# "It's my think"

# Exploring Critical Literacy with Low Level EAL Students

**by**

**Rosemary Harison**

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**Primary Supervisor:  Dr Pat Strauss**

**School of Languages and Social Sciences**
**Auckland University of Technology**

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# Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor any material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: …………………………………………………

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to forced migrants around the world who are attempting to make sense of alien worlds, and to my very special parents Jean and Christopher Harison.

# Abstract

This study explores the use of a critical literacy approach in a class of language learners who had low levels of literacy. The particular focus was on the teacher's role in the process and how she could implement this approach in such a way that the students would benefit. The study records the exploration of the relevant literature, the planning and implementation of the lesson, and her reflection on the process.

The students had all arrived in New Zealand as refugees. They had limited English proficiency and were enrolled on a Training Programme at the Auckland University of Technology. The aim of this programme is to help students enter gainful employment or continue with their studies. To this end great emphasis is placed on students improving their English proficiency and entering the workforce or engaging in further study. Many of the texts employed in the classroom context underline the desirability and praiseworthiness of these goals.

In this study 15 students drawn from a variety of sociocultural backgrounds were asked to deconstruct a text of a type often employed in the classroom and explore their reaction to it. Two experienced observers provided feedback on the lesson and the way in which it was implemented. The students worked in groups, where possible in their first language, and answered a series of questions on the text. They were also asked to write individual texts in response to the teaching text. The researcher then conducted interviews with the students which afforded them the opportunity to expand on and clarify these responses.

The study concludes that classroom exercises such as these can be meaningful and empowering particularly when students assume the roles of narrators and advisors. However such lessons need to be carefully designed and structured if students are to gain real benefit from such as approach.

## Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Rationale for the study

> "Teachers of reading comprise the most sinister political group, whose continued presence and strength are more a cause for alarm than celebration" (Postman, 1970. p. 161.)

Postman's statement encapsulates the challenge and oppositional stance of critical literacy. Although this stance is extreme, it comes to the heart of the matter: language and literacy teaching is both a personal and a political activity, a cultural practice with significant implications for learners and communities. It is not simply a benevolent practical service to the community, nor unquestionably empowering for learners; in the view of critical literacy, it is potentially disempowering. The power of text is hidden but critical theorists will argue that "literate practice is always morally and politically loaded" (Luke, Comber and O'Brien, 1996, p. 42).

Critical literacy throws out this challenge to teachers, and yet, while we are not unaware of the inequality and cultural conflict involved in language acquisition, particularly a powerful language such as English, and while aspects of critical theory have seeped into our classroom practices, teachers are unsure of how to use this knowledge to the advantage of our students.

The literature on how to translate critical theory into classroom practice appears to be particularly sparse in the context of teaching adult learners of English for Speakers of Other Languages (EAL) who are at a low level of English language and literacy acquisition. This study sets out to take up the challenge critical literacy extends to teachers. I sought to examine my own practices and to investigate the possibilities of teaching reading and writing with sensitivity to critical literacy concerns to adult EAL learners who are at an early stage of acquisition.

### 1.2 Purpose of the study

Following an extensive literature review, this project examined the effectiveness of certain critical literacy practices put forward in the literature in the micro-setting of my particular teaching context. The study evolved, however, in the tradition of Critical Research, into a more reflective and reflexive process, with a strong focus on my own

emerging awareness as a critical practitioner, and on critical literacy as an evolving theory. It is less about imparting a critical approach to the students than about exploring what critical literacy has to offer the language learners in my class. This involves deconstructing my own embedded texts and discourses against the backdrop of my classroom context.

## 1.3 Outline of the thesis structure

The following chapter presents an overview of critical literacy, its application in the classroom, and situates this study in relation to relevant theory. Chapter 3 outlines the context of the study, the rationale for the selection of participants and material, the methodological approach, and the instruments and data analysis employed. Chapter 4 describes the findings of the study, and the final chapter discusses the relevance of these findings for current practitioners.

**Chapter 2**

**Literature Review**

In this chapter I present a broad overview of critical literacy as the foundation for the study which follows. The first part of the chapter is dedicated to critical theory, which has a central role in critical literacy, and the second part presents a detailed breakdown of practical classroom applications of critical literacy. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the classroom study, the practical focus of this thesis, situating it in relation to the theory, politics and critical literacy practices as presented.

**2.1 The theoretical foundations of critical literacy**

In this section I present an account of critical theory. I introduce this topic by placing it epistemologically, and follow this with a short history and an explication of the politics of critical literacy.

**2.1.1 Knowledge, meaning, language and culture: the epistemology of critical literacy**

> *Serpanine:* 'When I think to you, the thought, *so far as it finds corresponding ideas and suitable words in your mind,* is reflected in your mind. My thought clothes itself in words in your mind, which words you seem to hear - and naturally enough in your own language and your habitual phrases. Very probably the members of your party are hearing what I am saying to you, each with his own individual difference of vocabulary and phrasing.'
>
> *Barnstaple:* 'And that is why (….) when you soar into ideas of which we haven't even a shadow in our minds, we just hear nothing at all.'
>
> (H.G. Wells, 1923)

At a philosophical level critical theory involves a rejection of traditional Western epistemology or any supposedly secure representation of reality that exists outside of culture and fields of discourse. Human knowledge and language are not general and abstract, reflecting the world as it really is, but ways of seeing, understanding and making meaning which have developed over time in particular places and contexts. They are socially and historically constructed and semiotically positioned (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Pennycook 1999; New London Group 1996; Gee 1996; Luke 2001).

Language, as described by Gee (1996), is not only a medium of communication as it is often understood to be. Neither is it simply a tool that we use to organize and express our ideas and experiences. It is centred on communication and meaning, but meaning through language is something which flows continuously back and forth across the line between mind and society. Making sense through language is a matter of coordinating with other people or being "in synch" with them in terms of what we count as knowledge, in our ways of knowing, valuing and experiencing the world, and in our enactment of particular identities. This coordination is not only with those present and the living but also, within specific historically achieved and history-creating coordinations, with the dead and the absent. In this light, Gee (1996, p.13) paints us human beings as

"vastly radiating lines of meaning, lines radiating out into space and time".

In a critical literacy view, all forms of expression are integral to the processes of appropriating, sustaining and building meaning, and all forms of expression feed back into these processes (Kumaravadivelu, 1999).

Language, and texts in the broadest sense[1], is a necessary condition for cultural processes and practices; language is their medium and their broker as well as being engrained in these processes (Lankshear 1996). Furthermore, what Gee (1996) refers to as our 'dramas of meaning' - the language, practices and institutions that tie us together - do not take place in a culture or a society, they actually constitute and actively construct those cultures and societies (Luke, Comber & O'Brien, 1996; Lankshear, 1996).

This view of the nature of knowledge, language and human reality has far reaching implications for truth, authenticity, communication, validation, access, success and learning in cross-cultural settings. Over the last several decades this view of language, truth and culture has influenced a wide range of academic disciplines particularly in the arts and social sciences. This of course, has included language teaching theory, leading to heavy critique and rewriting (Kern, 2000).

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[1] "A text is the product of textualizing. People textualize experience and the world in which they live, making those phenomena part of a language system (broadly defined). Text can be written, oral, signed, electronic, pictorial, etc. A text can refer to a string of words, a conventional or written routine or structure, a genre of written language (e.g., poetry), as well as a genre of social activities or event types" (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, as cited in Ares & Peercy, 2003, p.637).

Writing on language teaching has given weight to the interplay between language and culture, the role of interpretation, the transformation of knowledge, critical thinking in the language classroom, and finally, a call to "recognise the political and moral implications of diverse ways of understanding" (Mueller, 1991, p.22).

However, as Canagarajah (2001) points out, although elements of this radical shift in perspective have seeped into all educational domains today, this awareness has not easily translated itself pedagogically into the classroom. Where educators have responded, interpretation in theory and practice has varied widely, not least within the area of critical literacy.

Most problematically perhaps, is that critical literacy is a specifically political orientation. It requires overt recognition of the power of ideology through language, and also that teachers find ways to link their work to the liberation of readers, writers and language learners from the suppression and domination that learning language, or learning through language implies. To learn to communicate in and become literate in the globally powerful language that is English, language minority students have to negotiate a place for their own discourse conventions, intellectual traditions and cultural practices (Canagarajah, 2001). While literature and debates on critical literacy theory is abundant, key issues appear to be unrEALved and "there seems to be particular anxiety about how to proceed" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 2).

### 2.1.2 Critical theory historically

The origins of critical theory can be traced to the pre World War 2 Frankfurt School, a German institute of social research. Here, Horkheimer, Habermas, Fromm, Arendt, Marcuse and others developed influential sociological, political and cultural theories built on the German tradition of social and philosophical thought, including the work of Marx, Kant, Hegel and Weber (Degener, 2001; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

In the context of pre-Nazi Germany these thinkers focused on the changing forms of domination of the times: rising fascism but also the rise of dogmatic socialism, positivism and scientism. From the beginning, critical theory was interested not only in explaining and analysing domination, but also with linking theory to social change. In relation to mass culture and political economy they analyzed the processes of cultural production, communication and the politics of cultural texts and audience reception. The model of critical cultural studies they generated recognised the degree to which dominant ideologies and the use of cultural artefacts work to justify a society's social and

economic hierarchies and sustain social oppression. Influential research conducted by the institute called into question any shared notion of higher ideals or shared mission for humanity, finding the assertion of universals or even truth, including orthodox Marxist truth, to be a marker of fascism. When the Nazis came to power, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno left Germany for the United States of America where they further developed critical theory. Here they produced their major work in reaction to the contradictions between progressive American rhetoric of egalitarianism and the reality of racial and class discrimination in American society (Jay, 1996; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000).

During the 1970's and 1980's the French discourse theory of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and others was applied to educational research in England and the United States of America. For the French poststructuralists language and discourse were core issues. Rather than being a transparent or neutral means for describing the social or biological world, language and discourse were understood to construct, regulate and control knowledge, identities, social relations and institutions including education, scholarship and research. According to poststructuralist discourse theory, no knowledge or understanding is prior to or outside its manifestation in discourse (Luke 1997; Threadgold, 2003).

Intellectual and philosophical schools of thought proliferated from these and other related and influential perspectives, all of which have fed into critical theory. They include poststructuralism, as above; social constructionism, in which individuals and groups are understood to participate in the creation of their perceived reality and identities through texts, and power relations are understood to be constructed and deconstructed through these processes; and postmodernism, which claims that no communication is devoid of myth, metaphor, cultural bias or political content, and which questions the legitimacy of knowledge and identity (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Luke, 2001; Threadgold, 2003; Giroux et al., 1996).

Critical theory shares common ground with all these, but it is distinguished by an acute preoccupation with notions of dominance and resistance, particularly in relation to clashing and competing ideologies, and the unashamed political and moral stance it takes for democracy and social justice. For critical literacy, no text is innocent and all stances, including those of academic discourses and critical literacy itself, promote ideologies and are therefore political (Foucault, for example in Kumaravadivelu, 1999; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Luke & Freebody, 1997; Gee, 1996). From a critical

literacy point of view, to claim political neutrality is a denial of responsibility, which Pennycook (2002) describes as putting one's head in the sand or 'liberal ostrichism' (p.29).

### 2.1.3 Critical literacy is political

All representation is mediated by the immediate context, but also mediated and shaped by the ideologies or value systems of our cultures. At the same time, texts and everyday textual and language practices work together to construct not only knowledge, cultural, gender and class identity but also social power. In a critical literacy view, our knowledge and the language we use to express it is always interested, value-laden, and ideological:

> "The texts of everyday life are not innocuous, neutral texts requiring simple decoding and appropriate response. They are key moments where social identity and relations of power are established and negotiated" (Luke, Comber and O'Brien 1996, p.35).

In our everyday interactions at work, in retail exchanges, or over the family breakfast, for example, we are engaged in 'taking sides' - speaking, working and socialising in ways that act in the symbolic and material interests of particular groups. These groups might be, for example, men or women, wealthy or poor, young or old, culturally mainstream or marginal. Textual practices too, in the form of material culture from television programmes, job applications, newspaper articles, video games or the music and accessories of popular cultures represent, define and build up values and power relations (Luke, Comber & O'Brien, 1996).

Catherine Wallace (2006) provides a topical example in the apparently well intentioned blandness and 'safeness' of the global EFL textbook, exemplified by the popular *Headway* series. Promoted by international publishers in the UK and North America as well as enjoying a prolific black market trade, they reach into classrooms and homes from London to Vietnam. In what Wallace interprets as a bid to avoid sensitive topics such as politics, alcohol, religion and sex, celebrity and the trivial dominate. In this and in presentation, layout and other ways, these textbooks resemble popular magazines such as *Hello* or *OK*. However, like any other text, they are embedded in ideology and can not be divorced from context.  Wallace points out that the apparent happy neutrality

disguises an ideology which presupposes, through dominant images and themes, a dedicated commitment to consumerism and the pursuit of pleasure.

According to Fairclough (as cited in Landis, 2003), texts and authors represent and construct a version of the social world, and position or locate the reader in a social relation to the text and to that world through various lexical and grammatical, generic and semiotic features. Foucault (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 1999) and Gee (1996) claim however, that the meaning in texts is not derived from any inherent objective linguistic features but by larger and specific discursive formations (discourses) of which these features are a part, and within which they gain their significance. Gee's list of typical discourses include: being an American or a Russian, a woman or a man, a member of a certain social class, a factory worker, a boardroom executive, a member of a club or lunchtime social gathering. Lankshear & Knobel (1997) add, being "an active citizen". They define discourses as:

> "socially constructed and recognized ways of being in the world, which integrate and regulate ways of acting, thinking, feeling, using language, believing, and valuing. By participating in Discourses we take up social roles and positions that other human beings can identify as meaningful …, and on the basis of which personal identities are constituted. It is in and through Discourse that *biological* human beings are constituted as ("identified") *social* human beings" (p. 96).

Discourses, according to Foucault, make it difficult for the individual to think outside of them and as such they are also exercises in power and control. Each discursive formation has its particular ideologies and particular ways of controlling power. Power however, does not necessarily manifest in a top-down flow from upper to lower levels of social hierarchies but extends itself in capillary fashion (Kumaravadivelu, 1999), becoming a part of daily action, speech and life. For Fairclough, ideologies are linked to power because they are a means of legitimizing social relations. They do this,

> "… simply through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving, which take these relations and power differences for granted. Ideologies are closely linked to language, because using language is the commonest form of social behaviour, and the form of behaviour where we rely most on commonsense assumptions" (as cited in Landis, 2003. p. 285).

Thus, the position of critical literacy is that left unquestioned and uninterrupted, the spoken, written, graphic and other texts of everyday life play a powerful role in building

and reproducing social structures which systematically empower some while disempowering others. They also exclude alternative real and possible versions of the world, project narrow versions of identities, and thus have the power to perpetrate a kind of cultural violence.

The focus of critical literacy is education, and the belief that educational systems in any culture are political (Freire, 1972; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Lankshear 1996; Luke & Freebody 1997). Language and literacy, being socially situated and constructed, are also institutionally located. Institutional contexts are not by definition politically or culturally negative or aimed at constraining an otherwise free creativity or citizenship but they are also neither benign nor neutral. They are informed by social contracts and historical projects for moulding and making people and populations as well as for shaping and distributing cultural and material resources (Luke and Freebody 1997).

According to Foucault (in Luke, 1997), social institutions such as schools and universities are comprised by and through discourses. Discourses make up a dense framework of spoken, written and symbolic texts of institutional bureaucracies, such as policies, curriculum documents, forms, and face to face encounters such as classroom interaction and informal talk. In education systems, dominant social and cultural groups have established their language, knowledge priorities and learning styles as the official examinable culture of education. Academic and scholastic success is defined and assessed according to the notions of important and useful knowledge, of representing truth, of arguing and establishing correctness of those dominant groups and cultures. Their logics, grammars and language are established as the institutional norms (Luke, 1997; Lankshear, 1996).

Gee (1996) distinguishes between primary and secondary discourses. Our primary discourses are our first ways of thinking, feeling, valuing and using our language to give form to and make sense of our experience, learned through communication with family or kin. Secondary discourses, on the other hand, are encountered through involvement with social institutions beyond the primary group such as work, church, government departments, or schools and universities. For Bourdieu and Passeron (1970), these discourses include a range of cultural understandings and behaviours. In the case of educational institutions, these extend to ostensibly non-academic features like gait or accent, which he refers to as 'cultural capital'. Privileged children are deeply familiar with this behaviour, as are their teachers. Children of unprivileged backgrounds, and in

the context of this study, adult learners from many culturally non-mainstream backgrounds, have not learnt it.

Lankshear (1996) suggests that students whose primary and secondary discourses are vastly different may make very different meaning from and sense of their secondary discursive experiences from members of other groups who experience closer 'fit'.

"Sometimes making *any* viable sense whatsoever of life within secondary institutions presents a major challenge" (Lankshear, 1996 p.22).

Kell (2004), puts it another way:

"we either recognise or don't recognise our own relation to the discourses that surround us, and this is what either enables or does not enable us to realise communication within them" (p. 443).

All learners enter education systems with different life experiences and different patterns of language and literacy development (Hammond & Derewianka, 1999) and therefore do not have comparable access to the representational systems and mediational means, linguistic knowledge and cultural artefacts of the institution and the wider cultural context for which they are being educated. This is one of the two major points of rationale arising from critical theory on which critical literacy practices are based. The other is that in the typical classroom non-mainstream students' different and valuable knowledges, perspectives, interpretations and identities - "rich and complex experiences" (Wallace, 2006, p.75) will be barely acknowledged, closed down or circumscribed rather than enriched. Ashton-Warner, writing about her classroom experiences with rural Māori children in the early part of last century wrote:

"What a dangerous activity reading is; teaching is. All this plastering on of foreign stuff. Why plaster on at all when there's so much inside already?" (1963, p.14).

Up to this point I have represented a view which emphasises the regulatory nature of text and Discourses, as represented by Foucault and critical literacy in general. However, Derrida and de Certeau approached the question from the angle of what readers do with texts.

Derrida questioned whether any definitive or authoritative interpretations of texts are possible at all. For him, all texts are polysemous: multiple and potentially quite

idiosyncratic meanings can be generated by readers, and each text's features and differences are reconstructed and reconstituted into distinctive readings by individual readers in particular social contexts (Luke, 1997). In other words meaning, as constructed by the reader, is a kind of wild card, unforeseeable and therefore not completely controlled by the author, or in the case of the classroom, by teachers and institutions.

In his work on the subversions of dominant discourses embedded in the practices of everyday life, de Certeau (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 1999) also challenges a one-sided theme of domination by pointing out that while powerful social institutions are able to demand particular behaviours, thoughts and responses from individuals, people do not always comply. They regularly reject the demands placed on them institutionally, and use 'tactics' to create a place for themselves in environments defined by institutions.

Critical theory, reflecting its Marxist antecedents, rejects a liberal humanist view of individuals as completely free, independent and creative. Instead, human thought, movement and speech are understood always to be constrained in multiple ways. On the other hand, an over-deterministic view that we are nothing but "ideological dupes or discursive ventriloquists" (Pennycook 1999, p. 335) leaves no possibility for change or individual agency, and change is the aim of critical literacy. However, the issues of what change critical literacy seeks, what or who is to change, how change is to be achieved, and crucially, who of the participants concerned determines these questions are unstable and far from resolved.

### 2.1.4 The concept of transformation in critical literacy

Change, expressed as 'empowerment' and 'transformation', and sometimes 'liberation' or 'emancipation' is the underlying goal of critical literacy.

Some, for example Gramsci (as cited in Giroux, 1987), see literacy itself as the gateway to transformation:

> "[a]s both the mastery of specific skills and particular forms of knowledge, literacy has to become a precondition for social and cultural emancipation" (p.2).

Others, like Postman (1970) and Street (1993) take issue with this view. To teach reading itself, according to Postman, even to promote vigorously the teaching of reading, is to take a definitive political position on how people should behave and what they should value.

The classical critical literacy view is that through enlightenment, and empowerment, the goal is social transformation, the changing of reality, in the sense of Freire, for whom a word is a word that can change the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Freire's earliest concern was with class oppression – the liberation of the oppressed, non-literate peasants he worked with in Brazil in the mid twentieth century (Degener, 2001). He sought to impart literacy as a tool of enfranchisement and empowerment, mindful of not imposing the oppressive ideologies of the dominant classes in the process, and with a view to achieving concrete change in the social order.

Transformation, however, is to be achieved through personal empowerment of learners through giving them 'voice', but also through 'conscientization' (Freire, 1972), or consciousness-raising. In other words, one version of reality is to be replaced by another, higher vision, as 'top-down' and inevitably culture-bound as any other. Although there are many different interpretations and developments, the basic contradiction or tension of critical theory lies in this concept, which remains a cornerstone of critical literacy: the desire to make a place for the voice of 'the oppressed', the quest to honour the identity, culture and knowledge of learners, but at the same time teaching people how to view themselves and interpret their world as their passport to emancipation.

Pennycook refers to this line of thinking as "big C, big T" critical theory, or "preacherly modernist-emancipatory pedagogy" (Pennycook 1999, p.343), and quotes Spivak who suggests, the notion of 'critical' also needs to imply an awareness "of the limits of knowing" (Pennycook, 1999, p.345). As a political stance, critical literacy is constantly in danger of assuming that the teacher or theorist has risen above the hidden assumptions of her/his own position, as well as having the in-depth awareness of the learner's world, context, knowledge and concerns necessary to actively intervene, which in fact she or he can not do.

Shor (1999) and Brookfield (1987) see the path to a more democratic classroom and society through the cultivation of analytical habits of thinking, reading, writing,

speaking or discussing which enable discovery of the deep meaning of any event, including the meaning of our own texts, identity and knowledge.

Following Fairclough (as cited in Pennycook, 1999), who saw critical language awareness as an essential element of social change, many practitioners have limited conscientization to a rationalistic analysis of texts or literacy practices. Others, arguing through all these issues, have interpreted transformation in very broad, open-ended terms, for example "to envisage versions of a world which is 'not yet' in order to alter the grounds on which life is lived" (Simon, as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 1999, p.464).

For most, critical literacy in practice is a blend of several or all of these interpretations while emphasising different themes.

If critical literacy appears to lose its clarity in the details of what exactly it can achieve, it nevertheless retains its clear ethical and political stance as committed to reducing "the deafening violence of inequality" (Fox, 1993, p.44). The belief that critical education should guide learners towards becoming political, a focus on developing learners' awareness of social conditions, and the connection between knowledge, texts and power remain central tenets of critical literacy (Giroux, 1987; Lankshire & Knobel, 1997; Pennycook, 1999).

### 2.1.5 Summary of the theory of critical literacy

In summary, the central concern of critical literacy is with social justice and equity of access for all students, an acute sensitivity to issues of cross-cultural communication and to the potential for cultural values to be imposed through the process of teaching (Hood, 1998).

In the classroom, it is clear that "every teacher chooses some subject matters, some ways of knowing, some ways of speaking and relating, instead of others" and that "[t]hese choices orient students to map the world and their relation to it" (Shor, 1999). These choices either allow access to the mainstream or perpetuate inequality and respect; and engage with learners' knowledge, cultures, contexts and histories or circumscribe them. All decisions made in the classroom are understood to be actual negotiations over whose values, interests and beliefs will be validated (Degener, 2001).

At the heart of critical literacy is the idea of a connection between changes in discourse and the wider processes of social and cultural change (Threadgold, 2003). Critical

approaches have sought to do this through any or all of the following: seeing through the texts used in the classroom and not reproducing the inequality and injustices of the wider society; giving non-mainstream learners access to the mainstream through overt pedagogical strategies; teaching learners ways to resist the power of texts in general; and based on the assumption that the construction and reconstruction of meaning and reality is characterised by narrativity, transforming mainstream society by giving non-mainstream learners voice.

## 2. 2 Critical literacy practices

Drawing mainly on Pennycook (1999) and Janks (2000) I have categorised documented critical literacy practices into three broad strands. Though seldom pure, these strands reflect different pedagogical interventions based on practitioners' varying responses to difference and their different conceptualisations of the workings of power, and of 'transformation' and 'emancipation'. They foreground one or other of: Access, Deconstruction and Engagement. Access emphasises giving marginalised learners access to the mainstream; Deconstruction emphasises critical reading and deconstruction to raise learners' awareness of how language works to position readers in the interests of power; and Engagement is concerned with live issues of oppression in learners' lives for conscientization and liberation.

EAL practices in critical literacy, especially in the institutional setting, have tended to take a rational and strongly linguistic perspective and generally fall into the first two categories above. These approaches focus on language or literacy as systems and hinge on explicit and text-based analyses of how language works to construct social and cultural meanings and relationships of power. They are often supported by an interest in Michael Halliday's theoretical framework of functional linguistics as well as insights from social theory (Hood, 1998).

### 2.2.1. Access

An access approach is most commonly associated with teaching text genres and Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics which, in common with critical literacy, has epistemological foundations in French discourse theory. The concern of this approach is with giving learners access to 'cultures of power' through overtly teaching the identification and use of linguistic and cultural tools associated with power and appropriateness.

However, access as an approach to transformation has been controversial. Teaching learners how to access power without attention to how language, literacy, text and discourse are implicated in power relations in the politics of everyday life ( conscientization) is to introduce, reproduce and even sanction those power relations as part of a taken-for-granted view of the world (Pennycook, 1999; Luke, 1996; Luke, Comber & O'Brien. 1996). As Pennycook says, it presents more as an assimilatory model to help students enter an unchanged mainstream than one which challenges the power structures that privilege the dominant forms which give rise to inequality in the first place.

Hammond and Macken-Horarik (1999) counter such criticism by claiming that control of linguistic resources provides the necessary basis for the analysis and critique of texts. Confining their conception of conscientization to linguistic analysis and critique of texts, they see critical literacy with ESL learners as a long term project, arguing that language learners "cannot be expected to run before they can walk" (Hammond and Macken-Horarik, 1999. p. 531).

In terms of Access as an effective path to equality, Julia Kristeva (1986) makes the point that the first phase of the Women's Movement fought to achieve access to a patriarchal system but found that the system itself was not one that supported and represented women's needs or experiences. To write within the forms of the dominant culture can often mean to write against one's own ways of being and knowing. It was discovered that women being able to read, write and talk like men, was not such a great achievement, and access to the symbolic order did not provide equality.

Giroux (1987) captures the tension of these arguments by characterising literacy as a double edged sword which can be wielded for the purpose of self and social empowerment or for the perpetuation of relations of repression and domination. The aim of critical literacy is to walk the line between providing learners with the tools for the first without falling into the second. For Hammond and Macken-Horarik, Lilia Bartolomé (1994) and the New London Group (1996) the teacher has a responsibility to teach the knowledge bases and discourse styles deemed desirable by the greater society. However, for Bartolomé and the New London Group the crucial point is that this process must be additive: "new concepts and new discourse skills must be added to not subtracted from existing knowledge" (Bartolomé, 1994, p.240).

"The role of pedagogy is to develop an epistemology of pluralism that provides access without people having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities" (New London Group, 1996, p.11).

### 2.2.2 Text Deconstruction

Text deconstruction rests on a view of power which is negative, and discourse is understood primarily as a powerful means of maintaining and reproducing relations of domination (Janks' 2000). Critical interventions in this category focus predominantly on conscientization, specifically the deconstruction of written texts presented as readings in the EAL classroom. Examples can be found in the case studies in Teachers Voices 3 (Burns & Hood, 1998). The critical premises for text deconstruction are that discourse is a domain of social struggle; that texts are socially constructed, politically motivated and historically determined; and that the relationship between textual features and social meanings is not transparent (Threadgold, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 1999).

Deconstruction aims to raise awareness of oppression by dominant ideology in text within the classroom, as well as to prepare learners to cope with it and counteract it in their lives outside the classroom:

> "[R]eaders who read critically are more able to select their stance in relation to those texts, choosing to resist some messages and accede to others and in this way gaining a measure of control over what happens to them as readers when they read" (Apol et al., 2002, p. 431).

While some studies have focused on learner deconstruction of the broader cultural concepts of literacy itself, and literacy practices (Wallace, 1999; Kramer-Dahl, 2001; Landis, 2003), I am only concerned here with critical deconstruction of actual texts used for language teaching purposes.

Critical analysis of texts requires that we develop classroom frameworks for 'problematizing' texts; talking about how and in whose interests social institutions and texts can refract and bend social and natural reality, and manipulate and position readers and writers. It amounts to putting the cultures and knowledge of texts 'up for grabs' (Luke et al., 1996) for political debate. In this tradition, Luke, Comber and O'Brien (1996) define the term 'critical' in the following way:

"By 'critical' we mean ways that give students tools for weighing and critiquing, analysing and appraising the textual techniques and ideologies, values and positions. The key challenge … is how to engage students with study of 'how texts work' semiotically and linguistically, while at the same time taking up explicitly how texts and their affiliated social institutions work politically to construct and position writers and readers in relations of power and knowledge (or the lack thereof)" (p. 35).

Various frameworks have been developed for problematising texts using one or more of four interconnected components. Drawing on Luke, Comber and O'Brien (1996), Apol et al. (2003) and others, the first three can be summarised as: foregrounding the conditions of production and interpretation of the text; discussing the text's overt and subtle messages; and discourse analysis of how the language used works to construct social meanings and relationships of power.

The fourth component is a practical application, an extension of conscientization, which Luke, Comber and O'Brien refer to as "strategic and tactical action with and/or against the texts" (p.38). These could be interpreted as deconstructive action in some cases, reconstruction, or as 'counternarratives' (Giroux et al., 1996), narratives which emerge in opposition to 'grand narratives' or official narratives.

**2.2.2.1 Foregrounding the conditions of production and interpretation**

Fairclough (1989) and others call for lessons that put the social and economic conditions of production, and conditions of interpretation of the text, into the foreground. Students need to be encouraged to research, speculate about and second-guess the institutional agendas, ideologies and human agents behind and at work in the text (conditions of production), and to talk about their and other readers' social standpoints and positions (conditions of interpretation).

The path to liberation, according to Giroux (1987), is through understanding the relational nature of how meaning is produced within a specific context of power. The critique of ideology in texts needs to include a view of human agency in which the production of meaning takes place "in the dialogue and interaction that mutually constitute the dialectical relationship between human subjectivities and the objective world" (p. 11).

**2.2.2.2 Discussing the text's overt and subtle messages.**

This involves students learning to look for and ask questions about ideologies in texts, spoken and unspoken messages and agendas, power structures, assumptions and writers' motivations (Apol et al., 2003; Luke, Comber & O'Brien, 1996). It may also involve discussion about truth and authenticity (Apol et al., 2003).

> *"This requires more than a technical analysis of language. It requires a 'reading of the cultures' around, behind, underneath, alongside, after and within the text"* (Luke, Comber and O'Brien, 1996 p. 35, authors' italics).

**2.2.2.3 Discourse analysis of how the language of texts works to construct social meanings and relationships of power.**

The purpose of critical discourse analysis in the classroom is to bring into view the ways in which systems of lexico-grammar express and construct ideology, social and cultural meanings and relationships of power (Pennycook, 1999; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999) and to increase learners' awareness of the linguistic choices that the writer has made (Janks, 2000). Every choice made foregrounds what was selected or not selected, hidden, silenced or backgrounded. Pennycook stresses that it is not enough to connect TEAL to the world in which it occurs. This connection must focus on inequality, discrimination, resistance and struggle. The critical questions behind textual deconstruction according to Janks (2000) are: Why did the writer or speaker make these choices? Whose interests do they serve? Who is empowered or disempowered by the language used?

Such analysis can become quite technical and, it could be argued, unnecessary or inappropriate to many EAL learning and teaching contexts. Readers do not need to know explicitly how the language in a text works to construct meanings, or the complex metalanguage of linguistic analysis to recognise ideological subtexts. Luke, Comber and O'Brien (1996) and Janks (2000) also caution against approaches that are too linguistic at the expense of diversity, inclusivity and an engagement with difference.

**2.2.2.4 Strategic and tactical action with and/or against the texts**

Critical theory calls for critical approaches to include a clearly transformative dimension as well as a critically analytical one. If transformation is achieved in an Access approach through overtly teaching learners skills which will allow them to fit in

and compete on more equal terms within the dominant culture, Deconstruction thus far offers only analysis without 'transformation' unless transformation is taken to be a heightened awareness of ideology in texts and an increased ability to read between the lines. Deconstruction alone does not allow for human agency. Luke, Comber and O'Brien (1996) therefore recommend that textual analysis be translated into cultural action;

> "into textual 'tactics' to be deployed as part of a practical 'strategy' for institutional intervention and community projects" (p. 38).

They suggest drawing on divergent cultural resources or discourses to rewrite or recreate the text and change its topics, perspectives or portrayals or to develop written or spoken or media revisions or criticisms. They also suggest action that moves beyond the text and the classroom and into the community. Such actions could include writing or speaking to the text's authors or institutions, further research about the institutions or issues raised by the text, or further data collection on community texts and contexts. Comber (2002) presents interesting case studies of this kind of intervention with young children in an L1 setting, which include learners organising a petition in reaction to a text which negatively impacted on them and a class making a proposal for neighbourhood development.

**2.2.3 A pedagogy of Engagement: Addressing diversity and difference**

> "An adult educator organises a trip to the desert as a literacy experience. The students set off in a truck with videos and cameras with the ostensible purpose of recording stories about the land in which they grew up. After a few days away the group returns and in the following weeks the shots and stories from the trip are turned into a reading book. For a while the books are read in English, and Kriol and then in the Aboriginal language of the students, always with a great deal of discussion […]. A few years later the same group submits a land claim for the property they drove over on their literacy trip" (McGinty, 1995, p. 29).

Where the transformative element of the critical agenda presents more as assimilation than 'liberation' in the Access model, and barely features in the general literature on Text Deconstruction, in a fully realised Engagement approach the concept is generally of primary importance alongside conscientization. However, both transformation and conscientization are problematic.

Like Text Deconstruction, Engagement rests on a negative view of power and relies principally on consciousness-raising as a means to liberation. The focus of Engagement is however, not on written texts but on engagement with the real concerns and lives of learners at the point where learning involves potentially conflicting histories, knowledge, literacies and beliefs/ideologies. It is about the importance of a pedagogy that is sensitive to participants' articulated and unarticulated responses to the potential or actual "symbolic violence" (Kumaravadivelu, 1999) perpetrated on them through their engagement with a dominant language and culture. Engagement is concerned with problematizing all aspects of the classroom environment as well as with making a connection between the classroom and the wider society, often in the interests of making concrete change.

Engagement is exemplified in the deep reaches of the unconventional and comparatively open ended approach quoted above (McGinty) but also in small ways in the confines of the average, highly constrained classroom by the simple means of engaging with the alternative identities, ideologies and knowledge of the learners and by maintaining a sensitivity to the possible impact of texts and powerful conflicting cultures on learners.

Kumaravadivelu (1999), Schenke (1996) and Pennycook (1999) describe the L2 classrooms as sites of struggle between competing discourses - a struggle for identity, the control of social power, and cultural memory. Mary Louise Pratt (as cited in Shor, 1999) describes them as

> "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (npn).

Pennycook (1999) calls for teachers to continually reappraise and re-examine the way in which we interact in the classroom, and the language and the texts we teach in terms of their consequences on students' life trajectories and futures.

Kumaravadivelu (1999) suggests that it is not the type of texts employed in a reading lesson that is critical for engagement, and neither is it necessarily the specific teaching methodology. He describes a reading class he observed in which the North American teacher employed a traditional teacher centred teaching style, and one of a selection of readings under the theme of "American Heroes" to a class of educated foreign learners.

The learners presented as being stubbornly resistant and uncooperative, and afterwards complained to Kumaravadivelu that the teacher was not helping them with their English and talked about nothing else but American culture and American heroes. Kumaravadivelu's evaluation of the problem here did not concern the choice of text, but that the teacher apparently ignored or was unaware of the cultural relativity and political implications of her materials and her own perspectives. He felt that the students did not engage, because they felt that "their identities were not being recognized and that their voices were not being respected" (p. 454); what the lesson fatally lacked was the inclusion in its context of the students' knowledge, experience, reasoning and inevitably different perspectives on the topic.

Many critical literacy projects with an Engagement focus involve groups of learners who are perceived as 'oppressed', or are understood by the teacher or researcher to be particularly 'at risk' or disadvantaged in mainstream society. What is recognised as oppression in the literature is dependent on the critical literacy discourse at the time. In Freire's time, social class was the issue, later it was colonialism, and more recently it has been race, gender, sexual orientation, age and other categories or combinations of categories of oppressed, as for example to be seen in the contributions to Constructing Critical Literacies (Muspratt et al., 1997) or TEAL Quarterly, 33 (3), 1999.

However, practitioners who venture into full Engagement in the Freirean sense are constantly in danger of overstepping the limits of their own knowledge or historically limited point of view and assuming too precisely the nature of their learners' realities or oppression. In other words, critical literacy, which has a heightened concern with negative stereotyping, appears to fall into this mode on a regular basis by its own categorization. Edward Said (1978, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 1999) observed that the treatment of communities of individuals as an indistinguishable mass amounted to dehumanisation, and Said in turn, has been criticised for being locked in a rigid dichotomy of domination and subordination, which Kumaravadivelu comments,

> "does not account for the diversity of historical contexts, for the heterogeneity of colonized subjectivity or the agency of colonized peoples" (Kumaravadivelu 1999, p.464).

In the course of their respective studies Dana Frye (1999) and Kamler & Threadgold (2003) recognised the problems of stereotyping participants.

Kamler & Threadgold, whose problematic study involved older women from the Vietnamese community in Melbourne, found that one flaw in their approach was that they had constituted the women as 'Vietnamese' when in fact their focus did not even begin to encompass the complex and intersecting issues of the participants, which included political, ideological and class differences as well as very different histories.

Frye followed Freirean and feminist themes in her reflective case study involving immigrant and refugee Latina women in the USA. She aimed to create a dialogical environment where "student voices were louder and stronger than the voice of the teacher" (p. 504). To do this, she focussed on issues central to the lives of the learners ('generative themes') and used a problem posing approach. However, the problems arising spontaneously in the class coalesced around the learners' differences, rather than the solidarity which is the assumption underlying Freire's Marxist based critical theory. Competition arose based on age, national origin, and differences in use of L1 and educational background, creating tension, power struggles and various forms of hierarchy including the participants' automatic deference for the teacher.

Frye, classically for an Engagement approach, also aimed to provide the learners with opportunities to think critically about social issues of oppression in their lives (problematize) and about effecting change in their lives (empowerment and transformation). Yet she observes that 'empowerment' in terms of relationships of power on the societal level, appears to be a cultural notion and that in this context her own view of empowerment sometimes "thwarted our efforts" (p. 510).

Pennycook (1999) suggests that making people aware of their own oppression can often be pessimistic and patronizing, especially if it is only a top-down attempt, and Frye herself questions whether her students' awareness of social inequities would actually lead to empowerment. Said (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 1999) shows how ideas, accorded the authority of academics, institutions and government, create not only interested knowledge but also the very reality they seek to describe. Merely to position specific learners or groups as disempowered, disadvantaged or "the oppressed" when they do not easily characterise themselves in this way is to tread on "swampy" ground (Catherine Wallace, 1999). Wallace illustrates this point by referring to a critical reading course developed specifically for 'historically disadvantaged students' - Coloured (mixed race) South African university students. The students on this course reported that they felt constantly framed as 'disadvantaged' and came to feel that this

meant 'not as good as white students'.  The terrain of Engagement with a pre-conceived rationalistic notion of conscientization and transformation is fraught with the risks of presumption and imposition.

Kamler and Threadgold's paper dicussing their study with Vietnamese women, is presented as a 'coming clean' about some of the problems of translation across cultures and how easily preconceptions and cultural positionings interfere with the process. Their focus is the translation of language, but a parallel question emerges from their reflections which is deeply unsettling to some of critical theory's key themes. This is, the near impossibility of full participatory engagement across cultures while maintaining coherence and control of a critical framework.

In this study, the researchers positioned the women as co-researchers in a collaborative pedagogy based on a contract: the researchers would teach the Vietnamese women English and the Vietnamese women would provide their biographical stories for the researchers' purposes of challenging (western) society's negative conceptions of ageing, thereby contributing new understanding.

Even though the project was located in feminist and poststructuralist theorising about language and representation, and was particularly sensitive to the fact that language is not a transparent mode of communication, the researchers found that they had not anticipated the cultural barriers to engagement, and these arose from the start.

The meanings made by the project's different participants of their own and each others' agendas, roles and identities were at odds, and these meanings were central to the very point of the project. One example of the problems they encountered is that at one point the researchers realised that some of the Vietnamese women were telling not their personal stories as the researchers understood this concept, but a collective Vietnamese story adjusted for western ears.

> "We assumed that these […] stories would actually be self-representations which we as researchers would be able to read fairly straightforwardly, that they would offer us the 'data' for our research findings as well as giving the women a kind of 'voice' they had perhaps not had before" (p. 137 - 138).

The researchers comment that it was as much a struggle to know themselves as the women knew them, as it was for them to know the women and hear their stories. These Vietnamese women appear to have retained control of their stories through tactics as described by de Certeau. The agenda of challenging stereotypes about ageing and contributing to new understanding is culturally situated; it was not their agenda, and their stories and identities were going to be transformed, beyond their control, through and for western academic Discourse and purposes. Through this study Kamler and Threadgold discovered that cultures are never fully translatable and they mean this both ways:

> A vision that takes diversity seriously is a radically unsettling one - which may be why such visions are few and far between (p. 150).

In response to the way asymmetrical power relations of society at large are maintained in schools, Bartolome (1994) argues for a humanising pedagogy that respects and uses the multiple perspectives, histories and intelligences of students as an integral part of teaching practice. Teachers need not only to develop pedagogical structures that speak to the day to day reality, struggles, concerns and dreams of students but also to become politically aware of their own location and to treat their students as knowers and active participants in their own learning.

It is traditionally accepted that conscientization is the initial step in the process of change, but it is clear that neither the nature of the issues nor the shape of conscientization or transformation, when they are applied to the lives of people in a top-down cross-cultural environment, can emerge prior to engagement with the learners. The two outstanding points that emerge from the McGinty (1995) quote at the beginning of Engagement are the degree to which the pedagogy apparently engaged with the conflicting histories of the learners and the politics of language learning but also, the open-ended treatment of 'empowerment' and 'transformation'. The implication for this chapter is that empowerment, as Frye found, begins with validation, and transformation is in the hands of the learners not the teachers.

As Schenke (1996) has written,

> there is still the question of what complacencies of power we assume in supporting pedagogies of transformation, liberation, or "coming to voice" (p.155).

As teachers, we do not know the precise shape of oppression experienced by or practised by our students, what can be taken away from them or what it can be replaced with. Teachers and researchers need to be aware that the traditional themes of Engagement can themselves be irrelevant, disempowering, dehumanising and patronising, and intrude unwanted upon the identities and lives of learners. Pennycook (1999) comments that claiming to emancipate people through a greater awareness of their conditions is both arrogant and doomed to failure and suggests that a more plausible way forward is through a critical engagement with people's wishes, desires, and histories.

### 2.2.4 Summary of critical literacy practices in teaching EAL

In summary, as Janks (2000) concludes, Access without a theory of domination or Engagement paves the way for the reification and naturalization of powerful discourses while failing to recognize that difference fundamentally affects pathways to access and involves issues of history, identity and value.

Text Deconstruction on its own comes closer to engaging with the worlds of learners than Access but the tools it offers for dealing with clashing ideologies generally fail to go beyond a rationalistic and pessimistic theory of Domination. Janks concludes that Domination without Access maintains the exclusionary force of dominant discourses while Domination without attention to difference and diversity loses the ruptures that produce contestation and change.

As a framework, suggestions and examples of 'action against the text' (Luke et al., 1996) offer possibilities for transformation and agency on the part of the learner. However, in the light of insights from Engagement, in terms of both conscientization and transformation, the practitioner needs to be careful that these are not simply a replacement Discourse, a vision provided by the teacher.

The framework of Engagement, when presuming to enter the lives of the students beyond the bounds of what arises naturally in the life of the classroom, opens practitioners to the pitfalls of presuming too much about the worlds and needs of

learners, and at the same time denying, ignoring or being unaware of the socially contextual basis and limitations of their own ideologies and power.

While working for a more equitable classroom, education system and ultimately, while striving to work towards a more democratic society through the work we do with learners, critical teachers in a cross-cultural setting need to keep our limitations in mind: we cannot know the learners in our classes to the point of making assumptions about what oppresses them, or about what is empowering or transforming for them; and we cannot control the way they shape their paths to transformation.

Janks also makes the point that attention to difference without providing access to powerful forms of language ghettoises students, while Engagement without Deconstruction leads to a celebration of diversity without any recognition that difference is structured in dominance and that not all discourses, genres, languages or literacies are equally powerful.

Pennycook (2001) calls for critical applied linguistics itself to retain a constant scepticism, a way of thinking and acting that is always problematizing, and for this problematization to be turned on itself. He again brings attention to critical literacy's confidence in its own rightness, "its belief that an adequate critique of social and political inequality can lead to an alternative reality" (p. 22).

For Pennycook, this means not only that critical applied linguistics implies a hybrid model of research and praxis, but also that it has the potential to generate something that is far more dynamic than a fixed discipline or the mapping of a fixed politics onto a static body of knowledge. He calls this a 'movable *praxis'*:

> "I see critical applied linguistics as a constantly shifting and dynamic approach to questions of language in multiple contexts, rather than a method, a set of techniques, or a fixed body of knowledge" (p. 26).

It is not difficult to find critical literacy studies involving native speakers, primary and secondary students, EAL learners with a high level of acquisition, English for Academic Purposes or foundation courses but there are few studies involving adult EAL learners at a low level of literacy acquisition. The study described in Chapter 3 is an exploration of some of the tenets and tools of critical literacy in the context of such a class.

# Chapter 3

## Methodology

### 3.1. Introduction

This study involved a lesson with two areas of focus. The first of these was classroom deconstruction of a common type of teaching text through a set of questions. These questions will henceforth be referred to as the critical questions. The second area of focus was student re-construction of this text, in which the language learners were asked to respond to it by writing alternative versions from their own points of view. The student texts that resulted will henceforth referred to as the student texts.

The use of questions for classroom deconstruction of texts is universal across the literature. Asking the learners to reconstruct a text after textual deconstruction is one of Luke, Comber & O'Brien's (1996) suggestions for cultural action against the text.

The processes of critical ethnographic research, as described by Kumaravadivelu (1999), involve the researcher actively engaging her/himself with powerful systems of discourse and seeking to deconstruct dominant discourses, as well as counterdiscourses, by posing questions at the boundaries of ideology, power and knowledge.

The powerful discourses this study is concerned with are two: firstly, the discourse of critical literacy, and secondly my own discourses, as one of the class teachers, which are more broadly speaking, those of the institutions I represent and the wider dominant culture. As such, this project can be characterised as a form of "self-conscious criticism" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000), or reflexivity. Reflexivity is explained by Pennycook (1999) as a stance taken by the researcher which retains a constant questioning and scepticism about the types of knowledge, theory, practice, or praxis s/he operates with. This applies both to the researcher's own position and to critical theory and practices themselves.

While the purpose of the lesson was to trial critical literacy methodology in this specific context, it was equally about engaging with and deconstructing these dominant discourses by presenting them to my class. The students' final texts are ideally the expressions of knowledge, identity and ideology – the 'counterdiscourses' - of the learners in this class in response to the ideology embedded in the teaching text.

In outline the study took the shape of three main events: firstly, the class discussing a set of critical questions which focused on the teaching text; secondly, a writing exercise which I set the following day and which the students took home to do in their own time; and thirdly, individual semi-structured interviews with the learners about the meanings of their texts.

The data includes the learners' written responses to the critical questions, the observations of two invited observers, and the student texts supplemented by the semi-structured interviews with students on the meanings in their texts.

## 3.2 The context of the study

The class involved in this study was an EAL class that I taught for one semester at AUT University, Auckland.

### 3.2.1 The institutional setting

The course is funded by a government employment training scheme called Training Opportunities, the purpose of which is to move unemployed permanent residents with low qualifications, who receive a weekly benefit, into paid employment by teaching skills relevant to this purpose.

This particular Training Opportunities course is specifically for unemployed migrants who have low levels of English language acquisition, low qualifications, and who entered the country with refugee status[2]. Many of these learners have no qualifications. Citizens who are not refugees in this category but who meet other requirements for entry are also admitted to the course but those with refugee status have priority.

The teaching focus is English language, particularly literacy, but the course includes modules on basic numeracy and New Zealand life and culture, and all of these are taught with an employment focus. This class was a Level 2 class, a level of acquisition halfway in a progression starting with Level 1A, in which most of the learners are at a beginner literacy level and/or 'absolute' EAL beginners, to Level 4. At the level above

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[2]International law defines a "refugee" as a person who has fled from and/or cannot return to their country due to a well-founded fear of persecution, including war or civil conflict.

*Article 1, The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees"*
*(*http://www.unhcr.org.uk/info/briefings/basic_facts/definitions.html)

this class, learners are required to begin practical work experience as part of their studies.

The level of funding for these classes fluctuates semester by semester. Funding is tied to the number of 'positive outcomes' from the preceding semester and these are defined as either paid employment for the learners or progression from this course to further training or further education. If the required number of positive outcomes is not achieved, the number of students who can be given classes the following semester, as well as the number of teachers employed, is negatively affected, as is the survival of the programme as a whole. Teachers, therefore, have an investment in meeting these requirements for themselves as well as for the 'client' group as a whole, even when these objectives (a fast track to employment) may be at odds with the realities of the learners' life circumstances.

Once learners are enrolled they are under an obligation to attend regularly. Ultimately if they do not comply, their training benefit payments can be stopped. This course of action, if it is implemented, is in the hands of individual case workers in the government department responsible for payment of benefits (Work and Income New Zealand) and can be influenced by teachers who hold the attendance information. Consequences resulting from non-compliance, however, are extremely rare.

At the time of this study, classes were held for twenty hours a week, from 9am to 1pm, with some required self-directed study making a total of twenty-five hours. I was timetabled to teach this class on one four hour day a week. However, for the purposes of this study and for the week of the study only, I arranged to teach the class on two consecutive days.

### 3.2.2 Special circumstances of EAL learners who are refugees

Most of the learners in these classes are in the early stages of making new lives for themselves in New Zealand (refer to *Years in NZ*, Table 1). Although there is really no such thing as 'the refugee experience', only the experiences of refugees (Turton, 2003), there are several circumstances that distinguish refugee experiences of resettlement, acculturation, language and literacy learning from that of other migrants (Gray & Elliot, 2001). In most cases the choice of destination, New Zealand, has not been theirs; some suffer ongoing psychological and physical effects of past trauma which may include violence, the threat of violence, torture and/or years of uncertainty in transit. Many

suffer from chronic ailments resulting from war, poverty or life in countries that lack services and infrastructure, and many for similar reasons have not had formal education opportunities, training or what would count in New Zealand as work experience. Many live with the anxiety of family members left in dangerous or distressing conditions. These circumstances, although not universal, are common and lend themselves to the classically 'criticalist' (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000) construction of refugees as victims or 'the oppressed'.

Alternatively, learners with refugee backgrounds might equally be characterized as people who are likely to have extensive experience of the world, specifically, extensive experience of oppression and survival in environments which challenge their sense of self, and their world views and ideologies.

### 3.2.3 A class profile

The English language acquisition levels of the learners in the class were quite mixed. Most of the students will have matched the following level descriptor for AUT EAL courses (Wette, 1996, p. 4).

> "Can satisfy basic transactional and limited social needs in "everyday" situation[s]: survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements. Can understand short texts but has considerable difficulty understanding texts with more complex discourse structure. Can write simple social messages/ correspondence; short simple recounts of personal experiences".

There were members of the class who were clearly both higher and lower than this descriptor, however. Examples that provide a clearer indication of the written English proficiency of the class members can be found in their written texts (Appendix A).

As can be seen in Table 1 below, this was an ethnically diverse, female weighted class in terms of numbers. Ages ranged from 18 to 36, with most of the learners falling into the younger age group of 18 to 23. Of the eleven women, there were three sets of sisters: two Ethiopians (Students 4 & 5), the two Afghanis (Students 10 & 11) and the two Turks who are twins (Students 8 & 9). The two students at the bottom of the table, learners 16 and 17, were absent on the day of the critical literacy lesson. They are included in the table because they contributed to the study overall by actively taking part in the pre and post lesson activities and because their absence on the day of the study may in itself be significant. Table 1 also shows the students' countries of origin,

first languages, and length of time in New Zealand to the nearest year at the time of the study.

| Learner | Country | Language | Age[3] | Years of Formal Education[4] | Years in NZ | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The Cook Islands | Puka Pukan | 21 | 5 | 3 | F |
| 2 | Sri Lanka | Tamil | 34 | 12 | 2 | F |
| 3 | Eritrea | Tigrinya | 28 | 8 | -1 | M |
| 4 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 20 | 9 | 1 | F |
| 5 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 18 | 10 | 1 | F |
| 6 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 26 | 0 | 3 | F |
| 7 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 21 | 10 | 1 | F |
| 8 | Turkey | Turkish | 19 | 5 | 1 | F |
| 9 | Turkey | Turkish | 19 | 5 | 1 | F |
| 10 | Afghanistan | Pashto | 20 | 6 | -1 | F |
| 11 | Afghanistan | Pashto | 21 | 7 | -1 | F |
| 12 | Iran | Farsi | 32 | 10 | -1 | F |
| 13 | Iran | Farsi | 26 | 7 | 3 | M |
| 14 | Iran | Farsi | 23 | 9 | 3 | M |
| 15 | Iran | Farsi | 26 | 11 | 2-3 | M |
| 16 | Somalia | Somali | 23 | 1 | 3 | M |
| 17 | Somalia | Somali | 36 | 3 | 4 | M |

*Table 1: Class profile*

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[3] In some cases learners did not know their exact ages.
[4] In some cases approximate due to education having been interrupted, intermittent and/or part time.

Student 1, who did not come to New Zealand as a refugee, was identified as having learning and communication difficulties which were not limited to English usage but extended to the use of her own language, a factor that impacted on her participation level in the class and the lessons.

The majority of the learners in the class were religious. Several, both Muslim and evangelical Christian, made a regular point in class discussions of identifying their ideological positions with their religious beliefs, one or two going as far as to sanction other students' behaviour on these grounds. The class also included several students from Muslim, Orthodox and other Christian backgrounds, and one Hindu, who did not express or manifest their religion or lack of belief in any overt way.

During the semester, students sometimes brought issues and problems relating to adjusting to life in New Zealand into open class discussions. These issues included dealing with loss of family and peers, loneliness and the anxiety of family diaspora, loss of status, and cultural clash including intergenerational problems which were an issue for one of the parents in the class and several of the younger members.

Overall, my experience and opinion of the class dynamic was that it was energetic, motivated and positive. I was aware of various underlying tensions which occasionally surfaced openly between members of the class. Those that I was aware of related to expectations involving behaviour and dress codes, respect shown to elders including the teachers, and classroom etiquette when some members objected to what they saw as disrespectful or disruptive behaviour of others.

### 3.4 Preparations for the study and the immediate classroom context

The class's introduction to the study began three weeks before the study took place with the consent process and trialling the use of a video camera as a data collection tool. These events impacted on the study in two ways: firstly, they heightened students' awareness that the critical lesson was going to be something out of the ordinary; and secondly, they almost certainly influenced the learners' attitudes to the study and their level of involvement, and in doing so they mark the beginning of the study.

### 3.4.1 Trialling the use of a video camera as a data collection instrument

I introduced the video camera two weeks before the study in order to experiment, with a view to using it to record the critical lesson, and to familiarise the students with its

presence in the classroom. This immediately raised an issue for three of the learners who were uncertain about being filmed on religious grounds. Thus it was an introduction to the study which involved the class in a discussion of the pros and cons of allowing themselves to be filmed and as a consequence, thinking about their role and participation in the study. Taking note of the learners' mixed reactions I proceeded but gave the students alternatives to being filmed, including learning how to operate the camera and taking the role of cameraperson.

Using the camera was both a stimulating activity and one which became increasingly student centred and directed. The learners organised and filmed interviews with each other and dealt with technical problems that arose. One of the students who had been uncomfortable about being filmed (Student 11) participated fully, playing a principal role as camera operator. The two others who had misgivings about being filmed, Students 16 and 17, kept a low profile until filming began, then changed their minds and joined in anyway. Learner 16, who had expressed the clearest intention not to be filmed, spontaneously delivered the longest and most animated filmed interview.

The class also entered into discussion with me about the practical difficulties of using the camera for the study and ultimately they were involved in making the decision not to use it in the critical literacy lesson, a decision made on the morning of the lesson. Thus, in its earliest stages the study became, for most of the class, an exercise in engagement, while for at least two of the learners, it presented them with a conflict of interest. These two learners gave consent to participate in the study but were absent for class on the day of the critical lesson.

### 3.4.2 Obtaining consent

My approach to the study was overt in every respect. The reason for the study, my aims, the aims of critical literacy, what was going to happen at each stage of the study and how the information collected was going to be used was explained and discussed openly in the lessons leading up to the study and later with the help of interpreters during the formal consent process.

Obtaining consent informally was a simple interpersonal exchange which involved discussions with the class about the project and asking them verbally whether they were willing to participate. By contrast, the formal consent process was cumbersome and official. It involved one teacher with no connection to the class and four interpreters

entering the classroom in an official capacity and in my absence, with papers to read and forms to sign. The consent form and information sheet can be seen in Appendices B and C respectively. This session, which took place a week before the study, took almost an hour. Everyone signed consent.

As Threadgold and Kamler's (1999) study with Vietnamese immigrants showed, it may sometimes be near impossible to translate the meanings of some events or texts across cultures. In this case the full meaning and implications of consent within Western academic research was, for these learners, a discourse within a foreign discourse. Similarly, it is often impossible to know how people from very different cultures interpret or transform events or texts from our cultures. However, for historical reasons some learners in these classes may have compelling reasons to be suspicious of officialdom, including being asked to sign forms for reasons they might not understand. It is possible to conjecture that the formal consent process may have added to misgivings already present for the two students who had recapitulated on the stance they took on the use of video and ultimately did not to attend on the day of the study[5].

## 3.5 The lesson materials

The materials for the lesson consisted of a reading text and a set of questions for discussion. The questions aimed to raise the readers' awareness that teller, purpose, perspective and audience shaped the narrative, to bring the text's implicit messages to the fore, and to actively create the conditions for the learners to respond to the ideologies within the text.

### 3.5.1. The text of the reading lesson

The reading text (Figure 1) was written by a New Zealand born teacher at AUT as a pedagogical text for learners of approximately this student profile. It was written for Password, a quarterly magazine for EAL learners produced by teachers in Auckland.

The reading, entitled "A Success Story" and accompanied by a photograph, is a short profile of a former student of the AUT Training Opportunities course (referred to as TOPs in the text). The protagonist of the story, Berezaf, arrived in New Zealand as a refugee, studied the same topics as the students in the class involved in this study and

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[5] C.f. Hayward, Strauss & Harvey (2005), commenting on the AUT formal consent process undertaken for a case study involving newly arrived refugees: "Several members of the group did not understand why we had given them forms to sign … [t]hey approached pieces of paper and signatures with suspicion and associated them with the oppressive, authoritarian regime they feared" (p. 8).

finally, through diligence and a friendly attitude was successful in being offered work in a local cafeteria where she is happy. It is worth noting that at the time of writing a significant proportion of students who had recently entered the country as refugees and were studying on the course, had little or no previous formal education.

## A success story *

Berezaf Belachew is a refugee from Ethiopia. She arrived in New Zealand in May 1996. She was the second member of her family to come here. Later, her brother came.

When Berezaf came, she could not read and write English so she began a *TOPs* course in 1997. Her first course was called "Reading and Writing for Work". When she finished this course, she did two more TOPs English courses. She studied English language, *numeracy*, how to find a job and about the New Zealand workplace.

Her teacher found *voluntary* work experience for her in a student cafeteria so that she could learn about working in NZ, practise her English and learn new skills. Her supervisor was pleased with her because she was hard-working, quick to learn new tasks and friendly with the staff and the students. He gave Berezaf a job in the cafeteria. She started there in February 1999 and she is very happy in her work. She says she enjoys it because her *co-workers* are helpful and friendly.

Vocabulary
*TOPs*—Training Opportunities Programme. Most students on these courses are paid a benefit called the Community Wage—Training. They also receive a travel allowance.
*numeracy*—mathematics, working with numbers
*voluntary*—you do it because you want to; you do not get paid
*co-workers*—people that you work with

*Figure 1: The teaching text* ("Password," 1999)

### 3.5.1.1 Choice of teaching text

Many critical theorists make a point of advocating the use of authentic[6] or community texts for teaching critical reading, and specifically, authentic texts such as advertising or newspaper articles, which are obviously biased or ideologically loaded.

> "In a fast, capitalist, text-saturated culture that attempts to position and manipulate at every turn, community texts and language should be central focuses of study and analysis for all students" (Luke, Comber and O'Brien, 1996 p42).

Examples include the case studies in Burns and Hood (1998), Jennifer O'Brien's work with advertising material (Luke et al., 1996), Granville (2003), Van Duzer & Florez (1999) and Apol et al., (2003).

While the critical focus of these is the so called 'real world' outside the classroom, the focus of my lesson, in contrast, was classroom culture. Where in the cases stated above the textual materials were also most frequently chosen as examples, from the practitioner's point of view, of controversial or overtly political use of language, the text for this study was chosen as a recurring type of text on these courses. It is one which deals directly with identity construction, in fact with teachers constructing learners' identities, and its themes are very topical and of deep significance in the lives of most of these learners - immigration, learning English and building a new life in New Zealand. From a critical point of view, it directly concerns the interface between teachers'/institutional/dominant discourses and those of the learners.

Comber & Kamler (1997) propose that all language and literacy lessons are possible sites for practising critical literacies and that teachers too often treat the subject matter of their lessons as neutral or unproblematic.

In this study I deliberately chose to approach critical literacy as a universal approach which overtly recognises the ideological loading of all texts and aims to make a place for readers to select a position for themselves in this knowledge, whether oppositional or otherwise. The aims of this study were less about imparting a critical approach to the learners than exploring what critical literacy has to offer the learners in my classes and also raising my own awareness by putting the embedded discourses of a standard teaching text "up for grabs" (Luke et al., 1996. p. 36). In presenting this text I was asking the learners to deconstruct a dominant discourse of this course. In effect, I

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[6] 'Authentic' in applied linguistics terminology refers to materials which have not been especially created or adapted for classroom use (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992).

wanted to say to the learners - here is a text that we might typically give you, how do you read and respond to its ideological content? I also wanted to say - here are some critical tools, do they have anything to offer you?

This text is typical because

I. It addresses teachers' concerns that language presented to learners who are new to literacy or may be survivors of torture and trauma should be firmly grounded in the concrete experiences of the learners, and based on meaningful realities in the learners' lives including settlement needs in carefully graded, achievable steps (McPherson, 1994).

II. The content addresses the goals of the course in that it is work and settlement focussed.

III. It is language adjusted and suitably short for low level language and literacy learners.

Biographical texts such as this one but in their simplest forms, perhaps involving two or three sentences only, are often the first texts given to students in the beginner level classes on this course as both readings and models for writing. This text type is typical but in fact more typical at a lower level of acquisition than that of this class. Although the reading was not unchallenging it was relatively accessible to most of the readers in this class, linguistically and in terms of the subject matter and format which were already familiar to many of the learners. My reason for choosing a text that was more accessible in terms of surface level language features was that the readers would be more able to give their attention to critical questions. This is not to say, however, that the reading was without value as a language learning exercise for the majority of the learners, since it served at minimum to revise and consolidate previous learning.

### 3.5.1.2 Critical analysis of the teaching text

There are many ways in which *A Success Story* may serve the learners well. However, a critical analysis reveals how very well it also serves the interests of the state, the institution and the teachers, since funding for this course is directly dependent on a certain percentage of job related outcomes.

In keeping with the aims of the course, the foremost messages of the teaching text are learn English, work hard and get a job. Entitled "A Success Story", success is

characterized in the story as getting a job. References to work and jobs recur throughout the text: the course which the protagonist, Berezaf, did was called "Reading and Writing for *Work*"; on the course, among other things, she learned about "how to find a *job* and about the New Zealand *work*place"; the first development after starting this course was to be found "*work* experience", where she learned about "*working* in New Zealand"; and her supervisor was pleased with her because she was hard*working* and as a result he gave her a *job*.

In all, in the short text there are nine references to work and working. Qualities upheld in the text, as pleasing to authority (Berezaf's work experience boss) are those of being hardworking, quick to learn and friendly.

The text contrives to engage with the student by way of reader identification with the main character in the text, Berezaf, who is also presented as a model, thus constructing the intended reader's identity and reality in a powerful way.

Identity construction begins in the opening paragraph where Berezaf is defined as a refugee, by her national origins, and in relation to the movements of some of her family members.

A critical analysis immediately raises the question of the use of 'refugee' as a marker of identity. As one of the observers noted, 'refugee' used in the context of people who are permanent residents in New Zealand raises the questions of what a refugee is, and when a refugee stops being a refugee. The term 'refugee' could be and is frequently used by students on the TOPs courses as a point of positive recognition and identification. However, it is potentially a label with the negative, difficult, patronizing, or controversial connotations of one who is a victim, powerless, fleeing, without a home, and at the mercy of outside forces.

This negative interpretation seems to be reinforced by the characterization of Berezaf which follows this introduction. After the introductory paragraph, the first thing we learn about her is what she could not do: "she could not read and write English." Thus positioned as one who lacks she is thereafter portrayed as a largely a passive agent in the events that follow. After coming to New Zealand and beginning the EAL course, *"her teacher* found her voluntary work experience", and "*her supervisor* was pleased with her".

Berezaf's identity is also shaped by the people in her story and those left out, and by the limits set by the time frame of the text. In the text, Berezaf's reality begins with her arrival in New Zealand and ends with her present, a projected future for the reader. Necessarily limited in scope by length, aspects of her life included in the short text are restricted to her TOPs course and her progress towards employment. No life or self other than studying and work is represented in the text.

In terms of community and historical context, she is presented as Ethiopian and as a member of a family, but other than this she is without history and an individual operating or being acted upon without community.

Finally, the type of job defined as success, the limit of career progress for the reader as projected by this text as far as it goes, is the menial position of a cafeteria worker.

### 3.5.2 The critical questions

The critical focus of the lesson was on the content rather than the language of the text. The questions (Figure 2) drew on several critical literacy sources but in particular they owe much to Apol et. al., (2003). The texts under examination in that study were historical fiction and thus, like this text, narratives based on real events. The thrust of Apol et al.'s critical aims for their students was to highlight the 'motivatedness' and 'constructedness' of the texts they were examining, in particular by examining representations and distortions of truths in the texts under examination.

The first eight questions were designed for group discussion, preferably groups of students who shared a first language and otherwise with translations of the questions if that became necessary. The groups were asked to discuss the questions and then collaboratively write their answer, or where more than one opinion prevailed, write their answers, in English. Each group had one handout on which to write their responses.

The first of the questions is straightforward and requires a simple answer but they become more complex conceptually as they progress. I did not have a sense of how culturally determined and therefore how accessible the concepts contained in the questions were; in part I wanted to find out.

The questions started by drawing  attention to the conditions of production and reception (Questions 1 and 2); from there the intention was to lead the learners to speculate on and discuss the text's implicit messages (Questions 3 and 4), followed by

an attempt to encourage the learners to consciously recognise the choices made by the writer in terms of content included or excluded from the narrative (Questions 5 to 8).

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1. Who do you think wrote Berezaf's story?

2. Why did Rose choose this story for the class? Why didn't she choose a different story?

3. What do you think Rose wants you to think or learn or believe from Berezaf's story?

4. How does Berezaf's story help her do this?

5. Is this story a true story?

6. Is this story all the truth, the whole truth? What parts of Berezaf's story are not written here?

7. Are any texts the whole truth? c

8. What different things would you write in a story ?

    a)      to send home to family in your country
    b)      for people from your country who are thinking of coming to New Zealand
    c)      for Kiwi school children to read about refugees in New Zealand
    d)      for New Zealand refugees who already have jobs and are settled.

9. How does this story make you feel about your life in New Zealand?

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*Figure 2: The Critical Questions*

The overall intention of the first eight questions was for the readers to openly recognise and explore the fact that this text, like all texts, is "put together in particular ways by particular people with particular agendas hoping for particular effects" (Comber, cited in Apol et al., 2003, p. 434). This was an exercise in conscientization, but with a difference: I did not assume either that the students were unaware of these dynamics, or that this approach would be liberating. The aim was to create the conditions for the learners to be more able to select and express their stance in relation to the ideological content, to choose which messages they resisted and to which they acceded.

Question 9, which asked the learners about their emotional response to the text, was posed not as a discussion question but to be answered individually. Thus, having prepared the ground to approach the text critically, the point of this question was to

make the learners' personal reactions to the ideology in the text explicit both to me, and to them in preparation for writing a countertext.

**3.6 Pre-teaching the vocabulary used in the critical questions.**

I selected five words and phrases from the critical questions to pre-teach in the lessons leading up to the study. I presented two of these, *text* (Question 7) and *settled* (question 8, iv), in the simple and concrete sense in which they are used in the critical questions. The other three, *believe* (question 4), *how do you feel about ...* (question 9), and *the truth, the whole truth* (question 6), required more than a receptive understanding for the students to be able to respond to the questions. For these the practice I provided involved the learners actively using the phrases in the sense used in the questions. To practise the first two phrases, activities involved students discussing their beliefs, opinions and feelings on different topics. The handout for one of the exercises devised to practise the concept of *the whole truth* in a numeracy lesson on fractions, which refers to issues topical in the class at the time, is included in Appendix D.

**3.7 Language and reading comprehension lesson**

I presented the text in a separate lesson from the critical questions, in the first half of the four-hour teaching day. In this lesson, the class read the teaching text for the first time, discussed and answered comprehension questions and worked on vocabulary, sentence construction and paragraphing. Between this lesson and the critical literacy lesson there was a twenty minute break.

There is some debate in the literature about whether discrete skills should be taught at all. In this I agree with Hammond & Macken-Horarik (1999), believing that students cannot be expected to analyse and critique a text unless they are able to engage with it.

> "Engaging with the meanings of texts requires much time and effort on the part of both the teacher and the students. Such engagement includes an awareness of alphabetic codes, comprehension of texts, recognition of the cultural significance of specific genres, the ability to construct well-formed and cohesive texts, and the ability to undertake reflexive and critical analysis of texts" (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999. p. 531).

**3.8 The critical literacy lesson**

The critical literacy lesson lasted an hour and forty minutes and was observed by two experienced teachers.

**3.8.1 Introduction and instructions**

I began by asking the students to recap the story and to give their comments on it. I then explained my lesson plan and gave a simplified version of my overall objectives for the lesson, saying that the teaching text was my choice for them, that I wanted to know their reactions to my choice, and that I also wanted them to think about the text in a different way. I told them that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions but that what I really wanted to know was their own thoughts.

**3.8.2 Grouping for the discussion of the critical questions**

I then asked the class to form groups for discussion. I told them I thought it best if they formed groups with others who spoke the same language so that they could discuss the questions without a language barrier, but that the choice was theirs and if they wanted they could even work individually.

Most of the students followed my suggestion and moved into groups with a common first language. The exceptions were the one Eritrean man (student 3), who paired up with an Ethiopian woman (student 7) and the two other students who were the only speakers of their first languages (students 1 and 2) who waited to be told where to go. I judged that they would not function as a pair together and asked them to join two of the three smallest groups, the Afghani pair and the Turkish pair. The two students in the Eritrean/Ethiopian pair both had a good grasp of each other's first languages. The resulting grouping is shown in Table 2 below.

Once everyone was seated I explained that I would give each group one or two question and answer sheets, but they were to write the group's answers on only one sheet. The learners were to discuss each question and answer, allowing everyone to express their opinion, and to decide collaboratively on what to write down. I suggested they appointed a scribe, explained again that there were no right or wrong answers but all answers were acceptable, and told them that they need not write only one answer, but two or three answers if they wanted to.

Although translations of the critical questions were made available for the three students who were the only native speakers of their own languages, only Student 1 took this option.

| | Student | Country | Language | Age | Years of Formal Education | Years in NZ | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group 1** | 4 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 20 | 9 | 1 | F |
| | 5 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 18 | 10 | 1 | F |
| | 6 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 26 | 0 | 3 | F |
| **Group 2** | 1 | The Cook Islands | Puka Pukan | 21 | 5 | 3 | F |
| | 8 | Turkey | Turkish | 19 | 5 | 1 | F |
| | 9 | Turkey | Turkish | 19 | 5 | 1 | F |
| **Group 3** | 2 | Sri Lanka | Tamil | 34 | 12 | 2 | F |
| | 10 | Afghanistan | Pashto | 20 | 6 | -1 | F |
| | 11 | Afghanistan | Pashto | 21 | 7 | -1 | F |
| **Group 4** | 3 | Eritrea | Tigrinya | 28 | 8 | -1 | M |
| | 7 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 21 | 10 | 1 | F |
| **Group 5** | 12 | Iran | Farsi | 32 | 10 | -1 | F |
| | 13 | Iran | Farsi | 26 | 7 | 3 | M |
| | 14 | Iran | Farsi | 23 | 9 | 3 | M |
| | 15 | Iran | Farsi | 26 | 11 | 2-3 | M |

*Table 2: Group Breakdown*

### 3.8.3 Discussion of critical questions 1 - 8

I began the discussion by verbally modelling the first question "*Who do you think wrote Berezaf's story?*" Several of the students volunteered the answer "you", one said

another teacher had written it, and Student 13 commented that I had chosen it for my study, all of which I accepted without comment. Student 13 then asked me what the point of the question was and I replied that I wanted to know who they thought wrote it and we would discuss the question afterwards.

The learners then discussed and answered the questions. I had expected the discussion phase of the lesson to take about forty-five minutes with some leeway but in fact I had to stop the discussions after an hour and a quarter of focussed, almost uninterrupted talking and writing in which all the students, except Student 1, appeared to be actively involved.

In the largest group (Group 5) the learners took turns reading the question aloud in English and then translating it. Learners in all groups developed answers by looking for the words they needed in their bilingual dictionaries and sometimes checking with me. I walked around the room monitoring, giving feedback and answering questions, which were few to begin with. Questions 1 to 5 seemed to pose few problems but the groups began to have difficulties with question 6.

Question 6 asked whether the story was all the truth or the whole truth.  In spite of the students having had some practice with this concept I felt compelled to stop the class after paraphrasing it to two different groups and seeing a general difficulty. I revisited the idea, using and eliciting verbal examples of the limited truth of some commonly expressed stereotypes of New Zealand and their own countries, talked about the way we can misunderstand people's characters when we have only known them in a limited context, and referred to the discussions we had previously had on the subject and the way I had tried to explain the concept.  However, my attempts to explain were not successful or the learners were unable to translate them to the context of the teaching text. Eventually I reluctantly gave them the example of Berezaf's family, as an aspect of her story which was probably a very important aspect of her life, but which was barely mentioned in the text.

After this fairly unproductive discussion of Question 6 I verbally asked the class Question 7, whether they thought any texts were the 'whole' truth.  Only one learner responded, citing the Bible as such an example. The rest of the class were silent. I decided at this point to abandon my clearly unsuccessful attempts to explain, concluding

that the notion of *the whole truth* as I was presenting it, is culturally specific, and if it was worth pursuing I would need to provide more extensive scaffolding.

The class returned to the task of answering the questions in their groups but having dealt with Question 6, immediately experienced problems with Question 8. The question was: *What different things would you write in a story -*

- a) *to send home to family in your country*
- b) *for people from your country who are thinking of coming to New Zealand*
- c) *for kiwi school children to read about refugees in New Zealand*
- d) *for New Zealand refugees who already have jobs and are settled.*

I stopped the class again to try to explain my meaning. This time I referred directly to the context of the question, gave them examples of how I might personally answer the question and elicited one or two examples from the learners.

After an hour and a quarter, when I decided to stop the activity because of time constraints, the students were reluctant to do so and asked for more time to finish answering the last questions.

### 3.8.4 Feedback from the class about their responses to Questions 1 - 8

The length of time spent on discussing and answering the questions left less than fifteen minutes for feedback and question 9. I had planned the feedback session to be a group discussion and exchange of ideas across groups but what eventuated, due to time constraints, was no more than a wrap-up session.

The groups' written responses were collected as data.

### 3.8.5 Question 9: How does this story make you feel about your life in New Zealand?

There was not enough time before the end of the lesson for Question 9 so I asked the learners to answer this question at home and give it to me the following day.

### 3.9 The students' texts

The following afternoon the students gave me their responses to question 9 and we discussed the previous day's lesson. I then asked them to write a story which was their

'answer' to Berezaf's story. I asked them first to think of a person they would like to write about, and then gave them the instruction to "write the story you think teachers should give you in this class." There was much discussion and this explanation evolved into "the story you would like to read in class", "the story you think would be good for learning English in TOPs classes", and at their instigation, "a story for next semester's Level 2 TOPs class to read in class." The learners began this task in class and I asked them to finish it in their own time and give it to me when I next saw them the following week.

The next week only about half the students had written a countertext. I asked the students to recall the story and repeated the instructions. As a result, the following week I received at least one text from all but two learners, including the absent members of the class, two from four students and three from one student. The learners' texts were collected as data. I also copied the texts, made comments and suggested corrections on the copies, and returned them to the learners as I would do in an ordinary lesson. Some of the students typed up their stories in later classes and some gave permission for their texts to be used as teaching material in future reading classes.

### 3.10 Data collection methods and instruments

The data for the study falls into two parts which correspond to the two stages of the study: the critical literacy lesson and the learners' countertexts.

Qualitative approaches recognise that different types of inquiry are sensitive to different real world nuances, and that different sources, personal interpretations and/or theories may yield different results (Patton, 2002). In this tradition a variety of methods and data sources, or triangulation, is said to strengthen a study and enhance credibility by countering concern that a study's findings are simply an artefact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's bias (Patton). Triangulation involves not only combining a variety of observers, theories, methods and/or empirical materials but a variety which have complementary strengths and weaknesses.

### 3.10.1 Data collection and analysis for the critical literacy lesson

My primary aim for the lesson was to gauge the effectiveness of the questions, not only as critical literacy methodology per se, but also in terms of my entry point: I wanted to know how accessible the concepts contained in the questions were to this student group. The data for this part of the study was obtained from the learners' responses to the

critical questions and through self and peer observation of the lesson. Video recording was considered as a data collection instrument but abandoned for practical reasons, which will be explained later in this section.

**3.10.1.1 Observation**

Observation is a natural and obvious technique to record the actions and behaviour of people, its main advantage being its directness (Robson 2002). Observation of the lesson served to complement the data provided by the learners' written responses to the questions by providing contextual information regarding participant behaviour.

As an inherent weakness of observation, Robson raises the question of selective attention. As observers, he writes, our interests, experience and expectations all affect what we attend to as well as determining our selective 'encoding' and interpretation of what we observe. This can be a particular disadvantage of a teacher-researcher observing her own lesson as I did. The two invited observers provided a form of investigator triangulation regarding behavioural information and interpretation and also by their evaluation of the materials and teaching methodology in context.

The invited observers were both experienced teachers with broad backgrounds in teaching EAL as well as having extensive experience teaching students of this profile in this setting. The advantage of peer observation is that the observers know the context, which gives them an informed perspective from which to evaluate and comment on the lesson, the teaching, and the reactions of the learners.

The most commonly cited weakness of observation as an instrument is the observer effect, which refers to the extent to which the presence of an observer changes the behaviour of those under observation. For this observation, what Robson calls strategies of minimal interaction were employed to minimise the presence of the observers. These include avoiding eye contact, not reinforcing attempts at interaction, planning one's position in the environment to be out of the way but also avoiding doing these things to an extent that they reinforce any interest and disturbance inevitably produced. Although the presence of the observers in the small classroom undoubtedly affected the behaviour of the learners, it is impossible to gauge the extent of this effect on the learners. This is especially so since the observers merely added to an atmosphere already heightened and rarefied by the preparatory activities mentioned previously, which had ensured that nobody was under any illusion that this was an ordinary lesson. The overall effect of

these factors, including perhaps the presence of the observers, appears to have been stimulating rather than inhibiting, evidenced in the high attendance on the day and the positively energetic and focused quality of attention the learners gave the tasks.

Whereas it is impossible to know the extent to which the observers affected the students' behaviour, there is no doubt that their presence affected mine. Although the students apparently rose to the occasion, I was stage struck. I fumbled verbal explanations and was less responsive to what was actually taking place than I would have been under normal circumstances. However, since the learners who were well prepared, appeared to be acting independently almost regardless of the quality of my instruction, and since the focus of my interest was the questions rather than my presentation, I do not believe this affected the outcomes of the study in any significant way.

On the scale of highly structured to unstructured observation, this observation was towards the unstructured end, what Robson refers to as 'informal information gathering' (p. 194). This describes observation that allows the observers considerable freedom on what information is gathered and how it is recorded. In this study the invited observers were given only the aims and outlines of the research project, the lesson plan and materials, and a summary of the critical literacy themes upon which these were based. The less structured the observation, the more demanding it is of the observer but as Robson comments, unstructured observation works in the interests of complexity and completeness. As a consequence of their open-ended brief, the observers each provided different and valuable sets of comment, criticism and discussion which reflected their different perspectives.

**3.10.1.2 The learners' written responses to the critical questions**

The learners' written responses to the critical questions provide a direct indication of how effective the questions were as critical literacy tools. They are also indirectly informative about the learners' reactions to the ideologies implicit in the teaching text and their attitudes to me as teacher and researcher.

**3.10.1.3 Video recording**

For this study the difficulties presented by video recording outweighed the advantages. There are many advantages to video recording for this kind of analysis and they lie

mainly in the density of the data provided which allows for retrospective analysis at leisure and in much greater depth than other methods (Edwards and Westgate, 1994).

Against this, there was the question of involving the students who were uncertain about being filmed. The issue was decided, however, on practical grounds: the classroom was too small for the viewfinder to take in more than a few students when filming from a static viewpoint and it would be too intrusive to employ an extra person to move around the crowded classroom with a camera.

### 3.10.2   The students' countertexts and semi-structured interviews

The second part of the study involved the student texts. The two sources of data for these were the texts themselves and semi-structured interviews with the learners.

### 3.10.2.1   The countertexts

The data for the countertexts were the student texts themselves but equally, conversations held with the writers about their texts in individual semi-structured interviews.

### 3.10.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to discuss the meaning of the texts with their authors to realise a fuller understanding of what the writers wished to convey, and to try to understand their significance or otherwise as countertexts or cultural action with or against the teaching text. The interviews served as an opening for the student writers to expand, clarify and even change their meanings. Ultimately they served to involve the writers in the construction of my interpretations of their texts and in this sense to increase what Krefting (as cited in Thompson, 2000) refers to as 'truth value'. Truth value refers to the extent to which the researcher is confident that she or he has accurately reconstructed and represented the realities revealed by the study's informants, realities which must also be credible to the participants themselves.

> "[A] qualitative study is credible when it presents such accurate descriptions or interpretations of human experience that people who also share that experience would immediately recognize the descriptions. Truth value is perhaps the most important criterion for the assessment of qualitative research" (Krefting, as cited in Thompsen et al., 2000, p. 216).

Questions in semi-structured interviews are normally specified, but the interviewer is free to improvise and probe beyond the answers to seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to adjust the questions in response to the differing content of the students' individual texts or to what the interviewees chose to discuss, to omit questions which seemed unnecessary with particular interviewees or include additional ones, to rephrase, give explanations or try different approaches where understanding became a problem. Thus, within a broad structure the interviewer enters into a dialogue with the interviewee. The main advantage of the semi-structured interview is that it allows people to answer more on their own terms than the standardized interview permits, while still providing a greater structure for comparability (May, 2001).

The set of questions for the interviews was as follows:

Talk to me a bit about your story.

Do you think your story is a good story to give the students in a TOPs class?

Is your story very different from Berezaf's story?

How is it different from Berezaf's story?

Would you like to read this kind of story in class?

Why do you think this is a good story for the TOPs students to read in class?

Why did you choose to write this story for the class?

The intention of the first question or prompt, was to invite the interviewees to talk freely about their texts. Where the interviewees took this opportunity, their responses frequently formed the basis for the remainder of the interview. This provided the interview with some of the characteristics of an unstructured interview (May 2001) as it enabled interviewees to speak within their own frames of reference and therefore, for my preconceptions to be challenged.

> "The truly open-ended question allows the person being interviewed to select from among that person's full repertoire of possible responses those that are most salient" (Patton 2002, p.354).

The interviews were done on a voluntary basis and tape recorded with the learners' permission. They took place over two lessons when the regular class teacher for that time was holding individual needs assessment interviews with the students, and had

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provided the class with work sheets to complete at their own pace. The interviews therefore did not intrude on the learners' private or class time.

All of the learners agreed to being interviewed and recorded and several asked to listen to the recording once it was finished. One learner was absent for the last few weeks of the course and I was unable to interview him. In one case the recording failed, and I was unable to re-schedule it. Student 2, who felt unable to express her thoughts adequately in English, elected to return for a second interview in the school holidays with her secondary school aged daughter as interpreter.

### 3.10.3 Triangulation in the study

The study overall uses three of four types of triangulation identified by Denzin (as cited in Patton, 2002). The first is data triangulation, the use of different sources of evidence involving different times, spaces, and persons. The data for this study was drawn from a pool of fifteen students, and the two stages of the study took place in different times and spaces.

The second type of triangulation is investigator triangulation, which in this study applies only to the classroom setting. Data from the *etic* and *emic* perspectives of the observers and the researcher contributed to the analysis of the classroom events, materials and outcomes.

The third type of triangulation used in this study was methodological triangulation. Several methods were employed over the study as a whole. These include the use of observation in the lesson, discourse analysis of the students' written responses and interviews, semi-structured interviews, and reflection which took place over the period of the study and the writing of the thesis.

### 3.11 Data reduction, coding and analysis

### 3.11.1 The observation data

I had separate meetings with each of the observers, who gave me their observations and comments in the form of notes they had made during and after the lesson. We discussed these comments in depth and I recorded the content of the discussions on paper. I later combined their contributions with my own observations in one document, grouping together those items which were in broad agreement, noting the details which supported

these themes, and recording the separate finer points each of the observers raised under separate headings.

I have drawn directly on this document in the discussion and analysis of the critical lesson and the main themes that emerged have contributed to shaping the development of my understanding of critical literacy, my role as a teacher, and to the conclusions of this study.

### 3.11.2 Coding and analysis of the learners' written responses to critical questions

The learners' written responses to the critical questions were broadly structured by the pre-determined framework provided by the questions. Categorisation and deconstruction within the categories provided by the questions involved two layers of analysis: firstly analysis of the learners' understanding of the surface meanings of the questions, which was an issue in several instances and concerns how effectively the question was expressed; and secondly, if the surface meaning of the question appeared to have been understood, analysis of the learners' understanding of and response to the concepts contained in the questions.

Where the meaning of the questions appeared to have been misunderstood, the focus of inquiry was on why this was so. The observers' data contributed significantly in this area.

Where the questions appeared to have been understood, coding proceeded by grouping similar responses and comparing and contrasting dissimilar responses. Analysis of these responses was based on the meanings of the responses in relation to the individual critical questions concerned and with reference to the research questions. Analysis also took into account contextual information provided by observation, prior knowledge of the learners and the context, and the limitations of cross cultural interpretation in these circumstances.

The final step in analysis involved looking at overall patterns and themes provided by the responses and linking these into an overview of the lesson from which I drew my conclusions.

### 3.11.3 Data reduction, coding and analysis of students' countertexts and interviews

Data reduction, coding, and analysis of the student texts, and interviews, was done together since the purpose of interviews was to elucidate the meaning of the student texts.

My approach to understanding the texts is best described by what Silverman (2000) refers to as a *narrative approach*. I was more interested in the texts as stories describing some aspect of the worlds of the writers / speakers than as "true" pictures of "reality". I was interested in the ideologies they conveyed and the ways in which the writers had constructed their identities in relation to the original teaching text and teaching context, and I interpreted them as narratives generated jointly by writer and reader, interviewer and interviewee.

The greatest difficulties of less structured interviews come with the coding and analysis. Since the interview is less tailored to pre-determined categories the data are less easy to deal with.

May (2001) and Silverman (2000) describe the coding and analysis of interview data as a slow process of active interpretive work which starts with writing up notes, transcribing tapes, moving data around and simply listening and re-listening to tapes and in this case reading and re-reading the  student texts.  I began coding by comparing and contrasting the content, looking for emergent themes under simple topic headings, putting together those items and themes that were similar and separating out those that were different. Kraft (2002) refers to this as a pattern analysis.   As themes and patterns began to emerge from the data I began a structural analysis (Kraft), which involves linking patterns and structures together and finding consistent relationships among them. To assist the process I used colour coding and matrices to allow for cross classification and greater complexity, a method referred to in Patton (2002).

The problem with coding schemes is that they can lay down a powerful conceptual grid from which it is difficult to escape and force data into categories generated. There is also the danger that coding deflects attention away from data that does not fit uncategorised categories (Silverman, 2000 and Patton, 2002). All of this amounts to distortion and loss of actual data. However, this is perhaps unavoidable because, as Patton comments, without categorisation there is chaos and confusion.

Data reduction and coding of the countertexts and interviews were anchored to some degree by the categories generated by the teaching text, the aims of my research and theoretical interests.

## 3.12 Summary

In summary, this was a reflexive study which involved my own engagement and that of my students, with the two powerful discourses of critical literacy and that of my teaching environment for the purpose of deconstruction. This chapter has included a description of the epistemological grounds and research approach, the context, the procedure followed, and a description and rationale for data collection and data reduction methods and instruments.

# Chapter 4

# Findings

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings in two major sections. The first section concerns the lesson in which the learners discussed the critical questions, Questions 1 – 8, in groups and wrote answers collaboratively, and Question 9 which individual learners took home to complete. The second section concerns the student texts and includes data from interviews held with the students about their texts.

## 4.2 Findings from the critical lesson

The data from the critical lesson consists of my observations during the lesson, the accounts of the two invited observers, and the learners' written responses to the questions.

### 4.2.1 Observation

Observation was integral to this research. The observations, and particularly the critique of the two invited observers, contributed to the findings and outcomes in defining ways, notably in relation to sharpening my own critical awareness.

#### 4.2.1.1 The teacher

The observers commented that my verbal input was inconsistent. While the groups were working on the questions, I monitored their progress, checking that the students knew how to answer the questions, affirming their ideas and supporting them when they asked questions and generally taking a low profile. However, at times I responded to difficulties and differences they had with the concepts by assuming the truth of the very points raised in question. At other times I responded to their questions and the answers they were writing by asking leading questions, thereby positioning myself as expert although I had told the class that I wanted them to answer the questions within their own frames of reference.

One observer recorded that the "norms" of the lesson, in Hallidayan terms, were students sitting while the teacher stands, but also that I lowered my bodily posture while talking to groups or individuals.

**4.2.1.2 The students**

One of the main points of the observational data is that an hour and a quarter of concentrated discussion in a single activity is very unusual in a low level language / literacy class. Much of the activity revolved around the language, looking up words in a dedicated manner, and discussing the questions and wording of the responses. One observer noted that in the terms of Hallidayan Discourse Analysis (Eggins & Slade, 1997) the "key" was positive and exploratory.

**4.2.1.3 The lesson methodology**

The observers supported the use of questions as a device to raise critical issues. It was evident however, that in standard classroom conditions which these were not, a preferable methodology would be for the small groups to discuss only two or three questions at a time.

The grouping appeared to work well for all, with the exception of Student 1 and possibly student 2. These students were the only speakers of their first languages, and as a consequence, had to discuss the questions in English.

Both observers noted Student 1's reluctance to join others when the groups were being formed, her lack of participation in the discussion, and what one observer described as her difficulty relating to the exercise.

Student 2, in contrast, did engage with the questions and participate in the discussions but appeared to play a less active role in her group than the two other group members who were younger, sisters, and shared a first language. Group 3's responses to the critical questions support this observation as the voices of one or both the sisters are identifiable and dominate. This can be seen in the choice of vocabulary (Question 2), in their references to Afghanistan, their country of origin, and in the content, which links to these students' texts (Questions 8 (i), (iii) and (iv)).

In Chapter 5, insights from the observational data regarding possible reasons for students' differing levels of engagement in the discussion, and possible alternative approaches, will be discussed in more detail.

**4.2.1.4 The lesson materials**

The observers raised several issues relating to the level of difficulty, choice of questions, and my language choices within the questions.

It was very clear that the final two questions, 7 and 8, were too difficult. Question 7 was concerned with the intrinsically difficult issues related to the meaning of 'truth', and Question 8 was hypothetical, asking for examples of different types of content students would choose to include when writing texts for different audiences.

The observers and I noted the need for more scaffolding, and the observation data includes suggestions regarding the wording, layout and presentation of the questions, and different approaches to the concepts involved. These will contribute to the discussion of the lesson in Chapter 5.

One of the language points raised concerned the difficult phrasing of Question 4, "*How does Berezaf's story help her do this?*" This issue will be raised again with the presentation of the students' responses.

The remaining points raised by the observers concerned the language and were theoretical. The first drew attention to my use of the third person *Rose*, rather than the more direct first person *I*, when referring to myself in the questions. For example, "Why did Rose choose this story for the class?" This point was raised in the light of Halliday's construct, tenor (Halliday and Hasan, 1985). Tenor refers to the social roles and relations of formality, power and affect which exist between interactants, as reflected in and/or constructed by language choices. This point will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Two items of vocabulary in the questions were challenged. The first was the term *refugee* in reference to people who had entered New Zealand as refugees but are now New Zealand residents (Questions 8c and d). The second was *home*, in reference to the reader's country of origin, as in the question:

> "*What different things would you write in a story to send home to family in your country?*" (Question 8a).

The point being made about both items concerns the way they work to constitute the subject, a question of both politics and accuracy. When, for example, do these students stop being a refugees and how is a refugee distinguished from a "Kiwi" (Question 8c)? Equally, where would home be for the reader, or "your country" (Question 8a) - is it not New Zealand?

However, class events and the groups' written responses, including the student texts, give an informative picture of how accessible the concepts were and to what degree the questions were effective.

On the choice of questions, the observers also noted key omissions from the lesson. One such omission was that at no point was the printed source of the teaching text raised or discussed. Also noted was an absence of questions concerning power relations and identity construction. These two issues lie at the heart of critical literacy and might be said to be particularly relevant in the case of this text.

The groups' written responses to the critical questions are presented below.

**4.2.2 Student responses to critical questions 1 to 8**

The full set of written responses to Questions 1 to 8 can be found in Appendix E. In the following section I present the responses under headings representing the three main types of question: the question of authorship, ideology and messages embedded in the teaching text, and the role of audience in choice of content .

**4.2.2.1 The question of authorship: Question 1.** *Who do you think wrote Berezaf's story?*

To this question, all groups answered, "Rose", demonstrating a general awareness that this was a teacher generated text, although I was not the author.

**4.2.2.2 The ideology and messages embedded in the teaching text: Questions 2, 3 and 4.**

> *2. Why did Rose choose this story for the class? Why didn't she choose a different story?*
>
> *3. What do you think Rose wants you to think or learn or believe from Berezaf's story?*
>
> *4. How does Berezaf's story help her do this?*

Question 2 was intended as an open question, to invite all or any ideas about conditions of production and reception regarding teacher/author motivation. Question 3 specifically aimed to focus on the ideology, and Question 4, on persuasive strategies employed by the teaching text.

Four of the five groups answered Question 2 by clearly citing both aspects of the principle messages contained in the teaching text, and /or the persuasive strategies of reader identification and using a role model as my reasons for choosing this text. Group 2 stated my reason as wanting the students to learn English, an answer which is ambiguous in terms of conveying whether or not the students understood the question.

The same four groups, whose answers were so clear for Question 2, also clearly understood Question 3, all citing aspects of the ideology in the teaching text. Group 2, whose answer to Question 1 was ambiguous, returned a blank for both this and the following question, implying that they did not understand the questions fully enough to answer them.

Question 4 clearly presented great difficulties, in fact none of the groups understood the intended meaning. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the wording of Question 4 was problematic, specifically, the use of *her* and *this* in place of the full referents. As a consequence, all groups had difficulty answering this question.

Overall, although Question 4 was problematic, all groups show at least a minimum awareness of the underlying messages of the teaching text, and the responses of Groups 1, 3 and 5, show an understanding of the overall intent of this group of questions, providing answers to both the issues of subtexts, and textual strategies in their responses to Questions 2 and 3. The groups' responses are as follows.

Question 2. *Why did Rose choose this story for the class? Why didn't she choose a different story?*

Group 2's response could be read to refer to an aspect of the text's embedded message – that the readers should learn English, or simply meaning that as a teacher, I give students texts in general, because I want them to learn English.

> Group 2: *Because she wants student learning speak English.*

Group 4's answer is also unspecific. I understand that it refers to the use of reader identification through a role model. However, it may, for example, be referring to the graded language of the text.

> Group 4: *Because we're have hunrstanding this story [because we understand this story] and very often and themself.*

Groups 1, 3, and 5 include both ideology and the writer's strategy of reader identification in their answers, noting specifically that Berezaf was a refugee. Groups 3 and 5 extend this observation, referring to the device of using a role model: "*Rose show me a success life* (Group 3). These answers cite the qualities and goals modelled in the teaching text as 'success', diligence, being a good student, friendliness and workplace achievement.

Group 1 also suggests a personal motivation, which is that I like the class.

> Group 1: *Rose's like this class, we are refugee from Ethiopia and she's motivate[d] for success our life*
>
> Group 3: *Because this story is about a refugee girl. She is very hard working and she could learn about working in NZ, practise her English and learn new skills – Rose show me a success life.*
>
> Group 5: *because she was good student and she's a refugee and a success and she was hard workers and friendly and she's a supervisor.*

Question 3: *What do you think Rose wants you to think or learn or believe from Berezaf's story?*

Three groups answered this question with aspects of the ideology in the teaching text. Group 4 also suggest a personal motivation, which is that I think the messages will be helpful.

> Group 1: *we are thinking about Rose thinking how to get success? to get success hardworking quck learn and friendly.*
>
> Group 3: *I think Rose wants this we learn language and work in NZ and we believe the story because hard workers are always success.*
>
> Group 4: *We belive from the story new Zeland works hard work quick to learn new tasks and friendly: Roses thinks very helpful*

Group 5, whose answer to Question 2 referred to the ideology, here cited the textual strategy of using a role model.

> Group 5: *because she has good story and she passed all challenges in life and very well because* [and for this reason] *she* [is a] *pattern and hero for us.*

Question 4: *How does Berezaf's story help her do this?*

None of the groups understood the intended meaning of this question. Group 3 did not answer, and the remaining groups interpreted the question in three different ways.

Group 4 appeared to interpret the question as, *"How does Rose help the students?"*

> Group 4: *She teach very claver and very kind to help us writing Reading and talking*

Group 1 appeared to interpret the question as *"How does Berezaf's story help Rose help the students?"*

> Group 1: *This story helps to her the all students encourage for job & personal quality*

Groups 2 and 5 appear to have read critically beyond the text, and beyond the teaching ideology, to my personal motivations for doing this study. Group 2's answer is not immediately obvious but on reflection, I believe the question they were both answering was, *"How does Berezaf's story, or the whole exercise, benefit me (the teacher)?"*

> Group 2: *Maybe she got high* [maybe she will get promoted]
>
> *we help her* [we are helping her / we intend to help her]

> Group 5: *because she has good opportunity. for he's future.*

## 4.2.2.3 Questions of "truth" in texts: Questions 5, 6 and 7.

In terms of the lesson methodology, the intention of this group of questions was to encourage the learners to question the notion of uncomplex truth in texts, and whether any text can fully represent truth. From the research point of view, these questions were also designed to gauge the accessibility of the notion of 'the whole truth', and the learners' understanding of the concept.

Question 5: *Is this story a true story?*

To this, all groups answered, "*yes*".

Question 6:     *Is this story all the truth, the whole truth?*

        *What parts of Berezaf's story are  not written here?*

This question has two parts. To the first part, whether the teaching text was the whole truth, all groups answered in the affirmative. Groups 3 and 5 wrote no more on this question. Groups 1 and 4, however, followed this in the second part of the question by giving examples of what is missing from the text. The examples given, however, refer only to Berezaf's family. These answers only extend the example I used when the class showed difficulty with this question in the course of the lesson.

> Group 1: *She is married and she have two children & her husband work is teaching.*

> Group 4: *She is marride*

>        *She have two children*

>        *She have brother and sister*

>        *She have mather and father*

Group 2 gave a reason for their answer that the text is the whole truth, which is that I had given the text to them:

> Group 2: *Because this story from Roza*

Question 7. "*Are any texts the whole truth?*" Only Group 5 appears to have understood this question as it was intended, answering "yes of course". Groups 2 and 3 did not answer this question and the remaining groups answered as follows. The learner who suggested "the Bible" as an example of a text which is the whole truth when I asked the class verbally, was in Group 1.

> Group 1: *No, this different text.*

> Group 4: *Yes, because some times we can't Reading we can't writing    not got job so we will learn more English and writing and Reading*

**4.2.2.4 The role of audience in choice of content: Question 8.**

Question 8 concerns tailoring the content of texts to the intended audience. It asked the groups to suggest what content they would choose to include in texts written for four different example audiences.

Question 8. *What different things would you write in a story -*

   a)  *to send home to family in your country*

   b)  *for people from your country who are thinking of coming to New Zealand*

   c)  *for Kiwi school children to read about refugees in New Zealand*

   d)  *for New Zealand refugees who already have jobs and are settled*

The question elicited a set of responses that suggest partial but unstable understanding of the question. The answers of Groups 2 and 3 to part (d), for example, seem not to be written for, but about, the target audience, New Zealand refugees who already have jobs and are settled. Group 3, for example, wrote,

> *"Sara's life is very good because she is working. And she doesn't got any problem in langue and in job".*

Similarly, Group 4's response to (c) is not to explore possible content in a text for school children, but to express approval of New Zealand school children reading about refugees, "*Yes kiwi children to read about refugees in New Zealand."*

A quarter of the responses describe messages rather than, or as well as, content the students would choose to include (Question (b): Groups 4 & 5; Question (c): Group 5; Question (d): Groups 3 & 4.) Group 3, for example, responding to Question 8 (b), *What different things would you write in a story for people from your country who are thinking of coming to New Zealand*, wrote:

> *"This is very important. They learn some English, writing, reading and they well* [will] *hard work".*

This reflects at least in part, a lack of clarity on this distinction in the question. The question would, for example, have been improved had it read, "*What different things about your life would you write about in a story for ...".* However, the question and possible ways of answering it were discussed at length in the class before the groups

composed their answers. Consequently, the students' responses were not entirely dependent on the written question. The groups' responses to Question 8 are as follows.

Question 8 (a). What different things would you write in a story to send home to family in your country?

Three groups reported that they would write encouraging news to their family:

> Group 1: *I studies English language in AUT*

> Group 2: *My friend she is a refugee from Turkey + she arrive to NZ in 2000*

> Group 3: *I know on girl. she is refugee from Afghanistan. now she is good English speaking and she is working in immigration. and two days she works in supermarket.*

Group 4, in contrast, would write about difficulties:

> Group 4: *New Zealand I studied English but this country hard life Becouse languge very difficult my country and oll tings differnt ?*

Group 5 would not have adjusted the content, perhaps from the teaching text, or perhaps they would not censor what they would write to their family:

> Group 5: *same things.*

Question 8 (b). What different things would you write in a story for people from your country who are thinking of coming to New Zealand?

Group 1 chose to be discouraging:

> Group 1: *Don't coming NZ beacause this country bad weather.*

Two groups appear to have decided on encouraging content:

> Group 2: *She one years studid English now She has a restaurant and she a chef*

> Group 5: *for good life and new life. good future. for peaceful*

Group 4 would include a mixture of encouraging and discouraging opinion:

> Group 4: *refugees coming to New Zealand very nice country & has freedom but life very diffcult*

Group 3 responded with an opinion on how prospective immigrants should proceed if they immigrate. Their message corresponds with the ideology of the teaching text:

> Group 3: *This is very important. They learn some English, writing, reading and they well hard work.*

Question 8 (c). What different things would you write in a story for Kiwi school children to read about refugees in New Zealand?

Three groups reported that they would include information which explained their lives and presence in New Zealand.

> Group 1: *I come to New Zealand for studing and jobs.*

> Group 2: *She 1 years went to AUT for learning English.*

> Group 5: *let bet different* [a little bit different]. *Refugees has political problem in the cuntry.* [Refugees had political problems in their countries of origin.] *because same of refugees befor came to the NZ befor has job and life but the people need more fredien and people want choes.* [Although some refugees had jobs and lives there, people need more freedom and want choice.]

Group 5's response above, reads as a counter-response to the construction of identity in the teaching text – *"same of refugees befor came to the NZ befor has job and life"*.

The answer of Group 3 is a precursor to the student texts of two of its members, Students 10 and 11. These students both wrote about a protagonist called Sara from Afghanistan, who embodies aspects of the teaching text ideology. The content of their proposed text for "kiwi school children" appears to be in part a 'submissive' response to the teaching text ideology, endorsing the value of study, and like Group 5, above, in part a counter-response to the identity constructed in the teaching text, ("*she went to Univercity*"). Sara appears too, as a model of success, in this group's answer to Question 8 (a), and recurs in their response to the following question, (d).

> Group 3: *Sara is came from Afghanistan 15 years ago. She lives in Auckland. First she studied in school. And then she went to Univercity. She was very clever.*

As mentioned above, Group 4's response expresses opinion on the idea of New Zealand children reading about refugees:

> Group 4: *Yes kiwi children to read about refugees in New Zealand.*

Question 8 (d). What different things would you write in a story for New Zealand refugees who already have jobs and are settled?

The responses to this question reflect that at this stage of the lesson, the learners were under pressure to finish quickly and hand in their answer sheets. Group 5 did not write a response. Groups 2 and 3 wrote about, not for, the target audience, Group 2 did not manage to complete their answer:

> Group 2: *Now she very happy work some people and*

> Group 3: *Sara's life is very good because she is working. And she doesn't got any problem in langue and in job. She have got a success life. i like her work. I would be like a busy life.*

Group 1 expressed approval and encouragement, picking up the ideological themes of the teaching text:

> Group 1: *Oh, this is great countinues your jobs and one day to your worker. Thanks.*

Group 4 wrote an expression of shared appreciation for being in New Zealand and away from the difficulties of their countries of origin.

> Group 4:*Yes     new Zealand very helpful refuges quite cantry because my country ever day fighting thiscountry not politicol* [Yes, New Zealand is very helpful for refugees. It is a quiet country. In my country there is fighting every day, this country is not political.]

## 4.2.2.5 Overview of the how accessible the target concepts appeared to be for this group of students

Table 3 gives an overall picture of how accessible the target concepts in the questions appeared to be to the students in this class. The results also reflect both difficulties with the wording of the questions, which is particularly evident in relation to Question 4, and the additional explanations and scaffolding provided during the class.

All but Group 2 showed that they were fully aware or the conditions of production - the ideological subtexts in the teaching text and teacher motivation in using the text to teach reading. None of the students appeared to understand Question 4, which referred to textual strategies of persuasion in the teaching text, but it was clear from their responses to the other questions that they were aware of these strategies.

Partial understanding shown in the responses to Question 8 indicates that with more extensive scaffolding these students would have been able to respond to questions about the relationship between choice of content and audience.

The table reflects directly, in contrast, that Questions 6 and 7, which concern the concept of truth, were not successful to any degree.

| | Groups | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| 1.  Who do you think wrote Berezaf's story? | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 2.  Why did Rose choose this story for the class? Why didn't she choose a different story? | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 3.  What do you think Rose wants you to think or learn or believe from Berezaf's story? | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 4.  How does Berezaf's story help her do this? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5.  Is this story a true story? | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 6.  Is this story all the truth, the whole truth? What parts of Berezaf's story are not written here? | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 7.  Are any texts the whole truth? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 8.  What different things would you write in a story<br><br>   a)    to send home to family in your country?<br>   b)    for people from your country who are thinking of coming to New Zealand?<br>   c)    for Kiwi school children to read about refugees in New Zealand?<br>   d)    for New Zealand refugees who already have jobs and are settled? | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

***Table 3: Overview of the students' apparent understanding of the target concepts in the critical questions***

Key:
**3** Appears to have fully understood
**2** Appears to have at least partially understood
**1** Unclear whether has understood or not
**0**  Appears not to have understood

### 4.2.3 Individual responses to Question 9: *After reading Berezaf's story, how does it make you feel about your life in New Zealand?*

The purpose of Question 9 was somewhat similar to that of the student texts, an opportunity for the students to think about and express individual responses to the teaching text. Unlike the student texts, however, Question 9 asked for an immediate and specifically emotional response.

The following summary draws on extracts from these responses, the full versions of which can be found in Appendix F. The purpose here is to present a picture of how the class as a whole responded to the question. Individual responses to Question 9 are revisited in Section 4.3, where the student texts and interviews contribute to a thick description and more complete understanding of the way the students responded to the teaching text and methodology.

All fifteen students who participated in the critical discussions answered Question 9. The first notable finding is that fourteen of the responses, all but one (Student 2), address the ideological content of the teaching text, and ten reply directly to the two main subtextual messages of the teaching text: learn English and find a job (Students 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15). Two of the remaining students' responses address only one of these themes, English study (Students 6 and 8), and two (Students 5 and 10) address hard work, a secondary theme of the teaching text. One student (Student 2) responded with a comment unrelated to these themes.

The responses are grouped below according to four broadly different types of response. In the first grouping of four responses, the students answered the question with plain statements of study and / or employment plans. The second grouping is the largest, eight responses, and these read as positive responses to the teaching text. The third grouping is of two negative responses to the teaching text, and the last is a single response which introduces a new topic, unrelated to studying English or finding a job.

### 4.2.3.1 Responses which state study and/or employment plans without emotional content or opinion (4 responses: Students 4, 5, 7 and 15)

Three students (Students 4, 7 and 15) responded to this question with plain statements stating study and employment plans. Student 15, as an example, wrote,

> *Engish lagauge. After the I would like to be to job.*

Student 5's response is also a plan. She mentions hard work and learning, but these themes are not applied to learning English or employment. Her English course is only referred to in terms of it being over, at which time the writer would like to start enjoying life:

> *My feeling about my life in New Zealand, after these English course I would like hardworking quick learn and then enlarge my knowlege, start enjoy enjoyable life.*

**4.2.3.2 Positive responses to the teaching text (8 responses: Students 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 14)**

Eight responses communicate that the teaching text confirmed and / or reinforced ideology, intentions or rEALutions already held by the learners.

Four contain positive statements about the effect of the story on the readers. The phrases used are "*helpful*" (Student 1), "*Berezaf story my feel is good*" (Student 8),

"*Yesterday I read Berezaf's story so I felt good*" (Student 10) and, "*After reading this story, I feel very happy*" (Student 12).

In seven responses, the writers indicate that they found the teaching text motivating or encouraging to study hard or find a job (Students 1, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14). For example:

> Student 12: *After reading this story, I feel very happy because I would like very good finish study English and find good job.*
>
> Student 10: *this story showed me Success life. Maybe in the feauture I'll make my life success. And I'll very hard work. I'll enjoy my life.*
>
> Student 3: *I can could be to feel very nice New Zealand […].  I need learn.*

Student 9 conveys that she found the teaching text encouraging and that it made her think:

> *I came to NZ. My feel is got tired Because everything is different but I'm happy I want succes everythink first is speaking English after than I got good Job. I had some think from Berezaf Belechaw story.*

### 4.2.3.3 Negative responses to the teaching text (2 students: Students 6 & 13)

Two students' responses to the teaching text are clearly negative. Student 6 wrote,

> *I feeling Berezaf's*
>
> *I feeling study English.*
>
> *My life New Zealand no good because I feeling family Ethiopia.*

Supported by background knowledge and Student 6's interview data, which is reported in Chapter 6, I interpret her response in the following way: I identify with Berezaf, the protagonist, and feel strongly about learning English. However, I am unhappy in New Zealand (or, the teaching text also makes me feel unhappy about my life in NZ ), because my family is in Ethiopia and I miss them.

Student 13 expresses an uneasiness in his response, not with the ideology in the teaching text exactly, which is that if you work hard you can find a menial job, but with a related powerful ideology, that if you work hard anything is possible:

> *"I feeling shaky because af I study hord I can do anvthic I want"* [I feel shaky because if I study hard I can do anything I want].

### 4.2.3.4 One response which introduces a different topic

Student 2's response does not refer to study or work, but some thoughts on life in New Zealand. She writes,

> "*My feeling are New Zealand is peacefull contury. because young woman very safe"*.

### 4.2.3.5 Summary of responses to Question 9

Firstly, these responses overwhelmingly respond directly to the ideology in the teaching text.

As responses to the ideology, all but three communicate compliance or agreement with some aspect of the subtextual message. Resistance to aspects of the teaching text is also evident or suggested by alternative constructions of identity and in silences.

Three students indicated their work aspirations in their responses. These are notably more ambitious hopes or goals than that of the identity constructed for them in the teaching text. Student 3 would like to be a mechanic, Student 7 plans to study nursing, and Student 11 would like to be a doctor or pilot.

Three students wrote not about employment as the goal, but about quality of life as the reward for making the effort to study hard and find work (Students 3, 5 and 10). For example, Student 10 wrote, "*I'll enjoy my life*".

Part of the wording of two responses is identical. The second half of Student 1's response and the whole of Student 14's response reads, "*this story make my to more study English*". These are the only two students who did not write student texts. The possible significance of this will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Students 3 and 10 appear to express uncertainty about the outcomes they desired:

> Student 3: "*I can could be to feel very nice New Zealand.*"

> Student 10: "*Maybe in the feauture I'll make my life success.*"

Student 3's response above implies that at the time of writing he was unsatisfied with his life. Students 8 and 9, who are twin sisters, go further. They make the point that what they are experiencing and what is required of them as immigrants and non-native speakers is very difficult:

> Student 8:  "*My feel is today not bad my feel is very confused I am everiday thinking when I speak English very wel. My feel is tired.*
>
> Student 9:  "*I came to NZ. My feel is got tired Because everything is different*"


In terms of the feeling expressed, the largest group of responses, eight out of fifteen, express positive feelings about the teaching text. Four students did not express explicit feelings or opinions but showed their agreement. One of these, in contrast to the others in these two groups, was silent on the subjects of studying English and employment plans. Two students expressed difficulties with the teaching text, and one expressed her

thoughts on New Zealand, which are only indirectly connected to the topic of the teaching text.

## 4.3 Findings: the student texts

The data on the student texts consists of the texts themselves (Appendix A) and the individual semi-structured interviews with the students on their texts.

### 4.3.1 Introduction to the findings on the Student texts

Over a period of three weeks I received eighteen texts from thirteen of the fifteen students who attended the critical lesson. I also received three from the two students who were absent on the day of the critical lesson. The latter are also presented as data, for any insight they may provide in terms of the impact of the critical lesson, but they are treated as separate from the main body of work.

The purpose of the interviews was to check and clarify the meanings of the student texts with the authors. As such, the interview data is presented here in conjunction with the texts where it contributes to understanding the texts and the writers' intentions. The interviews served to check and confirm the meaning of the texts and the writers' intentions, but also, in some cases they served as an opportunity for the writers to adjust the content of the texts, add to it, and in some cases change it. In other words, the interviews were in many cases responses to the teaching text, and the whole exercise, in their own right. Where interviews have contributed additional data, it is clearly documented. In the event, the interviews were as meaningful in themselves, as critical teaching methodology, as any other stage of the study. The possible significance of this will be discussed in the following chapter.

Question 9 asked the students to express their affective response to the teaching text: "After reading Berezaf's story, how does it make you feel about your life in New Zealand?" These responses have also contributed to understanding the meanings of the student texts.

The texts range in length from 37 to 316 words. The majority take the topic and structure of the teaching text as their basis, adjusting these to the lives and identities of real subjects, who are either the writers themselves or people the writers know.

My interpretation of the meanings in the student texts and interviews is inevitably influenced by my personal knowledge of the students concerned, and my generalised understanding of the concerns, cultures and backgrounds of learners with similar backgrounds, and the challenges they face. It is also taken as given that my cultural standpoint, and my personal understanding and experiences of language learning, migration, cultural clash and 'symbolic violence' (Kumarvadivelu, 1999, p.476) is the unspoken matrix through which all this is filtered.

### 4.3.2 Coding and presentation

The texts are not presented in full as raw data, due to length considerations, but in terms of key points of commonality and difference that emerged during coding. Detailed deconstruction of key texts only, will be presented, with the purpose of clarifying my methodology and documenting emergent themes.

The main theme of coding is the way the student texts respond to the ideology of the teaching text, and as part of this, the way identity is constructed in relation to the identity constructed for the students in the teaching text. All texts are read as being in some sense an expression of the writer's response to the subtexts in the teaching text. This includes one student text in which the writer's identity is constructed entirely without reference to learning English or getting a job.

The texts fall into three primary categories. These are, firstly, texts in which the students have written about themselves, which I refer to as the "autobiographical texts" (10 texts); secondly, texts about someone else, named the "third person texts" (7 texts); and thirdly, one text which offers direct advice and tips to student readers on how to attain a successful life, which will be referred to as the "advice text". Non-response to the writing exercise (2 students), is a fourth category.

These categories are presented in a progression from texts which more obviously converge in terms of the messages in the teaching text, through to the more divergent.

### 4.3.3 The autobiographical student texts
   **(10 Texts: Students 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, and two texts from Student 4)**

All student texts written within a week of reading the teaching text were autobiographical and written in the first person. Of the texts received later, only one was

autobiographical (that of Student 14). This text was the writer's only text, and is written in the third person although it is autobiographical.

In all but three of these texts (those of Students 4, 5 and 14), the themes and ideology contained in the teaching text are placed centrally, and the writers show a high degree of personal response – either engagement, or reaction to some aspect of the teaching text.

The texts are presented in the following three categories, ranging from the fully engaged to those in which the writers' concerns are elsewhere.

1. Autobiographical texts which fully engage with the themes, ideology and construction of identity of the teaching text (5 texts).

2. Autobiographical texts which engage only to a limited extent, three of the four suggesting alternative themes (4 texts).

3. One text in which the writer developed a story and identity which has very little relation to the teaching text (1 text).

**4.3.3.1. Autobiographical texts which express agreement and engage fully with the ideology of the teaching text (5 texts: students 3, 8, 9, 10 & 11)**

Five of the ten autobiographical student texts fully engage with the ideology of Berezaf's story in a way that clearly and actively expresses identification with the theme of 'work hard and get a job'. Student 11, for example, writes in her text,

> *"I desided this. I find job in New Zealand. because this good for my life"*.

The texts, however, expand the scope of the ideology or qualify it in different ways, and adjust the identity created for them.

Of all the texts, the text of Student 10 appears to most positively and fully take up the messages of the teaching text, in content, tone and ideology - claiming it, rationalizing it and developing it.

Following the model, Student 10 defines herself as a refugee in her text, and does not go further than stating her national origins in reference to her life previous to arriving in

New Zealand. Like the teaching text, she begins developing her identity in her text from the time she arrived in New Zealand and by relating what she did not know:

> "*I didn't now* [know] *about New Zealand's life, education, culture, and language*".

She presents herself in deficit three times - she did not know about New Zealand life, education, culture, and language, she did not speak English when she arrived, and she is not computer literate. She also presents herself as the recipient of others' help on three occasions, the benefactors being her father, her private tutor, and her AUT University teachers.

However, she presents as upbeat and optimistic in her student identity: *"I'm happy in my class"*. The deficits she relates are the reality of her circumstances in relation to the theme of the text, but they are more than balanced by the stronger active voice in the text. To begin with, she follows the three passive references (above) with an equal three instances of action she, herself, is taking in shaping her life - she is learning English, and she details her active strategies for maximizing her learning:

> *"I'm talking with my friends in English and this is very good for English practise. I'm practise for computer twice a week".*

She also asserts that she will continue to study for three years, which is her own assessment of what she needs to achieve her goals. Her vision of her future identity is more ambitious than the role model of Berezaf - she writes that she wants to become a teacher or an office worker.

After the introductory paragraph, the greater part of the text is made up not only of the author's active response to her circumstances and the opportunities she is presented with, but also her opinions, beliefs and knowledge. As such, Student 10 fully claims her voice and identity within the given framework. Quantitatively, the active voice in her texts comprises 126 words of the total of 212. These are underlined in the original text (Appendix A) for reference.

In terms of her subject and frames of reference, the main body of the narrative is concerned with the writer's studies, and her quest and desire to learn and practise English. This goes beyond attendance in the TOPs classes to include her work with a private tutor, her personal learning strategies, and taking advantage of extra computer classes offered at AUT University. Thus, she presents a slightly broader scope of life

and learning than does the teaching text, and on all these activities she gives her opinion. She writes, for example,

> "*I want learn of computer typing emails and other programs but I don't know about it. This is very important for me because now all educations are belong with computer*".

In terms of her attitude to the ideology, Student 10's response to Question 9 signals clearly that she welcomed it; she writes, "*Yesterday I read Berezaf's story so I felt good*".

On the other hand, she shows uncertainty about the outcomes and a stoic realism towards the hardships. Her uncertainty is indicated in her use of language,

> "<u>*Maybe*</u> *in the feauture I'll make my life success. And I'll very hard work. I'll enjoy my life.* <u>*Maybe*</u> *this is* <u>*possible*</u>" (Question 9, underlining added).

Her stoicism is evident in the 'buts' (three) which follow her positive statements, and in the way she balances her cautious optimism with the difficulties and problematic realities of what she is trying to do. She is, for example, working very hard but her progress is slow,

> "*in three months my English is* [a] *little better*"; and, "*I think this all is hurt but this is need for New Zealand's life*".

Unlike the other students in this category, Student 11's text is exclusively focused on the writer's English studies and hopes for the future. She does not define herself and there is no reference at all to her past, to her family, or to anyone outside of AUT University. While her hopes are high, "*I would be lilk to be a doctor or pilot*", deficits and the passive aspects of her construction slightly outweigh her claims to knowledge and active moves that she has made. Her text gives the impression that her belief in the ideology may be uncertain; the teachers, she writes, "try" to teach the students, and regarding her English studies, she writes:

> "*I* <u>*feel*</u> *My English is more beter Than Two month befor and I* <u>*Try*</u> *to more learn English*" (underlining added).

Student 3, too, makes it clear in his text that he wants to learn English and find work, in fact his use of an exclamation mark in the concluding statement of this text gives these desires some urgency: "I need to learn to speak English!" This interpretation was confirmed by the emphatic way he re-expressed this sentiment in his interview.

The text, however, is very different in shape and content from the teaching text. Student 3 thoroughly and assertively re-builds his identity and recontextualizes the ideology.

Less than a third of the text is concerned with learning English and the writer's career aspirations in New Zealand. Instead, he constructs an identity which is firmly anchored in his past, this part comprising over a third of the text. He does not identify as a refugee, or situate himself as one who lacks. Instead, he writes of his academic and employment achievements, and his experience in his country of origin.

In his interview I asked him if his text was written for the class to read, and he replied, with emphasis,

> "*Yeah, yeah. Because in the story, my family and my history very important*".

Student 3 also broadens the context of his life and aspirations in the construction of his New Zealand identity, to include where he lives and aspects of his lifestyle which fall outside study and work:

> "*Sometimes I like to go the beach and sometimes I go for a walk in the city*".

His active desire to learn English concerns both his need to establish himself in the world of work (he wants to be a mechanic) and, "*I practise my English so I can talk to my friends*". He places himself in the social world, as a man who values his friends but who essentially sees himself as alone; his text includes four statements which refer to his single status, his being without children, and his preference to be alone.

Like the previous writers, Student 3 accepts but repositions the subtext of 'learn English and get a job'. While he makes it clear that this is his desire, he qualifies it with the reality that what he wants and what is expected of him, is difficult. Rather than expressing this with acceptance as Student 10 does, or showing doubt as Student 11 does, he sets the difficulty up as a conflict beside his urgency to learn English. He writes:

"*I want to speak the English language but it is difficult*".

In contrast to the identity created by Student 3, those presented by Students 8 and 9 are a mixture of the passive (the reality of their powerlessness) and active - active but at the same time, unconfident.

They define themselves as refugees, and are the only writers in this category to explain their reason for being in New Zealand. This involved their father's political position and decisions, circumstances completely out of their control. Approximately one third of Student 9's text, and much of Student 8's interview data is devoted to difficulties experienced in their homeland. These students also describe themselves as learning (active) but this is qualified with uncertainty and difficulties. For example, Student 9 would like to be a hairdresser "*when if my English is good enough",* and this process could take "*2 years or 3 years I'm not sure".*

While in their interviews and in Question 9 these students indicated that they welcomed the message in the teaching text, in their texts and in their interviews, their strongest message was to modify it by presenting the psychological stress they are experiencing while trying very hard to follow the ideology.

Both students mention tiredness "*Because everything is different*" (Student 9, Question 9), and confusion in relation to making a new life in New Zealand. In her interview, Student 9 said,

> "*I never see New Zealand people. Very, very different for me. Every day I get a headache. I stayed home. Very, very, I'm … worried."*

Student 8 showed her awareness of this departure from the content of the teaching text by saying, in her interview, that her text differed *"Because different life and problems and difficult thing".*

 In her text, Student 9 seems to be saying that if these things were  really possible, she could be happy in New Zealand but she is uncertain:

> "*I would like live* [life / living] *in NZ",* and *"now speak English hard for me but* [if] *I can success speak English and got a job. I'm happy for live in NZ".*

This interpretation is supported by the interview data.

In summary, the main theme of the first three texts in this category, following the teaching text, is the importance of study and the need to find a job. However, the theme is increasingly challenged and qualified from the first two to the last, as other themes are introduced. Four of the five texts contain reference to the hardship of learning English and coming to terms with living in New Zealand. This theme, in the last two texts, carries at least as much weight as the writers' quest to study hard, learn English and seek employment.

Another major shift from the teaching text is that increasingly the writers broaden their identities to include their lives previous to immigrating, and their extracurricular lives and activities.

All the texts portray the writers as being more proactive than the character in the teaching text and although the first two describe themselves as lacking knowledge to begin with, the third positively details his knowledge and accomplishments.

**4.3.3.2 Autobiographical texts which show a limited level of engagement with the ideology of the teaching text (4 texts: students 4, 5, 7 & 14)**

These four texts are characterized by their either detached, relatively brief (Students 4, 5 and 14), or mechanical (Student 7) treatment of the themes of study and work goals and in three cases, their introduction of alternative themes.

The four learners' responses to Question 9 are remarkably similar. They provide the precise response that a critical analysis of the teaching text suggests it is designed to produce. Student 7, for example, wrote:

> *"My feeling study English Languge  After that I study nurseing 2 and 3 year then I find a job".*

However, less than a third of the texts of Students 4, 5 and 14 is concerned with study and/or work and none of these learners showed any interest in discussing these topics in their interviews.

Of all the students who responded with texts, Student 5's short text and unrevealing interview give the least indication of her position regarding the teaching text. She does not mention her current studies or identity as a student in her text and she had nothing at

all to say about her text in her interview. Read as a statement of identity, she constructs herself briefly in terms of her Ethiopian origins, her age, and her plans, which involve university study and a desire to be a journalist. The little that Students 4 and 14 did write about their current student identities is devoid of affective content or opinion but simply the statement of a few short facts about what they are doing. Student 7 wrote more, but this part of her text appears to be a mechanical response to the teaching text, most of it being a repetition of approximately the same phrases even when not quite accurate in her case.

However, whereas Student 5 wrote very little on the subject of the teaching text and virtually nothing else, Students 14, 7 and 4, respectively indicated, revealed and went on to develop alternative themes. The identities, stories and concerns they convey in their texts are very different from the teaching text.

The data on Student 14's response is also thin, both his text and interview being notably brief. His is also the only autobiographical text which is written in the third person. There is, however, the suggestion of an alternative theme in his text. This concerns the then very recent period of his life, a two year transition period from the time he left his homeland to when he was granted Permanent Residency in New Zealand. This section, which follows, comprises almost half of his short text.

> *X [student's name] is a Iranian Boy. he was in a Pakistan for 2 years and he apply. for the permanent* [permanent residency in New Zealand] *in Pakistan and After 2 years he approved and After that he came to NZ.*

Student 14's interview data supports the interpretation that if anything, this was the aspect of his text which held meaning for him.

> Interviewer: *So, tell me, why did you write this story about you?*

> Student 14: *Because I live*[d] *in Pakistan.*


Like the teaching text and most of the other biographies, Student 7 begins her text by anchoring her identity in terms of her national origins. She continues with what reads as an absent minded treatment of the subject of the teaching text and then returns, at the end of her text, to her Ethiopian origins and the subject, which her interview confirmed, really interested her.

Her subject is firstly how difficult it is to obtain an education in her country:

> "*my country very hard lief because not enough about learn* [it's a hard life in my country because there are not enough educational opportunities]*"* (Text, Student 7).

She clearly saw this as the subject of her text, since when asked in an open question to talk about her text in the interview she began by saying,

> *"I write this my country's problem"*.

Her text also appears to be something of an expression of dual or changing identity or allegiance. She says in her text and interview, "*I happy now*" (interview), but other than this, in her interview she talked exclusively about Ethiopia and her past. She concludes her text with the statement: "*So* [but] *I missed* [miss] *my country"*.

When asked in her interview about her attitude to her text being used as a class text, Student 7 indicated that it was a purely personal response, describing her text as *"my think, my story, my thinking, I write"*.

Like Student 14, the theme suggested and later developed by Student 4 is her journey to New Zealand from her homeland. In this text she partially embarks on the subject, giving her text the title, "*My Adventure Story*", but restricting her treatment of it to the first paragraph. Her theme is fully developed in a second text which she handed to me at the same time. This second text falls into the following category, since in this text she abandons all links to the teaching text subject and ideology.

In her first text, she stays fairly close to the subject of the teaching text, indicating no conflict with the ideology but also, no particular interest. Like the other texts in this category, her treatment of the subject of the teaching text is brief and factual, and in her interview, she did not broach the subjects of study or work, talking only, and at length, about her journey to New Zealand.

In summary, the data on these texts indicates, at least in the cases of Students 4, 7 and 14, that these students did not identify with the ideology of the teaching text and / or that their predominating interests or concerns, in terms of the framework presented by the teaching text, lay elsewhere than with their current studies and finding paid work.

**4.3.3.3 One autobiographical text which does not engage with the ideology of the teaching text (Student 4, 2nd text)**

Student 4's second text is the only text in this category. In this, the second of three texts written by her, she does not engage with the subtext of the teaching text, but instead, exclusively develops her alternative theme, the "Adventure Story" of her titles.

Her theme, like that of Student 14, is her journey to New Zealand. However, in contrast to Student 14, this journey involved only a few days, took place within a family context, to a known and secure destination, and is presented as a uniquely enjoyable and exciting experience. In the telling of her story, she succeeds in completely reconstructing her identity, as a happy, enthusiastic adventurer and observer of life. There is no mention in her text of study or employment, no present or future, and no overtly moral aspect to the tale.

She describes the places and the sights she saw and the things she did along the way:

> "*Addis Ababa Airport is very beautiful and very big*";
>
> "*I stayed dubai I saw marketing center, gallery, and new model cars*";
>
> "*Auckland is a beautiful country. I saw the different people. like maori. chinese and kiwi.*"

In her interview she showed confidence in her story, not viewing it as a potential class text but justifying it simply by saying "*I like it*".  She said her trip was exciting and elaborated on the story, telling me more details of her journey, where she went, how much time it took, and her impressions.

The two students who were absent for the discussion of the critical questions also wrote texts which fall into this category.

The text of Student 16, one of the absent students, engages with the subject but not the ideology. It relates where he comes from and a range of details about his life, including that he was studying at AUT University, but with no indications as to why, how, a future, or success.  The text stays very close to a formulaic model built up through the levels on the TO course and is very similar to other texts he has written over the years.

Student 17, the other student who was absent, wrote two texts. The first engages neither with the ideology nor the subject, but has much in common with Student 4's adventure

story. The persona expressed is of observer of the events in his unfolding life, with a focus on events and the way he experienced them on his journey to New Zealand. For example he writes,

"*My watch confused me. I didn't know if it was daytime or night time.*"

His story ends with the words,

"*I have been learning English for one year And half*

*I am very glad*".

### 4.3.3.4 Summary of the autobiographical student texts

Of the nine autobiographical texts, five students wrote texts in which they responded fully and personally to the subject and ideology of the teaching text. These writers also all modified the ideology and reconstructed their identities in different ways.

Four texts indicated agreement with the ideology of the teaching text but limited engagement, three of these introducing alternative themes instead.

One writer, after a limited engagement in her first text, completely abandoned the subject and ideology of the teaching text, and presented a second text involving a different story and identity.

### 4.3.4 The third person student texts (7 texts: Students 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12 & 15)

Seven of the texts written after the first week were about a third person, six about someone well known to the authors, and admired for some of the qualities held up in the teaching text. One stands alone as a fictional narrative. The third person texts fall into the following three categories:

1. Model identities and fully realized moral stories that link closely to the ideological themes of the teaching text (4 texts.)

2. One text which presents an incomplete portrait or role model which is closely linked to that presented in the teaching text but which also begins to challenge the ideology.

3. Two texts which are related to the teaching text but are presented less as role models than as tributes to people greatly admired.

**4.3.4.1 Student texts which present fully realized moral stories that link closely to the ideological themes of the teaching text (4 texts: Students 10, 11, 12 and 15.)**

In these texts the writers show a high degree of awareness of audience and the role model aspect of the teaching text, its structure and messages, and develop these aspects to a greater degree than does the teaching text. All are about success, and tell the story of someone who has faced difficulties and overcome them through hard work and perseverance. In all of these, success is related to employment in some way, but for Student 11 a job is not the final reward for her protagonist's hard work.

As with her autobiographical text, Student 10 again most closely and positively endorses the messages of the teaching text. She also situates her story in circumstances closely relating to those of the teaching text and the lives of the students in the class, and in doing so she presents the ideology of her text in terms of a clear cut and accessible role model for students on TOPs courses.

The story is about a young Afghan woman, defined as a refugee. In this text, and in the texts of Students 11 and 12, the path from disadvantage to success is spelt out in a more dramatic and explicit way than is done in the teaching text. One way in which these writers have done this by placing more emphasis on their protagonist's lacks and difficulties at the beginning. Student 10, in this respect, writes,

> "*she didn't understand New Zealand culture and languages*",
>
> "*[s]he was very upset … This was very difficult for her*",

and,    "*she didn't know about writing and reading*".

Student 10's role model is also more positive after she had been studying:

> "[s]*he liked New Zealand and she was very happy*",
>
> "*her English was good*"
>
> and "[s]*he has got a new life and her feauture* [future] *will be very good*".

As in her autobiographical text, this protagonist also differs from the model presented in the teaching text in that the developments in the story are presented as resulting from her actions. Again, the other texts in this category share this characteristic. Student 10 writes of her protagonist,

*"she talk to every one and she solve her any problems",*

*"she applied for job"*

and     *"she got a job".*

'Hard work' and 'hard working' are mentioned four times in this text and the text concludes with a coda in which the messages of the teaching text as well as some additional ones are explicitly expressed:

> *"This story shows to students hard work and a good life. When you don't understand anything you should ask from teacher and when teacher explain to you. you should listen it and you do every time practice for English. you speak English with every one. Some time you go to library and read some books. These things are helps you every time. when you finish your study. you should get a job and you promise to your self. you'll be hard work and every where friendly."*

Thus, this student endorses all the messages of the teaching text, except the passive construction of the protagonist. She also extends her message by adding some extra advice and makes suggestions on how students might improve their English independently of the English classes. In her interview, Student 10 once again made it clear that she was keenly aware of the ideological role of the teaching text, endorsed it, and strove for the same effects in her own text:

> Interviewer: *Do you think this is a story that's good for the students to read?*
>
> Student 10: *Yes.*
>
> Interviewer: *Why do you think so?*
>
> Student 10: *Because it's about hard work and try to every time for English and life in NZ they must, they will be* [they need to] *get a job, all students ... and it's good for English when we read this story and they'll think they'll be able to try for English and every time they speak English ...*
>
> Interviewer: *Because she did?*
>
> Student 10: *Yeah, because she did these all things and now she has got a very good life.*

The circumstances of the protagonists in the other three texts which fall into this category are further removed from those of Berezaf in the teaching text, and those of the students on TOPs courses in general. Students 11 and 15 wrote about people they know and admire who reside in countries other than NZ, while student 12, who is Iranian, created a fictional Dutch character, who immigrated to New Zealand. These texts also introduce other variants, which further individualize the ideological stances taken by their authors.

The text of Student 11 presents an identity whose trials and successes are inseparable from those of her family. This is in contrast to the teaching text in which the focus is on difficulties, progress and success from an individual perspective. It is the family of this protagonist that is disadvantaged, a large immigrant Afghani family in Pakistan, of seven children and a father who is unable to work and dies early in the story. Unlike in the teaching text, the protagonist, who is at no point a student, but who is sister, cousin, breadwinner, and mother, is extraordinarily able and resourceful from the beginning. She makes decisions, takes action and works hard to change the circumstances of her whole family, whose needs she puts before her individual needs. Her success is not that she found work, although she has several jobs throughout the story, but overall family and economic progress. "[B]*ecause she was hard working and she had a worked"* her brothers and sisters were educated, and in employment, and "*know* [now] *they all success"*. Her final personal reward is not work, but that she *"had lovely child and … is very happ* [happy] *in her life."*

Like Student 10, Student 11's ideological emphasis is on hard work, and she too, clearly expressed her view of this text as a moral tale and an example to others. When asked why she thought this was a good story for the students to read, she replied:

> "*Because there's a success life, and …. It's good for everybody to find … to gain some more jobs, and same this*".

The identity and circumstances of Student 15's protagonist are still further removed from those presented in the teaching text but the ideology is almost identical to it. The text is about the author's sister, who is not identified by her nationality or as a refugee, which she is not, but as a success: "*She is A success"*.

The story takes place in Iran, the writer's country of origin. She is not constructed as disadvantaged or passive in any way, but through hard work (seven mentions, for example, *"I saw her study very, very much"*), doing voluntary work for experience, and friendliness towards both students and teachers, all of which are part of the ideology of the teaching text, she worked her way through secondary school, college and university to a teaching position at university and happiness:

> *"she is very hapy for her livef* [she is very happy in her life]".

Like Students 10 and 11, Student 12 shows a heightened audience awareness. The text is addressed both to me, *"Rose"*, and to the students:

> *"Dear students: I have one story for every bady [everybody]"*.

This story is fictional, which has the effect of distancing the writer from her text and its ideology, an effect increased in this case, as the writer takes on the fictional identity of a teacher writing a text for the class:

> *"Befor I was teacher semester top* [in a previous semester I was a teacher of a TOPs class]*"*.

The story is a moral tale, involving a young woman from Holland, a *"Good girl"* whose difficulty was that her parents died and for unclear reasons, came to New Zealand. In addition to the virtues of being good, of studying and being hardworking, this heroine was *"very strong"* and also *"very clever"*.

Like the first two writers in this category, Student 12 has dramatized the hardships faced by her protagonist. In Holland *"she had life very difficult and sad",* and while studying and working in New Zealand *"she had 8 or 9 hours time for rest"*. After studying long and hard and working at night, she qualified as a doctor and a dentist, finally placing this text in the realm of pure fantasy. She concludes the story with the emphatic *"she was very happy and she had a life very, very good."*

In summary, this group of texts are fully realized moral tales with a heightened awareness of audience. They advocate hard work and persistence, with the reward of success and happiness. In all the stories, eventual happiness involves at least someone in the story studying and achieving hard won paid work. The stories place more emphasis

than the teaching text on working hard (all the texts) and study (all but Student 11's text), as well as adding further admirable traits, actions and habits, additional to those included in the teaching text. They all increase the drama of their tales by either amplifying the virtues of the protagonist (Student 15), or the difference between initial deprivations and difficulties and final success by representing the deprivations as more pathetic than Berezaf's in the teaching text, and the success arrived at as more impressive.

### 4.3.4.2 One text / interview which presents a conflicted response  (Student 6)

Student 6's text parallels the story of the teaching text without mentioning that the protagonist found a job, although, from her interview, it seems she intended to include this. It is short, which relates to the limitations of her written English, but its incompleteness may relate to the writer's difficulties with the ideology, as discussed below.

Written about a friend of the author, the text, in full, is as follows:

> *A Success Story*
>
> *(Real name of protagonist)*
>
> 1. *She from Ethiopia.*
>
> 2. *She cam to New Zealand 2001.*
>
> 3. *She very good speak English and reading.*
>
> 4. *She study TOP cours before at AUT.*
>
> 5. *This now finish school.*

In her interview, when asked to talk about her story, Student 6 gave a verbal portrait of the protagonist which was probably closer to what she intended. This, in point form, was as follows:

1. She identified her protagonist by name and country of birth.

2. She made a point of saying that she had studied in her homeland for eleven years.

3. She studied at AUT on a TOPs course until she had completed the highest level.

4. She then studied on another training course.

5. She is now working.

6. She is very good at English, *"speaking, writing, everything - she's good".*

Student 6 was clearly aware of the role model aspect of the teaching text, and it was at least her intention to follow this design in her own text. Asked why she thought her text was a good one for the students in the class to read, she replied,

> *"Because she's finished, she's work. Students think, some - I'm finish, I'm work, yeah* [the protagonist of her text has finished studying and now she's working. Some students will think that when they finish studying they will get work]".

There are, however, indications of conflict in Student 6's response to Question 9. To the question, which asks, "After reading Berezaf's story, how does it make you feel about your life in New Zealand?" Student 6 wrote:

> *I feeling Berezaf's*
>
> *I feeling study English.*
>
> *My life New Zealand no good because I feeling family Ethiopia.*

She appears to identify with the teaching text, but to be disempowered rather than encouraged by it. This was later confirmed in her interview.

Student 6 has every reason to identify with Berezaf. In fact, she knows Berezaf. Like Berezaf, Student 6 is a young Ethiopian woman who came to New Zealand on her own. She was on a TOPs course, she badly wanted to learn English, and she also wanted to work in the future. However, although she was motivated, hard working and friendly, and she had been on the course for some time, she was not progressing in her studies.

Her principal theme in her interview was to compare herself to both Berezaf and her own protagonist, not just in terms of success, but also in terms of other issues that were occupying her mind. Her issues were firstly, the fact that she is in New Zealand alone without any family, and secondly, the advantage of previous formal education where it relates to learning and getting ahead in New Zealand, and which she did not have. I asked her in the interview whether she thought her protagonist was a success, and she replied,

*"Yeah. Because, uh, same you know, um, she's good English and because she's family here, she's family".*

On the issue of previous education, Student 6 pointed out that both Berezaf and the successful protagonist of her own text had family here, but Berezaf, like Student 6, had no previous formal education. She again raised the issue of previous education in a discussion about her studies when I met her the following week. The implication of this is that she feels apart and excluded from the success promised by the ideology of the teaching text, and is exploring her aloneness and lack of education as issues which may explain her lack of progress.

In summary, Student 6's response to critical question 9, her text and interview combine to convey a sense of conflict, personal exclusion and unhappiness with regard to the questions raised by the teaching text. She introduces the issues of social isolation and the difficulties faced by students in a highly literate society who have had no formal education as factors which may work against this ideology.

### 4.3.4.3 Tributes to loved ones (2 texts: Students 2 and 4.)

Two texts take an entirely different direction, being primarily tributes to loved ones in the real lives of the authors. The authors appear to identify the study and work themes of the teaching text with these people rather than themselves.

Student 2's text stayed fairly close to the teaching text in structure, content and subtext. Entitled "*Plans for the Future*", she wrote about her husband, who is constructed as a refugee from Sri Lanka and a hardworking student of English who is aiming to get a job. Her text diverged from the teaching text by including a section on the setbacks he had encountered, and his desire not only to get work, but to get a "dream house".

In the interview, however, Student 2 said that the written story was incomplete and not what she had wished to express. She wanted me to record the unwritten part of the story and felt strongly enough about this to request a second interview with her teenaged daughter as interpreter during the school holidays.

In this second interview she shifted the balance of the story, placing the weight of focus on her husband's life and position in their country of birth before they were compelled to leave. Her husband had his own business and was successful and rich in Sri Lanka. However, war made life too difficult. The Tamil Tigers were continually asking her husband for money and it was not safe, there was fighting, there were bombs and it was

difficult to run a business. In this way, Student 2 re-contextualizes her husband's present circumstances in terms of his past, an identity of relative social status, and their reason for leaving this. On his life in New Zealand, the emphasis of her story is on what her protagonist had sacrificed and suffered for the sake of his family in the face of the difficulties they had encountered.

Thus, she identified the subject and subtext of the teaching text with her husband, not herself. Her story is primarily a personal homage to someone she greatly admires, rather than a text with an exemplary message for students. Her own identity here is as one who supports a hard working student and aspiring worker who is dealing with loss and difficulty.

She however, expressed a second message in her interview, this time for young new immigrants studying in New Zealand. Once again, she appears not to identify herself with the teaching text, but as a parent or older person concerned about young people facing these challenges and choices. These young people may have been the other students in the class, and it is also possible that she was talking indirectly to her daughter who was acting as interpreter. She told me in a later conversation that she was worried about her daughter who was becoming rebellious.

Her second message, expressed with some feeling, is that New Zealand has a lot to offer. She advocates that students should work hard on their language and studies in order to find a job and, perhaps in opposition to the teaching text, that they should persist with their studies to increase their choices which, she says, are virtually limitless. When asked why she thought her story was a good one for the students to read in class she replied:

> "*Because it is a true story, because New Zealand is a good place for young people's future. The story is a good example of how New Zealand is good for studying and for young people.*"

In response to further questioning about this she replied more specifically:

> "*After this course students might want to leave and get a job but if they keep on studying they could get better jobs and if they study hard and try hard they can do better*".

In summary, Student 2 presents two distinct and strongly felt themes. Her text is firstly a tribute to her husband, whose identity she reconstructs, firmly placing it in the context of his past. Secondly, it is an endorsement of most aspects of the subtext of the teaching text, but resistance to the limited options it presents to young people.

The third text of Student 4, who is also the author of "*My Adventure Story*", is not a tale of rags to riches, but one of a school boy brother who is a success in the eyes of the author from the beginning. He could read and write English when he arrived and starts out in the text as a *"good student and very clever"*. Most of the text is concerned with English study, his own as well as the way he "*halp my famliy and my sister and me studied and prakies togather in English"*. When his English is good enough he is going to go to university. The only mention of work appears to be a mistake; she says his teacher found him voluntary study with a homework club "*so that He could learn about working in NZ."* Since homework clubs are for extra tutoring on schoolwork rather than employment, it would appear that she has lifted the phrase from the teaching text without either understanding or considering its meaning.

From the interview it is clear that the text was never intended as a class text although the author thought it would be "all right" as such. When asked why, she replied that she thought reading hers might inspire others to write.

The themes of the texts in this category are connected to those of the teaching text but they are significantly different in meaning. Above all, both texts are tributes to significant others in the lives of the writers, whose circumstances and goals connect with those presented in the teaching text.

Student 2, however, additionally and separately, responded to the teaching text as a message to young people. From this perspective she expressed strong agreement to a point, but equally strongly opposed the limited options it presents.

**4.3.4.4 Summary of the third person texts**

The third person texts range in length from 37 (Student 6) to 317 words (Student 11), and two were handed in incomplete. Four of them are moral tales (Students 10, 11, 12 & 15), three showing a high degree of audience awareness and dramatic effect. All of these show engagement and agreement with the ideology in the teaching text, with varying degrees of expansion and adjustment of both the messages and the construction of identity.

The second two categories contain very different responses. In two of the texts (Students 2 & 4) the writers have identified the themes of the teaching text with significant others in their lives rather than with themselves. These stories take the form of tributes rather than ideological vehicles.

One of these texts (Student 2) and one other (Student 6) indicate agreement with the teaching text as far as they go, but were given to me unfinished. Both these writers revealed resistance to the ideology in their interviews, and Student 2 firmly re-situated the construction of her protagonist's identity.

### 4.3.5 The advice text (Student 5.)

Student 5 is the student whose first text and interview revealed the thinnest data on her response to the teaching text. Her second text is not a narrative but offers direct, practical advice for students on the course. Of the students who discussed the critical questions, only this student wrote an Advice text. However, the second of two texts written by Student 17, who was not present at the discussion of the Critical questions, also falls into this category. These texts address the students directly. Student 5 introduces her text with the words,

> "*What do you think abount your life? Do you know "How to get successful life?" I tell you some advise*".

Student 17, beginning more formally, writes,

> "*Good morning gentlmen and ladies. Who experience respecting and many things.*"

The advice in Student 5's text, entitled '*success*', deals with English study, hard work and how to progress towards employment. She writes, for example:

> "*Do you think get a new job? remember first of all now you are go to school and do an English course and work expirence after that you get job*".

In addition to this, she offers a tip on learning to drive and a suggestion about how to balance work with play and social activities by going fishing and sharing the fish with friends and family, in doing so broadening the scope of her message. Her text concludes with the words

> "*if* […] *you can use this method I tell you are successful*".

Student 17's advice in contrast, does not deal with hard work, success or employment, but with student behaviour in the classroom:

> *"Same [some] student in our class are shouting. Some others was quiet. Every person has a habit. that he is different. for example some people like shouting and some others hated shoute. If you are student don't be unpolite."*

### 4.3.6 Non-response: students who did not hand in a student text

Two students did not hand in student texts. I did not interview these students, and therefore the only contributing data on their responses to the teaching text are their answers to Question 9. Student 1 expresses agreement with the ideology of the teaching text, and Student 13, difficulty with it. Student 1 is the student who was identified as having learning and communication difficulties, and as not participating or not being able to participate in the discussions.

These students' responses to Question 9 are as follows:

Student 1: "*I will feeling helful about learn English in New Zealand.*

> *this story make my to more study English in NZ and How I can find job in NZ.*"

Student 13: "*I feeling shaky because af I study hord I can do anvthic I want.*"

### 4.3.7 Summary of all the student texts read as responses and / or replies to the teaching text

Referring to the critical analysis of the teaching text, the main points raised were, firstly that the topic, success, is characterised as finding a job, the job of cafeteria worker. The path to success is to work hard, to learn English, and to be friendly. Through the device of a role model, the reader is constructed firstly as a refugee, a point highlighted in the critical analysis as a potentially disempowering and questionably accurate definition. The analysis highlights her positioning through the text as someone who lacks, is passive, and whose identity is constructed without community or history and only in terms of her TOPs course and quest for work.

Regarding the writers' owning the term 'refugee', of the ten autobiographical student texts, four students identify themselves as refugees. In three of the seven third person texts, the refugee experience clearly forms the basis from which the story is developed, and two of these three writers use the word 'refugee' to introduce their protagonists.

Regarding the type of jobs envisaged, hoped for, or afforded the protagonists as their reward for hard work in the student texts, they range from the open ended desire for "a job" (Student 7) or "a good job" (Student 14), to mechanic (Student 3) or hairdresser (Student 9), the real job of university teacher of Student 15's sister, to journalist (Student 5), doctor or pilot (Student 11). In the interviews, two students (Students 6 & 10) named the jobs their real life protagonists had found after their TOPs course, and these were both supermarket jobs.

Seven of fifteen students fully engaged with the ideology and wrote fully realized personal or third person texts. Two of these students wrote both a first person and a third person text. All the texts concerned working hard towards a goal, which, in all, involves economic independence and in all but one, the final outcome is a job for the protagonist. Friendliness and perseverance are common themes. They all adjust, expand, and contain elements of opposition to aspects of the teaching text but none completely rejects the core ideology.

Oppositional elements, fairly assertively expressed in many of the texts, involve the inclusion of the hardship involved in adjusting to a new culture and learning English, and the expansion of both identity and the concept of life and success beyond the arena of being a student and future wage earner. Four of the five autobiographical texts project uncertainty but most of the fully engaged texts, including these, construct protagonists who are not passive recipients but actively involved in shaping their lives.

Two students did not write texts. The six remaining students wrote their initial or only texts to the topic and ideology, but these initial texts could not be said with confidence to show engagement or otherwise. One student (Student 5) took her involvement with the teaching text no further than this – she wrote one more text, not a narrative but directly giving tips and advice for students.

Five of these students hint at alternative themes and/or conflict with the teaching text in their first texts, and appeared to confirm this (Student 14), or develop those themes in

their second or third texts, or in their interviews. Two students (Students 2 & 4) develop their themes in two quite separate directions.

Three students' responses to the teaching text relate to identity. Student 7's response to the teaching text was to rewrite her identity by re-establishing her connection with her homeland. Student 2 did not identify herself with the teaching text at any stage. In her first text, she identified her husband with it, writing a text which is more of a tribute than a role model, and reconstructing her protagonist's identity in terms of his former success and status. Student 4's third text is similarly a tribute to a family member. Her first departure from the teaching text was to create an identity for herself in a first person text which has no connection to that created for her in the teaching text, in a fully realised alternative (adventure) story.

Student 2's second alternative response, and that of Student 6, both expressed in their interviews rather than their written texts, seriously challenge the subtext of the model text. Student 2 criticised its limitations, and Student 6, on the basis of her own experience, challenged its very basis – that hard work will lead to success.

One other student may be grouped with those who resisted the ideology. Student 13, who wrote in response to Question 9 that the teaching text made him feel "shaky", responded to the exercise by not writing a text.

# Chapter 5

## Discussion and Conclusion

I here present a discussion of what I consider are the key findings from this study. These conform to the three reoccurring themes in critical literacy: deconstruction, engagement, and transformation.

### 5.1 The critical questions: text deconstruction

The findings show firstly, that deconstruction of texts is possible with students with relatively low levels of English. From the first set of questions (Questions 1 – 4), the class overall, showed an awareness of audience and purpose, was able to locate the ideology precisely, and even able to identify the persuasive strategies employed in the text.

The one group which did not, through their written responses to the questions, clearly demonstrate the above understanding and awareness, was Group 2. This group was distinguished from the others by an overall younger age, and lower level of formal education. While this group did not show awareness of the ideology of the teaching text in their responses to the questions, two of the students did, however, appear to show a heightened awareness of it in their responses to Question 9, which asked students for the affective responses to the text after answering the critical questions, and in their student texts and interviews. Thus, I conclude that at some level the critical questions effectively raised the awareness of the whole class to the textual ideology. This conclusion is supported in a small way, by the fact that in contrast to the main body of student texts, none of the three texts received from the two students who were absent for the critical lesson, showed any perceptible response to the textual messages. Whether this raised level of awareness had the effect of liberating the readers from the ideology, or of increasing its power, is debatable. The student texts appear to indicate that in this respect the results were very individual.

The findings suggest that to ask these students to discuss and question the nature of truth, in reference to the second grouping of questions, was too abstract in this context, and not very productive. The learners' response to the questions on the role of audience in choice of content, however, indicate that this line of inquiry would, with more

scaffolding and possibly, more practice over a longer period of time, be accessible and fruitful.

There are indications in some of the student texts that the discussions on these questions possibly impacted more than suggested by the responses to the questions. Student 3's text, for example, virtually mirrors the approach taken by the critical questions about truth, and the verbal examples I gave in class, of silences in texts. Question 6 asks what aspects of Berezaf's life might not be covered by the teaching text. In his text, Student 3 unexpectedly describes aspects of his life in New Zealand that are unrelated to study or the pursuit of paid employment:

"Sometimes I like to go the beach and sometimes I go for a walk in the city."

Apart from giving me an insight into the level of entry at which text deconstruction methodologies in critical literacy level might be productive with this student profile, another outcome of the critical lesson was the heightening of my own awareness of the ideological content of my texts, verbal and written.

If I were to present a similar text again, my priority for deconstruction would be on the way this text constructs the reader's identity. I would make sure there was a very clear opening in the lesson for the students to think about their own view of who they are and compare it to the identity constructed for them by the text, and I would overtly provide for them to choose what to accept of this identity, and what to reject. My primary concern here would be the avoidance of potential symbolic violence rather than consciousness raising.

My second priority would be to bring forward for discussion the connection between the ideology in the text and the institutional agenda. In this case this relationship is straightforward and concrete, and very accessible. This could be developed into a discussion of power relationships within the text, and/or power relationships in the mini society of the classroom, a third important critical theme with a high degree of relevance to this text and the context in which it is being read.

### 5.1.1 The choice of text

Several factors appear to have made it easier for the learners of this class to approach the teaching text critically. The first is the choice of a text which was easily accessible to students in terms of surface level meaning. The language was relatively

unchallenging for the learners' level of acquisition, and the topic, layout and narrative structure were familiar. This meant that the students were presented with fewer barriers, allowing them to comprehend, process and internalise the text more quickly than would have been the case otherwise.

The class also benefited from working on the text in the language focus lesson immediately preceding the critical reading lesson. By the time the learners were asked to consider the text from a critical point of view, they were deeply familiar with it.

Another issue relating to the relative ease with which the students identified and worked with the critical questions was that the critical focus in the teaching text was both an issue of immediate personal and classroom relevance but also not particularly controversial or threatening.  The message of the text, work hard, learn English and find work, is not a hidden agenda on this course. It is a theme with which the learners are confronted from their first interview and familiar to these readers. The student texts showed that different aspects of this theme resonated or clashed with aspects of students' own personal and cultural perspectives and identities. However, the questions did not directly challenge the learners' own belief systems, but instead, invited the learners – the 'powerless' in the institutional dynamic, but in this case, the experts - to challenge me, their teacher, and my texts.

Two studies show how important a consideration students' safety is in the choice of critical issue. The teacher trainees in Apol et al.'s 2002 study of a critical reading course actively resisted a critical reading of the texts in question, completely rejecting factual information which contradicted their belief systems in order to do this.  Apol et al. propose that had the researchers used less controversial material, the course may have been more successful.  Similarly, in Granville's 2003 South African study with teacher trainees, subject matter which the researcher had regarded as exciting and challenging, proved far too personally 'unsafe', creating a divided and "dangerously conflictual" classroom environment (Granville, 2003, p.5).

In an attempt to understand student responses, both papers raise the issue of participant safety. In the case of this study, a few responses suggest that lack of safety with the textual ideology may have negatively impacted on learners' participation. The most obvious of these is Student 13's response to Question 9, which asked about the students' feelings after reading the teaching text. Student 13, who was one of only two students who did not reply to the teaching text by writing a student text, wrote,

*I feeling shaky because af I study hord I can do anvthic I want*.

However, the ideology of the teaching text did not appear to be highly challenging or threatening to the learners overall.

Choosing texts for the purpose of teaching critical reading, that is, selecting what, in the texts surrounding them, is suitable for deconstruction by one's students, is a political act in itself. Kumaravadivelu's reply to this (1999), is to say that the choice of text is less important than providing a classroom in which the learners' feelings, beliefs about what is important, their reasoning and their experience is part of the assumed context of the teacher's communication.

What was probably most 'unsafe' about the exercise for many of the students, however, was the fact of being asked to formally challenge their teacher. This likelihood is suggested by unsolicited flattering statements in some of the groups' responses to the critical questions, for example,

> *She teach very claver and very kind to help us writing Reading and talking* (Group 4, Question 4).

This also brings into question the authenticity of some responses, in particular, the more 'submissive' student texts. However, in their student texts, many others challenged aspects of the ideology in question, and one student (Student 6), in her interview, challenged a central message of the teaching text, that if you study and work hard you will succeed.

A third personal outcome of this study as a whole, is a deepening of my understanding of critical literacy, which has allowed me to develop a personal position within a vast field of possible stances, some of which have sat uncomfortably with me. Some of the foundational principles of critical literacy reach back to contexts, such as that of Freire's groundbreaking work in Brazil, which have little in common with the contexts many teachers are concerned with today. One of these is an issue raised by Wallace (1999), in which the confrontational stance to establishment discourses is overstated. Instead, to use her phrase, I would advocate

> *a preparedness to question a wide range of orthodoxies embodied in complex and shifting discursive constructs* (p.104).

**5.2 Engagement**

I attribute the learners' high level of engagement principally to several factors related to this being a study. These, I believe, in different ways valued the students' knowledge, identities, and feelings.

The first was the process of trialling the use of a video camera in the classroom, with a view to using it as a data collection instrument. This process was novel and interesting, and more importantly, involved the students in the study in such a way that they were, in reality, taking some responsibility for proceedings and decision making.

Secondly, I believe that the formal consent process and the presence of the observers in the classroom lent the study an air of official occasion and importance, which may have been alienating, but actually appeared to stimulate and further engage the majority of the students.

These same events may equally have contributed to the disengagement of the two men who absented themselves on the day of the critical reading lesson (Students 16 and 17). Their response to the use of a camera could have been anticipated and negotiated with them more actively than it was, and the same could be said in relation to preparing them for the consent process.

A written response to one of the critical questions gives a possible clue to another aspect of the students' sense of ownership of the project and how some students may have interpreted their role. This is, that they were doing this to support me in my studies and career aspirations, which I propose is an empowering reversal of the usual roles of helper and helped. Two groups appear to have interpreted Question 4 to mean, how does this text / research project help Rose, and their responses show their awareness of what the research project might mean for me personally. Group 2 wrote:

>*Maybe she got high* [maybe she will get promoted]
>
>*we help her* [we are helping her].

There were several expressions of the learners' consciousness of my role as helper in both their question responses and in their student texts. Group 4, for example, wrote in response to Question 4:

>*She* […] *very kind to help us writing Reading and talking*.

Therefore, in different ways, some of the usual power dynamics of teacher-student relationship were inverted. I also believe that the students being asked to discuss these questions in their first languages was affirming and empowering, and may also have contributed to the level of engagement.

Similarly, most students also demonstrated a high degree of engagement and motivation to convey their points of view in the individual interviews, which I attribute to my evident desire to understand their texts and hear their individual opinions on issues that were of importance to them.

**5.3 Redesigning texts: Transformation in the light of Design**

With reference to the three main streams of critical literacy practices described in Chapter 2, the New London Group (1996) and Janks (2000) define a fourth perspective: Design, which I encountered well after conducting the study. Significantly, without rejecting the learning from Dominance and Diversity, Design shifts the emphasis from a focus on the restraining/constraining and oppressive potential of language to its productive, creative and innovative potential as a meaning-making system.

The creative focus of Design harks back to Michel de Certeau's work on the subversions of dominant discourses embedded in the practices of everyday life (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). De Certeau points out that while powerful social institutions are able to demand particular behaviours, thoughts and responses from individuals, people do not always comply; they regularly reject the demands placed on them institutionally, using 'tactics' to create a place for themselves in environments defined by institutions. This is done by a process of poaching on the territory of others, recombining the rules and products that already exist in culture in a way that is influenced but never entirely determined by those rules and products.

In terms of critical language teaching, de Certeau's contribution here is the recognition that learners already have resistance to oppositional institutional discourses and resources to counteract them. De Certeau also raised attention both to the way disciplinary knowledges contrive to conceal the positions and interests of those who enunciate them as well as the way conceiving knowledge as discourse excludes an account of the power of enunciation to subvert or change it. By constructing learners principally as potential victims of discourse, we potentially increase the power of that discourse while maintaining our own power. Our students are positioned as dependent

while we position ourselves as providing them with the keys to a liberation as defined by us.

Regarding the typically heavy emphasis on deconstructing classroom texts in critical literacy in the EAL context, it is my belief that "conscientization" is probably more pressing for teachers who are immersed in the discourses they are teaching than it is for the learners, and that the discourses of teachers are possibly as disempowering as any. As Neil Postman found (1970), EAL learners already have a feel for the politics of language learning.

Kramsch (cited in Kumaravadivelu, 1999) points out that for these learners, the meanings in L2 discourses are unstable from the outset. She claims that from the clash between the familiar meanings of the learner's native culture and the unexpected meanings of the target culture, meanings that were taken for granted in L1 discourses are also questioned, challenged and problematized. She refers to language learners as 'border crossers' and notes that at the boundary between the learners' own lives and the native speaker's meanings, existing discourses are already challenged and changing and the creation of new personal meanings is already underway. She notes (in Vollmer, 2002) that the realisation of difference in this process can be at once an elating and deeply troubling experience.

> "But if we understand writing as a medium through which language learners attempt to understand and control the shifting perspectives in their lives, "to express and explore new identities, and to position themselves in new ways, writing in a second language becomes a powerfully motivating and potentially transformative force" (Vollmer, 2002).

Central to Design is a recognition of the learner's ability to generate an infinite number of new meanings. Design theory of discourse (New London Group, 1996) sees semiotic activity (encompassing the burgeoning variety of text forms) as a creative application and combination of existing conventions and resources ('Available Designs'). The act of 'Designing' involves shaping emergent meaning, transforming given knowledges, social relations and identities, depending on the social context in which designing occurs. The resulting texts are referred to as 'The Redesigned'. In this process, Available Designs and the active process of Designing are constantly in tension. Existing conventions are reproduced but at the same time recontextualised, recombined and transformed in relation to what is meaningful to the learner.

This, what is meaningful to the learner, is discovered through Diversity rather than being defined by the teacher and Deconstruction forms the basis for Transformed Practice.

Comber (2002) presents a case study in which the Design concept was developed by Australian primary school teacher, Helen Grant. The students, refugee children at upper primary level, were asked to make a short film about what they considered important aspects of their cultures. Grant positioned the children as storytellers and film-makers. After introducing them to the idea of multiple identities and inviting them to deconstruct how different films work she involved them in the processes of creative and critical design and production. Their brief was to make films that represented themselves, their lives and their views but also to make every aspect of the film – visual images, spoken and written text, music and transitions - positive and uplifting to counteract the "demonizing" change discourses about "boat people" in the media. Crucially and a step missing from my own study, once made, the children reflected on what they had produced and why. The final films (the redesigned) became both objects to celebrate and view and the subject of their own critique.

Another study focusing on identity construction was undertaken by Kamler (1995) in two writing workshops involving women aged 58-84 who were fluent in English. From the beginning the workshops were clearly articulated as feminist and transformative, aimed at disrupting negative and limiting stories of aging.

Kamler was also concerned with "rewriting our understanding of the liberal humanist subject and her relationship to language" (p. 7). She worked with the students to produce writing which did not essentialise the writer's personal voice. Instead, she guided the group to consciously construct their subjectivity in ways which revealed how the self is constituted discursively and enabled awareness of the contradictory nature of the realities they had taken on as their own.

> A major limitation of dominant approaches to personal writing is that the personal remains untheorised and read as an authentic expression of an inner self, rather than as a cultural representation. Teachers are frequently encouraged to cultivate the expression of the writer's individual voice, but rarely is that voice located within larger social and cultural constructs and seen to contribute to and reproduce social injustices (Kamler, 1995, p. 5-6).

In this study the emphasis was even more on deconstructing the creators' own productions in an evolving process of creation, theorising and re-creation than in Grant's study with refugee children. Group interaction revolved around critical questioning of the women's own writing and included issues such as what the readers found powerful in the writing; what or who was omitted, hinted at or over-generalised; what clichés and metaphors were used to gloss over experience, feelings or facts; what issues of aging are constructed or concealed; and what common issues, experiences, story lines and images the stories had in common. Kamler comments that questions that focused on absences and contradiction were particularly powerful in shifting the focus from the personal to the social.

Kamler concludes that she and the women used their resources to build a politics of their own, that the sense of purpose was taken up by the group members but transformed by them. She adds that they challenged the romantic tendency of the workshop leaders to replace images of weakness with images of courage, hopelessness with optimism and powerlessness with power.

> They refused to create new dualisms of super-aging, where storylines of fit, creative, physically active, adventurous ageing become the new unachievable oppression. Ageing was not one thing or the other; it encompassed a multiplicity of positions some of which were not pleasant (p. 11).

In summary, the Design concept of meaning-making encompasses:

> how people are positioned by the elements of available modes of meaning, yet how the authors of meanings in some important senses bear the responsibility of being consciously in control of their transformation of meanings, and how the effects of meaning, the sedimentation of meaning, become a part of the social process (New London Group, 1996, p.19).

In the view of Threadgold (2003), the theoretical assumptions of critical literacy are characterised by narrativity - the idea that realities and subjectivities are constructed in and by language; that subjects construct themselves and the worlds they inhabit in their everyday uses of language; that power relations are constructed and deconstructed through these processes; that what we call the social and culture are similarly constructed and deconstructed. By changing narratives, telling stories differently, Design offers possibilities for empowering readers and writers, or creators in the medium of choice, to change the social world. In other words, Design offers transformation, the critical literacy concept which has sat with such difficulty in the context of the contemporary adult EAL class.

Design allows the flexibility to respond to the multiple and shifting positions of learners and deals with some of the persistent questions that critical literacy approaches raise in terms of political imposition and patronisation related to critical concepts of oppression and transformation.

Janks (2000), who sees the value and shortcomings in all approaches when employed in isolation from the others, summarises what Design can offer the three other critical literacy approaches (p. 178):

> Access without design: This maintains and reifies dominant forms without considering how they can be transformed.

> Domination without design: The deconstruction of dominance, without reconstruction or design, removes human agency.

> Diversity without design: Diversity provides the means, the ideas, the alternative perspectives for reconstruction and transformation. Without design, the potential that diversity offers is not realised.

## 5.4 Conclusion

I conclude that teachers need to be careful about what messages we convey by pursuing the theme of deconstruction too strongly. I believe that EAL students have a feel for the issues that threaten them through learning English, and that it is more important and more logical for the native speaking teacher to have her consciousness raised so that she is equipped to recognize and provide for the learners' need to negotiate a place for powerful incoming discourses, and to recognize and work with the essentially creative concept of redesigning texts.

Comber and Kamler (1997) and others have argued that critical literacy is not a set of methodologies, a teaching approach, or an orthodoxy to replace older methods, approaches and orthodoxies .

What a critical perspective offers teachers of lower levels is a way to think about what it is students are learning to read and write, what they do with that reading and writing and what that reading and writing does to them and their world. When such understandings inform teaching, they affect how teachers think of the literacy work of the classroom, the questions they ask and the tasks they set (Comber & Kamler, 1997).

However, I believe there is likely to be an element of Access, Domination, Diversity and Design behind any good critical literacy practise. At the time the study which was the subject of this thesis, I was not aware of Design. My foray into deconstruction combined with the level of engagement, and the process of the students replying to the texts and discussing them in interviews, provided for the disruption of ideas, for alternative perspectives to be recognised and expressed formally, for a positive creative process of engagement and redesign. It lacked, however, the opportunity for the process to come full cycle, in the way Comber and Kamler's two studies did. For the students in that class, the process was over once I had recorded their interviews. The study therefore failed to provide the students with the opportunity to reflect on what they had written and why, to compare their choices and the ideologies of their texts with others, and perhaps to situate them socially and historically.

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## APPENDIX A

**The student texts**

*Texts received*

| Participant | Country | Age | Years of Formal Education | Years in NZ | Number of texts received | Auto-biograhical texts (10) | 3rd person texts (7) | Advice texts (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The Cook Islands | 21 | 5 | 3 | 0 | | | |
| 2 | Sri Lanka | 34 | 12 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | |
| 3 | Eritrea | 28 | 8 | -1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| 4 | Ethiopia | 20 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 5 | Ethiopia | 18 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 |
| 6 | Ethiopia | 26 | 0 | 3 | 1 | | 1 | |
| 7 | Ethiopia | 21 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| 8 | Turkey | 19 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| 9 | Turkey | 19 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| 10 | Afghanistan | 20 | 6 | -1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| 11 | Afghanistan | 21 | 7 | -1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| 12 | Iran | 32 | 10 | -1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| 13 | Iran | 26 | 7 | 3 | 0 | | | |
| 14 | Iran | 23 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | |
| 15 | Iran | 26 | 11 | 2-3 | 1 | | 1 | |
| 16 | Somalia | 23 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 1 |
| 17 | Somalia | 36 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | |

Note: Identifying names and dates have been replaced by X,Y and Z. My translation of preceding words or phrases is enclosed in square brackets.

<u>Student 1</u>: No text received.

<u>Student 2</u>: Original text mislaid

A story about the writer's husband. Received in week 3.

<u>Student 3</u>:

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1.

*My first name is X. My family name is Y. I am 27 years old. I was born on X-Y-Z. I come from Eritrea and I lived in Addis Ababa. I am a student and I am single. I haven't got any children.*

*I went to school for seven years and I liked studying maths. I worked in a furniture factory for two years My job was making furniture.*

*I came to New Zealand on the Xth Y 200Z. I came by myself. I live in Mt Roskill. I study at AUT in the city. I am studying English. I catch the bus to class I would like to be a mechanic in New Zealand but I need to speak English very well. I want to speak the English language but it is difficult. I practise my English so I can talk to my friends.*

*Sometimes I like to go the beach and sometimes I go for a walk in the city. I want alone.* [He was unable to explain this sentence in the interview.]

*I need to learn to speak English!*

<u>Student 4, Text 1: "My Adventure Story"</u>

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1

*My name is X Y. I came from Ethiopia. first I took a taxi to the airport. Then I flew to Dubai after that a stayed dubai 17ᵗʰ hourse* [for 17 hours]. *this is transit time and then the next flew to Hong Kong up to Auckland New Zealand.*

*When I come to New Zealand on August X/Y/Z. 1 month I stayed at home. after that only 2 month I started at school in X college.*

*now I am a student at AUT TOPs English course. I studied English lanugage, numerace and mates* [maths].

*my Plans for the future in New Zealand. Then if my English is good enough. I want to be anurse in five years time. I would like full time work.*

Text 2: "My Adventure Story"

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1

*My name is X. I came to New Zealand. in the first time I went to Addis Ababa Airport. Addis Ababa Airport is very beautiful and very big. and than I went to restaurant. I ate some food and drink.*

*In Ethiopia time 1:00am the aeroplane go out in the airport to dubai. dubai is abeautiful country. in that place stayed 17 Hours this is the transit time.*

*I stayed dubai I saw marketing center, gallery, and new model cars. and than the next flew to Hong Kong. The plane stopped in Hong Kong airport. After than I sit 5 hours. I just follow her and went to the airport office. and her checked in my pasport and visa.*

*The last flew is Auckland New Zealand. The plane stopped in Auckland airport. after that somebody checked my pasport. after that my cousine come to Auckland airport. they visited me.*

*Auckland is a beautiful country. I saw the different people. like maori. chinese and kiwi.*

*thank you Rose for listing me by [signature]*

Text 3: "I write my brother story"

A true story. Received in Week 3

*My brother name is X  He come from Ethiopia  He come to New Zealand. I think 9 month ago. He like New Zealand  He is a student in Y college. He is good student and very clever  He halp my famliy and my sister and me studied and prakies togather in English.*

*when X came He could read and write English. So He began English Language when he finished the study He go to university.*

*hes teacher found voluntary study for hes in a student homework cleab (place) so that He could learn about working in NZ.*

Student 5, Text 1: "My future plane"

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1

*My name is X Y. I come from Ethiopia. I was born in 1986 in Ethiopia. So this year I am 18 years. When I came New Zealand on July Z^{th}. This is good journey. My future plane is studing at Universetiy of Auckland. I would like to be jornalist.*

Text 2: "success"

Received in Week 3. Received in Week 3

*What do you think abount your life? Do you know "How to get successful life?"*

*I tell you some advise*

*Do you think get a new job? remember first of all now you are go to school and do an English course and work expirence after that you get job.*

*Do you think you should learn to drive? OK it's naise* [nice] *I give you another advise you go to teacher for driving*

*Sometimes you go to beach and caught a small or big fish and share your friend and you family every day you think about reading, hardworking and How to get success after this if you thought chaning to practical work. you can use this method I tell you are successful.*[She explained in the interview that she thought fishing put one in a good frame of mind for studying.]

Student 6, "A Success Story"

"X  Y"  [The name of the protagonist]

A story about the writer's friend. Received in Week 3

1.  *She from Ethiopia.*
2.  *She came to New Zealand 2001.*
3.  *She very good speak English and reading.*
4.  *She study TOp cours before at AUT.*
5.  *This now finish school.*
6.  *She very good student.*

Student 7, "A success story"

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1

*I am refugee   I came from Ethiopia I arrived X [month] Y [day]  my country Iwas student*

*New Zeland I Began a TOPS coursein February 19.*

*my first course reading and writing for work*

*I finished this course i did two mor TOPS*

*English, numerocy  I find a job and about the New Zealand Workplace* [the meaning is not clear here, she could be referring to one of the TOPs course modules or saying that this knowledge will help her find a job in the New Zealand workplace].

*my country very hard lief because not enough about learn*[it's a hard life in my country because there are not enough educational opportunities] *but this country good*

*So* [but] *I missed my country.*

Student 8: Original text mislaid

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1

Student 9: "MY ADVENTURE STORY"

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1

*My name is X. I come from Turkey. I came to New Zealand on YY August. I am refugee from Turkey. I live with my parentse. I must came to New Zealand because my father live in New Zealand. He came to New Zealand in 2002. He left Turkey He was very ubset for we but now us very happy we came to NZ. because I learning speak English and I got* [will get] *a job and we learn NZ culture. I would like to be a hairdresser but Now I continue study English when if my English is good enough after that I study hairdressir 2 years or 3 years I'm not sure. I would like live in NZ. I want to study English for 3 years but now I'm counfuse everything because I never speak English in Turkey so now speak English hard for me but I can success speak English and got a job. I'm happy for live in NZ.*

*Signature*

Student 10: Text 1: "A new life"

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1

*My name is X. I'm refugee from Afghanistan. I came to New Zealand last Y of May. **I didn't now** [know] about New Zealand's life, education, culture, and language. After few days my father told me about these things so I know what can I'll do. **But I didn't speak** English language.*

*On 16<sup>th</sup> of June my home teacher came to my home and she taught me three months. <u>Her help was very **good**</u>. now she teache me twice a week and in three months <u>my English is</u> [a] **little better**. On 19<sup>th</sup> of July I began AUT <u>**and I learning**</u> English language.*

*I'm happy in my class  because I have got **good** classmates and I have got good teachers. They are give us **goo**d lactures. They give us everyday papers. **I'm talking** with my friends in English and this is very **good** for English practise. **I'm practise** for computer twice a week. In the feauture I'd like to be a teacher or a office worker but I continue my study four or five years. I want learn of computer typing emails and other programs **but I don't know** about it. This is very important for me because now all educations are belong with computer. I'd like to be speed of conversation in English, improve my writing, reading, understanding. **I think this all is hurt but** this is need for New Zealand's life.*

*New Zealand's life is **very busy** because some peoples are studying and some have got jobs. I wrote about my past, present and feauture life. Maybe this story is little better.*

Text 2: "(Story)"

A story about the writer's friend. Received in Week 3

*Sara is a refugee from Afghanistan. She arrived in New Zealand in 2001. When she came to New Zealand she didn't understand New Zealand culture and languages. She was very upset and she thought about her new life. how can she speak English and How can she knows NZ culture and life? This was very difficult for her. After few days she went to English course but she didn't know about writing and reading. Her teachers told her for hard work. After few months her English was littele better good so she liked New Zealand and she was very happy. When her English was good and then she talk to every one and she solve her any problems. So she applied for job in the Food Town and she got a job there. Now she works Monday to Thursday and she is very hardworking. She has got a new life and her feauture will be very good.*

*This story shows to students hard work and a good life. When you don't understand anything you should ask from teacher and when teacher explain to you. you should listen it and you do every time practice for English. you speak English with every one. Some time you go to library and read some books. These things are helps you every time. when you finish your study. you should get a job and you promise to your self. you'll be hard work and every where friendly.*

Student 11 : Text 1: "About My Self"

Autobiographical. Received in Week 1

*When I came to New Zealand. I couldn't speak English. I didn't understand this country. After few days I came to AUT and give a test. and then 19 July I come*

*to AUT and I joined level (1). I didn't Understand About The Grammer. My teachers Thought* [taught] *me and all the student to English and more Things.*

*Why I want to learn and speak English.*

*because I live in New Zealand. I want to learn English and find some Job. I would like to be doctor are* [or] *pilot if I don't speak English How I find a Job. If I come to AUT teachers learn English and they try To us speak and learn English. This good for your Job and life.*

*Now I feel My English is more beter Than Two month befor and I Try to more learn English if I fantastic English speak* [so that I can speak fantastic English.] *This My all Teachers kindnes They Teach me English.*

Text 2:

A story about the writer's friend. Received in Week 3

*Sara is Afghani girl. She went to Pakistan from Afghanistan. she elders than her brothers and sisters. She have three sisters and Three brothers. her father was didn't can any work because he didn't have one hand.*

*She girl understood Urdu and than she find theacher* [she found teaching work] *at prime school and also she made a clothes and she had many but not enough many* [money]. *she was very hard working she eidmeat* [enrolled] *her brothers and sisters at school. some children came her home and she thought to children and they give to many* [she took in paying students]. *After few years her seatueation was batter* [her situation was better] *than before seatueation when she had. She married her sister with her causen* [cousin] *After a few years her father was did [her father died].*

*That seatueation defficult for her what was she doing. her casun* [cousin] *lived in Dubai. She want to take some many* [money] *for lone for her causen and her brother want send to Dubai* [she loaned money from her cousin to send her brother to Dubai]. *her brother went to Dubai he studie ten class. two brothers and two sister leaved* [lived] *in Pakistan. After that her brother work in Dubai and he fined* [found] *a work and he send mony for her faimily. After that she married with her causen, befor married she complet her lone many when she taked her causen* [she paid back the money loaned from her cousin]. *because she was hard working and she had a worked. know* [now] *her one brother is go to college one is go to school and sister 11$^{th}$ class complet. Know* [now] *her sister made a clotes* [clothes] *and her mother Pray her children for his success life. Know* [now] *they all success. Know Sara had lovely child and Sara is very happ* [happy] *in her life.*

*Signed and dated.*

Student 12:

A fictional story.  Received in Week 3.


*Rose:*

*Dear students:*

*I have one story for every bady* [everybody]. *Befor I was teacher semester top* [in a previous semester I was a teacher of a TOPs class]*, in the class was one Good girl. She was born Holland, she had life very difficult and sad. Because she in 13 years old, she parents died she was very clever because she after finished college for studied her came in New Zealand, she long time was to university after class she went to work for night, she was very strong because she had 8 or 9 hours time for rest. After 6 years she finished study. New [now] she was a docoter dentist. she was very happy and she had a life very, very good.*


Student 13: No text received.


Student 14:

Autobiographical. Received in Week 3.


*X* [student's name] *is a Iranian Boy. he was in a Pakistan for 2 years and he apply. for the permanent* [permanent residency in New Zealand] *in Pakistan and After 2 years he approved and After that he came to NZ. He came to NZ he didn't* [know] *any English and after a couple of Months he go to the English cours at AUT in Auckland city. If he finished his cours he look After* [for] *good job.*


Student 15:

A story about the writer's sister. Received in Week 3


*This story from my sister. She is A success. her name is X.*

*She woork in university. She is teacher.*

*She woork hard. She study very much beford find job*

*She alwes good studen of all scool.*

*She after the fineshed sekend scool go to the college and I saw ham study very very much and fined job in college* [After she finished secondary school she went to college and I saw her study very, very much and find a job at the college].

*She woork in compeuter room is job is free job* [voluntary*] jest for experienced. I no* [know] *all students and all teachers loves her Because she very frinedly beth* [friendly to both] *all students and teachers*

*after the finesh college she go university. some* [or same] *all time she study hard and she woork in university*

*She study Einglesh. my sister find anther* [another] *job to teaching*

*2 yers go* [years ago] *she finesh university.*

*now she woork in university teachenig Engilesh and she is very hapy for her livef* [she is very happy with her life].

Student 16.

This student was not present during the discussion of the critical literacy questions.

Text 1: "X's [the student's name] Story"

Autobiographical. Received in Week 2

*My name is X Y.*

*about my story. I come from Somalia.*

*I'm Somali. I left Somalia in 1991.*

*I went to Ethiopia in 1991. I lived in Ethiopia for ten years. There are many languages.*

*There so I speak Amharic and a little Oromo.*

*I flew from Ethiopia in 2002. We didn't land for sixteen hours. We had got three transits. India Thailand and Hongkong. We didn't had eat food for about 20 hours. because we hadnt maney. We were in Hongkong for 14 hours. and I felt very hungry.*

*I was confused about the time.*

*My watch confused me. I didn't know if it was daytime or night time.*

*finally I arrived in New Zealand.*

*I get in to Mangeri Refugee Centre.*

*When I was come in New Zealand.*

*I started at AUT 2003.*

*Know* [now] *I'm student.*

*I have been learning English for one year And half*

*I am very glad*


Text 2:

Received in Week 3.

*Good morning gentlmen and ladies.*

*Who experience respecting and many things.*

*Student must be polite and quiet.*

*When he is in the class.*

*Now you must also be silent.*

*When the teacher is explaning the lesson.*

*Inconclusion I want to thanking my teacher.*

*Who tought me English.*

*Same student in our class are shouting.*

*Some others was quiet.*

*Every person has a habit.*

*that he is different. for example some people like shouting and some others hated shoute.*

*If you are student don't be unpolite.*

# Consent to Participation in Research

Title of Project:     **Developing methodology for teaching critical literacy in low English proficiency refugee classes**

Project Supervisor:   **Dr Pat Strauss**

Researcher:           **Rosemary Harison**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this project / I have had the information translated for me.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that I will be filmed (if I agree to it) and that I will be interviewed if I want to talk about the work.
- I understand that the interview (if I agree to one) will be transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time before completion of the final data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant scenes will be edited out of the video and the footage will be destroyed.
- I understand that this video will only be used by Rose to collect information and will not be shown to other people.
- I understand that Rose will get some information about me from the TOPs files. This information will include: my age, my nationality, how much schooling I have and what languages I speak. No-one will know who I am because Rose will not speak about me. Rose will not use any other information from the TOPs files.
- I agree to take part in this research project.

Participant signature:    ………………………… …….. ……………………………………… ……………………………… ……………………………….

Participant name:         ………………………… …….. ……………………………………… ……………………………… ……………………………….

Date:    ………………………… …….. ………………………………………

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on** 19/04/04

**AUTEC Reference number** 04/79
Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

# Participant Information Sheet

**Date Information Sheet Produced: 5 April 2004**

**Project Title:** Developing methodology for teaching critical literacy in low English proficiency refugee classes

## Invitation

Your teacher, Rose Harison, invites you to be part of a study she is doing.

The study is for her MA (Applied Language Studies).

## What is the purpose of the study?

The study is about how Rose can teach students to read more than just the words of texts.

She wants students to think about how texts may change the way they think and feel.

She wants students to learn to choose how they understand texts.

## How are people chosen for the study?

Only the students in this class will be asked to be part of the study.

## What happens in the study?

The study will take four lessons.  In these lessons you will

- o   read a text
- o   answer questions about the text
- o   talk about the text
- o   write a text

Two other teachers will be in the classroom to watch Rose and how she teaches.

If you agree to be part of this study, Rose will use your writing for the study.

She will use your answers to the questions. And she will use the texts you write.

She will not use them if you don't want her to.


She might video or tape record the class when you talk about your answers.

If you don't want to be videoed or recorded there will be no problem.

Rose will make sure that you will not be filmed or tape recorded you if you don't want to.

You should feel free at any time to tell her if you don't want to be recorded.


She will ask you if you want to be interviewed.

Only say yes if you want to. There will be no problem if you don't want to be interviewed.


Rose will write a thesis on the lessons.

She will write about what she did.

She will write about what she thinks was good and not so good about her teaching.


**How will my privacy be protected?**

Rose will need to include information about the students in the class in her thesis.

The information she will need is:

- o   the students' ages
- o   how many years of school students had before they came to AUT
- o   students' nationalities
- o   students' first languages

For example: The students in the class are between 18 and 37 years old. 6 students come from Iran, 4 come from Ethiopia, 2 from Afghanistan, 2 from Somalia, 2 from Turkey and 1 from Eritrea.

She will write about things students said, wrote and did in the class but she will **not** use any students' names.

**What are the costs of participating in the project? (including time)**

There is no cost. The study will take from seven to nine hours of class time.

**Opportunity to consider invitation**

You can say yes or no to the invitation today or you can think about it for a few days. The first day of the study will be next Tuesday when Rose will teach the class instead of Jillian so you need to decide before then.

**Opportunity to receive feedback on results of research**

When the study is finished, Rose will come to your classes and tell you how the study went.

**Participant Concerns**

If anything about this study worries you, talk to the Project Supervisor or tell the interpreter who will explain your worries to the Project Supervisor.

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz , 917 9999 ext 8044.

**Researcher Contact Details:**     Rosemary Harison

Phone: 917 9999 ext.6163

Email: rosemary.harison@aut.ac.nz

Office location: WT706

Postal address:     AUT, School of Languages

Private Bag 92006

Auckland

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**     Dr Pat Strauss

Phone: 917 9999 ext.6847

Email: pat.strauss@aut.ac.nz

Office location: WT710

Postal address:     AUT, School of Languages
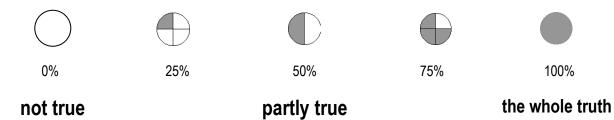
Private Bag 92006

Auckland

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on** 19/04/04

**AUTEC Reference number** 04/79

# Is it the whole truth?

| | 0% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 100% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **not true** | | **partly true** | | **the whole truth** |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  The only place to **learn English** is in English classes. | | | | | |
| 2.  **Clever people** learn English fast. | | | | | |
| 3.  New Zealand is a very **peaceful** country. | | | | | |
| 4.  If you eat well you will be **healthy**. | | | | | |
| 5.  New Zealanders are very **friendly**. | | | | | |
| 6.  People from your country are very **hospitable** | | | | | |
| 7.  Only bad people are in **prison**. | | | | | |
| 8.  Women do **more work** than men. | | | | | |
| 9. The Olympics show that North Americans and the Chinese are better at sport than other people. | | | | | |

# APPENDIX E

## Responses to Critical Questions 1 – 8

*Table showing student groups*

| Group | Student | Country | Language | Age | Years of Formal Education | Years in NZ | Gender |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group 1** | 4 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 20 | 9 | 1 | F |
| | 5 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 18 | 10 | 1 | F |
| | 6 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 26 | 0 | 3 | **F** |
| **Group 2** | 1 | The Cook Islands | Puka Pukan | 21 | 5 | 3 | F |
| | 8 | Turkey | Turkish | 19 | 5 | 1 | F |
| | 9 | Turkey | Turkish | 19 | 5 | 1 | F |
| **Group 3** | 2 | Sri Lanka | Tamil | 34 | 12 | 2 | F |
| | 10 | Afghanistan | Pashto | 20 | 6 | -1 | F |
| | 11 | Afghanistan | Pashto | 21 | 7 | -1 | F |
| **Group 4** | 3 | Eritrea | Tigrinya | 28 | 8 | -1 | M |
| | 7 | Ethiopia | Amharic | 21 | 10 | 1 | F |
| **Group 5** | 12 | Iran | Farsi | 32 | 10 | -1 | F |
| | 13 | Iran | Farsi | 26 | 7 | 3 | M |
| | 14 | Iran | Farsi | 23 | 9 | 3 | M |
| | 15 | Iran | Farsi | 26 | 11 | 2-3 | M |

*Responses to the Critical Questions:*

**1. Who wrote Berezaf's story?**

All groups: Rose.

**2. Why did Rose choose this story for your class? Why didn't she choose a different story?**

1. Rose's like this class, we are refugee from Ethiopia and she's motivate for success our life

2. Because she wants student learning speak English.

3. Because this story is about a refugee girl. She is very hard working and she could learn about working in NZ, practise her English and learn new skills – Rose show me a success life.

4. Because we're have hunrstanding this story and very often and themself.

5. because she was good student and she's a refugee and a success and she was hard workers and friendly and she's a supervisor.


**3. What do you think Rose wants you to think or learn or believe from Berezaf's story?**

1. we are thinking about Rose thinking how to get success? to get success hardworking quck learn and friendly.

2. (*blank)*

3. I think Rose wants this we learn language and work in NZ and we believe the story because hard workers are always success.

4. We belive from the story new Zeland works hard work quick to learn new tasks and friendly. Roses thinks very helpful

5. because she has good story and she passed all challenges in life and very well because she pattern and hero for us.

**4. How does Berezaf's story help Rose do this?**

1. Berezaf's story helps to her the all students encourage for job & personal quality

2. Maybe she got high

   we help her

3. (*blank*)

4. She teach very claver and very kind to help us writing Reading and talking

5. because she has good opportunity. for he's future.


**5. Is this story a true story?**

All groups answered "yes".


**6. Is this story all the truth, the whole truth?**

1. yes

2. Yes all the truth

3. All the truth.

4. Yes

5. yes


**What parts of Berezaf's story are not written here?**

1. She is married and she have two children & her husband work is teaching.

2. Because this story from Roza

3. (*blank*)

4. She is marride

   She have two children

She have brother and sister

She have mather and father

5. (*blank*)

## 7. Are any texts the whole truth?

1. No, this different text **/story**..

2. (*blank*)

3. (*blank*)

4. Yes, because some times we can't Reading we can't writing   not got job so we will learn more English and writing and Reading

5. yes of course

## 8. What different things would you write in a story -

### i)        to send home to family in your country

1. I studies English language in AUT

2. My friend she is a refugee from Turkey + she arrive to NZ in 2000.

3.  I know on girl. she is refugee from Afghanistan. now she is good English speeking and she is working in immigration. and two days she works in supermarket.

4. New Zealand I studied English but this country hard life Becouse languge very difficult my country and oll tings differnt

5. same things.

### ii)        for refugees who are thinking of coming to New Zealand

1. Don't coming NZ beacause this country bad weather.

2. She one years studid English now She has a restaurant and she a chef

3. This is very important. They learn some English, writing, reading and they well hard work.

4. refugees coming to New Zealand very nice country & has freedom but life very diffcult

5. for good life and new life. good future. for peaceful

### iii) for kiwi school children to read about refugees in New Zealand

1. I come to New Zealand for studing and jobs.

2. She 1 years went to AUT for learning English.

3. Sara is came from Afghanistan 15 years ago. She lives in Auckland. First she studied in school.  And then she went to Univercity. She was very clever.

4. Yes kiwi children to read about refugees in New Zealand.

5. let bet diffrent. Refugees has political problem in the cuntry. because same of refugees befor came to the NZ befor has job and life but the people need more fredien and people want choes

### iv) for New Zealand refugees who already have jobs and are settled.

1. Oh, this is great countinues your jobs and one day to your worker. Thanks. ?

2. Now she very happy work some people and

3. Sara's life is very good because she is working. And she doesn't got any problem in languge and in job. She have got a success life. i like her work. I would be like a busy life.

4. Yes    new Zealand very helpful refuges quite cantry because my country ever day fighting thiscountry not politicol.

**APPENDIX F**

**Responses to Question 9**

Question: **After reading Berezaf's story, how does it make you feel about your life in New Zealand?**

1. I will feeling helful about learn English in New Zealand.

   this story make my to more study English in NZ and How I can find job in NZ.

2. My feeling are New Zealand is peacefull contury. because young woman very safe.

3. I can could be to feel very nice New Zealand I would like to be a machanic. I need learn

4. I feeling studed Einglish after that 3-4 years studed cours. I finsed I start a job.

5. My feeling about my life in New Zealand, after these English course I would like hardworking quick learn and then enlarge my knowlege, start enjoy enjoyable life.

6. I feeling Berezaf's

   I feeling study English.

   My life New Zealand no good because I feeling family Ethiopia.

7. My feeling study English Languge  After that I study nurseing 2 and 3 year then I find a job

8. My feel is today not bad my feel is very confused I am everiday thinking when I speak English very wel. My feel is tired. Berezaf story my feel is good.

9. I came to NZ. My feel is got tired Because everything is different but I'm happy I want succes everythink first is speaking English after than I got good Job. I had some think from Berezaf Belechaw story.

10. Yasterday I read Berezaf's story so I felt good because this story showed me Success life. Maybe in the feauture I'll make my life success. And I'll very hard work. I'll enjoy my life.

    Maybe this is possible.

11. When I read this story I feel. she was a girl. Im a girl. When I finished my studay. I find some Job. I would be lilk to be a doctor or pilot. Now My English is not good, but I desided this. I find job in New Zealand. because this good for my life. I like biologe and I can this course in the future.

12. After reading this story, I feel very happy because I would like very good finish study English and find good job.

13. I feeling shaky because af I study hord I can d do anvthic I want.

14. this story make my to more study English in NZ and How I can find job in NZ.

15. Engish lagauge. After the I would like to be to job