stickers) is a result of a thorough market research and feasibility study. Our research team goes out to communities, townships, taxi ranks, stadiums and any other places where there are people who use taxis. This astute team listens and observes what people talk about or do, especially slang gimmicks and slogans. You will be surprised that most ideas of sexual nature are expressed in township lingua*
Mark1	*We design what we think will sell. In other words, we design what customers prefer. We don't manufacture for taxi drivers only but for all motorists. Most private individuals demand short messages. Our research has revealed that the highest demand of bumper stickers is from those of low educational standard. This may be attributed to the fact that they would be trying to establish a particular identity.* *For over 15 years in this business, we have printed different kinds of stickers. Motorists or spare parts retailers call us and request us to print particular messages. Most of the words they want printed are like a voice through which they speak. Some are comments on social events or issues that motorists observe or just a gimmick that is 'an in-thing' in the townships. For instance, we have been printing many stickers on 'World Cup 2010' and 'Proudly South African'. Believe me you me, we also printed many stickers associated with Jacob Zuma 'Umshini Wami'. These were selling like hot cakes during the Zuma trial.*
Mark2	*Stickers that we produce are meant for the South African market. They are homogeneous. You will find that stickers that Gauteng motorists demand are different from those that motorists in other provinces demand. By the way, we have branches in all the South African provinces.*
Q2: Do you ever change an original concept if the idea is not yours? Why do you do so?	
PR	*Whatever concept our customers want printed on the bumper stickers signifies something that is of importance to them. It may be something that identifies them with a particular social group or just a township gimmick. At times, it can be a cultural identity or message towards women of loose morals. We don't change any concepts because our intention is to serve our market-those who buy or order stickers. We aren't concerned with those who are offended by what the stickers say because they wouldn't buy our products.* *The only exceptions where we change the original concepts are when customers want us to print a line or slogan from an advertisement. In such instances, we are very cautious and we don't print that at all or if possible try to alter the words such that they won't resemble the original concept.*
Mark1	*Even though we are in business to make money, we don't just print anything that we come across. Our company policy is not to print stickers that can fuel racial or ethnic hatred or those that can be interpreted as prejudiced against any one. For instance, we don't print messages like 'All women are bitches' 'One Boer One bullet'. If you see such stickers on vehicles, you must know that they are definitely not from us.* *Some people have requested that we print drawings of nude women or women's genitalia. You can see how sick our society is and how male motorists are obsessed with pornographic material and obscenity.*
Mark2	*What you have to understand is that our company operates within a highly volatile industry that caters for a sensitive market. There is no specification in the demand patterns of our customers. Inscriptions on bumper stickers are ever changing. We at times change the original concept if it is not well received by the people. There are instances where we have unknowingly printed stickers that are outright obscene because they were in township lingua that we didn't understand. Our marketing team heard negative remarks from the public. Now we research extensively before we print especially if the sticker is in a language we don't know. At times even those expressed in English can have a double meaning.*

APPENDIX FIVE

Table 5-Researcher's interviews with taxi drivers	
Q1: Why do you have bumper stickers in your taxi?	
DR1	*They are a way of communicating with my passengers.*
DR2	*I want the passengers to treat us (taxi drivers) like human beings. Most passengers think that we are stupid because we are not much educated. I got the wisdom I have about life from my parents, especially how to behave. In order to earn respect one has to be arrogant at times and not to be too soft. That's the language most eGoli people understand and that's how we survive in the taxi business.*
DR3	*They communicate social problems with my passengers.*
DR4	*They are usually meant to make people laugh. I don't want people to be too quiet in the taxi.*
Q2: How did you choose this/these particular sticker(s)? What messages do you intend sending?	
DR1	*They 'speak' about what happens in our communities and our country at large.*
DR2	*I chose those that talk about social problems because most people face the same problems conveyed in these stickers. If you are honest, you will agree with me that most problems we, men, face are caused by women. My stickers may offend many women but what they (stickers) say about them (women) is the truth. Look at this sticker, which says, 'If women were good, God would have been married' and the one that says 'If you hate peace get married'. These creatures (women) talk too much and they are the ones that spread AIDS.*
DR3	*I usually choose those with a positive message. I don't like those that insult my Passengers. I know that some drivers like stickers that talk about sexual Matters. I think that's wrong. In our African culture, sexual matters are never discussed in public. Elders discuss sexual matters with youngsters in the privacy of their homes*
DR4	*I choose stickers that ordinary Black people in the township will understand. I don't care about those 'white' Black people who live in suburbs. Those have their own cars and don't use taxis. When they use taxis, they complain a lot-in fact they don't share the same jokes with us from the townships.*
Q3: Do these stickers on your taxi portray a particular image that you want to project of yourself?	
DR1	*I think they do as passengers who've read them usually don't do what they (stickers) warn them not to do...*
DR2	*I don't care what people think of me. In my culture, we speak out our minds fearlessly.* Indoda ayifeli ngaphakathi. *(A man does not die with his feelings bottled inside him).*
DR3	*Most of my stickers speak about peace, love and God. Maybe people see me as a peace-loving person. That's why they feel free when they ride in my taxi. Just imagine if I have stickers that threaten passengers with a beating-they would even be afraid to ask the way and get lost.*
DR4	*Many passengers take us for granted. They consider us uneducated and dirty. Look at me-I have Matric and a certificate in marketing. I have passion for this job. I do it not because I'm not educated but because I love it. Through the stickers in my taxi, I want people to think that I am Blackman who is proud of his culture. My heart feels sore when our culture is being broken. Some people who read my stickers might think that I insult women. No, I don't. I'm simply reprimanding those women who do not have self –respect and respect for our culture. For instance where is the insult in the sticker, which says* Wamuhle *G-string* kodwa uhlupha ngokusidunusela *(You are beautiful woman in a G-string but the problem is that when you bend you expose your behind to us)? You see what I mean. These women walk virtually naked in public.*

Q4: Do you think your passengers get the message you intend to send? (If not, why do they misunderstand it) what is the actual message the sticker is sending?	
DR1	*Some people get the wrong message in the stickers written in isiZulu. You know in my culture (Zulu) we communicate through proverbs like 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' (A person earns good standing from others)*
DR2	*They get the message except the stubborn ones whom we end up throwing out of our taxis or give a beating*
DR3	*I think they do. Even the drunk and unruly ones try to behave properly when in my taxi.*
DR4	*Yes, they get it. The fact that some passengers are offended means that my message touches a sore spot*
Q5: Do your passengers ever comment on your stickers? What do they say?	
DR1	*Some do, especially those I'm related to or those who know me-otherwise many just keep quiet because they know that any stupid comment* 'Ngingabaphihliza ngesagila*' (I can smash their heads with a knobkerrie (club)*
DR2	*Most passengers do comment because what is in the stickers them. The women don't usually comment. May be because our culture forbids them to comment on sexual matters in public or they are ashamed of their evil doings.*
DR3	*Most passengers comment, especially old women. They usually say I am a God-loving person and wish me a long life*
DR4	*I don't usually hear them do so. Maybe they do so in whispers. They are afraid to say so loudly because many taxi drivers are violent and don't take nonsense.*

APPENDIX SIX

Table 6-Categorisation of bumper stickers

Stereotypes-sexist/racist	**Taxi & road rules**	**Religious**	**Sayings/information**	***Taxi drivers' nature/identity***
*White trash *Black is beautiful too black is crime *Black is royalty *Blackman always a suspect *No Black bitches *All women are bitches *99% of women are after money. Where do you stand? *No ugly women in this taxi *Women are like a AT Machines if you don't have money they make funny sounds *Women are like taxis you miss one you get another one * Kiss my ass *Women are like motor mechanics they lie on their backs *All women are gold diggers *Women are like toilets they are always full of shit *A beautiful woman is a multiplication of problems, a subtraction of money, a division of	* In this taxi you are to respect me the way I respect you *You respect me I respect you *This vehicle is covered for passenger liability insurance *4-4 *asihlalisane* **15* passengers seated 0 passengers standing *A taxi doesn't have Apartheid *No heavy weights at the front *No girls in short skirts I already have a wife **Don't cry in this taxi* *Don't talk to me talk to my employer *Idiots at the back *Your child must pay unless if he is in your stomach *Don't rush me because I am in time *Its better to be late to work than early to hospital *I love your perm but mind my window *Beware this taxi stops anywhere any time * This vehicle is protected by the mafia, you hit him we hit you-harder * Driver is not responsible for	*This vehicle is protected by Jesus Christ *This taxi is protected by God *May peace come from the heavens *The time is now-pray *O lord help me keep my big mouth shut until I have something sensible to say *If women were good God would have married one *If you meet me and forget you've lost nothing but if you meet Jesus and you forget him you've lost everything *Everything is in the hands of God *Oh Lord Guide me while I'm driving. Protect us from dangers and make our journey safe until we arrive at our destination. Through Christ our saviour. Amen * Don't love me love Jesus *Many hate me but God loves me *Tears are liquid prayers *I love Jesus *I love Jesus and my car * If God's for us all, why do you hate me *Friends may disappoint you but Jesus will never	*Fuck the rich let the poor survive *It's usually fools that complain *Every Monday is a blue Monday *Money is the root of all evil *Life is a journey, enjoy the ride *Fuck life before it fucks you *Say no to drugs that will bring the price down * Don't fight with an ugly person because he has nothing to lose but you have a lot to lose *Sex under age is just a test *Mr credit was killed by Mr Cash *Smoking causes cancer *Shit happens *Stop Global whining *If you hate peace get married *If you can't beat them join them *Beauty is in the beer holder *Keep on working millions on welfare depend on you *Kids in the front seat cause accidents, accidents in the back seat cause kids *Love may be blind but love is an eye opener *If you want breakfast in bed sleep in the kitchen *Hard work has a future payoff laziness pays off now	**You don't know me don't bother me* **My nick name is troubles come after me I will give you some* **My nickname is trouble* *You are as ugly as my car **Trouble is my middle name* * *You make trouble I make fight I make trouble you keep quiet* **I will try to care* *I hate people who pretend to love me but love those who hate me openly **Don't assume I care* **Yes I do it but not with you* **Please don't look at me because I don't have a secret* **Sorry its not my day to care* **I'm ready to listen are you ready* *I'm still looking for my father* **I love sexy women* * *All I need in my life is a nice car, a beautiful woman who doesn't love money like you* **I want to study hobology* **I want to study*

relatives and an addition of enemies. * We can share anything not my wife *Life is a bitch fuck it *Night club virgins *_Wamuhle G-String kodwa uhlupha ngo kusidunusela_ *Girls used to cook like their mothers now they drink like their fathers *Yes I am a bitch but not yours *Indians pray for money, whites make money, blacks work for money ***** The only time women listen is when money speaks * You strike a woman you strike a rock * A bachelor is a man who has missed an opportunity to make a woman miserable * Never let your man's mind wander-its too small to be out alone * If a boyfriend walks out you shut the door * Go for younger men. You might as well-they never mature anyway * Women don't make fools of men-most of	loss of life. *Be patient we are all going the same way *Don't sleep in the front seat * Lets make it easy for both of us don't touch me don't talk to me just pay me *Don't say *dankie* driver, say short left or short right * *Phakamisa zwi, ukhulume kusese yisikhathi uma uzokwehla* (Raise your voice and speak in time if you are about to alight) * *Sheba ntho tsa hao otlohele tsaka* (mind your own business and leave me alone) *Don't ask me I'm not your mother *Count the money before you give it to me *No R20, R50, R100, R200 notes in the morning *Please pay your fare, it supports my family *If you sit in front please collect the money * *Guess what-it's time to pay* * *In this taxi it's healthier to pay than to exercise* *Built from genuine stolen parts *Be my friend after work * If you think this car is fast check the driver *No heavy weights at the	*Jesus is my saviour *Jesus is coming soon *The meek shall inherit the earth when we are through with it *Call the Lord He will answer you *The Lord is my shepherd *May peace come from the heavens *Jesus help me arrive alive *Many hate me but Jesus still loves me * <u>Motorists prayer</u> -80 km/h God will take care of you -100 km/h Guide me o thou great Lord -120 km/h Near my God to thee -140 km/h This world is not my home -160 km/h Lord I am coming home -180+ km/h Precious memories *The faster you drive the faster you get to heaven *In the olden days you had to work to go to heaven nowadays you just don't have to wear a condom *Go to the Lord He will answer you first * Is there life after death, smash me and find out	* To live like a king work like a slave *Anything not worth doing is not worth doing well *Has anger ever solved your problems? *Don't drink and drive *Knowledge is power *Get purpose love life *Usually fools complain *Don't believe anything you think *_Batho baka mo_ never _ba loka_ *When days are dark friends are few *_Motho ke motho ka batho_ *Respect a fool to avoid noise *Can you remember when times were hard and money was not hard to come by? *Saving is a fine thing, especially if your parents have done it for you *Don't stay in bed unless you can make money in bed *If you want the best get there first *Trust but verify. *Let the refining and improving of your life keep you so busy that you have little time to criticise others. *If you are going through hell keep going *There are two ways to live your life, one as if nothing is a miracle, the other as though everything is. *If you cant beat them arrange to have them beaten *Hatred is like acid, It will eat into your soul	*sexology* *_I am a girl-loving type because they love me too_ *I'm better than your mother *_I'm not deaf but I'm ignoring you_ *_Even f I'm ugly I'm better than your mother_ *_I don't do requests_ *Gee, I would like to care but I don't possess that gene *I've upped my standards now up yours *And I should care, why? *If you cant laugh at yourself I can do it for you *If you don't like my driving fuck you *I love to fight *I want my enemies to live longer so that they can see my success *I love sex *I'm a sexaholic *My fiend with aids is still my friend

them are the do it- yourself type	front *Don't bang the door *No smoking, eating, drinking or talking *Eat your food at home not in my taxi *Pay now play later *Don't bang my door bang the door on crime *You bang my door I bang your head *To know me does not mean that you don't have to pay *Leave school and become a taxi driver *Don't drink and drive *Life is too short, pay me now *Children over three pay full fare		and kill you before you die *One rotten potato spoils the whole bag * Don't stop till you getenough *Jealousy is the freedom of fools * Aids loves flesh on flesh	

APENDIX SEVEN

Table 7-Commuters views on bumper stickers	
Q1.	**What do you like about stickers on taxis?**
David	They are very funny and interesting. They keep me busy when I ride in a taxi.
Goddy	They address people I different informative ways. I also like them when they are written in African languages that Black people can understand and do what drivers expect them to do in the taxi.
Helman	They inform passengers about increases in taxi fares. They have jokes and prayers that can inspire passengers.
Julia	I don't pay attention to them but I think they are the drivers' mouthpiece.
Mercy	Some of the stickers are philosophical and make someone think deeply about life and everyday problems.
Nomad	They give passengers messages about what they to do and what not to do in the taxi.
Verona	
Addy	They inform people about what taxi drivers like and dislike and what people ought not to do in the taxi. They are fun and send out funny messages
Cleo	To be actually honest with you, I never take them into consideration.
Ezrah	Some oft them have lessons about life.
Flatter	They are funny and entertaining. They tell the truth about life
Ike	They usually mean what the driver thinks about other people. Drivers are human and people usually blame them for being rude. What drivers display on their taxis is how they feel and expect to be treated. They can be inspiring to the youth especially if one reads them deeply.
Khoe	I don't like them.
Limpo	They are great way of making our society read, appreciate, and analyse what one is reading. After reading one sticker, one will continue to read more and more as the stickers can make one laugh. They are not just funny but informative too.
Otto	They reflect the drivers' attitude towards the passengers. They tell the passengers what the driver doesn't like.
Prince	They 'talk' about things that happen around us.
Queen	They are informative and make us aware of dangers occurring in our daily lives.
Ursula	They keep passengers informed.
Q2.	**What do you dislike about them?**
David	Some of them are very rude and others are offensive to women.
Goddy	I hate some of them as they are swearing and insulting to women. These young drivers don't even consider that older people use these taxis. They show no respect to older people. The words in those stickers are a bad influence to the youth who take those words and use them in public.
Helman	I hate the way they criticize women.
Julia	I wont say that I hate them because I don't normally read them
Mercy	I don't like those that talk badly about how women dress. Women are free to dress the way they want
Nomad	I hate those that portray a driver as a violent person as they frighten us
Verona	I hate racist and sexist stickers.
Addy	I actually hate those that have racist messages.
Cleo	I don't know but the one I read was an insult to female passengers.
Ezrah	Some are vulgar
Flatter	I don't like those that are insulting as they are rudely written in sexual explicit language
Ike	They are sometimes insulting to other people
Khoe	They are insulting to everyone.

Limpo	I hate those that criticize women unfairly as such criticism shows no respect for women. I also hate those that make jokes about God as they use God's name in vain which is against the bible. I also hate those that talk badly about other races and other cultures.
Otto	I don't hate them
Prince	They are insulting to women and some have swearing words.
Queen	They are aggressive and insulting towards other people.
Ursula	They generalize and use stereotypes so offend some people.
Q3. What social issues are they portraying?	
David	I think they tell us about what some people do to taxi drivers or the things that happen to taxi drivers or what happens I life
Goddy	The stickers portray a sick South African Society that is obsessed with pornography. Since the stickers hurt other people, it shows how insensitive the sticker printers are as they are only concerned about money and they ignore moral issues like decent language, respect and culture.
Helman	It's a world where men have no respect for women and show insensitivity to women's feelings. I think that's why there is a lot of women abuse in our country.
Julia	I dot know and I don't care as long as I get to where I want to go. It's not my business what the stickers say or does not say. I use the taxi for transport not to read stickers.
Mercy	I think they portray a sexist society.
Nomad	They are part of the taxi industry as they tell us about the nature of taxi drivers.
Verona	Men still think they are superior and better than women are. Other groups think they are better than others are. People still use stereotypes to have fun of others.
Addy	They inform people about rules in the taxis and how to behave.
Cleo	I don't know because I don't read them much
Ezrah	They teach us about life
Flatter	They instruct people to follow the rules of the taxi and to have respect.
Ike	They display the relationship between passengers and taxi drivers.
Khoe	I don't know but I don't like them. Some people may find them funny but I don't. I hate having fun on other people's expense, especially those who are overweight and stickers refer to them as 'heavy weights'
Limpo	The stickers portray an image of a society that has different opinions. We have freedom of expression in South Africa but we take it too far at times.
Otto	They portray the attitudes of taxi drivers and the way they see other people.
Prince	They talk about life issues and everyday issues.
Queen	They talk about issues in our surrounding like HIV/AIDS, violence and relationships between men and women.
Ursula	They talk about life issues.

APPENDIX EIGHT

Table 8-Students' Analysis of bumper stickers

Message on bumper stickers	Questions used in the analysis of bumper stickers				
	What kind of language is used in the text? What do the words mean?	***What does the composer of the text want us to know?***	***How are children, teenagers, men or women constructed in this text?***	***How is the reader or viewer positioned in relation to the composer of the text?***	***What knowledge does the reader/viewer need to bring to this text in order to understand it?***
Driver not responsible for loss of life	*He uses law language when companies don't want to be sued*	*The drivers tells us that he don't care even if he kills us*	*Everyone is a victim they don't feel pity for us. Our life is meaningless*	*The reader is useless*	*The reader must know law language we learn in Economics about indemnity*
No heavy weights in front	*Uses respect to say heavy not fat.*	*He likes slim women. Fat ones disturb at front*	*Discriminates against fat women. Wants slim sexy women in front to touch-touch them*	*The fat people is taken as evil and heavy to the taxi.*	*You must know how we sit in taxis. At front there is small space so fat women disturb the driver*
Yes, I do it but not with you	*Uses a riddle so that we can guess*	*Wants to keep us guessing*		*The reader is positioned as someone who meddles in the writer's life.*	*You must know the hidden joke and know that man loves sex too much*
A free ride to all over 90 provided accompanied by both parents		*Is refusing us a free ride in clever way.*	*Old people are created as helpless and broke. They need a free ride.*	*The reader is taken to be*	*Must know that it is impossible for a 90 year old to have both parents. Life is short-we die young of Aids*
Save water bath with your neighbours' daughter	*Uses language of home. People bathing.*	*He is a man with evil mind. Has no respect for his neighbour's daughter.*	*Girls are taken to be sex objects like men who trick girls as if they want to help but to have sex with them*	*The reader is taken to be someone who is concerned about wasting water.*	*The reader must know that the writer is a man with evil intentions about wanting to bath with the girl next door*
Black is beautiful but too black is a crime	*Uses colour to mean race of Africans.*	*There is discrimination of our Black brothers. If you are too black other people in our township call you Shangaan or Kwerekwere*	*People from outside are taken as criminals*	*The reader is positioned as a black person who can be mistaken for foreigner.*	*Must know about the problem of xenophobia.*
Kids in the back seats cause accidents, accidents	*Uses knowledge of*	*Children can disturb driver*	*Children are nuisance at front*		*Must know about driving and*

in the back seats cause kids	*cars and casual.*	*and casual sex in back of car can cause pregnancy coz no time for condoms.*	*of cars and children can result coz of stupidity of casual sex.*		*dangers of casual sex in back seat of cars.*
You bang the door I bang your head	*Taxi language*	*He likes his taxi and does not want us to damage doors*	*Passengers that damage taxi doors*	*Positioned as a passengers in a taxi*	*How the doors of taxis are positions*
Don't bang my door bang the door on crime.	*Crime*	*That he is fed-up with crime. We must all fight crime*		*A passenger in a taxi who is affected by crime.*	*Crime is a big issue in our country*
Uma ufuna indlela esheshayo eya ezulwini hlukumeza umshayeli wetekisi *(If you want the fastest way to heaven harass a taxi driver)*	*Uses Christian language of idea of heaven.*	*He is a violent killer who can send you to heaven.*	*Passengers are supposed to fear taxi drivers.*	*Reader is positioned as a taxi passenger who will read message.*	*You must know that taxi drivers are rough killers.*
In good old days girls used to cook like their mothers now they drink like their fathers		*Man and women roles have changed. Girls drink like nobody's business.*	*Women are constructed as belonging to kitchen. Men are constructed as drunkards*	*Reader is taken to be just an observer of changing lifestyle.*	*The reader must know traditional gender roles. African culture does not allow women to drink but take care of family.*
Knowledge is power and power corrupts so study and be evil	*Educational knowledge.*	*That we can empower ourselves by education.*		*Someone thirsty for knowledge.*	*Educated people are crooks. Use knowledge wrong way like lawyers used to protect criminals.*
This vehicle is protected by the mafia	*Gangster language*	*He is a violent gangster*	*The driver is constructed as a gangster and passengers are victims.*	*A victim of crime.*	*Must know about mafia in films.*
All women are gold diggers	*Mining language.*	*Women like money in a relationship.*	*Women are constructed as dependent people who like money too much.*	*Women are positioned as evil money hungry people.*	*Must know meaning of proverb used. Gold is precious so women can do what it takes to get money.*
A beautiful woman is a multiplication of problems, subtraction of money, a division of relatives and an addition of enemies.	*Mathematical language*	*That the problems he face are from women.*	*Women cause arguments in family*	*Woman is a troublemaker.*	*Must know mathematics. Social life of Africans. Men marry for the whole family*
If you cant beat them arrange to have them beaten	*Gangster violence language*	*You solve problems with fighting*		*As a defenceless person who likes fighting.*	*The gangster fights in our communities and revenge.*
Is there life after death, mess with a taxi driver	*This is a Christian*	*That taxi drivers are violent*	*People are constructed as*	*Positioned as a passenger*	*Must know isiZulu and that taxi*

and find out	*language referring to life after death*	*killers-you mess with them they kill you*	*defenceless victims of taxi drivers*		*drivers will not think twice to kill you. Don't ever argue with a fool that like fighting*
Your child must pay unless if he is in your stomach	*Pregnancy and money*	*We must pay*	*Women always travelling with children*	*A woman passenger travelling with a child.*	*A sexist attitude of drivers. Women are the only ones that carry babies in their stomach. No one is exempted from paying in taxi*
If you sit in front please collect the money	*Taxi language and rules*	*You must collect money for him*	*Passengers in a taxi*	*As a passenger sitting at the front of taxi.*	*If driver collects, money can cause accidents.*
In this taxi it's healthier to pay than to exercise	*Gymnasium language*	*Does not want to hurt any one*	*Passengers in a taxi*	*A passenger*	*Benefits of exercise. You don't pay you get sick or injured*
If women were good God would have married one	*Religious language*	*He hates women wholeheartedly.*	*Women constructed as evil and cursed*	*Women are constructed as bad people before God.*	*Knowledge of bible and that God is said to be a man.*
Induku ayiwakhi umuzi (Fighting can never build a home)	*A Zulu proverb against violence*	*He wants us not to solve problems by fighting.*	*Not directed to any one but to everyone to stop fighting*		*Since the message is Zulu, the reader must know the meaning of Zulu proverbs.*
Say no to drugs that will bring the price down.	*Drugs and demand*	*That drug abuse is a big problem in our country. If we top buying price will go down.*	*People use drugs*	*Reader is positioned as someone who buys drugs at times.*	*Law of supply and demand. If we don't buy, price will go down but many people will buy because it will be cheaper.*
Beauty is in the beer holder	*A pun and playing with words*	*He likes beer and when drunk he sees ugly women as beautiful*	*Only ugly women at bar*	*A beer drinker also like writer*	*Pun and behaviour of drunks wanting women*
Sex under age is a test	*Sex language and school tests to find out how clever we are*	*He is engages in underage sex and encourage young people to be sexual active.*	*Teenagers engaging in sex are doing right thing*	*Positioned as a teen or child who must have sex*	*Must know the legal age to have sex is 16 and if you sleep with someone older it's statutory rape*
Please pay your fare it supports my family	*Payment and family values*	*He loves his family and the money we pay is his source of income.*	*Passengers who support his business*	*A valuable assert to the driver.*	*Family values and duties of a father. Taxi drivers have families too.*
In this taxi you are to respect me the way I respect you	*Peace and respect*	*He respects his passengers*	*Passengers in a taxi*	*A passenger*	*Importance of respect*
Beware this taxi stops anywhere anytime	*Warning*	*He is a reckless driver but shifts*	*Passengers in danger of*	*A passenger riding a speeding taxi*	*Reckless driving of taxi drivers*

		the blame to the taxi.	*speeding taxi*		
My nickname is trouble	*Violence*	*He is violent.*	*Victims of this driver*	*A helpless passenger who can be harassed by the driver*	*Violent nature of drivers*
Sorry it's not my day to care.	*Uncaring*	*Doesn't mind if he hurts passengers' feelings*	*Victims of this thug*	*Passengers in his taxi*	*The stinking attitude of taxi drivers*
I'm not deaf but I'm ignoring you	*Negative attitude. Don't care attitude*	*He is rude and has attitude*	*A passenger in his taxi*	*A passenger*	*Deafness and rude attitude of drivers*
If you don't like my driving fuck you	*Driving*	*He is a bad driver and doesn't care.*		*A victim of bad driving*	*Taxi drivers are careless*
I'm a sexaholic	*Sex and alcoholic language*	*He is crazy about sex and is not afraid of Aids*	*Women are victims of this driver who likes sex full time*		*That 'holic' means doing too much*

APPENDIX NINE

RESEARCHER'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

The same focus group that interviewed with bumper sticker manufacturers, also participated in my first interview. There was great excitement in class as I prepared to tape-record the interview. I began the interview with the question: '**What do you think of the people who make bumper stickers?'** The following conversation ensued:

> *Thandi: I think that the government must stop them. They spoil our democracy by insulting South African women.*

The other students reacted to Thandi's response with laughter but I probed her for more clarification, as I asked, **'How do they spoil our democracy?'** This question drew an animated reaction from Thembi instead

> *Thembi: We fought for our rights but these bumper (sticker) manufacturers make stickers that discriminate. They speak badly of women and make us feel bad. There are women out there that work hard to make a change. We don't rely on men's money.*
> *Tom: I support what they write in the stickers. It tells us about what's happening here in South Africa especially in Toekomsrus. Many girls are after money. They leave school to get pregnant and get maintenance money and grant[28]t.*
>
> *Thelma: I don't agree with some points made. Stickers don't talk about money only. They make those that talk about other problems that we in the townships face like Aids and women and child abuse.*
>
> *Thando: I think the manufacturers are men because they talk about sex. Men like talking about sex too much. This is wrong; just imagine when you travelling with your parents and you see a sticker written 'Sex under age is a test'. Your father will think you are sexual active and won't allow you to sleep over by your friend's house or go to parties.*

[28] This is a government social grant meant for children from poor families

Thembi: And I also think that these drivers don't believe in condomising[29]*. They have stickers that say* 'I love flesh on flesh'. *This is unfair, they teach us youngsters to have unprotected sex.*

Themba: I also agree. I think the taxi drivers tell them (manufacturers) to make such stickers with vulgar and hate speech. They are always fighting and insulting passengers. They are very rough to us. That's why they have stickers that say 'You make trouble I make war, I make trouble you keep quiet'.

Thando: They want companies to make stickers that tell us who (drivers) they are.
Thandi: I think the manufacturers don't care about us and they hurt our feelings. Even if we write in the newspapers about their signs but they are ignorant (sic). *They are just concerned with making money with their pornography.*

I then shifted the focus of the discussion by asking the question: **'What interests and values do the manufacturers of bumper stickers have?'**

Tom: I think taxi drivers are part of this scheme. They tell the companies to print these stupid messages. They just care for themselves.

Thando: As I said before these people are interested in sex. They like using women as their things. For example, I saw a sticker, which says, 'Sex instructor, first lesson free' *Just tell me, what is this?*

Tom: I agree with Thando. Companies that make stickers want to please men. They make stickers that speak badly about women and treat men as bosses.

[29] Using a condom during sexual intercourse

Thelma: The drivers here in Randfontein want us passengers to worship them every time. They are too traditional and put stickers that talk about them (drivers).

Thembi: I'm disturbed that at this age taxi drivers like fighting. They put stickers that talk about violence.

Tom: I think their stickers talk about them. All the drivers are rough. They treat (passengers) *badly and don't know how to talk with us. They drive too fast and if you complain, they call their gang to hit you.*

Thando: You are right. They tell the truth if they say 'This vehicle is protected by the Mafia You hit we hit harder'. *These drivers are gangsters we know in Toekies.*

As I realised that the group was focusing much on taxi drivers, I asked '**But you don't say anything about companies that make the stickers'**

Thandi: They are just the same as drivers. Did you hear what that one said when we interviewed them? They want to make their customers happy not us.

Thembi: Exactly! They also belong to the same squad. They still believe that women are less important to men. They are still using those old beliefs that women are like children. I don't buy it
Tom: But they are right, this 50-50[30] *is causing divorces.*

Thelma: Don't be old fashioned, Tom. Everyone has rights. Taxi drivers and these companies don't have a right to print stickers that talk about our private parts.

Themba: I agree with you girls. No one has a right to insult our sisters. If you look at the stickers, they don't say nothing about men. I think people who make

[30] It is reference to equality in terms of gender.

them hate women full time. For instance, I saw a sticker that says 'If women were good God would have married' *you see what I mean. They don't even respect or fear God.*

Thando: The drivers also like money too much. They have stickers that talk about money.

Thandi: They force us to collect money when we sit at the front as if we work for them and if the money is short, they can eat you.

Thembi: Generally, the people who make these stickers want to tell us that taxi drivers are rough and like fighting. Most are traditional African men who confuse respect with fear. They think that they have a right to touch every woman's body. That's why they want women to sit at front and they will be touching your thighs all the way.

Tom: But you love it when they tell you girls that you are fresh…

Thembi: Sis, Tom. Get real .Which girl loves being touched by those dirty bullies? The way they speak to women shows disrespect for us. Their stupid attitude is written in their stickers.

Thandi: Most of these drivers are old enough to be our fathers but you find them proposing love to us and touching our breasts. They do it the Zulu way and saying those silly praises about me…it makes me shy…

This observation made by Thandi, met with laughter from the other students.

Thembi: I support what Thandi says. I saw a sticker in one taxi, which says 'Yimina ngedwa enginelungelo lokushela lapha etekisini' (*I am the only one who*

has a right to propose love to women in this taxi). *They think that we travel in the taxi to be proposed. If you refuse them, they insult you and threaten to kill you.*

Thelma: I'm disgusted by the people who make stickers. They must be educated to respect human rights. Most of them did not go to school.

Thando: I agree with you who ever makes these stickers does not respect passengers. We give them our money and they don't respect us but worry about money …in fact their taxis are skorokoros[31].

Themba: But some people who make these stickers are religious and fear God they preach peace and love.

Thandi: You are right, there are few such drivers, not these hooligans that believe that they must solve problems with a gun or by fighting. If you bring fasie money, they insult you and threaten to throw you out of their taxi

As I was preparing to close the interview, I asked the students, '**What you think the stickers tell you about the nature of drivers or manufacturers?'**

Themba: In two words, I can say they are old fashioned and barbaric…what I mean is that they don't want to move with the times.

Thelma: I think what they write in the stickers is what they were taught when growing up that women must be beaten always. Let me finish- it's not only taxi drivers who have this idea. Even in our township, we see men beat their wives and boys rape their girls. It's common and like normal.
I asked in surprise, '**But why don't they report them to the police?**
Thelma: Sir, you don't know Toekies guys. They will kill you if you make a case at police station.

[31] An old and unroadworthy vehicle

Tom: I also think they write bad things about women because of jealousy. They don't allow their women to wear G-strings so they write 'Wamuhle G-String kodwa uhlupha ngokusidunusela' (*Woman in G-String, you are beautiful but the problem is that when you bend you expose yourself to us*)

APPENDIX TEN

RESEARCHER'S SECOND INTERVIEW WITH STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

The same six students who participated in the first focus group interview also participated in this second one. I started the interview with the question: '**How do you and other Commuters receive and respond to bumper stickers?'** The following conversation ensued:

Thandi: Many commuters, including myself, think that stickers are insulting to women.

Themba: I think commuters learn a lot about the bossy attitudes of taxi drivers to keep away from their rude and violent behaviour.

Thembi: besides those that are insulting to women, they are humorous and reflect on the lives of ordinary South Africans from townships.

Tom: I agree with Thembi. Many of us passengers learn a lot from these stickers especially those that speak about Aids and violence against women.

Thando: From the responses of commuters we interviewed it is clear that most women felt insulted by the messages in these stickers, which portray women as sex objects that are responsible for all the problems men face.

The group observed that readers of bumper stickers think that these texts break social norms as to what type of language could be used in certain social contexts.

After discussing how commuters receive the stickers, I wanted to establish what taxi drivers thought about the reception of the stickers. I posed the following question**: 'How**

do you think the taxi drivers think of the way commuters receive bumper stickers?'

The group made the following observations:

Tom: Frankly speaking, most of these taxi drivers I know are local hooligans who dropped out of school. Their stickers show that they enjoy making other people' lives miserable.

Thelma: From what they said in your interview, I think they only think of protecting their traditional beliefs.

Themba: You are right. These taxi drivers are only concerned with telling us that they are from a Zulu culture.

Thando: They choose stickers that show us that they are violent people. One even said that they use 'isagila[32]' *to solve their problems.*

Thandi: But, they are some drivers who are respecting and they display positive messages that can benefit the reader.

Thando: Yes there are, some messages are educational. They give us advice on how to avoid life problems.

Tom: I usually enjoy those stickers that have jokes, which we in the townships understand.

Thelma: Still on the issue of jokes-some jokes are not funny. They are not our culture and the English is difficult.

[32] A knobkerrie or fighting stick.

Tom: For example, my granny cannot understand some of the deep English in bumper stickers.

Thando: Many people enjoy those that speak about God. They inspire us and we feel safe that God will protect us in the journey.

Thembi: The idea behind these stickers is for the taxi drivers to create an image that they are in control. I think they succeed in doing so because we don't say anything because of fear. Most of the taxi drivers are gangsters who can beat you up at the slightest provocation like to ask for your change or asking to be dropped-off.
Thando: I think they don't care as long as they taken as somebody in life like being an actual man or to be feared.

Themba: They think that we enjoy their dirty jokes and vulgar language.

Thandi: The stickers only warn us not to do this and that in the taxi.