Semiotic remediation and resemiotisation as discourse practice in
***Isidingo:* A multi-semiotic analysis**

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ABSTRACT

Semiotic remediation and resemiotisation as discourse practice in *Isidingo:* A multi-semiotic analysis

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The problem explored relates to the dearth in studies exploring semiotic resources other than language in the study of mediated discourses in the media; public broadcasting in particular. Gilje (2010) laments that although manipulation of different genres and modalities has accelerated in the production of movies, documentaries and soapies due to developments in media technologies, there have been very few studies on the subject. The purpose of this study was to investigate how the *Isidingo* producers use new technologies and editing tools to merge and/or manipulate different semiotic material in the production of *Isidingo*. I investigated how different stories and narratives are infused into the storylines and how the producers are re-figuring socio-cultural-histories as semiotic resources in the production of *Isidingo*. This involved a determination of how storylines and other semiotic resources are transformed in *Isidingo* for aesthetic and communicative effect. The idea was to explore the socio-historical trajectory as semiotic material in time and space. In addition, I explored how the producers draw on and manipulate different genres (e.g. politics, advertisements, legal drama) which are often infused in the storylines in the production of the soap opera. The focus here was on the blurring of generic boundaries as *Isidingo* producers' use of multiple genres within the soap opera for aesthetic and communicative effect. I also explored how local and international topical issues are re-contextualised, intertextualised and resemiotised in the local *Isidingo* storylines. The idea was to do a multi-semiotic analysis of *Isidingo* as a soap opera, focusing on the reproduction of semiotic material. This entailed an ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis, which included nine randomly selected aired episodes of the soap opera.

I found that this soap opera heavily depends on societal discourses such as socio-cultural-histories, language-in-use and popular culture as its resource for composing believable plotlines. These everyday discourses are strategically used by the producers to recreate reality into the fictional world by demonstrating semiotic remediation and resemiotisation as discourse practices. I conclude that the producers recycle issues from the real world and recontextualise them into the fictional world in order to evoke viewer involvement (transparent immediacy) and to infuse multiple media (hypermediacy) for extended meanings. In addition to this, technology such as gadgetry, social networks and software are reconstructed in order to subliminally advertise these products to the viewers. I also conclude that the producers of *Isidingo* treat language in the soap opera as social practice. This makes it possible for the producers to create characters with multiple identities to depict different social roles and voices. By bringing in real life aspects, the soap opera serves as both fiction and reality.

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KEYWORDS

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Discourse

Soap opera

Isidingo

Language

Identity

Semiotic resources

Intertextuality

Multimodality

Resemiotisation

Semiotic remediation

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis of *Semiotic Remediation and Resemiotisation as Discourse Practice in Isidingo: a Multi-Semiotic Analysis* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full Name: Leilani Marthinus   Date: September 2015

Signature: ……………………

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my favourite child in the whole world, my nephew, Caleb. I hope my academic achievements will inspire you to reach for the stars.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a Thesis: It is as exciting as it is terrifying.

I have been through many things in my life thus far but nothing compares to the proverbial masters emotional rollercoaster I have been on for the past three years. There were so many instances where I questioned my ability to do this, to complete this. These instances turned into days and weeks of doubt: will I ever be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel?

With much guidance and incessant motivation from the incomparable Professor Felix Banda, I managed to not only complete this thesis but I was also made aware of my academic potential. Thank you for your constant encouragement even though I was ready to throw the towel in on numerous occasions. Without you, none of this would have been possible. Thank you for being on this journey with me.
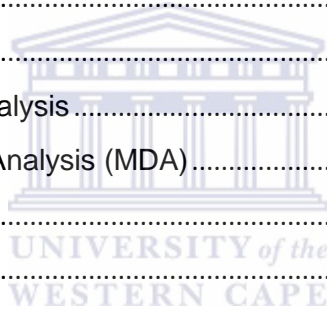
Friendship has always been extremely important to me. I have always consciously chosen people who add value to my life. In no particular order, the following people have certainly helped me in different ways to keep me sane: Michael, Nazeem, Nonkosi, Zaib, Adamia, Shenteen, Remo, Derrick, Rashaad, Chandré, Leylanie and Nasstasja. Thank you so much for listening to me whine and vent for the past few years and not giving up on me.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC   African National Congress

CDA   Critical Discourse Analysis

IMM   Integrative Multi-semiotic Model

MDA   Multimodal Discourse Analysis

NP   National Party

SABC   South African Broadcasting Corporation

SFL   Systemic Functional Linguistics

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

South Africa has changed vastly since the abolishment of the apartheid regime. Under the rule of the apartheid government, white Afrikaans speaking citizens were the primary target market for broadcasting companies despite the overwhelming number of the population being black. Television programmes were governed by segregation and blunt racism. During this time, it was generally accepted that this was the way South Africans were supposed to co-exist. In the year 1994, South Africa experienced its first democratic elections and the end of legislated inequality. The abolishment of apartheid and the introduction of democracy has encouraged South Africans to move towards an inclusive multicultural society; where foundations of new beliefs were set in motion.

1.1 Background
1.1.1 Apartheid Laws

The South African national government enacted laws in 1948 to enforce segregation. Their legislation was surrounded by Acts that separated races from each other in various ways. Examples of these are the *Groups Area* Act, *Bantu Education* Act, and the *Bantu Building Workers* Act. The *Groups Area* Act, No 41 of 1950 (South Africa, 1950: 1) forced races to segregate by allocating different residential areas for each race. The residential areas for white people were better structured and landscaped than those belonging to other racially fitted backgrounds. This led to residents being forced from their homes to different or more 'suitable' areas. This is how slum neighbourhoods such as Mitchell's Plain, Manenberg, Gugulethu, Phillipi, and so forth. came to be. Areas such as these were overpopulated whilst the white minority lived in spacious luxury. Another legislation Act was called the *Bantu Education* Act, Act No 47 of 1953 (South Africa, 1953: 1). This Act prevented blacks from obtaining an education which would have allowed them to be in professional positions comparable or higher than their white counterparts. With regards to this, one can also look at the *Bantu Building Workers* Act, Act No 27 of 1951 (South Africa, 1951: 1) where black South African citizens were permitted to be trained as artisans, but

they could only work with their own race. It was regarded as a criminal offence if these black people worked in urban areas amongst their white counterparts.

1.1.2 How Television came to be in South Africa

For decades, black people were treated unfairly in South Africa. The previously discussed governed Acts were not the only ways in which racial segregation were conducted. Another method of maintaining this way of life was further enforced by delaying the introduction of television in the country.

Even though South Africa was more economically advanced than other African countries at the time, television was introduced much later than in the rest of Africa. The National Party (NP) considered television to be a threat to their hold on mass communication and information dissemination. The NP government were particularly wary of Afrikaner cultural dilution due to information flow. In other words, they were fearful of blacks disregarding the Afrikaner ways once television became available in South Africa.

Cros (n.d.) discusses why South Africa took longer than other African countries to get television. He states that the NP - at the time - felt that they had valid reasons for keeping television from its citizens in South Africa. The NP felt that it "would hurt the preservation of the cultural heritage which had always been the spearhead of the Afrikaner struggle" (Cros, n.d.: 1). In other words, the NP felt that they had to preserve their right as the white supremacy and that the black races should stay where they belong. It is also clear that the NP did not want the black masses that were fighting for emancipation to gain any kind of information from outside. Thus, the NP forbade television in South Africa because it was a threat to all citizens, especially the whites. Cros (n.d.:1) further states that the NP "endangered the future of the country by refusing all forms of progress". By refusing the usage of television in South Africa, the NP was refusing the economic development of the rest of the world.

The NP was more interested in their own propaganda and banished any counter influences from outside the country. Westernised countries such as the United States of America, Canada and England – at the time – strived for equality amongst

all races. Despite their racial background, everyone had the freedom to live wherever they wanted to, the freedom to study whatever they wanted to and to be hired in any career they wanted to be in - as long as they were qualified for the job. South Africa's apartheid government had no interest in this kind of liberalism and they feared that the existence of television would instigate blacks into thinking that they were worth more than what the NP led them to believe they were.

It was evident that South African government officials were determined to keep television out of South Africa. They were scared that their 'perfect' country would be ruined by the utilisation of television in South African homes. If black South Africans saw programmes on television where black Americans were rioting and confronting Caucasian officials without fear, they would get ideas to do the same. The NP was fearful that black South Africans would be influenced by these American television programmes and be inspired to emulate their actions in their struggle for equality amongst all races (Nixon, 1999).

Nixon (1999) also discusses how difficult it was to have access to television in South Africa. The NP made sure that their overall political supremacy in South Africa was at all times present by instilling fear in the public's attitude towards television. They did this by going as far as defining television as a gadget from the devil and that it would replace their love for God (Nixon, 1999). According to Nixon (1999: 12), South Africa's Minister of Posts and Telegraphs (1958-1968), Albert Hertzog, went even further by saying that "inside the pill of TV there is the bitter poison which will ultimately mean the downfall of civilisations". It is interesting that he uses the word 'civilisation' in this context. During apartheid, civilisation was regarded as segregation where groups were split according to their race. It is clear that Hertzog, and others like him, feared television in South Africa because it would mean that blacks would be part of their world. Similarly, Nixon (1999: 12) states that Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, pointed out to the public that television was hazardous "to the racial struggle on a global scale [and that] TV would cause absolute chaos to South African life". Here, another political figure manipulated the public into believing that television would disrupt the utopia that is South Africa.

However, this kind of segregational manipulation did not last forever. According to Cros (n.d.), despite the NP's attempts to remain a legally racially segregated country, there were many other white South Africans who did not share these views. Some of these white South Africans were also South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) executives who were liberals and believed in racial equality. The downfall of the NP and white supremacy all started when some of their members resigned from government, including Hertzog in 1968. According to Cros (n.d.: 1), the public regarded Hertzog's resignation as the "green light for TV". In addition to Hertzog's exit from the government, the South African public became angry at the absence of television when they were unable to watch the now infamous walk on the moon by Neil Armstrong in 1969. This angered the South African public because they could not witness history taking place. They felt ashamed for not being as clued up as the rest of the world when it came to current important events. Cros (n.d.: 1) points out that the local South African newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, went as far as declaring that "the moon film has proved to be the last straw…the situation is becoming a source of embarrassment for the country". Similarly, Nixon (1999: 12) recalls Neil Armstrong's moon walk "as the event that marked the beginning of the end for the apartheid government's conviction that South Africa could remain a fortress against television into the next millennium".

After much debate and struggle, television finally made its national debut on 5 January 1976. It was slowly introduced at an earlier stage to certain sections in South Africa. There was only one channel (TV 1) in 1971 aimed at white audiences. A second channel (TV 2) came to be in 1981 that consisted of programmes in African languages, like isiZulu and isiXhosa. It was difficult to broadcast programmes that represented all the racial groups and their home languages. American and British programmes were still frowned upon at this time. At that time, the President of South Africa, F.W. de Klerk, felt that the media censorship the previous government imposed was too harsh. He took another look at the media censorship and decided to be more lenient than his predecessors by being more open-minded. De Klerk allowed some programmes from the international community to be aired in South Africa, as well as more programmes aimed at black South Africans. SABC followed in his footsteps as well as the political party, the African National Congress (ANC).

Two years after the ANC took charge of the new democratic government, 4 February 1996; the SABC restructured their television channels in order to illustrate the different languages in the newly developed multicultural society. It was assumed that people were not interested in a language other than their own and this was why subtitles were non-existent. Even more international programmes were welcomed with open arms. The *Broadcasting* Act No 4 of 1999 (South Africa, 1999: 1) perfectly sums up the post-apartheid attitude towards broadcasting in the new democratic South Africa, as summarised below.

- Through its programming, a public service necessary for the maintenance of a South African identity, universal access, equality, unity and diversity.
- Acknowledges that the services are owned and controlled by South Africans.
- Realises that the broadcasting system must reflect the identity and diverse nature of South Africa and must reflect the multilingual and diverse nature of South Africa by promoting the entire spectrum of cultural backgrounds and official languages in the Republic.
- Encourages the development of South African expression by providing a wide range of programming that refers to South African opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity [and to] provide a public service necessary for the maintenance of national identity, universal access, equality, unity and diversity.

This Act's objective is to align and resolve the broadcasting system with the democratic values of the Constitution and to enhance and protect the fundamental rights of citizens. (South Africa, 1999: 1)

From the summary above, South Africa intends to move away from the negative influences of apartheid by ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and equally. This is envisioned and portrayed by the Broadcasting Act and its television programmes.

In addition, television also boosted the economy of South Africa by creating jobs locally because of electronic companies like *Sony* that opened up factories to manufacture televisions in South Africa. The need for television manufacturing led to more positive economic influences such as the exportation of electronic products to other African countries. South Africa, slowly but surely, repaired their economic and

political status to the rest of the world by putting an end to racial segregation and allowing the use of televisions in South African homes.

1.1.3 Television in Post-Apartheid South Africa

The existence of television has also created the need for a new kind of literacy for the South African public, which involves 'reading' and interpreting multimodal texts by combining linguistic, visual and aural texts. Television is generally considered as a mass mediated discourse because it reaches vast amounts of people at the same time. Danesi (2004) discusses the power of television in this day and age. While noting the positive aspects of television, he also laments that "it has also become the medium that many people blame for helping to entrench our materialistic and shallow culture…There is no doubt that TV has had an impact on culture and on individuals living in it" (Danesi, 2004: 239). He further acknowledges that television programmes that are being broadcasted are those "that reinforce already-forged lifestyle trends. TV moguls are more intent on adopting and recycling such trends than in spreading commercially innovations of their own" (Danesi, 2004: 239). Even though this statement by Danesi (2004) is somewhat negative, it reinforces the notion that television is used as a tool to show representations of what the real world is like. This is the only way how television moguls can ensure the success of television programmes.

Broadcast television and its content analysis is discussed by Brown (1990: 13) where "television has a moral obligation to serve (and therefore represent) all of a country's citizens". Someone who expresses this point of view very well is Coombes (2003). He states that South Africa "has undergone far reaching shifts in its political, economic and cultural paradigms. Through these paradigm shifts new histories are created, existing identities are being renegotiated and new ones constructed" (Coombes, 2003: 1). Currently, South Africa has eleven official languages which are associated with different cultures. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is expected to play an important role in building a multicultural and democratic South Africa through its programmes. For the national broadcaster, this has opened up a whole new world of discourses such as human solidarity, cultural hybridism, multilingualism and positivity. Whether or not the SABC is up to the new challenge is not really the focus of this study. For the purposes of this study, a gap

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has been created for new kinds of television programmes, such as the local soap opera, *Isidingo,* which tackles the kinds of stories and relationships such as multi-racial marriages and co-habitation that were forbidden during apartheid.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The sociolinguistic character of South Africa is extremely complexed with regards to how the country has evolved since the dissolution of the apartheid regime. Considering that South Africa, as a democratic country, is a 'new born' and that the SABC is influenced by the trends in the new South Africa, not much research has been done to examine the factors influencing the writers and producers of *Isidingo.* According to Gilje (2010: 2), "new media and editing tools have led to a range of new digital means for shaping stories and narratives with different modes and across a wide range of (new) genres". Gilje (2010) discusses how stories and narratives are borrowed and re-shaped across modes and how genres are mixed. By reshaping, effectively, one is remediating and this is why some scholars such as Prior and Hengst (2010) classify semiotic remediation as a new discourse practice in new media.

Currently, there are not many studies on how South African soap opera producers manipulate different genres, as well as recreate socio-historical and political topics in the storylines. For this reason, I investigated the semiotic resources used in the production of *Isidingo* and how they are manipulated and re-purposed in different storylines. This involved determining how the storylines and other semiotic resources are transformed in *Isidingo* for aesthetic and communicative effect. The idea was to explore the socio-historical trajectory as portrayed in time and space in *Isidingo.* In addition, I also explored how the producers draw from and manipulate different genres in the production of the soap opera. The focus therefore was on the blurring of generic boundaries and how *Isidingo* producers use multiple genres in the soap opera. I further explored the manner in which local and international topical issues are re-contextualised, intertextualised and resemiotised. I looked at both the material production and reception of *Isidingo* as a soap opera. The idea was to do an ethnographic and multi-semiotic analysis of *Isidingo* as a soap opera.

1.3 Rationale for Research

Growing up, I remember the soap operas on South African television were all American-based, such as *The Bold and the Beautiful, Dallas* and *Days of Our Lives*. Even before South Africa officially became a democratic country, the South African soap opera, *Egoli: Place of Gold*, aired in 1992 for the first time. *Egoli*'s cast members reflected South Africa at that time in terms of dominant social roles and power relations, namely mostly white Afrikaans speaking characters and few characters of other cultures. As soon as South Africa became a democratic country in 1994, another South African soap opera called *Generations* made its way onto our screens. *Generations'* cast consisted of characters from various cultural backgrounds, with the majority of the cast being black actors. I could almost immediately see the similarities and most importantly, the differences by comparing these South African based products to their American counterparts. Not long after, prime time television welcomed another South African soap opera titled *Isidingo: The Need.* This soap opera had even more diverse characters in terms of racial categories as well as the storylines which is the reason why I chose *Isidingo* for my research. I believe that it would give me much more depth in terms of characterisation, intercultural interactions and diversity in the soap opera's storylines.

Furthermore, there is a gap in research that investigates semiotic resources other than language in multilingual spaces, such as *Isidingo,* and how producers use new technologies and editing tools to merge semiotic material to create a desired effect. This is supported by Daubs (2011: 178) who points out that "the discussion of new media are not simply about technology or even production, but rather involve a larger discussion about how the use of these technologies can alter a society and its culture".

1.4 Objectives

The main aim of my research was to do a multi-semiotic analysis of *Isidingo* as a soap opera. This study therefore looked at the semiotic resources including storylines and characterisation. The study was geared towards achieving the following:

(a) To explore the stylisation of South Africa and other lifestyles in *Isidingo* i.e. the traditional versus the modern and the hybrid lifestyle.

(b) To investigate the manner in which texts are 'borrowed' and transformed in *Isidingo*.

(c) To explore the recontextualisation of semiotic materials in space and time in *Isidingo*.

(d) To identify how South African history, cultures and political discourses are reported, recreated, repurposed and relived in space and time in *Isidingo*.

(e) To explore the actions, dress codes and mannerism (stereotypes, dances and speech styles) and the way they are re-performed and re-voiced in *Isidingo*.

(f) To explore how the producers of *Isidingo* are able to manipulate the soap opera genre.

1.5 Research Questions

My research questions are as follows:

(a) How are South African lifestyles stylised?

(b) What techniques are used for borrowing and transforming texts?

(c) How are texts recontextualised in space and time in *Isidingo*?

(d) What socio-cultural-histories are reported, recreated, repurposed and relived?

(e) How are actions, dress codes and mannerisms re-performed and re-voiced?

(f) How are *Isidingo* producers able to manipulate the soap opera as a genre?

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter One:

This chapter discusses the abolishment of apartheid and how the existence of television plays an integral part of South Africa's shift towards an inclusive multicultural society. It also highlights how new media and editing tools are used for innovative narratives by combining different modes and genres. This is made possible by investigating semiotic remediation as discourse practice. Furthermore, this chapter also covers the statement of the problem, the rationale for research, objectives and research questions.

Chapter Two:

The literature review and theoretical/analytical framework is a vital part of this thesis which focuses on what other theorists have to say on the same or related topics. This chapter deals with literary information on the short history and characteristics of soap operas as a genre as well as literature on soap operas in the new South Africa. Furthermore, it provides literature on language as social practice, multimodality, semiotics, intertextuality, resemiotisation as well as semiotic remediation. Lastly, the main theoretical concerns to be addressed in this study are discussed.

Chapter Three:

This chapter gives a description of the methods of data collection and analytical methods as used in Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) and Multi-Semiotic Data Analysis. I also describe how I collected the data (aired episodes) used for this study.

Chapter Four:

The focus in this chapter is on the reconstruction of South African lifestyles through remediation and resemiotisation of historical discourse, cultural artefacts, affirmative action and female empowerment. It also shows how the *Isidingo* producers semiotically remediate and resemiotise real-life social commentaries and social issues.

Chapter Five:

The exploration of immediacy in *Isidingo* is explored in this chapter. It demonstrates how the producers resemiotise aspects such as timeline, real life South African celebrities and organisations. The chapter also looks at the aspect of technology in media as a social semiotic tool used for subliminal advertising.

Chapter Six:

Attention in this chapter is on language as a social practice in *Isidingo*. This entails analysing the recontextualision of 'ordinary' and everyday language to suit the various characters and the roles they play in the linguistic performance of social identities in the storylines.

Chapter Seven:

This chapter draws the main conclusions of the study, such as the use of everyday societal discourses in order to recreate reality in the soap opera and evoking immediacy by using social issues and technology as media. A summary is given on the major themes of chapters four, five and six. In addition, this chapter suggests questions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL/ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights the short history of a soap opera as a genre, including the characteristics of soap operas. It also provides literature on soap operas in the new South Africa. I also review concepts such as intertextuality, multimodality, semiotics, resemiotisation, semiotic remediation as well as language as social practice. Furthermore, the main theoretical concerns of this study are addressed.

2.1 Short history of Soap Operas as a Genre

Neale (2000: 26) describes genre as "those instances which are relatively formulaic, relatively predictable, relatively conventional…in accordance with the conventions of a pre-signalled genre or genre system and those designed to flaunt them". Ang (1985: 51) defines genre as something that is "made according to certain rules and conventions…a complex of themes, narrative structures and styles that groups of television programmes have in common with one another". The term 'genre' thus has a certain formula and can also branch out into different types of sub-genres. Neale (2000: 227) points out that "different genres possess their own individual characteristics, their own conflicts and their own ways of resolving ideological issues with which they deal". This thesis' focus is on soap operas as a genre.

Let us take a look at the history of the soap opera. Soap operas were invented and developed in the late 1920s by American female radio programme makers. Stories were narrated on the radio (known as the radio genre), before television was invented. These stories are described by Geraghty (1991: 1) as "an over-dramatic, under-rehearsed presentation of trivial dramas blown up out of all proportion to their importance". Similarly, Modleski (1982: 101) describes soap operas as "revelations, confrontations, and reunions [that] are constantly interrupted and postponed by telephone calls, unexpected visitors, counter revelations, catastrophes and switches from one plot to another". Initially, soap operas did not have many fans because it was considered to be mindless entertainment. For this reason, soap operas were not taken seriously. In later years, soap operas have come to be taken more seriously

and are also known as 'soaps' because the programme sponsors were predominantly soap manufacturers. Soaps became popular amongst housewives and were broadcasted on a daily basis. They served as 'company' for the housewives who were home alone during the day. Soap operas were screened on the small screen very soon after television itself started to become popular in the homes of average citizens. Soap operas became so popular that it slowly but surely disappeared from radio and are now solely produced for television.

Ang (1985: 54) claims that soap operas as a "genre took on a new and flourishing existence in the new medium". The existence of television made it possible for visual pleasure to surface where the audience are able to see the actors' clothing, actions, reactions, places and mannerisms. These images are now part of the main attraction of the soap opera genre. Brown (1990: 56) defines a soap opera as a genre that "is preoccupied with the web relations within a community whose members (predominantly white, middle-class professionals) bear similar characteristics". Brown (1990: 55-56) further states that "the primary concern of soaps is affiliation: familiar, romantic, and social". Brown (1990: 187) also discusses why soap operas are produced: "the aims of the producers and advertisers [are] to reach the widest possible audience of consumers exist in a complex, mutually dependent relationship with the pleasure of the viewers". Geraghty (1991: 165-166) adds by pointing out that "awkward issues like race, class and sexuality are dealt with, attempting to indicate social change". This thesis' focus is on how the South African produced soap opera, *Isidingo,* deals with social issues in a South African context.

Ang (1985: 37) believes that soap operas have a "twisted image of reality". This notion is based on the belief that all texts are "a direct, immediate reproduction or reflection of an outside world" (Ang, 1985: 37). Soap operas also deny the fact that each text is a cultural product realised under specific ideological and social conditions of production. Thus, there can never be any question of an unproblematic mirror relation between texts and social reality. Therefore, "a text constructs its own version of 'the real'" (Ang, 1985: 37). She further discusses whether a text in the real world can be recognised as real or not. This serves as a problem because texts may be read at various levels namely, the denotative level and the connotative level. The denotative level includes discussions between characters, their actions and their

reactions to one another. Alternatively, the connotative level's focus is on the meanings associated with elements of the texts, the apparition of humanity and the manner in which viewers are confronted when they watch from a heterogeneous stream of signs. On a connotative level, viewers only pick up certain things that they consider pleasurable by finding only certain aspects of the full text's relevance. Ang (1985: 41-42) reaffirms this by stating that "a text is never read in its totality…a selection process is always taking place". One is not sure of what is real and what is fiction. This is blurred by the fact that viewers only relate to certain storylines based on their own schematic experience. *Isidingo* producers imitate the so-called day-to-day lives of typical South Africans and how the avid *Isidingo* viewers relate to this.

In addition, salient transitions is discussed by Baldry (2004: 94) as a "constant interplay" of what is expected and unexpected from the viewer's point of view and this "guide[s] the viewer vis-à-vis [with] these expectations to the right conclusion" (Baldry, 2004: 94). *Isidingo*'s avid viewers have certain expectations when watching their favourite soap opera. However, they also experience unexpected reactions because of the type of genre it belongs to. Like all texts, each genre has their own characteristics and because of this, people are inclined to like certain types of genres. Even though the viewers follow the storylines religiously and eventually feel like they are part of the 'family', they also experience what the characters experience because of the salient semiotic transitions.

2.1.1 Characteristics of a Soap Opera

Plenty of research has been done on the characteristics of what a soap opera is. South African soap operas are a fairly new genre in the country compared to westernised countries. Three main theorists will be looked at in this section. These theorists are Ang (1985), Geraghty (1991) and Brown (1990) and they compare American and British soap operas. Let us take a look at some of the main characteristics.

Soap operas are characterised by Ang (1985: 6) as the "dramatic complication [that] always revolve around the weal and woe of family". Like Ang (1985), Geraghty (1991: 84) states that American soap operas "are concerned with notions of community; in their worlds, the family is so central that anyone outside is liable to be

a threat, not a friend or neighbour who shares the same concerns". Brown (1990: 79) also points out melodramatic features of a soap opera by stating that "personal relationships is marked out through the representation of significant family rituals and events…It is the experience of these rituals and events on which the soap opera narratives centre". Soap operas' storylines are generally focused on familial and familiar relationships. This is supported by Geraghty (1991: 60) who points out that American soap operas' storylines surrounds family life. Likewise, British soap operas' "intension of familial relationships into the community is very important, enabling a group to be brought together which might otherwise be split by the conflicting interests of age, gender and class" (Geraghty, 1991: 84). No character in the American soap opera, *Dallas,* is more important than the others in the storyline. In other words, there are no protagonists in a soap opera. This is supported by Ang (1985: 57) who states that "not just one (or a few) but many main characters are involved. No one is in the most important position from a narrative viewpoint". Ang (1985) further explains that a soap opera's unity is not based on individual characters, but on the community where they live.

Another characteristic of a soap opera surrounds themes. Ang (1985) states that viewers are not really interested in the soap opera characters' every action in life. Rather, the viewers are only interested in how the dramatic storyline unfolds. Therefore, the production of a soap opera is selective where it "tells us a lot about the different characters, but it also leaves large parts of their histories untold" (Ang, 1985: 59). To add to this notion, Brown (1990: 80) postulates that soap opera storylines in general have an "excessive plot structure" that refer to clichés such as kidnappings, bribery, affairs, obscure illnesses, etc. Ang (1985: 59) also points out that soap operas generally "ignore too concrete social or cultural references because it concerns itself with a completely different aspect of life". Keeping in mind that Ang's (1985) discussion surrounds the American soap opera as a genre, it was interesting to look at how the *Isidingo* producers were willing to explore the said social and cultural references of South Africa.

On the other hand, Geraghty (1991) acknowledges that two American soap operas, *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, have strong thematic and formal links with daytime soaps but they do not have the same scheduling format and makes more use of other genres,

such as action and suspense. She further points out that these types of blurring of boundaries between soaps and other genres cause problems of a concrete definition of what a soap opera is.

There are pivotal differences between American and British soap operas. British soaps traditionally have two or three different storylines running at the same time. Sometimes, these stories are linked together by a common theme or there would be one melodramatic/serious storyline and another storyline for light entertainment that involves a joke or two, just to balance out the episode as a whole (Geraghty, 1991: 16). This is in contrast to Ang (1985: 9) who points out that "all themes and events are dramatized without any humourous distancing devices" in American soap operas.

There are also some characteristics regarding soap opera timelines being discussed by the main theorists in this section. Ang (1985: 6) believes it "is a continuous fictional television serial which can, in principle, go on ad infinitum". Geraghty (1991: 129) also feels that "because of their formal construction and their scheduling function, they do not have the luxury of an ending and have to deal continually with pressures of change". Geraghty (1991: 129) further laments that "the experience of soaps is one in which problems are continually presented, tested and temporary solutions arrived at". Similarly, Brown (1990: 80) postulates that soap operas "represent process without progression and such do not offer the prospect of a conclusion of final denouement…Thus, soap operas are fundamentally anti-utopian…an ending, happy or unhappy, is unimaginable". However, soap operas do supply mini-climaxes which give the audience the sense that the story has ended. This opens up doors for other stories to unfold in the plotline.

These basic melodramatic ideas by Brown (1990: 80) is being brought across for one specific purpose which is to show that "the sense of life is marked by eternal contradiction, by unsolvable emotional and moral conflict, by the ultimate possibility, as it were, of reconciling desire and reality". Ang (1985: 9) summarises the none-ending story as "when one problem, is still unsolved another [one is] on the horizon" and that it is a "continuous coming and going of mini-narratives in an uneven rhythm"

(Ang, 1985: 57). Similarly, Geraghty (1991) points out one predominant characteristic of a soap opera:

> Use a set of unresolved narrative puzzles to carry viewers across the time gap from one episode to another but the length of the fictional time which is deemed to have passed between the episodes depends on the demands of the narrative, it may be a minute, a month, a year, it may be no time at all if the following episode returns to the moment of drama on which the preceding episode ended. (Geraghty, 1991: 10)

When an episode ends on a dramatic pause where the audience is forced to wait for the next aired episode it is called a 'cliffhanger'. The timeline characteristic is interesting considering that the soap operas' storylines try to reflect what life has to offer. It is emulated by establishing the fact that there are no happy endings that are set in stone in real life and that one always has struggles to overcome.

Ang (1985: 19) discusses the planning phase of a soap opera where "producers have to have a definite idea of what the audience will find pleasurable, they must have a certain self-confidence that their own definition of pleasure will coincide with that of (large sections of) the public". The producers also need to "keep within the guidelines of existing and accepted definitions and routines of popular pleasure" (Ang, 1985: 19-20). The *Isidingo* producers have to know for sure what their audience will enjoy watching and to make sure that they will stay glued to the screen as avid *Isidingo* viewers.

Race in international soap operas are handled in a certain manner. According to Geraghty (1991), Caucasian characters are normally part of the majority cast members in American and British soap operas. Until recently, these soap operas rarely had black main characters. Having black characters were thought to be an asset only to reflect some of the 'outside world'. To a great extent, these soap operas' producers only use black characters to create certain effects. There are three strategies for handling black characters in soap operas. Firstly, they are regarded as exotic people who appear in the plotline on a short term basis in order to create trouble in the community. Secondly, they are used as a singleton – either one black character or one family of black characters – that "function in the same way as other characters but whose blackness is picked up and used for stories about black

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stories" (Geraghty, 1991: 141). Lastly, is the incorporation strategy where black characters "experience the narrative dilemmas differently from their white counterparts [and] have their specific problems but the solution to those problems lies in their incorporation into the community" (Geraghty, 1991: 144). This notion is based on the fact that "black characters are not just representative[s] but are or will become part of the community" (Geraghty, 1991: 144). Black characters in American soap operas are also "unable to claim full insider status in the community" (Geraghty, 1991: 147). They are never able to achieve this goal. Geraghty (1991: 145) further summarises the negative connotations attached to black characters: they "seem to have been marginalised, their stories being given less time than those of other characters". Considering the fact that the SABC is striving towards an inclusive multicultural society, it was interesting to explore how *Isidingo* producers portray characters despite the colour of their skin.

2.1.2 Soap Operas in the New South Africa

As previously mentioned, very few studies have been done on soap operas in the new South Africa. Barnard (2006) examines how South African soap operas describe and illustrate the new democracy and embrace a multicultural society. Barnard (2006: 42) states that South African prime-time viewing "explore[s] the growing clashes and mixes of races and cultures in families, communities and other groupings in the wake of apartheid's demise". Barnard (2006: 45) further goes on saying that *Isidingo* "infuses politics into its narratives as it follows the business, political and personal fortunes of a large group of multiracial characters". This study is aimed at exploring how *Isidingo* as a soap opera has re-invented itself from the apartheid regime to the new and improved democratic discourse. The major weakness of Barnard's (2006) paper is that it only looks at language when, in fact, the soap opera uses other semiotic resources in its production as well. Barnard's (2006) paper does not use the more recent tools such as intertextuality, multimodality, resemiotisation and semiotic remediation in his analysis.

However, other studies have touched on mode in South African soap operas. Naidoo (2012: 1) discusses South African soap operas and how they "tackle issues such as eating disorders, HIV/AIDS and Julius Malema". Mkhuma's (2004) interest is on cross-cultural relationships in the soap opera and how whatever is happening in our

society, is reflected in soap operas. She talks about the South African soap opera *Generations* and how it "was beginning to shape itself along the same lines as a real post-apartheid South African society" (Mkhuma, 2004: 24-25). The cast consisted of people belonging to different cultures and races who shared not only a house, but sometimes also a bedroom "without the social structure crumbling" (Mkhuma, 2004: 25). She further discusses how the scriptwriters carefully integrated this new way of life because of a new post-apartheid South Africa by keeping relationships or kissing to the same race and culture, but they eventually went in full swing mode in the late 1990's where the cast members were dating across cultural and racial lines.

Mkhuma (2004) also discusses another popular soap opera, *Isidingo,* which also deals with post-apartheid trends regarding relationships in South Africa. The *Isidingo* producers also pride themselves on many 'firsts' for a South African soap opera: the first interracial kiss, the first gay character, the first HIV-positive person, the first polygamous marriage and the first legal gay marriage. This is supported by Naidoo (2012: 1), who acknowledges that *Isidingo* holds the prize for both "the first mixed-race kiss [that] happened in 1999 [and] the first same-sex kiss in 2001". Mkhuma (2004) further discusses some of the most distinctive characters to date. The character, Derek Nyathi, was portrayed by a black man and he dated a white woman, Phillipa De Villiers. They shared the first interracial kiss on South African television as an interracial couple and also the first interracial marriage (Mkhuma, 2004: 25).

Isidingo did not only deal with interracial relationships, it also dealt – and is still dealing – with how women, especially African women, are seen in society. One of the longest running characters, Agnes*,* is portrayed by a black female. At first, she was portrayed as a dedicated wife selling chicken feet because her husband's salary was not enough to get by on a day-to-day basis. She also attended evening classes to better her education. Later on, Agnes found out that her husband was not only cheating on her but he wanted the other woman to become his second wife which "reflects a dilemma many women, especially the black elite, are grappling with" (Mkhuma, 2004: 25). This was the first polygamous marriage on South African television screens. Because of tradition, Agnes became the epitome of what it really means to be a strong black woman in a democratic South Africa. She is the perfect

example of how women's roles have been shifted in a modernised society. Du Preez (2007) discusses South African soap operas as 'the other' where the themes of local South African soap operas belong to the female audience and genre. Like its American counterparts, "females are also portraying powerful roles [and they are] good example[s] of successful professional women that also grapple with emotional and romantic issues" (Du Preez, 2007: 4). Thus, the audience is constantly being educated on sacrifices and challenges faced by people of different cultural backgrounds and races.

Similarly, Tlelima (2011: 1) describes *Isidingo* as "undeniably the best soapie in South Africa [and that] it has a diverse cast and is renowned for…[dealing]…with heavy issues which affect South Africans including misogyny, racism, domestic violence and HIV/AIDS". However, he is more concerned with the storylines having "less hard-hitting stories and more sensational stories with little or no social commentary" (Tlelima, 2011: 1). This will be explored in the forthcoming data analysis chapters.

Barnard (2006), Mkhuma (2004), Naidoo (2012), Du Preez (2007) and Tlelima's (2011) studies do not directly relate to the various semiotic material used in the production of *Isidingo.* This thesis supplies multi-semiotic examples of the manner in which *Isidingo* draws on multiple semiotic resources as well as how it adapts its storylines with regards to social issues and social commentary.

However, before I address the issue of language use as discourse, I would like to briefly look at recent theorizing around language as social practice. This is critical as South African soap operas tend to use language tailored to particular characters and contexts, albeit appropriated from real life.

2.2 Language as Social Practice

Traditionally, language in social-use has been approached from an autonomous systemic perspective where various languages used are classified as different codes with rules and structure. In recent times, linguists are moving away from an autonomous model based on monoglot norms to look at language as a social practice in multilingual contexts. This has put a spotlight on notions such as code-

switching and code-mixing, which are premised on languages as autonomous systems. In trying to move away from the autonomous model to language without boundaries, Møller and Jørgensen (2009: 149) point out that these multilingual speakers routinely "do not respect any phrase and structure constraints and also create new autonomous language forms". Although the first part of Møller and Jørgensen's (2009: 149) argument is in line with new thinking around language as a social practice, the latter part talks about creating "new autonomous language forms" and is in contradiction with current theorising on language.

As noted above, linguists are now moving away from looking at language as a bounded system towards language analysis as a social practice where there are no boundaries. In addition to this, language is regarded as a semiotic resource that indicates different meanings at the same time. Thus, multilingual speakers may use different aspects of their language-in-use to signal different meanings and identity affiliations. This is known as multivocality which is defined by Higgins (2009: 6) as "a set of interlinked concepts on voice as well as multiple perspectives of speaking positions articulated through language". This gives speakers 'voice', that is, the linguistic power to produce differentiated shades of meaning with a single utterance at the same time.

Machin (2013) points out that one should be careful when looking at language as the most important entity when conducting an analysis. Machin (2013: 351) further elaborates that these "discourses trace how discourses are translated into other semiotic forms and into social practices asking why this is done and what this accomplishes". Similarly, Heller (2007: 1) points out that there is a need for language-in-use to be regarded "as a social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as products of social action". Therefore, a move towards a more materialistic approach is needed where speakers are regarded as social actors and boundaries are seen as social action. These boundaries are not real, they are employed as a form of social organisation for authority or social regulation of speech forms in society. They are thus functions of social action rather than cast in stone. Therefore, I have used this notion to show how the different social actors portray different perspectives and identity options through the use of language(s). In this

regard, linguists should not be looking at language as an autonomous system which makes it possible for multilingual spaces to become places of hybridity.

The notion of language as social practice in a multilingual setting brings up the terms polylanguaging and translanguaging. Let us take a look at how Møller and Jørgensen (2009) explain what they call the four norms of language behaviour:

1. The monolingualism norm: persons with access to more than one language should be sure to master one of them before getting into contact with the other.

2. The double (or multiple) monolingualism norm: persons who command two (or more) languages will at any given time use one and only one language, and they use each of their languages in a way that does not in principle differ from the way monolinguals use the same language.

3. The integrated bilingualism (or multilingualism) norm: persons who command two (or more) languages will employ their full linguistic competence in two (or more) different languages at any given time adjusted to the needs and the possibilities of the conversation, including the linguistic skills of the interlocutors.

4. The polylingualism norm: language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal to achieve their communicative aims as best they can, regardless of how much they know from the involved sets of features (e.g. 'languages'); this entails that the language users may know - and use - the fact that some of the features are perceived by some speakers as not belonging together and some features are assumed to belong to sets of features to which the speaker has no access.

(Møller and Jørgensen, 2009: 146)

The language as social practice model being eschewed in this study relates to some extent to the third and fourth norms, in which language use do not respect language boundaries as predetermined in traditional models of language use based on a monoglot/monolingual speaker.

Hornberger and Link (2012: 263) describe the phenomenon of how multilinguals communicate as translanguaging where participants are "drawing on more than one language or literacy, but they are also using multiple and dynamic varieties of these

different languages and literacies…for varying purposes in different contexts". They further establish that its focus is more "on language-in-motion rather than language-in-place" (Hornberger and Link, 2012: 263). In other words, language is mobile and is not tied to particular localities or domains. This perspective is related to what Pennycook (2010) calls the dis-invention of language. The social actors are dis-inventing language the way we know it and reconstituting language by creating alternative ways of speaking. This goes hand-in-hand with Jørgensen's (2012: 61) view on polylingualism where "languages are socio-cultural constructions [where] speakers use features and not 'languages'". In this conceptualization, language and ethnicity are not seen as autonomous; they are a consequence of social action and hence part of the social practice. Language as a social practice also brings up the notion of linguistic performance of identity options.

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 19) define identities as "social, discursive, and narrative options offered by a particular society in a specific time and place to which individuals and groups appeal in an attempt to self-name, to self-characterise, and claim social spaces and social prerogatives". Furthermore, Norris (2011: 34) argues that identity may be "produced by a social actor inadvertently, rather than intentionally, but the produced identity is often read by other social actors as intentional". In this regard, social actors' attitudes and ideologies can be signalled through language use. Fairclough (2003: 9) defines ideology as "representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation". Keeping in mind that ideologies are primary representations, they can also be "enacted in ways of acting socially and 'inculcated' in the identities of social agents" (Fairclough, 2003: 9). Social agents, for the purpose of this thesis, are also known as social actors. Therefore, ideologies "can be associated with discourses (as representations), with genres (as enactments), and with styles (as inculcations)" (Fairclough, 2003: 9).

Let us take a look at who exactly social actors are. Norris (2011: 33) states that they are the ones who produce "some role-linked identity elements such as being a child, a parent, or a grandparent". They also produce "nation-linked identity elements" (Norris, 2011: 33) known by their dialect or language used. Additionally, social actors also produce a "social-group-linked identity" (Norris, 2011: 33) element by

establishing a relationship with each other. It can vary from being family, to extended family, to an acquaintance to even someone from the neighbourhood. Identity elements may shift from one to the other depending on the context at hand. Norris (2011: 56) also argues that "it is necessary to study social actors in many different (inter)actions within their social networks in order to interpret their identity production through their performance of particular (inter)actions".

Norris (2011) suggests how one can determine social actors' identity elements by commencing with:

> The roles that the social actors should be producing. But then, you need to study them closely and multimodally to determine if they, in fact, do produce these roles as identity elements; you need to determine whether they have mastered or appropriated the identity elements; whether they are producing these roles as identity elements at all; or whether they produce identity elements that are outside of the role-linked identity elements instead.
>
> (Norris, 2011: 275)

Norris (2011: 275–276) further delves into multiple identities in different contexts and how they are "produced and re-produced, negotiated and re-negotiated in everyday life". In other words, identities are not fixed; they are always changing based on various contexts.

This brings us to the notion of constructed identities based on the positioning theory. Positioning is explained by Yamakawa, Forman and Ansell (2005: 2) as "participants [who] position themselves or are positioned in different conversational locations according to changes in storylines". They further elaborate that "one can be positioned by another or by oneself" (Yamakawa, Forman and Ansell, 2005: 2). Positioning is a vital feature in constructed identities. The positioning of identities also:

> Views a conversation as interaction of position, speech-act, and storyline, and this conceptualization enables us to see conversations in terms of participant roles and alignments. A closer look at such roles and alignments will enable us to clarify identities that appear or are constructed through discourse.
>
> (Yamakawa, Forman and Ansell, 2005: 5)

In addition, Andreouli (2010) notes that positioning "contribute towards clarifying the relational character of identity" (2010: 1). This means that language sometimes changes, which is referred to as styling of identities.

Styling of identities is defined by Coupland (2007: 3) as "a means of constructing social meanings, social categories, and identity discursively". Here, "speakers draw on historical and linguistic relationships as resources in designing their personal identity and relationships with peers during talk" (Coupland, 2007: 3). The relationship between language and identities is also discussed by Banda (2009) where the social actor's identity should not be presumed. Instead, identity is performed through language in multilingual spaces.

The theorists Heller (2007), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), and Banda (2009) all agree that language use and performative identities at a particular time and space are based on socio-cultural, political, economic and other significant factors. In fact, I take the view of language use and identity as being mobile and socially determined rather than fixed and bounded to particular homogenous communities or domains. Thus, the study is influenced by the social constructionist perspective which focuses on "ways in which particular identities are legitimized or devalued in the context of global and local political economies" (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 13). The poststructuralist approach - in which language choices are considered - are also "embedded in larger, political, economic and cultural systems" (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 10). This is where social actors opt to use certain languages when interacting for cultural, political and economic reasons.

In this study, I analysed language use in *Isidingo* as social practice with which various identity options are occasioned. However, I was also mindful that language is not the only semiotic system. Therefore, my theoretical framework necessarily had to consider the linguistic, visual and aural/sound aspects of *Isidingo*, hence, multimodal discourse analysis as elaborated in the following sections.

2.3 Discourse Analysis and Language

Most scholars and discourse analysts grimace at the notion that real discourse analysis should ignore literature. Daily conversations should be the fundamental

entity of their activity. Maingueneau (2010: 1) states that "discourse analysis exceeds the boundaries of the usual distinction between text and context". Foucault (1989) agrees with the notion that discourse analysis should not be regarded as an aspect that is set in stone. Rather:

> Not to neutralise discourse [but] to make it the sign of something else, and to pierce through its density in order to reach what remains silently anterior to it, but on the contrary to maintain it in its consistency, to make it emerge in its own complexity [and to] no longer treat discourses as groups of signs but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.
>
> (Foucalt, 1989: 52-53)

In other words, language and context are always interlinked.

Language-in-use is regarded as discourse because spoken/written words cannot be separated from the context or the identities of the speakers or even why they are having the conversation in the first place. This is supported by Coupland and Jaworski (2001: 135) who define discourse as "the product of a complex interweaving of personal, social and cultural processes". It goes without saying that the recipient of the conversation has to interpret what was said. The non-participants (observers) are discourse analysts who have tried to recreate and analyse as much as they can. Discourse is also defined by Fairclough (2003: 129) as a representation of a certain part of the world and then "representing it from a particular perspective". Fairclough (2003: 3) also points out that discourse "signals the particular view of language in use". Furthermore, Coupland and Jaworski (2001: 145) regard CDA as "a means of exposing or deconstructing the social practices which constitute 'social structure' and what we might call the conventional meaning structures of social life".

Eggins (2004) uses two primary questions to introduce a method of how one can approach discourse analysis:

1. How do people use language?
2. How is language structured for use?   (Eggins, 2004: 21)

Thus, how do we use language to make different kinds of meanings and how are meanings made by using structured language for effective purposes? This is supported by Eggins (2004: 21), stating that there are "ways in which social and

cultural contexts impact on language use". Furthermore, Eggins (2004: 21) points out that "as a semiotic approach, it has common ground with semiotic theoreticians and those working in what has become known as Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA]". However, Eggins (2004: 21) discusses and develops an approach "about language as [a] social process and an analytical methodology which permits the detailed and systematic description of language patterns". Basically, language and context are co-dependent. The one is unable to exist without the other. Based on Eggins (2004), Fairclough (2003), and Coupland and Jaworski's (2001) theories, I attempt to show how producers use language and other semiotic resources simultaneously in the production of *Isidingo*.

Fairclough (2003: 2) laments that an "approach to discourse analysis is based on the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language". In other words, no discourse research can be conducted without an element of language because language is interwoven in all aspects of life. Even though the language aspect of a discourse analysis approach is important, it should not sway attention from other semiotic resources.

It should be noted that discourse is not the only important element that go hand-in-hand with language. Fairclough (2003) discusses texts as the other element. Chandler (2007: 194) defines a text/textual code "as a set of ways of reading which its producers and readers share". In other words, when producers compile a text, they have to keep in mind the reader's/audience's schemata and experience. This leads to the social effects of texts discussed by Fairclough (2003: 8) where "texts as elements of social events have causal effects". In order for texts to have social effects, these texts need to be produced with codes that the readers are knowledgeable about. This notion is supported by Chandler (2007: 194) who states that "familiarity with particular codes is related to social position, in terms of such factors as class, ethnicity, nationality, education, occupation, political affiliation, age, gender and sexuality". The readers of a produced text will find these codes familiar and these texts may change their knowledge by either learning from them or the impact it makes in general. This is what Fairclough (2003: 8) refers to when he

points out that texts have causal effects where "texts can bring about changes in our knowledge (we can learn from them), our beliefs, our attitudes [and] values".

Fairclough (2003) also suggests two ways of identifying aspects within a textual analysis. Firstly, one needs to identify the main themes drawn from parts of the world. Secondly, one needs to identify the "angle or point" (Fairclough, 2003: 129) that they are represented from. This is explored in chapters four, five and six of this thesis. Fairclough (2003) approaches text analysis by comparing two famous discourse analysts, Halliday and Chomsky. Text analysis establishes that "the main point of reference within existing literature on Text Analysis is Systemic Functional Linguistics [SFL]" (Fairclough, 2003: 5). SFL refers to a linguistic theory that is closely linked to analytical methods of Halliday. Unlike the more traditional approach to linguistics by Chomsky, SFL is mainly "concerned with the relationship between language and other elements and aspects of social life" (Fairclough, 2003: 5). The approach of linguistic analysis of texts are always centralised around the social character of texts. Even though "the perspectives of [CDA] and SFL do not precisely coincide, because of their different aims" (Fairclough, 2003: 5), this approach to text analysis is considered to be a "valuable resource" (Fairclough, 2003: 5) to CDA.

SFL claims that texts have ideational, interpersonal and textual functions at the same time (Fairclough, 2003: 9). Thus:

> Texts simultaneously represent aspects of the world (the physical world, the social world, the mental world), enact social relations between participants in social events and attitudes, desires and values of participants, and coherently and cohesively connect parts of texts together, and connect texts with their situational contexts. (Fairclough, 2003: 26-27)

For the purpose of this study, I examined how spoken language and other semiotic modes are combined by the *Isidingo* producers in their storylines. Below, I review literature on social semiotics and meaning-making.

2.4 Semiotics and Meaning Making

Danesi (2004: 4) describes a sign as "anything…that stands for something other than itself". A sign can also refer to different things that are known as referents.

Referents "allow us to refer to things and ideas, even though they might not be physically present for our senses to perceive" (Danesi, 2004: 5). In other words, referents refer to a sign that is obvious and also for something that cannot be seen with the naked eye. Danesi (2004: 5) uses the following examples to differentiate between the two: a car that is part of the 'real world' (the obvious) and a bright idea that is 'imaginary' because one cannot simply point to it; it is an idea.

Signs consist of anything and everything in any context or setting. Danesi (2004: 23) points out that "human intellectual and social life is based on the production, use, and exchange of signs". Basically, we are engaging and subconsciously always interpreting signs. Examples of these include gestures, talking, writing, reading, watching television or a movie, listening to disc jockeys on the radio, listening to music, looking at paintings and pictures. The list is endless.

Danesi (2004) also delves into an entity of visual signs, called mental imagery:

> Images of sensations, sights, sounds, tastes, smells, ideas, and so on are being constantly manufactured by the human brain. These allow it to generate hypothetical scenarios of situations or conditions that we may not even have actually experienced. Mental images are substitutes for real things, allowing a person to plan and predict things. (Danesi, 2004: 66)

He goes further by pointing out that images almost always have cultural conditioning. In other words, mental imagery is always based on one's own cultural experiences.

There are also two notable models of the sign, the Piercean sign (developed by Charles Sanders Pierce) and the Saussurean's model of the sign (developed by Ferdinand de Saussure).

2.4.1 Pierce's Concept of the Sign

The definition of what exactly a Piercean sign is, is extremely vague. Merrell (2001) attempts to simplify Pierce's concept of what a sign really is: a Piercean sign is generally something that tells something else about something of a person. Pierce's sign also has three components:

1. Representamen – a sign in everyday talk.

2. Semiotic object – that to which the sign relates. It can never be identical to the 'real' object. Pierce firmly believes that one's knowledge is never absolute. Meaning, one's knowledge cannot be more that an approximation of what the 'real' world actually is.

3. Interpretant – roughly known as the sign's meaning. Thus, how signs are interpreted by interpreters.   (Merrell, 2001: 28)

All three of the above components are interlinked and interdependent. Thus, all three components are needed in order to fully make use of the existence of a sign.

Chandler (2007: 29) declares that the representamen is called "the sign vehicle" by theorists. He states that an interpretant should not be confused with an interpreter, "but rather the s*ense* made of the sign" (Chandler, 2007: 29). Also, an object is regarded as "something beyond the sign to which it refers" (Chandler, 2007: 29), also known as a referent. Chandler (2007: 29) agrees with Merrell (2001) that "all three elements are essential". Furthermore, "the sign is a unity of what is represented (the object), how it is represented (the representamen) and how it is interpreted (the interpretant)" (Chandler, 2007: 29).

Let us take a look at the illustration of the Piercean sign before the link between all three components is explained.
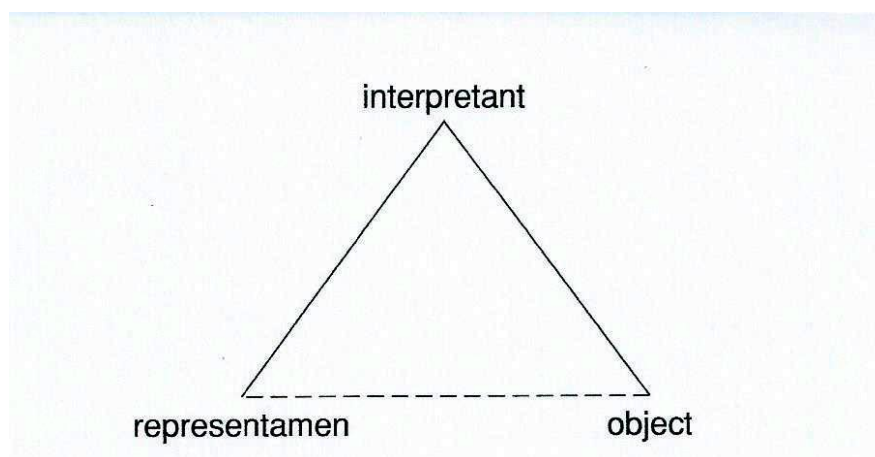
Figure 2.1 Pierce's semiotic triangle

Source: Chandler, 2007

The above illustration itself indicates a traditional triquetra symbol which is Latin for a three-cornered shape. The illustration itself shows that the three Piercean sign components – representamen, semiotic object and interpretant – have an

"interrelated interdependency" (Merrell, 2001: 29). The sign must have all three components, otherwise it is non-existent.

THE "PEIRCEAN" SIGN

Representamen (*X*)

Object (*Y*)   Interpretant (*X* = *Y*)
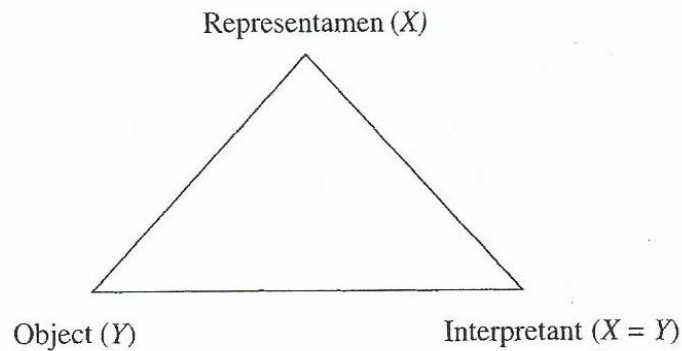
Figure 2.2 Piercean sign

Source: Danesi, 2004

The above illustration from Danesi (2004: 26) is a slightly different presentation of the previous illustration where "these three dimensions are always present in signification. Thus, the Peircean viewed the sign as a triadic, rather than binary, structure" as the above illustration indicates.

Merrell (2001: 34) attempts to simplify the Piercean sign by summarising that anything can be considered as a sign and that it is "something that *stands for*, something *to* someone *in* some respect or capacity". Furthermore, the sign itself can also become other signs. This depends on the interpreter's own experiences and expectations.

2.4.2 Saussure's Model of the Sign

According to Chandler (2007), Ferdinand de Saussure also has a model of what a sign is made up of. The Saussurean Model consists of two components, the signified and the signifier. The latter is the form the sign can take whilst the former is the concept to which it refers to. Saussure's model is based mostly on words that fall under linguistic signs.
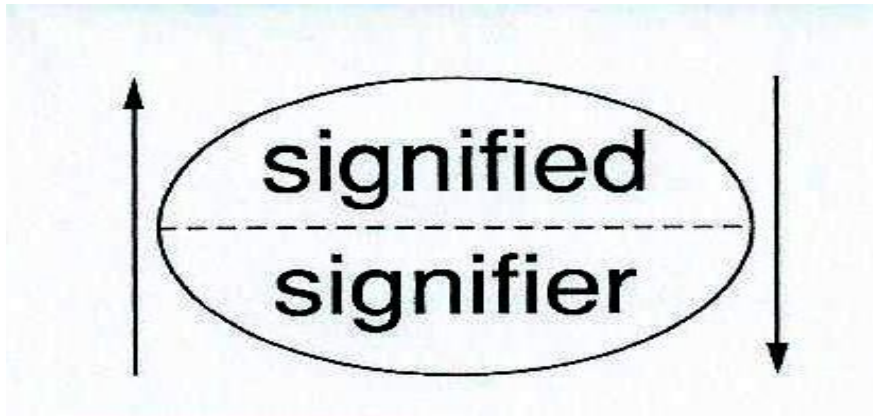
Figure 2.3 Saussure's model of the sign

Source: Chandler, 2007

The above illustration was developed in 1967 by Saussure and it was based on a psychological perspective (Chandler, 2007). Like many things, theories tend to change/enhance over time. Currently, the Saussurean model is still adopted but it has a similar yet clarifying meaning. According to Chandler (2007: 15), "the signifier is regarded as the *material (or physical) form* of the sign – it is something which can be seen, heard, touched, smelled or tasted"; whilst the sign is regarded as "the whole that results from the association of the signifier with the signified (Chandler, 2007: 15). The arrows in the illustration indicate that the one cannot exist without the other. If it did, it would be impossible to interpret and make meaning of a sign.

Chandler (2007: 31) compares the Piercean model to the Saussaurean model by declaring that the "representamen is similar in meaning to Saussure's signifier while the interpretant is roughly analogous to the signified. However, the interpretant has a quality unlike that of the signified: it is itself a sign in the mind of the interpreter". Danesi (2004: 29) also does a comparison of Pierce's and Saussure's models of a sign: "while Saussure viewed the sign as an arbitrarily devised structure, Pierce saw it instead as a structure that tended to be 'motivated' by some form of simulation". Chandler (2007: 64) regards Saussure's model as "understandably problematic" because there cannot just be one reality when the interpreter makes meaning out of a sign. Another interpreter can take the same sign and have a completely different meaning attached to it. Therefore, the reality/representation is from a subjective point of view of the interpreter(s). To summarise, Chandler (2007: 65) argues that "the extent to which a text may be perceived as real depends in part of the medium employed".

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Establishing the meaning of signs does not mean that one can just take the information and make sense of it. Merrell (2001: 32) states that there is an "intricate interplay" between firstness, secondness and thirdness:

1. Firstness – what there is such as it is, without reference or relation to anything else.

2. Secondness – what there is such as it is, in relation to something else, but without relation to any third entity.

3. Thirdness – what there is such as it is, in so far as it is capable of bringing a second entity into relation with a first one and it into relation with each of them.   (Merrell, 2001: 32)

These three categories by Pierce are established as "a process of signs becoming signs" (Merrell, 2001: 32), also known as semiosis. Semiosis is an entity of semiotics; a process where signs are translated into meaning. Just like the triquetra illustration of the Piercean model, firstness, secondness and thirdness are also interlinked. "As possibilities, firstness inheres; as actualities, secondness emerges, and as potentialities for future signs becoming signs, thirdness comes into the picture" (Merrell, 2001: 32).
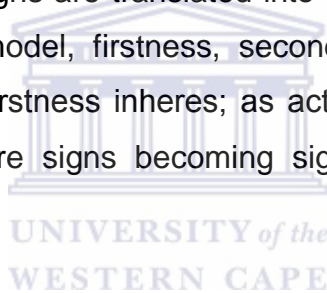
Danesi (2004) also discusses Pierce's firstness, secondness and thirdness by relating it to culture:

> A sign starts out as a sensory structure that is something that has been made to stimulate an object in terms of its sensory properties. It is then used by the sign – user to establish a connection to the object, even if the actual object is not present for the senses to perceive (=secondness). Finally, the sign itself becomes a source of knowledge about the world, once it enters the world of culture distributed for general usage (=thirdness). Cultures are essentially sign-preserving systems that distribute signs to people for various kinds of practical purposes.   (Danesi, 2004: 18)

Codes play an integral part in the studying of signs. Chandler (2007: 147) points out that "codes organize signs into meaningful systems which correlate signifiers and signifieds". In addition, "codes help to simplify phenomena in order to make it easier to communicate experiences" (Chandler, 2007: 157). Clearly, a sign can obtain

meaning once it functions "within a code" (Chandler, 2007: 147). This is affirmed by Danesi (2004: 21) who points out that "the network of interconnected meanings that constitute a culture is configured with codes". Furthermore, Chandler (2007: 148) provides a definition of a code: "a set of practices familiar to users of the medium operating within a broad cultural framework". In order to do a thorough semiotic analysis, one needs to look at the different kinds of codes. Chandler (2007) lists them as follows.

1. Social Codes

   Social codes can be defined as an entity that "involves adopting the values, assumptions and worldviews which are built into them without normally being aware of their intervention in the construction of reality" (Chandler, 2007: 56).

   - Verbal language (phonological, syntactical, lexical, prosodic and paralinguistic subcodes).
   - Bodily codes (bodily contact, proximity, physical orientation, appearance, facial expression, gaze, head-nods, gestures and posture).
   - Commodity codes (fashions, clothing, cars).
   - Behavioral codes (protocols, rituals, role-playing, and games).

   (Chandler, 2007: 149)

2. Textual Codes

   Textual codes can be defined as "every text [that] is a system of signs organized according to codes and subcodes which reflect certain values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and practices" (Chandler, 2007: 157). Furthermore, "textual codes do not *determine* the meanings of texts but dominant codes do tend to *constrain* them. Social conventions ensure that signs cannot mean whatever an individual wants them to mean" (Chandler, 2007: 157-158). Codes are used as a mapping device for interpretation.

   - Scientific codes, including mathematics.
   - Aesthetic codes within the various expressive arts (poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, music, etc.) including classicism, romanticism, realism.
   - Genre, rhetorical and stylistic codes: exposition, argument, description and narration and so on.

- Mass media codes including photographic, televisual, filmic, radio, newspaper and magazine codes, both technical and conventional (including format).   (Chandler, 2007: 150)

3. Interpretive Codes (Codes of Realism)

Interpretive codes can be defined as "all representations are systems of signs: they signify rather than present; and they do so with primary reference to codes rather than to reality" (Chandler, 2007: 160). This, however, does not mean that the reality is non-existent but rather "the recognition that textual codes are realistic" (Chandler, 2007: 160).

- Perceptual codes e.g. visual perception.
- Ideological codes: more broadly, these include codes for 'encoding' and 'decoding' texts – dominant (or 'hegemonic'), negotiated or oppositions. More specifically, we may list the '-isms', such as individualism, liberalism, feminism, racism, materialism, capitalism, progressivism, conservation, socialism, objectivism and populism; (note however, that *all* codes can be seen as ideological).   (Chandler, 2007: 150)
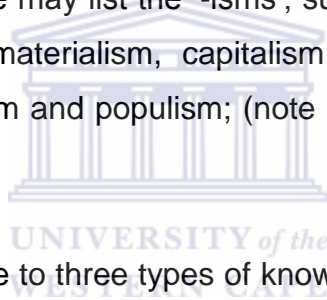
The three kinds of codes relate to three types of knowledge that are interpreted. The three types of knowledge are the world (social knowledge), the medium and the genre (textual knowledge). The relationship between the aforementioned types of knowledge boils down to modality judgements (Chandler, 2007: 150). It needs to be noted that the three kinds of codes may overlap in mediums; just like the three types of knowledge. Because the *Isidingo* viewers have their knowledge about their world, they have certain expectations when watching the soap opera.

Even though the definition of semiotics is generally known as the study of signs, Chandler (2007: 2) describes it as a "disparate phenomena" because different people have different ideas of what exactly represents a sign. Some theorists believe examples of signs are visuals like road signs and star signs. Others might think it has to do with art and pictures. Signs can also be represented through body language, words and sounds.

Cobley (2001) discusses semiotics from a linguistic perspective. He points out that there is an incessant detection/quest of signs. Considering that communication forms an integral part in one's life, he claims that there is no human being alive who is not interested in communication. Cobley (2001: 3) further states that this kind of person would be someone "who is not concerned with the working of signs". Furthermore, he lists examples of when communication takes place in every individual's life. For example, someone who has not thought about how children communicate, how one's heart rate accelerates when one is scared, how hearing someone's accent immediately indicates where they are from, etc. Cobley (2001: 3) affirms the fact that every person has an interest in communication by stating that it "should give an indication of the impossibility of such person's existence [and that] humans have harboured an intense interest in signs". Thus, semiotics can be defined as "a matter of analyzing language and discovering how various artefacts and processes of human culture are analogous to it" (Cobley, 2001: 3).

Stenström and Jørgensen (2009) discuss how language and identity are made up of different factors namely social, cultural and geographical factors. They also point out that the construction of identity is "construed through human interaction as a starting point" (Stenström and Jørgensen, 2009: 5). In other words, identity is not a pre-existing notion but it can only be developed when people interact with one another.

Barthes, cited in Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 16), believes that images isolated from other things would be "polysemous". According to Barthes, cited in Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 16), "in every society various techniques are developed intended to fix the floating chain of the signified in such a way to counter the terror of uncertain signs". This can also refer to images that are dependent on language for interpretation. In other words, images solely can be interpreted incorrectly if language is not included in the message. Kress and Van Leeuwen and Barthes have similar perspectives on how meaning is drawn from language and images. This study explores the manner in which *Isidingo* producers create meaning by utilising visual semiotics accompanied by lingual communication.

2.5 Intertextuality and Multimodal Discourse Analysis

To account for how prior knowledge is critical to understanding new meaning, I draw on the notion of intertextuality. The term intertextuality was introduced by the philanthropist, Julia Kristeva, in 1966. She states that texts have two axes:

1. Horizontal axis: connecting the author and the reader of a text.
2. Vertical axis: connects the text to other texts.   (Culler, 1981: 69)

Codes are then created by combining the above-mentioned axes where each and every new text/reading produced is dependent on codes that already exist. Culler (1981: 103) points out that the study of intertextuality is no longer traditional. Rather, the "codes whose origins are lost make [it] possible [for] the signifying practices of later texts". The origins of certain texts may be uncertain, which opens doors for other texts to be developed. The *Isidingo* producers depend on the audience's schemata, accompanied with the evolving new technology.

Intertextuality makes a text understandable. Barthes (1977: 146) states that any text is a mere "tissue of quotations [and that] the writer can only imitate…never original". In other words, texts in general are all interlinked and draw from each other. Nothing is new, texts are recycled over time. Chandler (2007: 200) agrees with this notion by pointing out that "every reading is always a rewriting. It is by no means an isolated example". The difference can only take place when producers put a different and new spin to their storylines. Barthes, cited in Chandler (2007: 200), announced in 1968 "the death of the author and the birth of the reader, declaring that a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination". I explored how the *Isidingo* producers recycle texts over time based on the notion that any text, including a soap opera, is never original. A text is always derived from somewhere or someone else.

Multimodality can be defined as the application of two or more modes in a single communicative act (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). This means that one can interpret more than one mode simultaneously instead of isolating each one of them. This is supported by O'Halloran (2004: 1) who states that there is a "shift in linguistic enquiry where language use is no longer theorized as an isolated phenomenon''. O'Halloran (2004) further indicates that multimodal analysis does not only have to be a verbal medium, but it can also include participants' gestures, wardrobe, facial expressions etc. Multimodality also draws attention to the ways that different

semiotics are connected. Language is combined with semiotic resources when analysed and interpreted "for the construction of meaning" (O'Halloran, 2004: 1). Furthermore, Machin (2013: 348) states that "in multimodal communication, the different modes had become more integrated and visual elements were being used to communicate complex ideas and attitudes". In essence, different modes, including language, are part of a multimodal analysis.

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) multimodality draws inspiration from the Hallidayan grammar where the notion of language as social semiotics is extended to include visuals. Because of the omnipresence of both imagery and lingual communication, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) look at how visual semiotics are analysed when combined with language in order to show meaning other than just simple spoken language. It is made quite clear by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) that reading images may vary according to region and social backgrounds; yet they are quick to point out that there should not really be any fundamental differences. There will merely be details that are either included or excluded, depending on where the image comes from (regionally). Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 14) propose that their work can be used as "a tool for practical as well as critical applications in a range of fields". Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) tool has been used in this study as the application of multimodality in the analysis of the semiotic resources used in the production of *Isidingo*.

The theorist O'Halloran (2004) states that the concept of multimodality makes it possible to interpret more than one mode at a time. The omnipresence of both language and images can be analysed. Chandler (2007: 67-68) explores the relationship between modality markers (cues) and genres (medium) where "different genres…establish sets of modality markers, and an overall value acts as a baseline for the genre. This baseline can be different for different kinds of viewer/reader, and for different texts or moments within texts". There is also the need to understand meaning (semiosis) in multimodal discourse. This is based on the idea that we are surrounded by multimodal cues, markers and semiotic resources. Fei (2004: 220) points out that we need to make "meaning through the co-deployment of a combination of semiotic resources". These semiotic resources can include images, gestures and sounds.

2.5.1 Multi-Semiotic Model

Prior and Hengst (2010) state that:

> Taking a dialogic approach to semiotics calls for attention to the range of semiotics that are present and consequential in interactions rather than taking single mode analyses (of talk, of writing, of gesture, of visual image) as autonomous communicative domains. It also calls for understanding of all kinds of dialogic, not generated out of abstract systems, but drawn from a history of sign use, tuned to the present interaction, and orientated to future responses and acts.   (Prior and Hengst, 2010: 6-7)

There is a dearth in how meaning ascends in multimodal texts, particularly in video texts (Fei, 2004). There are two semiotic resources, namely language and visual images. The Integrative Multi-Semiotic Model (IMM) is mainly used for printed texts but may also be used for soap operas like *Isidingo*, because it also includes the two semiotic resources, language and images. According to Fei (2004: 222), the IMM's main purpose is to show "the complex multifaceted nature of meaning made in a multi-semiotic text". There are three planes of conceptualisation for the semiotic resources: the Expression Plane, the Content Plane, and the Context Plane. Below is the illustration of this kind of typological framework.
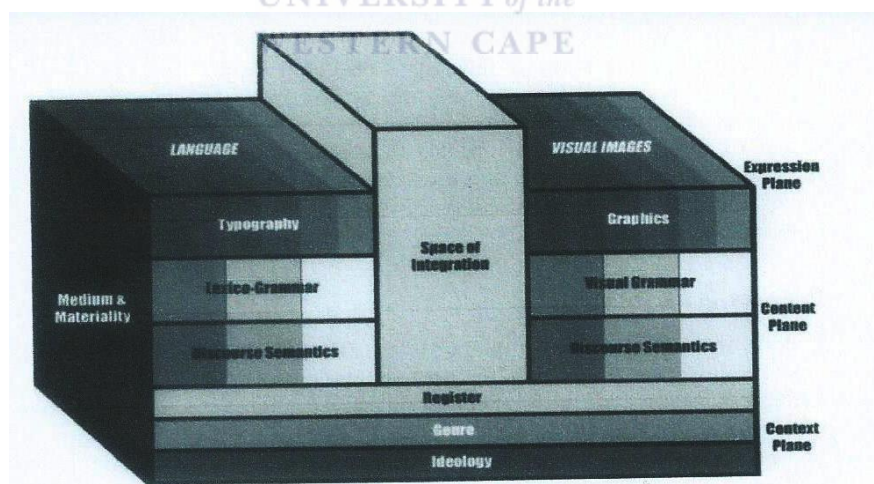
Figure 2.4 The integrative multi-semiotic model (IMM)

Source: Fei, 2004

As seen from the illustration above, the Expression Plane consists of two semiotic resources; language and visual images. Fei (2004: 222) describes it as "the interface between the text and the reader". This plane is the link between the other two planes. They rely on each other. In other words, they are interlinked. As seen in the illustration, the Content Plane embodies the grammar and discourse of both semiotic

resources. The Context Plane deals with the register, genre and ideology of the text. The Content Plane and the Context Plane are mediated by the Expression Plane in the IMM framework to substantiate meaning from a text through a meta-model with an appropriate meta-language accompanying it.

Agha (2007) discusses another entity of chronotopes in a participation framework. The participation framework of a representation depends on the "semiotic medium and genre" (Agha, 2007: 322). It can be small or large, depending on the intended audience. For example, it can be at an interpersonal communication level where two people are having a conversation with each other. It could also be at a larger scale where there is an advertisement on television to reach a large number of people at the same time (mass media). This kind of participation framework is considered to be "geographically dispersed but semiotically unified by the audience's orientation to a common televisual message at the moment of reception" (Agha, 2007: 322). *Isidingo* can be considered as a mass mediated participation framework where an intended audience is reached. This particular audience may be of different cultural backgrounds but they all share a similar interest, which is to follow the storyline of *Isidingo*.
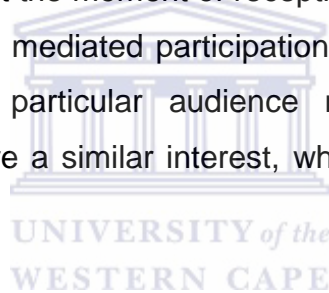
Semiotic encounters are also mass mediated where signs connect many people with one another within a participation framework that is fused together through mutual interests, such as encountering signs like utterances and gestures that "mediate their connection with each other" (Agha, 2007: 325). Agha (2007: 326) also refers to a mass mediated social process that are considered to be mass mediated semiotic encounters "if one or more of the participation frameworks through which it unfolds are organised". Naturally, these moments are preceded and followed by participant encounters.

According to Agha (2007), mass mediated encounters can be divided in two ways. Firstly, there is a presupposition where cultural forms refer to having a husband or wife or colleagues at work where mass media is not involved in any way. Thus, "persons become oriented in everyday encounters with each other through segments and trajectories of their biographic lives" (Agha, 2007: 326). Secondly, cultural forms, like portrayals or romantic relationships or life at the office "are recycled and

recontextualised…that involve extended trajectories of co-participation in at least some segments of which mass media play no role" (Agha, 2007: 326). Extended trajectories of co-participation may refer to how to keep a job. Thus, mass mediated encounters can be considered representations of the real world. Related to Agha's (2007) work on trajectories, Roozen (2010: 49), states that "persons are producing and reproducing themselves and the social identities associated with those practices".

2.5.2 Multimodal Data

Multimodal data, according to Norris (2011: 79), refers to when "the tapes are collected, the researcher can play and re-play the interaction in order to select representative samples and start transcribing". She admits that "transcribing multimodal interaction is a very complex process" (Norris, 2011: 79) because there are so many elements to consider for an appropriate and thorough analysis of a text. Norris (2011: 79) further discusses the main chore of a multimodal transcription where the researcher needs to translate "the visual and audio aspects [and then put it] into some printable format". Sometimes, multiple transcripts of the same interaction have to be represented in order to include the different modes in the text. There are three decisions that have to be taken into account when collecting data, namely theoretical, methodological and analytical. Theoretical decisions are based on "what is actually recorded and what is left out" (Norris, 2011: 79). Methodological decisions deals with "the choice of data collection method at a given time, as for example audio, visual, or participant observation without recording, once the theoretical focus has been determined" (Norris, 2011: 79). Furthermore, Norris (2011: 79) points out that "once a method is established, the researcher has to make analytical decisions". The purchased *Isidingo* episodes do not include commercials. In other words, it is pure non-interruptive episodes. These episodes are of analytical importance as I used different analytical methods/frameworks at the same time. Norris (2011: 80) supports this by stating that the task of multimodal transcriptions are not there "to analyse the images that are incorporated, but rather to use the images in order to describe the dynamic unfolding or specific moments in time in which the setting and the non-verbal play as much part as the verbal".

Baldry (2004) discusses the way in which technology has been revolutionised over the years. He talks about how computers, the World Wide Web and software programmes have made it easier to analyse film texts. He further points out that technology "has made it possible to convert a film into sequence of stills and hence into a printable format" (Baldry, 2004: 83). Multimodal transcriptions are possible where one can take a video and convert it into a printed version of shots and screens of *Isidingo* as a soap opera.

2.5.3 Multimodal Transcriptions

Knowing now what multimodal data is, let us take a look at what multimodal transcriptions are. Norris (2011: 81) states that "it is generally well understood that the transcription guides – or even forces – the analyst into a certain direction of analysis, which, of course, simultaneously constrains the analyst to a certain interpretation as well".

Baldry (2004: 84) believes that a multimodal transcription is needed "to show how meaning is built up as a series of functional units – typically, subphases, phases, but also potentially macrophrases, minigenres and genres". Baldry (2004) further explores why multimodal transcriptions - in correlation with other semiotics analysis types – are relative when analysing aspects other than language in a text. Multimodal transcriptions' main purpose is to examine "text and text types in relation to their context of situation and context of culture" (Baldry, 2004: 84). He illustrates this by showing, explaining and exemplifying two types of multimodal transcriptions:

> The classic multimodal transcription has a visual frame, visual image, kinetic action, soundtrack and phases and metafunctions. Such a transcription can be read from left to right where it is "concerned with *instance* rather than with *type*…that constitutes a progression from a description of textual data to one relating to the specific text's organisation into semiotic units.
>
> (Baldry, 2004: 86)

The second multimodal transcription incorporates structures, types of phases, sub-phases (top row) and co-deployment and resource selections in the bottom row. This type of transcription "summarise[s] the major characteristics of the *entire* text in a concise way, thus demonstrating its greater potential for compression in description" (Baldry, 2004: 87). The first type of transcription is more detailed in its analysis,

whilst the second type of transcription is more concerned with the type of data. Both transcriptions also have their own abbreviations. Even though the one is read from the left to the right and the other one is read from top to bottom, both transcriptions illustrate a moving scene's semiotic resources and its language used.

Baldry (2004: 105) further points out that even though "the multimodal transcription can be a useful starting point for an understanding of the ways in which resources such as gaze, gesture and language, combine in typical phrasal patterns, it has its limitations". This is why a multimodal transcription has to be used in conjunction with other semiotic analysis types in order to fully analyse the text, like a video, as a whole.

Norris (2011: 5) argues that multimodal (inter)action analysis has "greater insight into identity production than the audio recordings". What Norris (2011) means by this is that the outdated audio recordings are not a true reflection of the message being brought across. The identity of the social actors are not properly analysed unless a multimodal analysis framework has been applied. According to Norris (2011: 5), "the complexity [of the text] is lost" without multimodal analysis, for example, non-verbal entities like eye contact or gestures.

To reiterate how important identity is in a multimodal analysis, Norris (2011) lists what a multimodal theoretical/methodological framework allows us to do.
   a) Incorporate all modes of communication into a discourse study;
   b) Explicate how social actors produce simultaneous identity elements on different levels of attention/awareness;
   c) Illustrate how a single identity element is made up of three different parts: the general, continuous, and immediate identity element;
   d) Demonstrate how social actors shift identity elements in and out of focus;
   e) Show how saliency of identity elements develop in short and long durations;
   f) Explain how social actors change identity elements altogether;
   g) Present how social actors sustain a person's identity across time, place and activities.   (Norris, 2011: 277)

A multimodal analysis thus makes it possible to analyse how social actors move in and out of various identity elements based on the context at hand.

Norris (2011) approaches a different manner of how identity can be looked at, specifically under the theory and methodology umbrella. This is referred to as Multimodal (Inter)Action Analysis where it "allows the researcher to investigate identity in a more holistic way" (Norris, 2011: 1). (Inter)action occurs mutually exclusive with the production of identity "when one individual acts with objects, acting within the environment" (Norris, 2011: 1). Identity production can only manifest through social actors in the community. Social actors and the objects in a setting "give off messages about the social actors' identities and structure the (inter)actions in some way" (Norris, 2011: 2). In other words, in order to analyse multimodal (inter)action correctly, as a researcher, one needs to take into account not only the social actor or the objects in the environment, but also the message that is being brought across by establishing the social actors' identity and what (inter)actions are taking place.

2.5.4 Resemiotisation

Another useful concept that I draw on in this thesis is resemiotisation. Resemiotisation is described by Iedema (2003: 42) as "weaving people, their meanings and behaviours into increasingly reified, complex and obdurate semiotics, enabling them to create new realities". Iedema (2003) refers to this as the reorganisation of social spaces. Thus, resemiotisation refers to transformation of semiotic material from context to context and from one mode to another. Resemiotisation, then, looks at how certain semiotics are set in motion to create new social meanings as afforded by different contexts and modalities. I explored how the *Isidingo* producers resemiotise different semiotic resources for various social meanings in the trajectories of the different storylines.

Fei (2004: 221) discusses Iedema's definition of what resemiotisation is and that it refers to the "intersemiotic shifts". Fei (2004: 221) elaborates by saying that the said intersemiotic shifts refer to "the reaction and integration between language and pictures in cases where these semiotic resources co-occur on a page". *Isidingo* might not co-exist on a page but the airing of an episode on television makes it possible for language and visual images to appear simultaneously and for a reaction. Reaction, here, refers to how meaning is developed by resemiotising social spaces.

Even though media texts seem realistic, it is important to remember that they are representations instead of regarding them as reproductions of what reality is. This is affirmed by Chandler (2007: 67) who explains that media texts are "constructed from different materials from that which they represent, and representations cannot be replicas". In other words, representations are a close enactment of what reality really is. This is known as aesthetic realism. Aesthetic realism is popular because even though the representation itself is not an actual reality, it draws from various kinds of material, therefore the audience can relate to it. Soap operas serve as an example of aesthetic realism, especially when the viewers watch the soap opera on a regular basis and there is a feeling of familiarity where the audience feel that they 'know' the characters and can therefore empathise and/or relate to them.

Chandler (2007) points out that the world is full of signs and that we are unable to understand anything without making meaning out of signs and codes. He argues why there is a need to study signs. Most of the time, these signs and codes are transparent and hinder us, as interpreters, to really read into them. Sometimes, realistic signs are not that apparent. "A valuable semiotic function of denaturalizing signs" (Chandler, 2007: 11) should be performed. Representations of reality serve as some type of ideological function. Chandler (2007: 11) further states that "deconstructing and contesting the realities of signs can reveal whose realities are privileged and whose are suppressed". This kind of approach to semiotic analysis involves the investigation of certain social groups by constructing and maintaining a reality.

There are ways in which to acquire meaning from a sign. Danesi (2004: 14) states that "in order to extract meaning from a form of X, one must be able to recognize it as a sign in the first place. This means that signs have *structure*". He further states that "some signs can [also] replace each other" (Danesi, 2004: 5). This is known as an analogical relation to a sign. Danesi (2004: 16) notes that "the brain's capacity to produce and understand signs is called *semiosis,* while the knowledge-making activity this capacity allows all human beings to carry out is known as *representation*". Representation can thus be defined as "the use of signs (pictures, sounds, etc.) to relate, depict, portray, or reproduce something perceived, sensed, imagined, or felt in some physical form" (Danesi, 2004: 16).

Based on the notion that there cannot be one reality, a challenge on semiotics to the 'literal' evolves. The literal makes it impossible for the representation of the way things are realistically. Chandler (2007) explores the different ways of the aforesaid challenge. Literal and figurative language have their traditional definitions where the latter refers to language that stands in place of something else (connotative level), and the former refers to language used to say exactly what it means (denotative level). Semiotically, figurative language is regarded as something that forms "part of the reality maintenance system of a culture or subculture. It is a code which relates ostensibly to *how* things are represented rather than to *what* is presented. Yet, such 'form' may have 'content' of its own" (Chandler, 2007: 124). In other words, figurative language is used metaphorically where texts are reconstructed in a certain manner to create a specific effect. Figurative language is not just used in poetry, but also on television and in films. Chandler (2007: 125) states that the use of figurative language "can be regarded as a new sign formed from the signifier of one sign and the signified of another". Thus, the signifier establishes a signified by obtaining a meaning based on the close relationship of the two. The new signified may then be replaced by a new one.
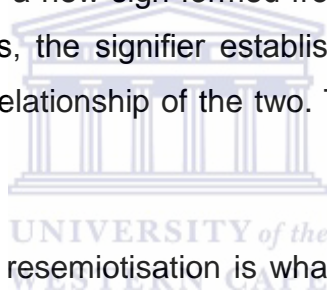
The most important aspect of resemiotisation is what Bolter and Grusin (2000) call 'repurposing'. Repurposing explores the spatial-temporal semiotic reproduction, reception, representation and redistribution of artefacts and activities. I explored how *Isidingo* producers recontextualise certain actions, ideas, artefacts and activities to create desired effects in the storylines. Repurposing brings up the notion of immediacy and its counterpart hypermediacy. The producers rely heavily on South African viewers as a nation and what they might find interesting. This is in agreement with Bolter and Grusin's (2000) argument on the relationship between immediacy and hypermediacy:

> Where immediacy suggests a unified visual space, contemporary hypermediacy offers a heterogeneous space, in which representation is conceived of not as a window on to the world, but rather as 'windowed' itself - with windows that open on to other representations or other media.

> (Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 34)

One can easily deduce that the producers essentially have to tackle topics close to many South African hearts in the plotlines. According to Daubs (2011: 12),

immediacy and hypermediacy is utilised in order "to examine the relationship between a user and a media text, or more specifically, the user's involvement with a text". Bolter and Grusin (2000: 30) point out that immediacy can be achieved with two entities; "removing the programmer/creator from the image [and at the same time] involving the viewer more intimately in the image". In addition, Daubs (2011: 12) points out that the notion of immediacy "references a feeling of 'presence' (in time, space, or both) with a mediated event".

2.5.5 Semiotic Remediation

This leads me to another important notion. Bolter and Grusin (2000) extend multimodal theory to what they call semiotic remediation. This is taken up by Prior and Hengst (2010), who introduce semiotic remediation as the new discourse practice. Semiotic remediation refers to the various ways that semiotic material and performances are re-presented, re-woven and re-voiced across modes, media and chains of activities. It is also about how particular actions and ideas are routinely recontextualised to create a certain effect. Prior and Hengst (2010: 6) sum up the gist of what semiotic remediation entails: it "represents a basic dialogue process that interdiscursively weaves together modes, media, genres, and events and serves as a foundation for indexical and chronotopic orders".

The term 'remediation' is defined by Prior and Hengst (2010: 1) as "ways that activity is (re)mediated – not mediated anew in each act – through taking up the materials at hand, putting them to present use, and thereby producing altered conditions for future action". They further point out that focusing on discourse practice is of vital importance because semiotic remediation goes hand-in-hand with chronotopes and trajectories. Bolter and Grusin (2000) state that remediation is not linear. Instead, it is reciprocal. Daubs (2011: 24) discuss this notion: "while new media can and certainly do remediate the aesthetics of older media, so-called, old media can also remediate the aesthetics of newer media". Irvine (2010: 236) also talks about remediation as referring to "a wider set of communicative processes than just those involving media transfer. The 'semiotic' part of our title, meanwhile, is what indicates a broad focus on many kinds of signs, not only linguistic signs". In addition, "the *re-* prefix in 'remediation' implies something important is taken to be the same while situated in a different event of semiosis" (Irvine, 2010: 237).

According to Prior and Hengst (2010: 7), remediation pays attention to "the location of any interaction - and its convergence of particular tools, people, and environments - with historical trajectories that reach from past into present and projects forward to near- and long-term futures". In other words, the notion of remediation plays a vital role in semiotic analysis because a "careful tracing of semiotic analysis [has to take place] across chains and for a subtle and precise vocabulary for practices of alignment as well as processes of transformation across media, genres, and events" (Prior and Hengst, 2010: 10).

In essence, there is a need for semiotic remediation researchers to:

> Recognize the simultaneous, layered deployment of multiple semiotics (talk, gesture, artifact use and production, interaction with environmental structure): people are never just talking, just reading, just writing. It also means that researchers should look at semiotic trajectories and chains across time and place, recognizing both the need to understand semiotics as dispersed and mediated and the value of tracing out mediations ANT-like, rhizomatically, across situated functional systems.   (Prior and Hengst, 2010: 19)

The word 'chronotope' itself combines 'etyma' that denote time (chromos) and space (topos). Agha (2007: 321) attempts to show - through various comparative studies of chronotopic representations - that "entextualised projections of time cannot be isolated from those of locale and personhood". Similarly, Prior and Hengst (2010: 6) refer to chronotopes as the "understanding [of] how participants in a moment of discourse routinely navigate multiple representational worlds of indexical fields on the one hand, and also how such situated interactions link to part and projected histories of representation". When studying and analysing semiotics, one cannot only look at time to get an appropriate outcome. One needs to look at both time and place of those people of certain social types. Thus, time is described by Agha (2007: 321) as an entity that is "textually diagrammed and ideologically grasped in relation to, and through the activities of, loca table selves". Agha (2007: 321-322) firmly believes "that all semiotic representations are chronotopic because they occur in space and time". Representations are signs that are heard and seen by participants. Only then can meaning be experienced by these participants. This is known as "temporal-spacial expression" (Agha, 2007: 322) where the participants connect illustrated chronotopes to experienced chronotopes.

2.6 Theoretical Concerns

Based on the theoretical framework in this chapter, certain theoretical concerns have arisen. Even though plenty of research has been conducted on international soap operas as a genre, there is not a lot of research on modes in South African soap operas. Particularly, there is a gap in research on different semiotic material used in South African soap operas such as multimodality, resemiotisation and semiotic remediation.

There is also the issue of language use as discourse by focusing on language as a social practice in order to indicate social action. In addition, the notion of linguistic performance of identity options has to be addressed in such a way to reflect theories surrounding language as social practice.

Language is not the only semiotic system that needs to be analysed. Soap operas serve as visual pleasure which falls privy to the layering of other multiple semiotics. This is where multimodality comes in. Multimodality makes it possible for the analysis of more than one mode at a time as well as meaning(s) attached to these different modes. However, it has been pointed out that this kind of analysis may include and exclude details. On the other hand, it should not really make a difference. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) propose that their multimodality theory should be used as a practical tool to remedy this.

Based on the notion that this study is a multi-semiotic analysis, this research makes use of multimodal data. There are usually three major decisions that have to be made when the collection of data takes place. Firstly, the theoretical decision with regards to what is included and excluded. Secondly, the methodological decision can only occur once the theoretical part has been decided on. Then, one decides on the data collection selection method i.e. whether it should be audio or visual. Lastly, the analytical decision can take place where the researcher is ready to analyse the multimodal data. Multimodal interaction transcriptions are known to be a complexed process (Norris, 2011) because of its various multiple semiotics. This is based on the idea that the researcher sometimes has to translate and convert the visual and audio aspects into a printable format. At times, even the same scene may be used to explore the different modes. For example, the same interaction can be used to

indicate how social actors move in and out of identity options through language use as well as the indication of other modes.

Baldry (2004) laments that multimodal transcriptions have its limitations and it should be used in conjunction with other semiotic analytical frameworks. Fairclough (2003) suggests two ways to identify features in a textual analysis: identifying the main themes and which angle these themes are represented from. Another analytical framework that can be used to fill the gap of multimodal transcriptions is Prior and Hengst's (2010) framework of semiotic remediation. Their framework makes it possible for researchers to explore the "simultaneous, layered deployment of multiple semiotics" (Prior and Hengst, 2010: 19) in combination with semiotic trajectories and chronotopes across time and space. In other words, how certain actions and ideas are recontextualised to create a certain effect. There is also the notion of resemiotisation where one can explore how certain semiotics are set in motion to create new social meanings based on different contexts and modes.

2.7 Summary

This chapter explained the short history of a soap opera as a genre as well as literature on soap operas in the new South Africa. It also dealt with issues of how languages in multilingual contexts are dealt with, specifically how identity is portrayed through language choice. In addition, this chapter also delved into the notions of semiotics such as intertextuality, multimodality, resemiotisation and semiotic remediation. Lastly, the main theoretical concerns have been summarised. The next chapter explains how data was collected and analysed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the literature used to analyse the data that fall in line with the objectives set out in chapter one. This chapter will discuss the research methodology used to acquire the necessary information to answer the research questions set out in chapter one. Research methodology forms an integral part of any type of research, whether qualitative or quantitative. Research methodology helps with explaining the nature of the data and highlights the employed method that leads to conclusions through data processing (Seale, 2003).

3.1 Design and Procedure

3.1.1 Qualitative Method

The objective of any research design is to answer the research questions as accurately and unambiguously as possible by using a framework that defines the process from beginning to end. In order to do such a process, as a researcher, one needs to establish whether to either take the qualitative or quantitative research method approach. Both embark on research in different ways. Ospina (2004) differentiates between the two. Qualitative research occurs when the researcher aims for a holistic picture from historically unique situations, where idiosyncrasies are important for meaning. The researcher uses an inductive mode, letting the data speak. In contrast, quantitative research aims to isolate the phenomenon, to reduce the level (Ospina, 2004: 4). This research is designed to answer descriptive questions such as the 'how' and 'what' questions. Therefore, a qualitative research approach has been chosen for this thesis.

Thorne (2000: 69) states that qualitative research "usually relies on inductive reasoning processes to interpret and structure the meanings that can be derived from data". In other words, how and why do certain things take place? *Isidingo* is a prime example of a South African soap opera where producers use semiotic

resources such as storylines, characterisation and the portrayal of South African lifestyles through language-use, culture, history and politics.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 30), qualitative research involves an approach where "researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them". Qualitative research uses a natural setting for its data. This means that I, as the researcher, have mainly observed and interpreted the social phenomena in the socio-cultural contexts depicted in *Isidingo*. Qualitative research methods can also help a researcher identify social norms and status, as well as ethnicity and other positioning in social contexts. This is relevant to my research as I obtained information about how cultural groups and social actors' behaviour in *Isidingo* are reconstructed and re-performed. I have done so by analysing, interpreting and discovering the social motivations of the specific actors, actions and behaviours in the production of the soap opera.

Norris (2011) confirms that there is a need to transcribe data qualitatively because:
> Natural interaction cannot be quantitatively transcribed. The unfolding of modal use does not develop in a simultaneous timely manner. In other words, naturally occurring interaction cannot be transcribed successfully by using every second, fourth or sixth frame, because postural shifts, gestures, gaze shifts, and so on do not occur at clock time intervals.   (Norris, 2011: 86)

3.1.2 Document/Text Analysis

Denscombe (2003) identifies two ways in which documents are used in research. Firstly, documents are used as part of the literature review where it acts as an introduction to research by helping the researcher establish the current state of knowledge, as well as provide information on the theories and principles behind the phenomenon under investigation. Secondly, documents are used as sources of data where it acts as objects of investigation and are treated as such in their own right.

With that said, the nine aired episodes used for this study formed part of the documents that have been analysed. These video clips were analysed as texts. Text-based research falls in line with Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) notion of

what a text is. They state that a text is looked at in terms of not only words, but in terms of the visual as well. It is important to look at texts in this manner because it allowed me to do a multi-semiotic analysis of *Isidingo*.

3.1.3 Secondary Research

Secondary research is known as secondary data that already exists. There is no need for the researcher to go out into the field to find data (primary research). This makes it easier and is more cost-effective than primary data. This study is concerned with *Isidingo* episodes that have already been produced and aired on television.

Because this is a document/text-based analysis, it enables the use of secondary research as the base of data collection and analysis. The selected aired episodes were examined to meet the objectives of the thesis.

3.2 Data Collection

As stated, this thesis uses secondary data which requires a secondary method of data collection. The main data, aired episodes, were obtained from the SABC. To obtain the relevant episodes, I corresponded (via email) with a sales executive from the Business Development Content Enterprises Department at the SABC. The sales executive had all the master tapes of the soap opera and converted them to DVD format after I made the necessary payment. I also had to fill in a prescribed order form which was supplied by the sales executive. Once the payment had been made, I was obliged to scan and email proof of payment as well as the completed order form. It took 24 hours to convert the master tapes to DVD format. These DVDs were then posted and delivered within two days to the Linguistics Department at the University of the Western Cape.

Initially, the five random episodes chosen for this study were collected to analyse the problematised status. However, I found it limiting with regards to the objectives of this thesis. As a result, I added another four episodes that enabled me to carry out a comprehensive analysis of *Isidingo* over time. Among other things, the idea was to explore the resemiotised semiotic materials in space and time in *Isidingo*. Overall, the idea was to create a descriptive account of the consumption of *Isidingo* as a

soap opera, which has been triangulated with the production of data that arose from the multi-semiotic analysis of the video clips.

3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Multi-Semiotic Data Analysis

According to Chandler (2007), semiotic analysis can only be done through various approaches including intertextuality, CDA and content analysis. He further argues that semiotics "is now closely associated with cultural studies [whereas] content analysis is well established within the mainstream tradition of social science research" (Chandler, 2007: 222). Content analysis can be defined as an analysis based on a quantitative approach so that the content of the texts can be manifested. Semiotic analysis, on the other hand, "seeks to analyse texts as structured wholes and investigates latent, connotative meanings" (Chandler, 2007: 222). To summarise, content analysis has a "fixed meaning" (Chandler, 2007: 222) attached to it but the focus of semiotic analysis is on discourse and signs and how they are "stressing the role of semiotic context in shaping meaning (Chandler, 2007: 222). Semiotic analysis - referring to different realities made by various interpreters - may have different meanings for the same discourse and signs of a text. Chandler (2007: 222) stresses that even though content analysis and semiotic analysis are worlds apart when it comes to the meaning of a text, many researchers have combined the two. He reiterates this by stating that "semiotics is not incompatible with quantitative methods" (Chandler, 2007: 223).

Irvine (2010) takes a step-by-step approach on how to analyse a text semiotically. There are different aspects to consider.

1. How many events of semiotic transformation should one look at and why?
2. How many remediating moments need to be included in an analysis?
3. What about absences?
4. Are the data under examination defined in some important way by what they are not, or by some exclusionary process?
5. Is there something important that people are not talking about?

(Irvine, 2010: 240-241)

As a researcher, I had to consider all of the above-mentioned questions in order to conduct a thorough semiotic analysis of the interactions that took place in the

episodes of *Isidingo.* I had to establish which remediating moments from the soap are important and which ones were not. This does not mean that the ones that I decided to exclude were not as important as the included ones; it merely opens up a gateway for further research.

Fei (2004: 220) discusses Lim's IMM that is regarded "as a 'meta-model' [that is used] for the analysis of a page or frame which involves the use of both language and pictures as semiotic resources". However, he points out that "there is a need to further develop the model into one that can account for meaning arising from other semiotic resources in dynamic environments such as video text and hypertext" (Fei, 2004: 220). The application of SFL, created by Halliday, assists in this kind of investigation even though its initial objective was to study "the semiotic resource of language" (Fei, 2004: 220). Semiotics has established to be an inventive method for analysing visual texts, such as soap operas. Soap operas consist of a wide range of signs such as dress codes, mannerisms, camera movements, characters, etc. Semiotic analysis makes it possible to analyse visual texts as a whole.

An ecological and multimodal approach is argued by Chandler (2007: 223) as "the primary value of semiotics is its central concern for the investigation of meaning-making and representation which conventional academic disciplines have tended to treat as peripheral". He further states that one needs a semiotic approach of analysis in order to investigate a wide range of modalities. Chandler (2007: 223) argues that a semiotic approach to data analysis "has been applied to a vast range of modes and media – including gesture, posture, dress, writing, speech, photography, the mass media and the internet". Thus, semiotic analysis was the perfect method to use to explore *Isidingo.*

3.3.2 Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA)

Norris (2011) points out that certain aspects have to be considered in order to do a multimodal discourse analysis. Traditionally, only verbal language was analysed. Now, there is a need to look at social actors and other modes. CDA has to do with looking at language only whereas MDA takes all communicative modes into consideration. Examples of communicative modes include the furniture in the background, age, sex, facial expressions, reactions, gestures, etc. (Norris, 2011: 8).

In other words, it is not just spoken language that serves as the only communicative function. Even more detailed aspects have to be taken into consideration when one does multimodal (inter)action analysis. Norris (2011) discusses multimodal transcriptions:

> The reading path of this transcript is linear and strictly coded, following Western ideology…the trajectories of the reading path in this multimodal transcript are almost salient to next most salient, and also top to bottom and left to right. Instead of organising the transcript by lines, this multimodal transcript is organised by images. Instead of employing punctuation marks indicate intonation, the multimodal transcript visualises the rising and lowering of intonation…Overlap is indicated by utterances touching in the transcript…Short pauses are indicated by spaces between the written words relative to the pace of spoken language, and longer pauses are indicated by the lack of spoken language in or around one or more images.
>
> (Norris, 2011: 8-9)

In other words, visual images of a text is indeed imperative in a multimodal transcription because it "show[s] the immediate surroundings of the [social actor] as well as [his/her] façade, dress, approximate age, sex, and some facial expressions and gestures, which all give off interpretable signs" (Norris, 2011: 11). She reiterates the importance of communicative modes in a multimodal analysis by pointing out that "many modes are lost through audio recording[s] and become perceptible only in video recordings" (Norris, 2011: 13). It is clear that the concept of multimodal transcriptions are imperative in order to fully analyse different modes in a text. However, Norris (2011) points out that there are implications to this type of analysis. These implications do:

> Not simply investigate the multimodal ways in which social actors (co)construct meaning, but [it] investigates how social actors with their everyday actions (co)produced identities – or rather identity elements – take on a durable aspect across time and space. (Norris, 2011: 24)

In order to do a multimodal (inter)action analysis, one therefore needs to move toward a holistic analysis.

For the purpose of this research, I did not only look at language-in-use, but also at how the different modalities are used. These modalities include the appropriation of

different discourses, genres, resemiotisation and remediation of objects, events and activities in *Isidingo*.

The table below provides a transcription guide for conversations.

Symbol	Meaning
[ ]	Researcher's translations
XXX	Inaudible words
…	Speaker trails off
(( ))	Physical gesture accompanying speech
--	Speaker gets interrupted
Bold	Words or phrases in languages other than English

Table 1: Transcription key

3.4 Summary

This chapter has covered a systematic outline of methodological procedures in order to achieve the objectives mentioned in chapter one. This chapter entails a qualitative research approach that used documents (video clips) as a source of data. The said data acts as objects of investigation in their own right. The video clips were analysed as multimodal texts with the use of content analysis. I explored how the analytical approach of semiotics and discourse through modality is needed for the South African soap opera, *Isidingo*. The next three chapters will apply these approaches in order to show the results of this study.

CHAPTER 4

ADAPTATION OF REALITY IN THE FICTIONAL WORLD

4.0 Introduction

This chapter explores how real life events and aspects are reconstructed in *Isidingo*. In order to demonstrate this kind of exploration, the semiotic materials that are used by the producers are analysed to show the re-modelling of the immediate outside world. In this regard, I show how various semiotic materials are repurposed. By repurposing one entity, it opens up a window for producers to create new meaning.

4.1 Creating Naturalness of Soap Settings

The soap opera, *Isidingo*, is based in a reconstructed mining town known as Horizon Deep. The fictional Horizon Deep Mine is the heart of the reconstructed mining community in the new South Africa. This is accompanied by footage of a mine shaft and several scenes apparently done underground.

Figure 4.1: Underground footage

Outside of this, viewers are able to see places such as business offices as well as business outlets such as restaurants, bars, the ON!TV studios, cinemas, coffee shops, etc. Restaurants, bars and coffee shops serve as general meeting places for social actors from all walks of life. The viewer also gets to see attractions of Johannesburg in the background. An example of this is the view from the lounge of the Sibeko's penthouse where one gets to see either a breath-taking sunset in the background to indicate that it is evening or a view of a green landscaped area filled with trees and bushes to indicate daytime. It is safe to say that the *Isidingo* set is used as a way to show viewers that the characters are not just sitting around waiting

for their turn in the storyline – but their day is going about as usual – in a 'normal' Johannesburg way.

Apart from the re-enactment of Horizon Deep, the producers have also created different kinds of characters and social identities that one finds in a typical mining town including the mine bosses, mine workers and criminals. The taxi wars, protests, unscrupulous businessmen and businesswomen associated with a thriving mining town form part of the contexts and plots in the soap opera. Producers have therefore recontextualised these different aspects of the mining town character.

Besides the mining, one also gets to see character development as in real life. In other words, one sees characters evolving as human beings. This is an attempt by the producers to recreate the real South African socio-cultural context, as well as the economic structures in place. Ongoing character development encompasses how each and every character started off in the soap opera and how much each one has evolved with the help of the plotline. An example of this is the character, Georgie Zamdela, better known as Papa G. He started off as a ruthless gangster who was notorious for not getting caught by the police. The producers then systematically demonstrated Papa G's humane side by having him employ inexperienced people like Lerato. One also gets to see Papa G mentor others such as Sechaba into 'good' (non-criminal) entrepreneurs. This is Papa G's way of empowering the community. Even though he is the one who usually fans taxi wars, he also instructed the protestors who took part in the taxi war not to kill anyone. Another character who has been developed over time is Zeb Matabane. Zeb was introduced as the sole provider for his wife and children who were living in the rural area outside of the urban city, Johannesburg. He is well known for having affairs and consequently disrespecting his wife. As the years pass, the viewer gets to see this character develop into a respected member of the Horizon Deep community who is dedicated and loyal to his wife. Ace Nzimande is another character who was introduced as a soccer player who loves the fairer gender. He made no secret of this until the audience witnessed him falling for Ziyanda. One gets to see him evolve from being a player to being in a monogamous relationship. In other words, Ace as a character develops from being a womanizer to a dedicated boyfriend who respects females. This is in agreement with Ferreira's (2013: 1) statement about "soaps [that] are in the business of getting

people tuning in to characters and ongoing character developments as opposed to plot-driven shows". In other words, it is of utmost importance for the producers to make sure that the development of each character is systematically developed over time to make sure that viewers will stay tuned in.

In addition to ongoing character development, the producers have appropriated and recontextualised South Africa's levels of social class. One way that this is demonstrated is by having characters belonging to the upper class, the middle class and the lower class. The rich such as the Sibekos live in penthouses. An example of a middle class family is the Matabanes. The lower class are those who are situated in townships and shebeens. However, all classes hang out at the local shebeen. In a way, the socio-cultural context and economical structures are now complete because one usually finds all of the three classes in any given community. This is a deliberate effort by producers to create 'reality' through a representation of various social beings in a community. The producers are bringing in all of these aspects in order to reconstruct and recontextualise the mining character of the fictional Horizon Deep.

The producers therefore establish 'naturalness' to the scenes by tapping into various kinds of situations and semiotic material associated with real life in a mining town. By creating 'naturalness', the *Isidingo* producers are now able to re-represent certain aspects into the fictional world as 'real.'

4.2 Semiotic Remediation of South African Lifestyles

South Africa has a rich, cultural and historical background that makes it imperative for South Africa's political heritage to be recontextualised. The *Isidingo* producers sometimes bring the history of apartheid into the plotlines in order to evoke immediacy which is closely interlinked to hypermediacy. These two terms will be taken up in the next chapter. South African history plays an integral part in the modern South Africa. In addition, Prior and Hengst (2010) argue that social actors' interactions demonstrate the 'now' in time as well as the 'then'. The past and the present are always somewhat linked where history serves as signs that are heard and seen by social actors so that they can experience meaning of these kinds of signs in the present. Even though the country officially ended segregation in 1994, to this day there are still sensitive traces of the apartheid legacy. In other words, the

Isidingo producers are reconstructing the 'now' which is different from apartheid. Let us take a look at how the producers are able to semiotically remediate South African lifestyles into their current storylines.

Even from the very first episode in 1998, the producers indicated transformation by recreating what was happening in South Africa at that time. Consider the following scene where it looks like a typical Caucasian South African household in the episode of 7 July 1998 about four years into South Africa's democracy. The older characters on the left are wearing what is regarded as typical Afrikaner attire. Here, the resemiotisation of the Afrikaner's dress code is indicated by the characters wearing plainly coloured attire. The background of this scene relates to the bride-to-be trying on a wedding dress and they applaud the outcome. However, unlike what one would expect to find in a typical Afrikaner home during apartheid, there is a calendar with black people hanging on the wall. The calendar is next to the young lady on the right.

Figure 4.2: Transformation of household

The calendar signifies that things are changing, which falls in line with the transformation as dictated by the new constitution of South Africa. The producers successfully attempted the indication of the movement from segregation to democracy in the plot to emulate South Africa's constitutional stance. Here, the real world moves into the fictional world to make the fictional world real.

Another way in which South African lifestyles are semiotically remediated in order to indicate the country's new constitution is evident at the local Horizon Deep bar where people of all races and (trans-)gender orientations frequent. See figures below.

Figure 4.3: Racial integration at local bar

Here, racial integration through acceptance of diversity takes place where characters from different cultural backgrounds hang out socially at the local bar. One can see that people from different cultural backgrounds enjoy a similar social setting. It seems that even though there is no official segregation, there is still some division.

In later years of the soap opera, lifestyles are also re-enacted to portray the new South Africa through characters from different cultural backgrounds living under the same roof. Maggie, a white woman, owned a commune where characters from various racial and cultural backgrounds - like Nandipha, Parsons, Lolly and Dusty - all shared the same living space. Similarly and in more recent years, Charlie, Len, Calvin and Prada share a flat. Prada, a gay Hindu man is also close friends with the Zulu female character, Ayanda. Children from different cultures also participate together in various social situations. An example of this occurs in the episode of 6 July 2012 where one sees the sons of Barker and Vusi attending music lessons (see figure below). In the opening scene of 6 June 2012, the viewer gets to see a typical breakfast despite the people of different races present at the breakfast table. They are also not a typical nucleus family of mother, father and child/children.

Figure 4.4: Racial integration at home and education

All of these instances are clear indications of how the multicultural diverse South Africa is resemiotised through the portrayal of the various characters in the soap opera.

In addition to these types of lifestyles, South African workplaces are also resemiotised in the soap opera to indicate social transformation. Let us consider the following transcription from the first episode, 7 July 1998, of *Isidingo* where blacks and whites work together as equals*.* The very first scene takes place at the local mine. There are mostly black workers with Mike who is white and by the looks of things, he is in charge. Everyone is dressed in orange and blue overalls.

> 00:55 Mike: Mr Zebedee.
>
> Zeb: Mike.
>
> Mike: What a pleasure. It's not often that we get a worker's representative coming underground with the workers these days.
>
> Zeb: I thought I'd better go check if anything has changed since the last time.
>
> Mike: And? What does the union say about the shaft steward moving in next to the whities?
>
> Zeb: They say it is about time.
>
> Mike: I say welcome to the club. ((Everyone starts laughing)) When you go into the kitchen, you see that square thing with that round plates on the top, that's for cooking. There's no need to make a fire in the middle of the bloody lounge anymore. ((Everyone breaks out in laughter))
>
> Zeb: You know when you go into your bathroom; you see this round white thing standing on the floor. It's for pissing in. ((Everyone bursts out in laughter))

The extract above is about the changing racial and professional relationships in the new South Africa. The workplace transformation is shown in various ways. Firstly, by having Zeb and Mike shake hands. 'They say it is about time', here, refers to the unions who are part of the transformation. The unions endorse equality in the workplace and because of this, 'It is about time' acknowledges that transformation was bound to happen in South Africa. Mike playfully says 'welcome to the club'.

Everyone starts laughing. Mike takes a light-hearted jab at black people being primitive by describing what a house looks like inside, 'When you go into the kitchen, you see that square thing with that round plates on the top, that's for cooking. There's no need to make a fire in the middle of the bloody lounge anymore'. Again, everyone breaks out in laughter. Zeb joins in on the joking around by copying Mike's joke, 'You know when you go into your bathroom; you see this white round thing standing on the floor. It's for pissing in'. In turn, everyone bursts out in laughter again.

In the above extract, the characters all share the same sentiments of happiness that the unfairness of the previous dispensation has come to an end. This is indicated through laughter. The fact that all of them seem giddy about being there resonates the welcomed feeling of unity that has been wanted by many for a very long time in South Africa. The dialogue above shows that everyone can now laugh - out of relief - about apartheid and that they have now moved on. The same reaction from the crowd shows that despite their cultural background, they agree on something. Here, the viewer gets to experience a glimpse of how South Africans are dealing with transformation in the workplace. At this time, South Africa was regarded as an infantile democratic country because it has been a mere four years since the first democratic black president was elected. This is in agreement with Moekejo (2007: 1) who postulates that South African media is supporting "the new constitution in instilling a mindset in all South African[s] which says that we are all one rainbow nation". This is done through showing that there are no differences amongst races.

The following scene is another way in which the producers re-enact South African lifestyles in their plotlines. The background of the following scene of 6 July 2012 is where Jefferson is extremely upset that he gets demoted as the CEO. His niece, Nikiwe, is taking his place as Acting CEO. As soon as he hears this shocking news, Jefferson storms into Nikiwe's office whilst she is in the middle of a meeting with Barker. While Jefferson is biting off Nikiwe's head, Barker tries to diffuse the situation by interrupting Jefferson's angry words directed at Nikiwe. Without missing a beat, Jefferson lashes out at Barker.

10:05 Jefferson   I don't do business with people who benefited from
                      Apartheid.

Keeping in mind that Jefferson is a black character and Barker is Caucasian, the implications here are that Barker did not struggle like him and his family during apartheid. Also, Barker has no business stopping him from reprimanding Nikiwe because they (black people) were excluded back then. Jefferson is not only excluding Barker because of the colour of his skin, but also 'to get him back' for what happened back then during apartheid. This can be regarded as some form of retribution and/or revenge even though Barker is not solely responsible of apartheid taking place. In addition, it was frowned upon for black people to speak down to Caucasians during apartheid. This kind of aesthetic realism is very popular amongst the *Isidingo* producers because they get to draw from real-life events, such as apartheid, and insert it into the storylines to resemiotise a sensitive issue that was supposed to end decades ago but it still affecting the mass population in some way or other.

Another instance of how the producers recreate the new South Africa occurs in the episode of 6 June 2012. Jefferson is apologising to Bianca on behalf of his wife who used harsh words - earlier in the same episode - when she spoke about Bianca. While all of this is taking place, the radio is playing in the background. The following interaction is taking place on the radio between two unknown characters. It goes as follows.

19:20 Radio voice: *Ben, dis so lekker om jou hier te hê…en ons het jou eintlik…Dis wonderlik, en ek wens ons het vroeër…en 'n mens kan sien hoe mooi is dit rêrag is en almal is volledig…en dit is onse beurt XXX te reis en te gaan sien en om te lewe, om in te neem soos ware Suid Afrikaners moet. Ons moet trots wees.*

[Ben, it is so nice to have you here…and we have actually…That's wonderful, and I wish we had earlier…now a person can see how beautiful it really is and everyone is happy…it is our turn XXX to travel and to see and to live, to take it in like true South Africans do. We should be proud.]

The audience hears in the background that as true South Africans, they should be proud; a reminder that they have come a long way since the violence during the

segregation era. Here, real life is being imitated where the producers re-use the radio as a form of technology to bring in the 'now' to indicate what is currently happening in South Africa. This is also in agreement with what remediation is about; being able to use a different media into another. Consequently, a new medium is created even though it is produced in a subliminal manner. In other words, the conversation on the radio is used as a semiotic tool which is remediated by moving from the past into the present and simultaneously becoming part of the soap opera's storyline.

Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011) discuss how the current South African government attempts to remedy the inequality of apartheid:

> In addition to scrapping apartheid legislation, an extensive policy and legal framework was developed to promote affirmative action in education, employment, sport and other areas of life, including a far-reaching programme of broad-based black empowerment (BBEE).
>
> (Durrheim, Mtose and Brown, 2011: 14)

Therefore, the beginning of a democratic South Africa opened up doors for equality amongst all races, especially in the workplace.

However, the fact that the white man is in charge with more power does not mean that he cannot be questioned anymore. Because of the existence of the unions, he cannot look down on blacks as in the past. It also makes it possible for everyone to work on equal terms which are part of the new South Africa. In the first episode of *Isidingo*, the mine supervisor, Mike, reprimands two black subordinates because they are physically carrying logs instead of using a jack to load the heavy objects.

20:42	Mike:	Who broke it? You broke it. Just like you break everything! Have you any idea how much a balls-up like this costs us in time?
	Godlieb:	There was a two by four in the rails. And anyways, we don't need a jack.
	Mike:	There's always a bloody story. There's always a bloody story!
	Godlieb:	I will try my best.

Mike:	Don't make me laugh. We all know that your best isn't good enough.
Godlieb:	**Meneer** [Sir], this is not the way you should be speaking.
Mike:	Oh and how should I be speaking?
Godlieb:	You are a racist.
Mike:	And you're a bloody trouble maker! Be careful, because I got your number.
Godlieb:	You are the one who's making trouble. If you tell us how to fix this bumper, we will fix it but you don't speak like this.
Mike:	And how should I speak? Like this?! ((Punches him)) Is that the message that you understand? ((The other black man stops Godlieb from retaliating))
Godlieb:	I'll report you. You will be fired from this mine. I'm telling you.
Mike:	And the day that happens you will be at the bottom of the number three shaft!

The scene above starts off with Mike asking who broke the jack but does not wait for an answer. Instead, he not only accuses his subordinates of breaking the jack, but also breaking everything else. Godlieb tries to explain the situation but Mike is not interested and proceeds by insulting them, stating that, 'We all know that your best isn't good enough'. Here, Godlieb argues back by warning Mike that 'this is not the way you should be speaking'. This upsets Mike and he punches Godlieb who then retaliates by threatening Mike, 'I'll report you. You will be fired from this mine'. The extract above resonates with the transformation where black South Africans are aware of the new working environment with its new laws. On the other hand, white South Africans are also aware of the new dispensation but they feel frustrated and confused about how to deal with the new notion of equality in the workplace.

Even though the aspects of multiculturalist lifestyles – especially in the workplace - are positively reinforced, there are sometimes instances where culture brings a lot of tension. According to Dubin (2009):

The racial categories of the apartheid system created significant barriers between different groups, ensuring that their values, beliefs, customs,

ceremonies and languages remained relatively exotic and incomprehensible to one another…Even so, the big difference today is that cultures are facing off and interpenetrating one another to a much greater extent than ever, provoking confrontations that apartheid has previously limited.

(Dubin, 2009: 21)

Similarly, Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011: 27) define race trouble "as a social psychological condition that emerges when the history of racism infiltrates the present to unsettle social order, arouse conflict of perspectives and create situations that are individually and collectively troubling". Taking these theorists into consideration, let us explore how the producers incorporate post-apartheid challenges into the present.

In the episode of 7 July 1998, two black characters are sitting at the bar having a conversation. The white character, Mike, is playing darts in the background with one of his white friends. Mike interrupts the black characters by putting a hand on each of their shoulder and stating the following.

| 11:40 Mike: | You know guys what a life, hey. I wish I was a black man. You guys got the whole thing sorted out. |

One can deduce from the extract above that some whites are even envious towards blacks. Mike humourously points out how he feels about the new South Africa. It is clear that he does it in a joking manner because he is talking to black people.

On the other hand, Mike is blunter about his feelings of the new dispensation and how it affects him when he interacts with people belonging to his own racial group. This can be seen earlier in the same episode.

10:10 Mike:	Have you noticed, when you give those guys [blacks] some authority they lose their sense of humour. You can't get a bloody decent day of work done underground these days without 'Oh I can't do that. I can't say that'. Affirmative action. Rubbish.
Ted:	((Shakes head))
Skip:	Times are changing.
Ted:	Ya.
Mike:	For the worst, believe me.

Ted and Skip nod in agreement with Mike's statement - and at the same time – share in the frustration of not knowing how they should act with regards to the new law. In addition, they also have no choice but to fall in line with the transformation of South African lifestyles. Here, immediacy is evoked through the re-representation of how some white South Africans feel about the new dispensation – whether they are for or against it.

In even more recent years, the role of black people in the workplace has changed even more where they have taken more control in a professional capacity. This has all been made possible by the South African government introducing terms such as Affirmative Action, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBEE). These notions are resemiotised by the producers showing non-white characters either owning or are taking charge of businesses in the reconstructed mining community. For example, a white man named Pierre De Villiers used to be in charge of the Horizon Deep mine. Currently, it is a black man, Jefferson Sibeko, who is in charge of Sibeko Gold. During apartheid a black man in such a powerful position was against the law. The Indian character, Rajesh, owns another mining company in the community. Frank, who is coloured, is Head of News of the local broadcasting company, ON!TV.

In addition, people across cultures also work together at Sibeko Gold, ON!TV and the Duncan Hotel. For instance, Ma Agnes is a black woman who runs the hotel for Barker, who is the owner. She works closely with Harriet who is white. Ma Agnes manages the hotel and Harriet manages Barker's private and professional affairs.

Figure 4.5: Transformation in the workplace

One can see from the way that both of them are dressed, they are equals in the workplace despite their different cultural backgrounds.

These examples are clear indications that the *Isidingo* producers have adapted their plotlines to emulate the outside world's current stance against inequality in the workplace. The producers effectively indicate transformation in the workplace by semiotising the role-players of the workplace and adapts it even more to keep up with the times. This is supported by Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011) who note that:

> Transformation in South Africa has seen rapid changes in these patterns of interaction. In a matter of few years, society has been desegregated and black people have taken up powerful positions and leadership roles in government and in private, public and non-governmental institutions. Surviving in the commercial world today for white people often requires that they are dependent on black partners, particularly in the legislative context of broad-based black economic empowerment (BBEE).

> (Durrheim, Mtose and Brown 2011: 48)

Apart from the transformation of black men in powerful positions in the workplace, women are globally encouraged to be leaders in the workplace as well. Horn (1991) is concerned about women empowerment in a post-apartheid era based on the notion that feminists are non-existent in South Africa. She laments that females are still seen as the inferior gender and that "employers in these sectors [such as mining] unashamedly offer training opportunities and employment to males only" (Horn, 1991: 29). Horn (1991: 29-30) further explores ways in which women can be incorporated into the working world on the same level as their male counterparts by "implement[ing] affirmative action programmes to phase women into these sectors at an accelerated rate in order to equalise the proportions of men and women employed in traditionally male sectors of the economy".

Women empowerment is currently one of the mainstream eras in South Africa where women are not solely homemakers but they are also career women. Let us consider the following characters and scenes in order to explore how the *Isidingo* producers have attempted to equalise females in the working environment by contesting the traditional. Ma Agnes evolves from being a submissive housewife financially dependent on her husband to someone who made a name for herself in the community by making her own money and attending adult literacy classes in the

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evenings to better her education. She also went from battling with her husband's infidelity and forgave him because of her strong traditional values of staying in a marriage. One can deduce from the portrayal of Ma Agnes throughout the soap opera that she is the epitome of how females have changed from submissive housewives to becoming independent career women throughout the years in the soap opera. She emulates liberated South African women who are no longer staying at home to be submissive to the breadwinning husband. This is in agreement to Mkhuma's (2004) statement about South African soap operas that currently use female characters as a representation to show the shift of the stay-at-home to professional women. She argues that the reason behind this is because "this is the type of woman that every new magazine on our shelves is targeting with its glossy covers, selling sex, fashion and beauty stories" (Mkhuma, 2004: 1). Priya is another example of how women are being transformed in the workplace. She is a Hindu detective who has various males as her subordinates. It is evident that the producers also make use of ongoing character development to indicate the shift of being a submissive housewife to empowered females who are career- and goal- orientated.

Females portray powerful professional roles and have to - at the same time - deal with emotional and romantic relationships at home. Let us consider the following contrast of how the transformation of empowered females is resemiotised in *Isidingo.* The Zulu female character, Nikiwe, is highly ranked and respected in the mining industry. However, it appears that her uncle, Jefferson, seems to have a massive problem with his niece having more power than him when she is promoted to Acting CEO. By Nikiwe becoming Acting CEO, Jefferson gets demoted. As soon as he receives the upsetting news, Jefferson barges into Nikiwe's office. He addresses her in a disrespectful and unprofessional manner by shouting at her. Nikiwe, on the other hand, remains professional. This is in agreement with Du Preez (2007) who talks about how assertive females in the work environment are contentiously tackled in a traditionally male world.

After the whole debacle where Jefferson shouts at Nikiwe, Barker tells Nikiwe in 6 July 2012's episode.

13:30 Barker: You are brave, intelligent, clearheaded and honest. I do
                    not know one other management professional in this

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country who could have handled this mess as well as you.

Later, in the same episode, Barker tells Rajesh the following.

19:07 Barker: I think what Nikiwe Sibeko is doing at Ultra Deep makes her a very important young South African.

Barker does not refer to Nikiwe as a 'woman' or a 'black woman' but a South African, which indicates solidarity. Barker represents those who are acceptant of powerful professional women. It is apparent from the above scenes that Barker has the utmost respect for Nikiwe.

Nikiwe is a black female boss with two white men, Benjamin and Barker, who are her subordinates. Unlike her uncle, Jefferson, they do not seem to have any qualms about having a woman in charge. Not only does Barker comfort Nikiwe with soothing words, he also places his hand on her shoulder. See figures below.
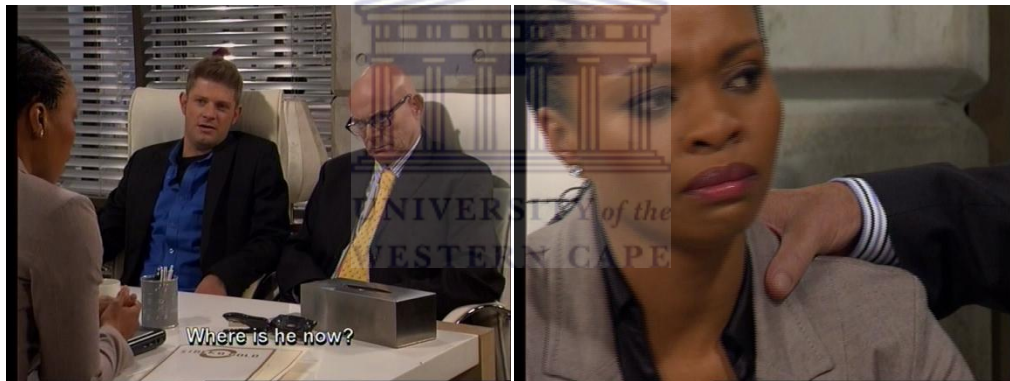

Figure 4.6: Female empowerment

One can say that the producers are indicating transformation in terms of characterisation by looking at the characters and their roles they are going to play. The characters are playing the South African context but at the same time the transformation is playing them, such as Mike, Ma Agnes, Nikiwe and Barker. This falls in line with what the South African constitution says about equality amongst all. In essence, the producers make use of characters belonging to various cultural groups that form part of South Africa in order to show the transforming socio-economical structures in the soap opera as well as the outside world. This method evokes immediacy where the audience feels that the real world is blurred with the fictitious mining world where the latter seems real to the audience.

4.3 Resemiotising Cultural Heritage

Apart from exploring South Africa's lifestyles in terms of the community and the workplace, let us take a look at the recontextualisation of South Africa's rich cultural heritage and how culture is semiotised. Tlelima (2011) notes that *Isidingo*'s cast members are all from different cultural backgrounds and that they show South Africa's modernised cultural diversity. Similarly, Barnard (2006) states that South African soap operas tend to exemplify a democratic multicultural South African society. Let us explore the crossing of racial boundaries, how the producers resemiotise cultural aspects and beliefs as well as the manner in which cultural heritage is simultaneously being maintained and/or contested in the production of *Isidingo*.

As previously discussed, the reconstruction of South African lifestyles is depicted by the producers through racial integration at the workplace and popular hangout places. This opened up doors for cross-cultural relationships of characters. In terms of the recontextualisation of culture in *Isidingo*, the producers have incorporated the different ethnic groups from South Africa i.e. a Zulu family, a Coloured family, a Tswana family, an Indian family, etc. These social actors eventually started romantic relationships with people outside of their respective races. Following are a few noteworthy interracial romantic relationships and friendships. Derek Nyati (African descent) and Philippa De Villiers (white) are known as the first interracial romantic relationship in *Isidingo*. They were the first couple on South African television to cross racial boundaries. The *Isidingo* producers took a risky leap by contesting the Acts of the apartheid era where races were separated so soon after South Africa became a democratic country. Frank Xavier, as a coloured man and former activist during apartheid, has no qualms about dating outside of his race. He has dated not only of his own race, but also black and white women. Nikiwe and Dr McNamara are examples of this. Calvin (Frank's son) who is also coloured is very close friends with the white female character, Charlie. The same goes for Bianca (coloured) and Skumbuzo (black). Charlie's father, Eddie (white), works with the Hindu woman, Priya, and subsequently have become good friends.

One can say that the producers of *Isidingo* are linking multiple identities of South Africa by having a multiracial cast. Coming from a segregated background, it is no

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longer frowned upon when people from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other. *Isidingo* has made this possible through having cross-cultural friendships and romantic relationships. A noteworthy instance of the crossing of racial boundaries occurs when Jefferson and his wife is unable to fall pregnant. They opt to hire Bianca, a coloured, as a surrogate mother.

Romantic relationships are even more modernised by including homosexual characters in the soap opera. One of the first gay couples was Steve and Luke. *Isidingo* is also responsible for the first televised gay marriage of these two characters merely a few days after gay marriage was legalised in South Africa in 2006. Len is an openly bisexual man who had a one night stand with the Hindu homosexual character, Prada. This takes place in the episode of 2 January 2013. Len and Prada are not only close friends, but they also work and live together. Keeping Geraghty's (1991) discussion in mind of how stroppy issues like sexuality are dealt with in soap operas is to indicate social change, let us consider the following two scenes.

Scene 1

Prada shares his views on the one-night stand with his closest friend, Ayanda.

    8:42   Prada: I'm happy to pick up things with Len where we were before New Year's. I'm not going to let a booze-filled night of abandon ruin what was, what is a good friendship between housemates.

Scene 2

In the same episode, Calvin informs Skumbuzo about Len and Prada's one-night stand.

    11:48 Skumbuzo: Hey, look man. I…I'm just trying to digest this. Len and Prada?

              Calvin: Yes, look. I'm not disapproving of them or whatever. Know what I mean? They can do whatever they wanna do.

              Skumbuzo: Cool, cool. Hey, look me too. I'm not against anything.

One can deduce from these two particular scenes that it is completely normal to not only have one-night stands, but it is also tolerable to accept anyone's sexual orientation.

However, not everyone is as accepting of homosexuality. When Prada's grandfather passed away, he and his brother were the only two beneficiaries to the will. It stipulates that in order for the siblings to obtain their R1 million inheritance, both of them are to be married to women. Even though Prada never made a secret of his sexual orientation, his family never accepted it. The grandfather's last wish is a testament to the older generation of South Africa who is not particularly comfortable with homosexuality. Instead of contesting the will, Prada gives in to his family's bullying and agrees to marry a Hindu woman. Prada's family arranged the marriage, which refers intertextually to certain cultures in South Africa that are still currently opting for this customary method of wedlock. The producers use this storyline to blur the modern and traditional by showing different perspectives on homosexuality and how each one is handled by various characters in the plot of the soap opera.

In terms of cultural heritage, let us explore how the incorporation of cultural symbols and elements are maintained and contested by different characters that are contextually dependent. Let us look at how the recreation of a death in a Zulu family, the Sibekos, is semiotised. It is expected in the Zulu culture that if a close loved one dies, the female recipient of this loss will indicate the mourning period by wearing black clothes. For example, Nikiwe wore black when she lost her unborn child due to a miscarriage. On the other hand, Katlego handles the loss of her surrogate unborn child differently. We see Katlego go through some of the rituals of mourning a loved one but it is inconsistent with the Zulu culture's rituals where the colour of her wardrobe was not hindered by the death. Unlike Nikiwe where the cultural element is maintained, the producers contest culture with Katlego by modernising the concept of death in the Zulu culture.

Producers do not merely replicate or duplicate culture, they challenge and remodel it. For example, the belief in ancestors is countered by Zulu people and other cultural groups in the world. They believe that they are cared for and secured by their ancestors. Ancestors reward good behaviour and punish bad behaviour (Zibani, 2002). The Sibekos is a respected Zulu family in the Horizon Deep community. The head of the family is Jefferson Sibeko. His wife, Katlego, and niece, Nikiwe, resides with him. He is the CEO of Sibeko Gold, a local successful mining company. Katlego and Nikiwe work for him. One can say that the Sibeko family lives a modern lifestyle

as opposed to how the Zulu people traditionally live. This is in correspondence to Zibani (2002: 138-139) who points out that "the Zulu people supported themselves by caring for their livestock and cultivating their crops. The westernized shifted this primitive and traditional lifestyle by introducing the idea of working for money to meet the economic needs". This is exactly what the Sibekos are doing in the mining industry and they are quite successful at it. Zibani (2002: 174) laments that "the long exposure to western and Christian ideas has resulted to a change in the Zulu way of life". In other words, Zulus raised in westernised ways conduct themselves differently compared to those who grew up in a traditional setting. This brings up the notion of hybrid lifestyles.

With modernity and globalisation, there is this contradiction that people live hybrid lifestyles where both the modern and traditional lifestyles are blended. There is the contradiction between a person who has to live according to their culture or live in the modern world. However, people do not have a single role to play. Because of context-based situations, there is a bit of both. Therefore, there is a blurring of boundaries of what is modern and what is traditional. In fact, it is like this in the real world as well. We see it being replayed in the soap opera by having those who grew up westernised but still do things according to culture. Most people still have ties with the traditional ways even though they have been nurtured in a westernised way. We also have roles that challenge the traditional. Let us explore the Sibekos who live traditional Zulu and modern lifestyles at the same time.

In a professional context, Jefferson is in charge of Sibeko Gold and Nikiwe reports to him. In a personal and Zulu patriarchal cultural context, Nikiwe is considered less than Jefferson because he is her uncle as well as the head of the homestead. In the episode of 6 July 2012, Jefferson is on the phone with his brother, Lincoln. Lincoln informs Jefferson that his daughter, Nikiwe, will be taking over the responsibilities and position of Jefferson as Acting CEO. This does not please Jefferson and he immediately lashes out at Lincoln over the phone.

> 9:08 Jefferson: She's just a girl. You will make a mockery of the company!

Even though Nikiwe is more than competent to take over the reins, it is apparent that her uncle confuses the professional context with the traditional belief that women are

considered less able in various situations than men. This is clearly indicated by Jefferson referring to Nikiwe as a 'girl'.

As soon as Jefferson is finished on the phone, he storms into Nikiwe's office while she is in the middle of a meeting:

10:16 Jefferson: You! My own family. My own brother's daughter. You go behind me. He put me in charge of you. To watch over you because you are still a child!

Nikiwe: Father is right. You are very--

Jefferson: Do not patronise me. Do not patronise me! You ungrateful little child! You are nothing and you will learn soon enough.

Nikiwe: **Babomncana** [My father's brother].

Jefferson: Shut up! It is not your place to talk! It is your place to listen! You are my brother's child and that is how it goes in our culture!

It boils down to tradition for Jefferson; implying that culture is above all else. It trumps everything. In this scene, Jefferson blurs culture where women are considered less than men, even more with Nikiwe being younger and inexperienced. As a result, Jefferson confuses his professional context with his cultural ways by being disrespectful to his newly assigned boss. Culturally, Jefferson is expected to be wiser than Nikiwe by referring to her as a child. Yet, the producers portray him as the one acting like a child.

In the episode of 13 September 2013, Katlego sees a snake in her bedroom. Her niece, Nikiwe, and her brother-in-law, Lincoln, later discuss it. All of them have to temporarily move out of the penthouse to give a pest control company time to sweep their home. Lincoln theorises that some people see a snake as terrifying but others regard a snake as a sign of a problem and that 'however much we grow apart from our culture, we must still respect it'. This is in agreement with Zibani (2002: 117) who confirms that "traditional Zulu people have a strictly patriarchal and exogamous system organized under the strict rules of behaviour and codes of respect and honour". What Lincoln is referring to here is the concept of ancestors. Ancestors can be defined as "spirits [that] are capable of punishing man's disobedience by bringing

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misfortunes, diseases, disasters or even death itself" (Zibani, 2002: 171). With this being said, the producers of *Isidingo* recontextualise the aspect of ancestors of the Zulu culture to portray the hybrid lifestyle.

Baby showers are generally given just before the baby is born. It is a welcoming celebration in honour of the expectant mother. *Isidingo* has used this notion with a twist where the coloured woman, Bianca, is a surrogate for the wealthy black family, the Sibekos. It is traditionally expected that the pregnant female will be the one to mother the unborn baby. In this case, Bianca only serves as the one to carry the child and the infant will be given over to the Sibekos after the birth takes place. Here, the baby shower is thrown in the honour of two mothers; the surrogate and the mother who will take care of the baby once it is born. This is the producers' way of taking the traditional celebration and modernising it by incorporating the concept of surrogacy into the storyline. At the same time, the producers make use of a Zulu family who chooses to use the westernised way of having a baby. In essence, by using the notion of surrogacy the producers are contesting the traditional.

Looking at the above instances and exploring how Jefferson handles situations, one can deduce that he uses culture when it suits his situation. In other words, Jefferson chooses between culture (traditional) and the modern when he feels like it. This is in agreement with Zibani (2002: 174) who points out those "who have been westernized, but they are still interested in maintaining a typical tradition Zulu way of life. These are those people who are Westernize[d] and Christianized but still interested in maintaining the African heritage". One can also say that Jefferson incorporates hybridity as a lifestyle choice.

Most of the purposes surrounding this section revolve around how cultures are handled in the current South Africa, where they lean more towards the modern ways of doing things in contrast with the traditional ways. Based on the analysis in this section, one can clearly see that the modern and the traditional cultures are sometimes blended in *Isidingo*'s storylines. There are modern and traditional characters and they sometimes have to adapt to each other or the situation when interacting. The various types of relationships are resemiotised in this soap opera to show how South Africans are in a modern world.

Conclusively, keeping in mind that South Africa is culturally rich, there are people who opt to conduct themselves in a traditional way. Others choose to go about their business in the modernised way. Because we are part of a world that tries to keep up with the westernised way of doing things, we are often challenged with the traditional. In other words, certain cultural groups' moral compass is stronger than others and they find themselves in a challenging position in the modernised world. Thus, the producers use different characters and contexts with regards to the modern and the traditional. The Sibekos are perfect examples of this, where the head of the household should always be the man even though it is sometimes obvious that Katlego is equally knowledgeable. It is part of culture and part of feminism even though they have also been exposed to western ways. The producers are thus not merely replicating culture, they are challenging it.

4.4 Semiotic Remediation and Resemiotisation of Real-Life Social Commentaries and Social Issues

Social commentary is defined by Burr (2002: 119) as an element that "addresses the truths of social experience, which are public and commonplace, known to all". Let us explore how producers reconstruct real life social commentaries as well as social issues from reality through semiotic remediation and resemiotisation in order to evoke naturalness.

One aspect of semiotic remediation is recycling. The *Isidingo* producers remediate the criminal series genre in the soap opera as a means to indicate real issues from the outside world. For instance, one way real issues from the real world is resemiotised is by looking at the issue of rape in South Africa. An example of this occurs in the episode of 30 May 2012 where the character, Charlie, has been raped. She gets inspected by a doctor with a rape kit that is used as evidence in cases of sexual assault. A rape kit – also known as a sexual assault evidence collection kit – is used when a victim reports the crime of rape to the necessary authorities (www.endthebacklog.org).

A rape kit is quite useful to the police when convicting the guilty. This type of evidence is also used in the real world where police authorities have to identify the

perpetrator through DNA samples. Further into the 30 May 2012 episode, Charlie's friend, Calvin, is worried about her and seems adamant on solving the case on his own. He shares his feelings of frustration with his father, Frank.

7:49	Calvin:	I can't get my head around it. I was having a lot of fun while…while that was happening to her. ((Sighs)) After something like this, do you think it will change her?
	Frank:	Look, we gotta focus on being supportive of her; being there for her.
	Calvin:	Of course, ya of course. But, let's also not lose focus on finding this person who did this to her, man. Finding him and...
	Frank:	Calvin. Calvin, look at me. I don't want you going on some vigilante investigation of your own. We have to back to the system. We have to trust they are gonna find this guy and prosecute him.
	Calvin:	What is the conviction rate on rape?
		[Scene ends]

It is generally known and accepted in South Africa that criminals are hardly ever found or convicted. This notion is supported by Holtman and Domingo-Swarts (2008: 105) who lament that "South Africans have constant exposure to crime and violence, both through direct victimisation and through extensive and detailed daily media reports". The real world is being replayed where the social issue of rape and an unsafe country is remediated from the real world into the soap opera. Consequently, the viewer feels that they are part of this representation because they can relate to it. In addition, this scene is also an intertextual reference to the real world where citizens tend to take the law into their own hands because of the ineffective South African police system. This is shown through Calvin's frustration about what happened to his close friend, Charlie. Later in the same episode, Charlie speaks to her father.

10:20	Charlie:	I get raped and the guy walks free.
		[Scene ends]

I take this issue of the ineffective South African police system up shortly into more detail.

Furthermore, the investigative officer, Priya, gives the actual statistics of rape in South Africa by making a bold statement in the episode of 30 May 2012.

17:15 Priya: Eighty percent of sexual assaults are committed by family members and friends. Stranger rape is surprisingly in the minority.

This information can be confirmed by the viewer's schemata on rape statistics of the immediate outside world. Calvin's previously mentioned question on the rape conviction followed by Frank's silence indicates South Africa's current problem regarding rape and how the police's hands are tied when trying to convict the guilty without sufficient evidence. The *Isidingo* producers also give an actual statistic of the real world; a fact in the fictional world. It can also be said that the producers sometimes move from reality into fiction and vice versa, which is important because it links in with where the character, Priya, uses real statistics. By using statistics from the outside world, the storyline is believable to the audience. Based on the statistics and the evidence, the producers are able to project sadly disturbing information. In this regard, this reality of the mining world becomes the reality of the audience. By this happening, the audience's world consequently falls away leading to transparent immediacy (Bolter and Grusin, 2000) which will be explored in the next chapter.

Rape is a crime activity in South Africa that usually "occur between people who know each other and occur as a result of a mix of particular social and economic factors" (https://africacheck.org). Furthermore, crimes such as rape usually "take place between people who know each other and live in the same neighbourhood" (https://africacheck.org). These kinds of crime are rarely premeditated and are often exacerbated by alcohol and other substance abuse (https://africacheck.org). This frustration of an unsafe and crime-filled South Africa is further elaborated by three characters: Charlie (the victim), Eddie (Charlie's father) and Priya (the investigating officer). The following scene is taken from 30 May 2012.

9:48 Eddie: Okay, so we've got nothing from the witness statements. What about DNA?

Priya: The lab rushed the swabs. No DNA.

Eddie: Well, trace evidence, dirt, oils--

Priya: Yeah, they'll run that.

Eddie: And fingerprints?

Priya:	I've got all the fingerprints but you know how a high-use item like a bathroom handle is like. Smudging, unclear, overlapping.
Eddie:	So what you're saying to me is that we've actually got nothing, right?
Priya:	Well Eddie. We do know that the locket is still missing and I checked the hotel suite. Nothing.
Eddie:	The locket's a trophy, perhaps.
Charlie:	So he walks free…
Eddie:	What's that sweetheart?
Charlie:	I get raped and the guy walks free.
Eddie:	We're gonna find this guy Charlie. No matter what and you have my word on that.

Charlie is an open lesbian character who was raped at a party. This party was held in her honour where only close friends were invited. Here, the producers show how easy it is for a crime of rape to take place by remediating facts of rape from the real world by re-representing it in this manner. This is also made possible because of the reconstruction of the Johannesburg-based mining town with its underworld and criminal elements.

The incompetent South African police force is even further elaborated by the producers in the episode aired on 2 January 2013. The background of this scene occurs when Charlie's rapist has been identified, found and tried in court. He walked away unconvicted. Charlie felt unsafe because her rapist sent her a Christmas card. She is fearful of the possibility of him coming back. In order to protect herself, she bought a gun illegally. Her friend, Benjamin, found out and agreed to keep it safe for her. The gun was found when the police had a roadblock. Consequently, Benjamin lands up in jail for the possession of an illegal firearm. Cherel, Charlie's friend, visits Benjamin in jail. He then informs her about why Charlie wanted to keep a gun for her protection.

| 19:46 Benjamin: | After he walked free. She doesn't trust anyone. Not Eddie. Not the authorities, not the system. |

Notably, Eddie is Charlie's father and also a detective at the local police department. Even though these episodes were aired almost eight months apart, the theme of an

unsafe South Africa plays a big role in the plotline. This is an intertextual reference to the real world's stance about the police system in the country. It resonates the self-doubting mindset that South African citizens have towards the South African Police Service.

Earlier, in the same episode, the detective charges Benjamin 'with unlawful possession of a firearm' (5:26). Here, the producers of *Isidingo* emulate a real-life crime situation where a detective in the real world would charge a suspect. Simultaneously, the crime fiction genre is adapted into the soap opera's storyline to fully bring across the notion of a crime-ridden South Africa. The producers do this by bringing in the setting of a prison cell.

Figure 4.7: Crime-ridden South Africa

Thus, it can be argued that the *Isidingo* producers blend the fictional and the real worlds by infusing the storylines with adaptations from other genres as well as bringing in elements from the real world. Here, the detective is resemiotised to a detective in real life as well as a detective in a crime fiction story. The crime fiction genre will shortly be explored into more detail.

With the aim of evoking immediacy, the producers resemiotise the contemporary issue of rhino poaching into *Isidingo*. There was a time in South African news where rhino poaching was flagged as a serious concern:

> During 2012, in South Africa alone a staggering 668 rhinos were killed by poachers, that's almost two a day…This poaching is by no means isolated to South Africa, rhino poaching is surging across the entire African content and is a constant threat to the smaller rhino populations in Asia…This poaching is predominantly fuelled by the illegal trade in rhino horns; globalisation and economic growth made it easier to establish illegal trading routes. The current

poaching crisis is attributed to the growing demand for rhino horn in Asian countries, mainly China and Vietnam, where [the] horn is believed to have medicinal properties.   (www.savetherhino.org)

The *Isidingo* plotline contributes to the on-going concern for the extinction of certain endangered species. Let us take a look at how the producers resemiotise (Iedema, 2003) rhino poaching news reports into plotline of the soap opera.

There is a scene in 6 June 2012's episode where rhino poaching is discussed and how it affects the future of the endangered species.

9:42   Len: Hey Daniel. How's it going?

        Daniel: All right. Howzit.

        Len: How's the wildlife game hey?

        Daniel: Ya.

        Len: I hear it's quite bad. Rhinos down to two hundred this year.

        Daniel: Two hundred and forty and counting.

        Len: Two hundred and forty this year?

        Daniel: Yeah.

        Len: Unbelievable. I can't believe people actually believe it cures cancer. You may as well be chewing your fingernails.

        Daniel: Yah. It's not even that. It's up North. The guys are using it to make dagger handles and treat convulsions and fever.

        Len: Yeah I've heard about that and the aphrodisiac story. It's unreal.

        Daniel: We're expecting it to be bad this week because of the full moon. Better light at night.

        Len: Poacher's moon.

This particular scene has absolutely nothing to do with the *Isidingo* plotline at the time. However, the producers wisely choose Daniel to discuss the rhino poaching issue because he works with wildlife. Daniel walks into Len at one of the business establishments at ON!TV. This makes the scene seem real because when acquaintances in the real world run into each other, their small talk draws from whatever topic is newsworthy at the time. Walking into each other as acquaintances

is also made possible by the reconstruction of a mining world with its own character development. This is good for continuity as well as immediacy for the audience.

In addition, Daniel is semiotised by the producers in the character of game warden from the real world. Also, his wardrobe (see image below) emulates that of a game warden from the real world.
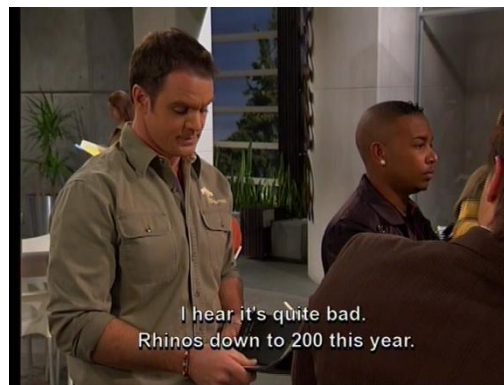

Figure 4.8: Semiotising of a game warden

He wears khaki or 'bush' clothes and what can be said to be heavy-duty boots, carries a boy-scout knife and his feet are attired in thick socks. The rhino death figures given in the scene were real figures at the time, from the department of wildlife in the real world. Here, one can deduce that the *Isidingo* producers are not only drawing newsworthy topics from the real world but they are, at the same time, making the soap opera seem like it is part of the real world. Thus, the topic of rhino poaching is a method used by the producers to insert current South African affairs to make the soap opera seem real. In other words, the fictional world is resemiotised as a re-presentation of the real world.

We also see the resemiotisation of the black market social issue infused into *Isidingo*. It is generally known and mostly accepted in both worlds that it can take years for heart transplant candidates to get to the top of the waiting list. The *Isidingo* producers resemiotise this issue by making use of the character, Barker. He is a rich and powerful man who pulls strings to nudge himself to the top of the list of a heart transplant. Usually, it takes quite some time for an ordinary working class individual to become a candidate. The rich are known for getting things done at a quicker pace because of their wealthy social status. Barker is known for his unethical ways and he eventually obtains a heart on the black market. This eventually catches up with him when Lucas, the brother of the donor, kidnaps Barker in the episode of 2 January

2013. Barker wants to know why he was kidnapped and Lucas answers him as follows.

20:19 Lucas: Primarily, I suppose to right a wrong. You know, to return to the status quo, restore order. Or to put it another way, to close the circle.

This particular scene was originally aired the time when selling organs on the black market was constantly part of the news in the outside world. Lower and middle class individuals strongly feel the unfairness of the wealthy. The character, Gabriel, is used to portray this. Like Daniel, Gabriel is used to portray and resemiotise how the masses feel about upper class' gluttony of abusing the system.

The use and appropriation of westernised pop culture is also touched on in *Isidingo*. In the episode of 6 June 2012, Suzie and Rodney are out for supper and drinks. Their topic of conversation surrounds a concert of the American female rapper, Nicki Minaj.

17: 54 Suzie: Are you serious? Come on, she didn't.

Rodney: She did. She totally did. She saw Nicki Minaj in New York.

Suzie: You lie!

Rodney: I am telling you.

Suzie: Nicki Minaj?

Rodney: Nicki Minaj.

Suzie: I swear, that girl's crazy.

Rodney: And hot.

Suzie: In a loopy kinda way.

Rodney: Anyway, she saw her in a small venue. About 500 people or so.

Suzie: Wow.

Rodney: Apparently, it was just insane.

Suzie: I am so jealous of your friend.

Rodney: I know she said it was the best piece of art that she has ever seen, and that includes movies.

Suzie: I'm not surprised. I mean, if her music videos are anything to go by. She's always trying something new.

> Rodney: It actually makes her so much more than a rapper. She's a serious artist actually.

Nicki Minaj plays a big role in pop culture all over the world. Thus, the producers of *Isidingo* are taking events and topics from pop culture and insert it into the plot to make the storylines a representation of the real world.

In addition, during the actual 2010 Soccer World Cup hosted in South Africa, the latest results of who won and who lost matches the previous evening were part of the *Isidingo* storylines. The producers even went as far as having some of the characters mention who would be playing against whom the same evening that the episode originally aired. This is made possible through the use of technology where the producers are able to take episodes that are far apart and then bring them together to evoke immediacy. This will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has shown and demonstrated the ways in which reality has been recreated, through intertextual references, into the fictional world, Horizon Deep. This was demonstrated by the producers reconstructing the fictional mining town. The producers have reframed, remediated and resemiotised topics such as historical discourse, cultural artefacts, affirmative action and female empowerment into *Isidingo* as a soap genre. In this regard, this chapter has attempted to demonstrate semiotic remediation and resemiotisation as discourse practices in *Isidingo.* The next chapter explores immediacy in the soap opera.

CHAPTER 5

EXPLORING IMMEDIACY IN *ISIDINGO*

5.0 Introduction

By creating authenticity of the mining character that is Horizon Deep, the producers are able to re-represent certain aspects into the fictional world as 'real'. In turn, they evoke what is called immediacy. Immediacy is defined by Daubs (2011: 10) as "the medium [that] becomes transparent, allowing the viewer a sense of presence with the mediated image". The term transparent immediacy derives from this, which is explained by Bolter and Grusin (2000: 24) as "a transparent interface that erases itself, so that the user is no longer aware of confronting a medium, but instead stands in an immediate relationship to the contents of the medium". In other words, the user of any type of text feels they are part of the medium. The producers achieve transparent immediacy through various ways. The semiotic reconstruction of the mining world is just one way in which the *Isidingo* viewers' attention is captured so that they feel they are part of the action taking place in the soap opera. The producers also bring in the so-called real life activities and it includes citing real crime statistics, which is designed to erase mediation, so that the story becomes real and involves the viewer directly.

5.1 Real-Life Activities

Camera angles are used as a technique for *Isidingo* to handle time frames in order to evoke naturalness and immediacy. Frank and Lolly, have mutually decided to get a divorce. After much pondering, Frank finally decides to sign the necessary paperwork. The camera zooms in on him signing the divorce papers. The viewer gets to see him not only sign the document, but also date the divorce papers on the same day that the episode originally aired; 6 July 2012.
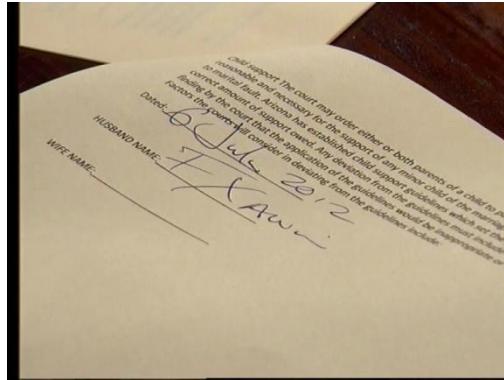
Figure 5.1 Remediating time for immediacy

Here, the divorce papers look like it is part of the real world. By having Frank date it on the same day that the episode originally aired on South African television screens, one can deduce that the character is really signing actual divorce papers in the real world. Based on Bolter and Grusin's (2000) 'immediacy', this makes this particular scene more real to the audience because the storyline occurs on the exact same day/date that the viewer is watching the episode.

Another occurrence of how *Isidingo* evokes immediacy with regards to its timing occurs in the episode of 13 September 2013 where Calvin has been hired by local businessman, Skumbuzo. Calvin makes up a new menu for the restaurant and calls it 'the Friday the thirteenth special'. The day 13 September 2013 falls on a Friday in the real world. Friday the thirteenth is a superstition that is seen as an unlucky day. The date, day and superstitious belief of the real world are being reconstructed in the soap opera. However, the producers repurpose the day by putting a positive twist on the unlucky day by the means of celebrating it with a reduced price on food at the restaurant.

It is evident that *Isidingo* is meticulous with the inclusion of the actual date of when the episode originally aired in the storyline. The producers do this in order to create the desired effect of immediacy where mediation erases itself between the audience and the reconstructed mining world. The *Isidingo* producers elaborate on this point by having characters constantly mention important dates such as public holidays and what these holidays represent not only to them in the fictional world, but also to those of the immediate outside world. By doing this, the audience and the fictional reconstructed mining town blend where there is no disparity between the two.

In addition, *Isidingo* airs from Mondays to Fridays only. To fill the gap of lapsed time, the producers use characters to mention the weekend coming or past. The effect here is that the viewer knows that time has lapsed from Friday to Monday and want it to seem real for the fictional world as well. This goes hand-in-hand with transparent immediacy where the producers erase the aspect of time as if it is really happening right now (Bolter and Grusin, 2000). Thus, the viewers are made to feel that they are part of the storylines. Thereby, there is absolutely no mediation. In fact, the producers want the audience to experience time as if it is now; as if they are there. There is no medium because the producers have created naturalness with regards to timelines in the soap opera. In addition, the producers are doing this kind of reconstruction because they want the audience to be involved and to feel that they are part of the content. In this way, naturalness is created.

The producers also evoke immediacy by bringing real people and real events into the storylines. *Top Billing* is a lifestyle television programme that features on SABC 3 – the same channel *Isidingo* airs on. In the episode of 20 September 2013, ON!TV launches a function where the new television broadcasting boss is introduced to the public. Right after the press conference, everyone gets the opportunity to mingle. One of the characters, Calvin, runs into an actual *Top Billing* presenter from the real world, Jonathan. They interact as if it is completely normal for a fictional character and a celebrity from the real world to interact in the soap opera. Calvin excitedly tries to convince Jonathan to give him Jeannie D's number. Jeannie D is also a presenter from *Top Billing*. Here, the producers bring in real-life presenters from another television programme in order to arouse the idea that Horizon Deep is part of the immediate outside world. In other words, transparent immediacy is always taking place in the production of the soap opera. This is in contrast with Ang's (1985) belief that soap operas are a "twisted image of reality". Here, the fictional world falls away as soon as *Top Billing*'s presenter is introduced. Consequently, *Isidingo*'s world suddenly becomes real.

Hypermediacy occurs when multiple representations are visible at the same time (Bolter and Grusin, 2000). Let us consider the use of multiple representations in *Isidingo*. ON!TV serves as a television channel that acts as real in the fictional world. Because of ON!TV's existence, journalism as a genre is incorporated into the soap

opera's storyline – which is also part of hypermediacy. ON!TV is a television studio used for news in Horizon Deep. Sometimes the producers make use of the news genre to inform the public of whatever is going on in the Horizon Deep community at that time. The *Isidingo* producers thus borrow elements from the news genre in order to make the fictional world's news a realistic representation. As an *Isidingo* viewer, you are swept into watching a news broadcast within a soap opera that gives you the sense that their news is realistic. The producers achieve this by using a character as an actual news presenter. Here, the news genre is used in *Isidingo*'s plotlines. As a viewer, one can see other characters watching the news and when the camera angle changes by discarding the characters; the presenter looks straight into the camera. It gives a feeling that you, as the viewer, is actually watching the news and that you are part of the Horizon Deep community. By doing this, the producers are making the audience a part of the community.

Thus, the audience has two functions here: being the viewer and a participant in the constructed mining community. Therefore, the producers resemiotise the news genre into the soap opera genre by extending it into the real world. The *Isidingo* producers also opt for using and manipulating other discourses into the storyline to serve a purpose. This kind of transparent immediacy heavily depends on the manner in which the producers make the audience feel that their world is disappearing and then they become part of the situation that they are viewing.

The journalism discourse is also infused into the storyline when Bianca is accused of killing her new-born baby with the occurrence of ambush interviews. Her accomplice, Ma Agnes, is interviewed by the local press in the Duncan Hotel; 6 July 2012.

Figure 5.2: Multiple journalism representations

According to Bauer (2012: 1), ambush interviews are described as "reporter and camera crew corralling alleged wrongdoers in parking lots, hallways, wherever a comment - or at least a stricken expression - might be harvested from someone dodging reporters' phone calls". The facial expression of Ma Agnes can be seen in the image above.

Another way to evoke immediacy is by creating naturalness through bringing real organisations into the *Isidingo* storylines. Let us regard the following scene of 6 June 2012's episode where Katlego and her family are excited because they are waiting on the birth of the new addition to the family. Her husband, Jefferson, reminds her that there is only two weeks left and that she should not forget to apply for the birth certificate. Following is the rest of the interaction.

2:41	Ayanda:	Don't you have to do that at Home Affairs?
	Katlego:	No, actually the Department is making the process quite easily accessible. So we'll probably have the baby's birth certificate the next day or the same day possibly.
	Nikiwe:	So you'll have to decide on a baby's name before then?
	Katlego:	Yes.
	Jefferson:	Good point. The way Katlego and I keep on going back and forth about the baby's name, we'll still be debating it after the baby's been born.
	Katlego:	We must decide before the baby's thirty days old. Otherwise we'll miss the registration deadline.

This scene evidently shows the infusing aspects of the Department of Home Affairs from the immediate outside world. The Department of Home Affairs generally deals with civic services such as identity documents, marriage certificates, death certificates and travel documents. In this particular scene, the department deals with birth certificates. For a long time, parents of a new-born baby physically had to go to the department to register their new-born son/daughter. In recent years, it has been made more convenient where the hospital that the child is born at, will do the name registration of the new-born baby on behalf of the parents. Here, the producers reconstruct and re-represent the services of the Department of Home Affairs of the outside world by incorporating it within their running storyline to suggest that the services provided by the department in the fictional world is real. In fact, both worlds

merge and become one. Katlego further points out two facts of this organisation from the real world: that the baby's birth certificate will be ready on the same day of registration or even the next day and that a name should be decided on before the baby is thirty days old – or they will miss the registration deadline.

In this particular scene, the Sibeko family is used as a means to discuss facts of the actual Department of Home Affairs from the outside world in a fictitious manner. The producers use elements from the outside world by re-representing it and making it part of the storyline. By doing this, the *Isidingo* community seems like they are part of the real world. This is also in agreement with Bolter and Grusin's (2000) immediacy where there is absolutely no mediation between the Department of Home Affairs from the outside world and the Department of Home Affairs from the fictitious Horizon Deep. In fact, it seems like it is the exact same department. At the same time, transparent immediacy is also taking place where the viewer feels part of this scene because of the infusion of the real department.

As previously discussed, transparent immediacy is used by the producers so that the interface erases itself. Consider the following other instances of the inclusion of organisations from reality occur in three of the selected episodes for this analysis. The *Isidingo* producers reconstruct the mining world by running particular storylines and then using the credits to show organisations from the real world as a way to assist and/or guide any viewer who can relate to the plot at that particular time. Let us consider the following.

The use of real organisations from the outside world is infused into the soap opera by re-using the concepts of societal problems, which has been explored in the previous chapter. In the episode of 30 May 2012, the issue of rape is being looked at by making use of the character, Charlie, who was drugged and raped. She does not remember what happened the night of the crime. She wakes up from a nap and tells her friend, Suzie, 'I think I remember what happened that night' (21:39). It is also worth mentioning that these two characters were also romantically involved with each other at that time. The episode ends as a cliff-hanger where Charlie can finally put the pieces together of what really took place the night she was assaulted. The credits commence as follow.

Figure 5.3: Using real organisations through societal problems

Both of these organisations' contact details such as contact numbers and website details are given. SANCA's (South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence) vision is "to be the most effective organisation in the field of prevention and treatment of chemical dependence in South Africa" (www.sancanational.org). FEW's (Forum for the Empowerment of Women) vision ensures "a world where black lesbian, bisexual and transgender women know, access and enjoy their right to autonomy, dignity and equality in all aspects of their lives, both in private and the public domain" (www.womensnet.org). Around this time in the news from the outside world, there were various and separate incidents involving women being drugged and date raped.
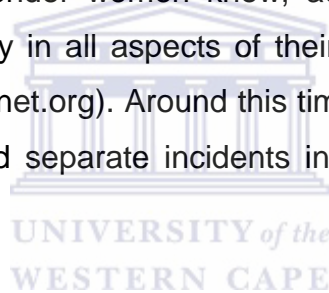
In another scene, the producers use the issue of corrective rape in the episode of 6 June 2012, to bring awareness and assistance to people in similar situations by crediting the following two organisations from the real world.

Figure 5.4: Infusing real organisations through the concept of rape

Again, both organisations' telephone and website details are provided. POWA (People Opposing Woman Abuse) is an NGO that helps against woman abuse (http://www.powa.co.za/). Their objectives include making women aware of their rights and helping abused women move towards a better quality of life. The inclusion

of these South African organisations is made possible by the rape of Charlie in the storyline. The provided contact information creates awareness of the organisations to viewers who might be in similar circumstances as the character. The viewer can then go to the website to find out all of the relevant information and, most importantly, how he/she can be helped.

The notion of an unsafe community is addressed when Benjamin is caught by the local police for having a gun without a permit (2 January 2013) to list the following organisation from the real world in its credits.

Figure 5.5: Unsafe community

Unlike the previous two sets of credits, only a phone number of the National Firearms Call Centre is given. Here, the viewers can contact the organisation if they know of anyone who is in similar circumstances as Benjamin so that they can be dealt with accordingly by law enforcement.

By including these various organisations, the producers effectively get rid of the medium by using the storyline at the time to show the audience that there are indeed organisations in the real world for those who need assistance and/or guidance if he/she is in similar circumstances as portrayed in the soap opera. Therefore, the producers blur the boundaries of the real and fictional worlds by using organisations from the real world as a means for the audience who either are or know of anyone in similar circumstances as the characters. In essence, there are two mediums that seem to be competing here. In fact, one is pretending to be the other: there is *Isidingo* as a fictional world and at the same time it is pretending to be reality. Thus, there is no longer awareness of a confronting medium.

In addition, sometimes there is a need for new realities to be created. This is discussed by Iedema (2002) where the reorganisation of social spaces takes place by "weaving people, their meanings and behaviour into increasingly reified, complex and obdurate semiotics". Taking into consideration that the *Isidingo* studios burnt down on 13 June 2012 in real life, the producers were forced to tweak the storyline. The damaged studios did not immediately affect the plot of *Isidingo* because the majority of the storylines are pre-recorded a few months in advance. It gave the producers ample time to gradually incorporate the loss of the studios from the real world into their storyline where most of the characters had to move to one location. The reason for this - in the storyline - was because of contaminated water in the community and caused the soap opera to turn into a mini-series for the time being. This is not the first time *Isidingo* was converted into a mini-series. The previous two times were done over the festive seasons of 2004 and 2007 to run concurrently with the prime-time episodes. The burning of the studios was, however, the very first time where the soap opera turned into an actual mini-series that remained in the prime-time slot. All this had to take place because of a fire in real life. In this particular instance, the producers were forced up to a certain extent to create a different 'reality' for the Horizon Deep community. In fact, the real world affected the plotline as a whole. In essence, Daubs (2011: 12) points out that immediacy gives off "a feeling of *presence* (in time, space, or both) with a mediated event". The ease in tweaking of storylines is made readily possible because of new media technology and editing tools (Gilje, 2010).

5.2 Technology as Social Semiotic

Different forms of technology are used by the producers to reconstruct and recontextualise real life activities in order to create naturalness and consequently evoke immediacy. Apart from this, the producers also incorporate some of these new technologies that one also finds in the real world. For example, we see iPhone, Blackberry and Samsung cellphones on screen. All these are incorporated in the reconstructed mining world. By bringing these aspects in, we see how some of these gadgets are used to repurpose certain things, which are explored as follows.

Through developments in technology, the presence of social networks such as *Facebook* has also been brought in to the soap opera. *Facebook* is a globally well-

known social media network where people keep in touch with each other. *Isidingo's* storyline also makes use of a social network called *Facepage.* In other words, *Facebook* is reconstructed as *Facepage* where it is used – just like in the real world – to stay in contact with people. Just like in real life, this social media network is also an easy target for identity theft. Let us consider the following.

Horizon Deep serves as the fictional community in *Isidingo* where the character, Charlie, makes use of the popular social network called *Facepage* to keep in contact with friends and family. One can see below – used in the episode of 6 June 2012 – that it shares the same layout as *Facebook.*


Figure 5.6: Facebook as Facepage

The background to this particular scene is where Charlie has been raped and her rapist is still on the loose. She logs onto *Facepage* and sees how many people are concerned about her well-being and who are also sympathising with her situation. Here, the producers do not only use the community of Horizon Deep to be concerned about Charlie, they extend the community of concern to a social network platform. This is supported by the notion that the plot of a soap opera surrounds social actors who are part of a particular community (Brown, 1990, Geraghty, 1991, Ang, 1985). Consequently, by using *Facepage*, Charlie eventually finds out that her friend, Quinton, might not be who he claims to be. Here, the producers make use of Charlie and *Facepage* to demonstrate how easy it is to steal someone's online identity; how easy it is to pretend to be someone else. The producers are reconstructing the social network in order for hypermediacy to take place. Hypermediacy is explained by Bolter and Grusin (2000: 53) as "the desire to get past the limitations of representation and to achieve the real".

The older generation, particularly, did not grow up with technology that the younger generation are confronted with these days. Because they are not used to this form of communication, they are usually reluctant to learn anything new. As times are changing, more of the older generation are becoming interested in the evolution of technology. *Isidingo*'s storyline emulates this kind of behaviour through Charlie asking Cherel whether or not she is on *Facepage*. Cherel's response in 16:36 (6 June 2012) is, 'maybe you can show me'. One can deduce that the producers sometimes use elements from the real world and move it into the fictional world by showing how the older generation is keen on learning new things like technology. In essence, the real world is being repurposed as fictitious adaptations so that the fictional world comes across as real.

Simultaneously, *Facepage* is also resemiotised as an additional community who is concerned about one of the characters. It is also used as a means to reflect identity fraud - which is what is happening in the real world. In addition, *Facepage* is recontextualised to show how the older generation is keen on learning about how their younger counterparts are socialising. They are interested in keeping up with the times.
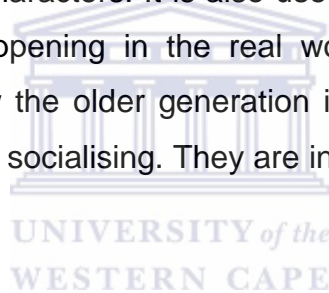
The use of cellphones is also made apparent in the soap opera. Cellphones are another form of technology that is used to keep in contact with close family and friends through calls and texts. Keeping in mind that Charlie was raped (30 May 2012) the detective, Priya, tries to find the rapist. Priya makes use of cellphone footage as an investigative method to look for any sign of who the rapist might be. The cellphone footage is obtained by people who were present the night of the party.

Figure 5.7: Cellphone footage as investigation method

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Here, cellphones are being used by Priya in a different manner than the usual method of utilisation as in the real world. The detective wants to find a criminal. Also, the community in the soap opera is used as an aid to assist the police in order to find the criminal. This could be another way of what Brown (1990); Geraghty (1991) and Ang (1985) discuss where the soap opera's storylines surround a particular community. However, it is rather difficult to find the guilty person without any witnesses. Furthermore, a blurring of genres occurs where movement in and out of reality takes place where the community in real life (the audience) is also used as an aid to catch criminals. This is in line with Bolter and Grusin's (2000) notion where new forms of technology make it easy for media blending and also to repurpose semiotic resources for the potential of different meanings. Thus, we see real life events and activities being easily incorporated into storylines, as illustrated above.

Apart from cellphones being used as an investigative tool, it is also used for subliminal advertising, amongst other things. The onset of technology as described above and the ease in media and video editing (Gilje, 2010, Bolter and Grusin, 2000) has opened a medium of advertising that occurs subliminally in soap operas. Brown (1990) argues that soap operas are increasingly subliminally being used to advertise products as a way to reach as many consumers of the products as possible. Instances of this kind of advertising occur where various gadgets like iPhones, Samsung S-series cellphones, laptops and the latest software have been infused into the *Isidingo* storylines to show the rise of technology in the real world. This is in contrast with its earlier episodes where phone booths and landlines were used as the primary medium of communication. Most of the time, these phone booths and landlines were only used as background props. Moreover, various characters are always busy on their cellphones or laptops. These gadgets are seen by the viewer and he/she is subconsciously persuaded to want and/or buy the seen products. This is done through the use of product placement which is a subliminal advertising technique. Rodriquez (2013: 1) explains product placement as "instead of featuring the product in a separate commercial, the product gets integrated into the narrative of a TV show or film". He further elaborates that product placement is "meant to be seamless, a character will suddenly sip from a familiar brand of drink or tinker with a well-known device" (Rodriquez, 2013: 1).

A more recent example of subliminal advertising occurs in 6 June 2012's episode where Katlego uses her laptop and the World Wide Web as a medium for obtaining information. When it is almost time for Katlego's surrogate, Bianca, to give birth, Katlego is very excited. Instead of going to a medical doctor to find out what to expect, Katlego does an internet search about pregnancy stages. She reads aloud what she has found in her search. In this incident, we see a techno savvy structure of a web-based search. At the same time, this scene tries to bring attention to the fact that most people living in urban cities, like Johannesburg, use technology as a faster and more convenient way of obtaining information. The camera even shows the screen of the search results that she is reading to her husband.
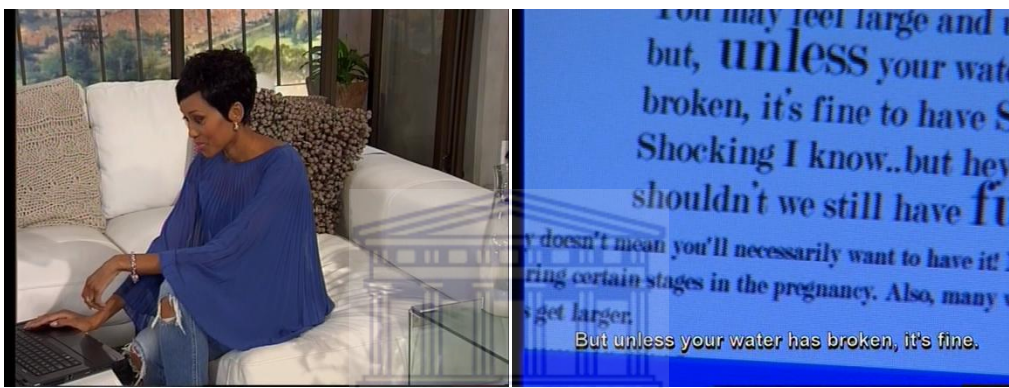

Figure 5.8: The use of the internet as part of the storyline

The use of the internet is taken from reality and placed into the fictional world so that the audience believes that it is the real world. It keeps us watching and involved in the action. Similarly, showing the screen of the laptop in 6 July 2012's episode, shows the audience that the producers use real and current gadgets and software.
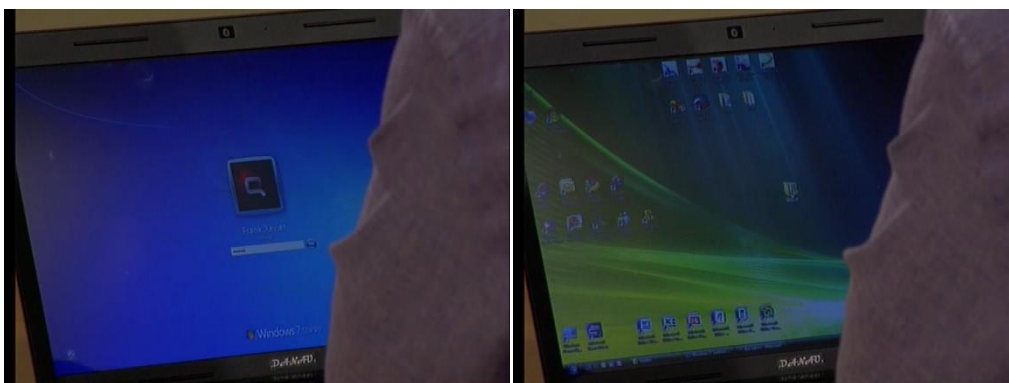

Figure 5.9 Windows 7 operating system

The audience sees the screen of the laptop and the computer: it is real and - at the same time - it is fiction. Effectively, the real and the fictional worlds are blended. This makes the audience feel that the fictional world is a representation of the real world.

Subtle advertising also takes place with clothing that the characters wear throughout the storyline. Once the episode is finished, the credits show where the audience can purchase the seen clothing. Here, the real and fictional worlds are blurred where the audience has the opportunity - if interested - to go to a retail outlet in the real world to buy whatever they see their favourite character is wearing. This is in correspondence with the previous chapter where the producers infuse real organisations as part of the credits. By including elements from the real world, the producers are effectively making the fictitious mining world seem as real as the outside world.

5.3 Summary

This chapter has shown how real life activities are used by the producers to evoke immediacy and its counterparts, transparent immediacy and hypermediacy. This was demonstrated by showing how real life aspects are recycled by addressing timelines, real life South African celebrities and South African organisations. In this manner, this chapter has managed to show how the producers recycle issues from the real world and recontextualise it into the fictional world in order to evoke immediacy. In addition to this, the producers have also managed to reconstruct technology such as gadgetry, social networks and software to subliminally advertise these products to the viewers. Effectively, the *Isidingo* producers demonstrate the circulation of the real world into the fictional world by repurposing different forms of technology and advertising objects in a subliminal manner. Therefore, the next chapter will demonstrate language as a social practice.

CHAPTER 6

LANGUAGE AS SOCIAL PRACTICE IN *ISIDINGO*

6.0 Introduction

Linguists have moved away from exploring language in multilingual contexts in terms of the traditional autonomous paradigm to analysing language as a social practice. This chapter investigates language/multilingualism as social practice in *Isidingo*. I show how producers draw on South Africa's multilingual heritage for the characters to linguistically perform various identities. This is used to indicate that languages are used by speakers to signal their identity options, as well as multilingualism as linguistic dispensation and social practice (Heller, 2007, Aronin and Singleton, 2008, Pennycook, 2010).

6.1 Performing Identity through Linguistic Repertoire

Linguistic performance is described by Chomsky (1965) as "the actual use of language in concrete situations". Linguistic performance refers to what social actors utter which may include grammatical errors if they do not follow 'system' rules. The traditional way of looking at a language as a system is different from the one adopted in this study where social actors are expected to ignore traditional linguistic boundaries and use their linguistic repertoire to denote identity affiliations and social roles, amongst other things. This notion opens up doors for the performance of different voices and identity affiliations in multilingual spaces. The different voices embedded in the linguistic choices enable multivocality in which identities and affiliations are signalled in one utterance. Multivocality is defined by Higgins (2009: 6) as "interlinked concepts of voice and speaking positions expressed through language". Let us consider how the different characters in *Isidingo* perform different identities through language as well as achieve voice and multivocality (Higgins, 2009, Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). According to Banda (2005: 18), social actors are able to "negotiate roles and relationships, and ultimately intimate at dimensions of social identity" through linguistic performance. The idea is to show how the different linguistic repertoire empowers and enables the characters to achieve actorhood and different role structures as positioned in interactions (Davies and Harré, 1990).

Role structures and identity affiliations (Banda, 2005) go hand-in-hand with multivocality. Jefferson Sibeko and his wife, Katlego, blend English with their mother tongue, isiZulu. There are many occurrences where they mix these two respective languages in order to signal different socio-cultural roles and identities. In the 30 May 2012 episode, Katlego's family is trying to convince her to have a combined baby shower with her surrogate mother, Bianca. Katlego and her niece, Nikiwe, converse in both isiZulu and English. We immediately see the Zulu identity being signalled and negotiated by the characters in the extract below.

18:40 Katlego: **Besikhulumile ngalendaba** [We've already spoken about this issue] last week and now you just wanna gang up on me.

Nikiwe: **Asikuhlanganyeli** [We are not ganging up on you]. **Hawu** [What]?

Katlego: It is my day and I don't want to share it with Bianca. I mean, is that really so hard to understand guys?

Ayanda: Katlego--

Katlego: --No, no, no. This is not negotiable.

Nikiwe: Look, it's gonna be your day but for all the wrong reasons. What do you think? People will talk behind your back?

Ayanda: The fact that the surrogate isn't there?

Katlego: Well that's because you guys will be there. **Nizohleba nano angithi** [You guys are going to gossip with them, right]?

Ayanda: We don't have to. You know how these things work.

Here, we see the characters negotiating and performing two different identities at the same time using the English and isiZulu languages. English can be said to dominate in this conversation (Myers-Scotton, 1993) but what is clear is that the speakers seem to be using these languages as options in their linguistic repertoire (Heller, 2007, Banda, 2005). This involves selecting different bits and pieces of language with which to signal identity options (Mambwe, 2014, Blommaert, 2007). The dialogue starts off with whole stretches spoken in isiZulu, which identifies Katlego with a Zulu identity. This is evident by Katlego starting off the conversation in isiZulu, 'Besikhulumile ngalendaba' and continuing in English, 'last week and now you just

wanna gang up on me', indicating a different identity associated with western education and culture. Nikiwe, in turn, responds in isiZulu only, 'Asikuhlanganyeli hawu'. In return, Katlego responds only in English, 'It is my day and I don't want to share it with Bianca. I mean, is that really so hard to understand guys?' The rest of the interaction also takes place in English between Ayanda, Katlego and Nikiwe until Katlego converses in English, 'Well that's because you guys will be there', as well as isiZulu, 'Nizohleba nano angithi?' Even though the question is asked in isiZulu, the response is in English by Ayanda, 'We don't have to. You know how these things work'. The dialogue here starts in one language (isiZulu) and ends in a different language (English). At the same time, these characters are creating different identities: Zulu-based, English-based and general urban African-based (hybrid) identities by blending both the traditional and modern lifestyles (Banda and Bellononjengele, 2010). This scene shows evidence of social actors using isiZulu and English to signify their multiple identities as well as to achieve multivocality. In other words, different voices are performed where the different linguistic choices give the actors different voices. The use of the different linguistic options makes them achieve what Higgins (2009) calls multivocality.

Another instance of multivocality and the blending of the modern and tradition is seen in the episode of 6 July 2012 where the characters are in a formal business meeting. We see Jefferson using isiZulu when he is upset at Lincoln for demoting him and putting his niece, Nikiwe, in charge of the company. By initially confronting Nikiwe, Jefferson's use of isiZulu suggests that he attempts to use his Zulu cultural heritage by intimating the socio-cultural roles and related norms that demand he, as a man, be the CEO.

> 9:40   Jefferson: **U'kwenza kwakho lokho** [This is your doing]!
>
>   Nikiwe: **Uxolo baboncane** [Excuse me uncle].
>
>   Jefferson: I was just on the phone with your father. Did you cook it up with this criminal? Is that why you two are suddenly in bed together? To cook up a plan? To sour the board and influence your father?
>
>   Nikiwe: Please **baboncane** [uncle], this is not appropriate--
>
>   Jefferson: --appropriate?! It's appropriate for you to go behind my back to your father?!

((Barker tries to interrupt))

Jefferson: Shut up **wena** [You]! Shut up! Shut up!! I'm not talking to you, man!

Nikiwe also reacts in isiZulu, 'Uxolo baboncane'. 'Baboncane' refers to my father's brother in isiZulu. 'Mamcane' is the isiZulu equivalent to my mother's brother. Both these terms' equivalent in English is 'uncle'. In isiZulu, 'baboncane' is more specific to which side of the family 'uncle' belongs to. By Nikiwe using 'baboncane' instead of 'uncle', is her way of accepting the cultural role but as we see later on in the same interaction; she also switches back to English to challenge her uncle. Jefferson then switches to English, 'I was just on the phone with your father. Did you cook it up with this criminal? Is that why you two are suddenly in bed together? To cook up a plan? To sour the board and to influence your father?' Here, both characters make use of English to signal their identity associated with business meetings. Nikiwe, in turn, responds by begging her uncle in English, isiZulu and English again: 'Please **baboncane** this is not appropriate'. Jefferson replies in solely English, 'appropriate?! It's appropriate for you to go behind my back to your father?!' Barker tries to interrupt and Jefferson barks at him in English, 'Shut up' and isiZulu, 'wena!' It is clear that Jefferson's initial use of isiZulu was to infuse cultural affiliations on the debate of who should be CEO. But of course, Nikiwe responds in a professional way but also makes use of isiZulu opportune times to suit her arguments. We also see an example of multivocality where the traditional element of respect is apparent, but also the modern where different voices simultaneously depict the tradition and the modern. In essence, the producers are using isiZulu, English and the element of the Zulu culture to indicate the social actors' identities as well as their social roles. As shown above, the social roles of the traditional and modern cultures are being contested.

It is interesting that the negotiation of the different identities and the constant switching of languages take place in a formal setting in a business office between the Sibekos in the scene above. The following scene differs by taking place at home, an informal setting (6 June 2012). In terms of practice, it is similar.

5:39 Katlego: Hey.

Jefferson: Hey. **Ifolder yamo ayisalanga la** [Did I leave a folder here]?

Katlego:	I think **uyibheke la** [It is over there].
Jefferson:	Oh, **nantsi** [here]. **Ngiya-bonga** [Okay, thank you]. **Yini la matasa matasa la walapha** [What are you busy with]?
Katlego:	I'm just reading. 38 weeks, what to expect.

Jefferson treats his linguistic repertoire the same in both domains. In the extract above, both Jefferson and Katlego communicate in English and isiZulu. Jefferson starts off the conversation in English, 'Hey' and mixes isiZulu and English, '**I**folder', and then in isiZulu 'yamo ayisalanga la?' The 'i' in *ifolder* represents an isiZulu prefix added to the English root word *folder.* Katlego responds in English, 'I think' and isiZulu, 'uyibheke la'. Jefferson then replies in English, 'Oh', isiZulu, 'Nantsi. Ngiya-bonga yini la matasa matasa la walapha?' Katlego only responds in English, 'I'm just reading. 38 weeks, what to expect'. It is evident from the above scene that Jefferson and Katlego are drawing from English and isiZulu in the same stretch of talk to reinforce their social roles and identities as Zulus. At the same time, both of them are portraying their identities as modern and educated South Africans through their linguistic repertoire. These social actors achieve various voices through the use of English and isiZulu.
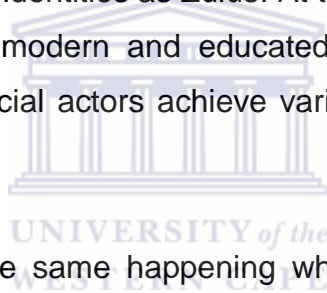
In the next scene we see the same happening when it comes to negotiation of identities and contestations of social roles. Jefferson reminds his wife at the breakfast table that they should not forget to apply for their unborn son's birth certificate at the hospital. This takes place in the episode of 6 June 2012.

| 2:30 | It is so exciting. Oh, Katlego, don't forget to put in place. We have to apply to receive **ibirth** [birth] certificate **yomtwana** [the baby's]. **Esibhedlela** [hospital] after he is born. |

Traditionally, Jefferson should have just married Bianca, have a child (after impregnating her) and be a father; as Zulu culture demands. Instead, he contests the Zulu culture through the modern day notion of surrogacy. In the extract above, Jefferson converses in English: 'It is so exciting. Oh, Katlego, don't forget to put in place we have to apply to receive'; followed by a mix of isiZulu and English, 'ibirth certificate'; isiZulu, 'yomtwana. Esibhedlela'; and finally English again, 'after he is born'. In one stretch of talk, Jefferson alternates between English and isiZulu to create a single meaningful piece of discourse. It is important to note that if the extract

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above is directly translated into English, it would not make grammatical sense: *It is so exciting. Oh, Katlego, don't forget to put in place. We have to apply to receive birth certificate the baby's. Hospital after he is born.* Even though it would be deemed ungrammatical in English, it is contextually meaningful as a hybrid form where English and isiZulu serves as one communicative tool.

We also see the performance of the Zulu cultural identity in the episode of 6 July 2012 where Jefferson informs his wife that his niece will replace him as the new CEO.

11:40	Katlego:	**Ini** Jeff. **Sekwenza'kaleni manje** [What's wrong Jeff]?
	Jefferson:	**ULincoln Ufonile** [Lincoln phoned me].
	Katlego:	And **ube funani** [What did he want]?
	Jefferson:	He's making Nikiwe CEO.

In the extract above both social actors engage in isiZulu and English. Katlego is concerned about her husband and asks in isiZulu, 'Ini Jeff? Sekwenza'kaleni manje?' Jefferson replies in isiZulu, 'ULincoln Ufonile'. Katlego is curious about why Lincoln would call and asks in English, 'And'; and isiZulu, 'ube funani?' Jefferson responds solely in English, 'He's making Nikiwe CEO'. The conversation starts in isiZulu but ends in English. These social actors establish their social roles as a modernised Zulu husband and wife by using features of isiZulu and English in one stretch of talk (Pennycook, 2007).

However, in another scene from 6 June 2012, Katlego maintains English as her only lingual communicative tool. There are times when characters don't signal Zulu affiliation; in this case they just maintain English.

6:45	Jefferson:	I know the contract states that she, you know, she is to have nothing to do with the baby once it's born.
	Katlego:	Yes, very clearly.
	Jefferson:	But she's made such a sacrifice for us.
	Katlego:	And?
	Jefferson:	Don't you think it will be a good idea to let her hold the baby for a few minutes, you know. Just to say goodbye.
	Katlego:	And what exactly do you mean by sacrifice? Hmm? What kind of sacrifice has she made? She was out of work, we

	gave her money. I mean, she would probably be out on the streets if it weren't for us.
Jefferson:	**Ubona kungase wona umqondo omuhle** [So you don't think it's a good idea]?
Katlego:	No, no I don't think it's a good idea Jeff.

English is used as the dominating language in the above extract by Jefferson and Katlego. However, in one turn, Jefferson makes use of isiZulu, 'Ubona kungase wona umqondo omuhle?' This scene shows evidence of negotiated identities when Katlego answers her husband in English, even though the question asked by Jefferson is in isiZulu. This particular dialogue shows evidence of language-in-motion (Hornberger and Link, 2012) where there is no breaking between English and isiZulu. It is as if the characters are using one language, as if there are no boundaries. The context of language use, here, is as if English and isiZulu are one language. There is no break between the two languages. Jefferson draws from more than one language whereas Katlego sticks to one language. Jefferson maintains his multiple identities as a Zulu man. Katlego, on the other hand, is signalling her affiliation to English in this communicative context.

All of the scenes explored so far make use of English and isiZulu as discourse practice. It can be said that both Jefferson and Katlego combine bits and pieces of language in different ways for communicative effect, multiple cultural affiliations and social statuses (Banda, 2005). Thus, both Jefferson and Katlego's language choices show evidence of the social actors constructing their own identity where they draw on political and cultural artefacts.

Because the characters in *Isidingo* are part of a multicultural community, not only English and isiZulu are used when alternating between codes. In some instances, more than two languages are used by these social actors. In addition to this, South Africa is not only known for its multi-linguistic background, it is also notorious for the birth of a certain kind of slang called tsotsitaal, kasi-taal and flaaitaal. Henceforth, for the purpose of this study, I will make use of the term 'tsotsitaal'. Tsotsitaal is derived from all of South Africa's eleven official languages. Hurst (2008: 210) defines tsotsitaal as "a style which reproduces a particular social statement of identity". Let

us explore how the producers introduce a new way of speaking by incorporating tsotsitaal in the *Isidingo* storylines.

Although tsotsitaal is from townships, it is also spoken by white people and other people who interact or work at the mines. Let us consider the following scene taken from 7 July 1998's episode. The white character, Gideon, is addressing two black colleagues in the mine shaft. The topic of discussion is on what to do when they steal explosives without getting caught.

> 3:47 Gideon: **Wena, vula indlebe**, **lesi skhathi niya phezulu** [Open your ears when you go up]. When you get out, you get behind a couple of men with bags. Okay, because the guards will search them first. It's best that you get in the middle of a big group. Okay. XXX Behind the old tool shed. XXX **Ni'nga hamba manje** [You can leave now]. XXX Five minutes. **Sharp,** Okay.

In the extract above, Gideon uses tsotsitaal by combining elements of isiZulu, 'Wena, vula indlebe lesi skhathi niya phezulu'; English, 'Okay, because the guards will search them first. It's best that you get in the middle of a big group. Okay…behind the old tool shed'; Zulu, 'Ni'nga hamba manje'; tsotsitaal, 'sharp'; and English, 'okay'. Through the same stretch of discourse, it is evident that the above extract has to be considered in a South African context in order for meaning to be understood. The different languages used are in line with the recent notion of language as social practice in which speakers defy linguistic boundaries. Gideon's multilingual identity also pierces through by the use of elements of isiXhosa, isiZulu, English and tsotsitaal in the same stretch of talk. This is supported by Makalela (2013: 112) who views tsotsitaal as "markers of urban identity and of being streetwise". The character displays multiple voices (multivocality) and indicates his social role as a miner through the linguistic choices in tsotsitaal.

Coupland (2007: 15) considers speech forms such as tsotsitaal as a part of a genre where "participants have some significant awareness, as part of their cultural and communicative competence, of how the event-types they are engaging with are socially constituted as ways of speaking". In the episode of 6 July 2012, Ayanda welcomes Vusi and his son for his first music lesson. She asks Vusi about his well-

being in English and Vusi replies in what has become associated with tsotsitaal, 'I'm good, **sharp sharp**' (3:24). Unlike 'sharp' in the previous scene, here the meaning differs to Vusi's overall well-being. Thus, he is doing great. This is affirmed by saying the word 'sharp' twice for emphasis. If Vusi's reply is taken out of context, the message would lose its meaning. Switching to tsotsitaal carries meaning where it is indicated that it is a South African produced soap opera. This is done intentionally by the producers to signify Vusi's identity and social role as a multicultural South African who knows tsotsitaal.

Characters other than the Sibekos can also be seen performing identity options through linguistic choices. The use of multiple languages is indicative of multiple identities as a discourse practice in *Isidingo.* Let us explore this notion where Vusi informs Ayanda that he has to leave the music lesson sooner than planned. The following scene is taken from 6 July 2012's episode.

> 7:14   Vusi: Sorry **ausi** [sister], I have to rush. **Ku nento engi**
> **dingayo emsebenzeni** [There's something I need at
> work] but as soon as you're done, give me an SMS.
>
> Ayanda: No problem.

Vusi is negotiating and performing three different identities simultaneously by making use of English, Sotho and isiZulu. He starts off with English, 'Sorry' but also has features of Sotho, 'ausi'; English, 'I have to rush'; isiZulu, **'**Ku nento engi dingayo emsebenzeni'; and then back to English, 'but as soon as you're done, give me an SMS'. Vusi stylises his identity through the use of three lingual elements in the same stretch of discourse to indicate his multilingual identity and social role as a multilingual South African.

Another student, Lerato, joins the lesson soon after. She apologises for her tardiness, '**Askies** [Excuse me] I'm late. Sorry'. She uses a feature of Afrikaans-based tsotsitaal, 'Askies' along with features of English, 'I'm late. Sorry'. Here, different voices are being used by the social actor to indicate her linguistic repertoire and, hence, identity affiliations. She further explains why she is late.

> 4:35   **Ja** [Yes], I had to come in a taxi today **né**, and this guy
> wants to get into the taxi with a pig…**tjo** a big pig. And
> there was such a fight with the driver **tjo**. So, this guy **né**

untsa [take out] **panga** [machete] **a re** [let us] tries to threaten the driver **tjo**. So now this driver **o re** [he says] this pig must sit here. This thing was sitting here the whole time **ke ya o botsa** [I'm telling u]. This thing was **yho yho tsebe yaka** [my ear] screaming **areh** [it] ((makes pig noises)) like a mad thing.

Even though English is the dominant language in this stretch of talk (Myers-Scotton, 1993), it is clear that Lerato is using multiple languages as options as her linguistic dispensation (Higgins, 2009, Aronin and Singleton, 2008). These include Afrikaans (Ja), tsotsitaal (né, tjo, yho yho), Sotho (untsa, a re, ke ya o botsa, tsebe yaka, o re), Swahili (panga) and Tswana (uri). In fact, the combination of all these lingual forms used by Lerato is illustrative of what is called tsotsitaal (Makalela, 2013). The incorporation of these various language features should be regarded as the producers' way of constructing Lerato's social role as an urbanite with multicultural identity. This is supported by Makalela (2013: 123) who states that multilingual speakers who use tsotsitaal "favour a hybrid form which involves a confluence of Afrikaans, English, Nguni and Sotho languages".

In the above scenes, both Vusi and Lerato are reconstituting the dis-invention of languages by creating another way of speaking, where both speakers use features of various languages (Jørgensen, 2012, Hornberger and Link, 2012, Makoni and Pennycook, 2006). A closer look at what Vusi and Lerato are saying should be analysed within multilingual and multicultural South African contexts. Here, multilingualism and multiculturalism are incorporated into *Isidingo*'s storyline to demonstrate the demographic cultural diversity.

If we take the argument of language as a social practice (Heller, 2007), then we may also explore why certain things are done and what will be accomplished by doing these things (Machin, 2013). Let us explore the following in order to show voice and identity through the use of language. In the episode of 12 January 2015, Katlego is preparing for the arrival of a very important visitor. She instructs her domestic worker, Zukisa, to make sure everything is in order.

11:10 Katlego: Make sure there are enough pillows. We don't want to look like we're skimping. All right?

Zukisa:	**Izokwanela** [It will be enough] ma'am.
Katlego:	And I really don't mind where she is staying. I mean, she can choose but just get everything ready. All right? Give her one of the most private rooms, yeah?
Zukisa:	**Sizobona xa se ke fika** [We'll see when she gets here].

We see the different social roles and statuses being played in this scene. Katlego only speaks English whereas Zukisa only responds in isiXhosa. Zukisa is a domestic worker who just came from the Eastern Cape. Her English competence is being re-enacted as limited. Zukisa sticks to her home language even though she is being addressed in English by her boss. It is also interesting that Zukisa opts for isiXhosa as her medium of communication even though Katlego's mother tongue is isiZulu. Luckily for Zukisa, isiXhosa and isiZulu are both Nguni languages. Hence, there is a high degree of mutual intelligibility (Miti, 2006), so that the two can communicate perfectly even if one is communicating in isiXhosa and another in isiZulu. By communicating solely in isiXhosa, Zukisa is maintaining her Xhosa identity while Katlego is maintaining her identity as a modern Zulu woman who communicates solely in English from time to time. Both characters' social roles belong to different cultural heritages as is indicated through their different linguistic choices. Therefore, different voices are pierced throughout the entire interaction. It can also be argued that English is constructed as a high status language of the employer and isiXhosa as a low status language, which is also the case in real life.

The positioning theory is based on how social actors position themselves or are positioned in conversations (Yamakawa, Forman and Ansell, 2005). This is all context-based. Zukisa positions herself as Xhosa not only with her boss, Katlego, but also to other social interactants in the soap opera. Let us explore her language(s) of choice in the next scene of 12 January 2015 when Zukisa interacts with a very good friend of hers, Lerato, who is positioning herself as an urbanised woman who speaks tsotsitaal.

3:08	Zukisa:	I'm sorry to bother you. **Ndiyabulela ngonika uSizwe iphoto frame zika Khanyiso** [I wanted to thank you for giving Sizwe the photo frame for Khanyiso's photo].
		Ndiyabulela kakhulu, sisi [Thank you so much, sister].

Lerato:	Oh **chommie** [friend], it's fine. You know I was feeling so bad. He wanted to book you a massage **mara** [but] that day I was just too busy, I couldn't.
Zukisa:	Oh okay. **Bendicinga ukoba izinto bezihamba kakuhle njena kodwa bendicinga ukoba xa kukho into oyidingayo uza kotsho** [I just wanted to say if there is anything you need, tell me].
Lerato:	Hey **chommie** [friend], **ukawufela ke** [you can lend me] a few thousand. The salon is not doing very well. This December like I thought it would, **hore** [it's] bad.
Zukisa:	Oh. **Bendicinga ukoba uthi izinto zihamba kakuhle nje** [I thought you said things were going well].
Lerato:	**Eya** [Yes]**.** I got lucky for a little bit. There were some ladies **bane ba tlile mona horizon ba batla manala le di what what** [who came to Horizon Deep wanting to do nails and stuff] so they came by **mara** [but] since then **hore** [it's] bad. It's just getting worse.
Zukisa:	**Yho, ujanuwari yinyanga embi ngoba ngodisemba sitya imali yonke** [Wow, January is a very bad month because December we finish all our money].
Lerato:	**Re ya eja tjhelete eo, ebile bao ba santsane ba salletswe ke tjhelete** [We squander it, and those who have a bit left over]. They're gonna make sure it stretches a long time until next payday.
Zukisa:	**Yazindingathetha noSizwe** [I could speak to Sizwe]. I'm sure **ikhona imali eshiyekileyo singakunceda wetha** [there is still a bit of money left over].
Lerato:	**Hayi chommie** [No friend]. **Ke ya bapala** [I'm joking]. I wouldn't ask you guys for something like that. No.
Zukisa:	**Singakunceda, uba uyafuna** [But we wouldn't mind, we could help].
Lerato:	Thank you, hey. I love you for that. **Empa seke wa kgathatseha ke tloba hantle** [But don't worry, I will be fine]. **Bekeng etlang,** next weekend, after that after that

	keFebruary [Just a few more weeks and then it's February]. Things are gonna get better. **Phela le nna** [Even I], I still have bills to pay.
Zukisa:	Okay. **Xa sowusitsho ke, sisi** [If you say so, sister]. **Enkosi** [Thank you].
Lerato:	**Sharp** [Cool].
Zukisa:	**Enkosi** [Thank you].

In the extract above, both speakers make use of English in addition to African languages. Zukisa uses a lot of isiXhosa. Lerato uses a lot of English but also tsotsitaal. Zukisa's speech is almost entirely isiXhosa. Lerato uses a lot of words associated with Sotho and tsotsitaal such as 'sharp' which refers to 'okay', as well as 'chommie' which means 'friend'. It is evident that the producers use Zukisa in this interaction to play the Xhosa role whilst Lerato comes across as the urbanised individual. 'Chommie' is also used to show intimacy between these social actors. It is not because there is a deficiency for the word in isiZulu. On the contrary, this dialogue indicates that these social actors feel free enough to show their cultural identities of Xhosa and Sotho because of the existence of a multilingual space. In other words, Lerato constructs her social role as an urban businesswoman through the use of English and tsotsitaal. This is in agreement with Hurst (2008: 211) who considers tsotsitaal speakers as those who "self-identify as urban and modern, and they interact culturally with a global identity discourse which speaks across the diaspora".

Because the positioning theory is context-based, it is possible for positioning of social actors to show the relational character of identity (Andreouli, 2010). In other words, the styling of identity can take place through linguistic choices, as it has already been argued above. Below we see how Sechaba and Sizwe position themselves as Zulu, Xhosa and Nguni speakers. At the same time, we see the different social roles, again, being enacted linguistically. Let us explore the following scene taken from 9 January 2015 where Zukisa's husband, Sizwe, bumps into his friend Sechaba and they automatically have a quick catch-up session.

| 15:34 Sechaba: | **Yintoni manje kwelicala** [What are you doing this side]? |

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Sizwe:	**Hayi bendihambisele kwinkosikazi yam** [I took something to my wife].
Sechaba:	**Orait** [All right]. Compliments. **Siyakuvuyela angikubonanga kulonyaka omtsha** [I didn't see you at New Year].
Sizwe:	**Unyanisile. Yazi no mfazi wam undixelele ukoba ubunomnye umnyhadala** [Yes. My wife told me you hosted a great party].
Sechaba:	**Hayi! Bekunzima ngempela ngiyagruva** [Hey! It was great I love to party].
Sizwe:	**Hayi ndiyakuva. Jonga ke andikwazanga ukuphumelela. Ndiqonde ukuba mandihlale nonyana wam. Masikhe sifumane ixesha lethu unkosikazi akhe abethwe ngumoya. Usebenza nzima** [No, I hear you. Sorry I couldn't come. I wanted to spend some time with my son and let my wife go and have a great time. She works hard].
Sechaba:	**Ja** [Yes]. I must meet this small boy of yours.
Sizwe:	**Uthethe kade bhuti. Uphindele ekhaya izolo** [You're too late my man. He went back home yesterday].
Sechaba:	Okay next time.
Sizwe:	**Yintwana elungileyo leya iyayithanda ibhola. Ithi ifuna ubanga Ace Manyisa** [He's a very good boy and he loves soccer. He wants to be like Ace Manyisa].
Sechaba:	Oh okay, Ace, that's good that's nice.
Sizwe:	**Kodwa unina imkhathazile lento yohambo. Oko ebekhala ekuseni** [But his mother isn't taking his leaving very well. She cried this morning].
Sechaba:	Oh yeah. It must be hard for **mama** [mother].
Sizwe:	**Ngoku ndimenematha andazikuba mandidibanise ntoni ukuze ndimenze azivebhetele** [I must find a way to make her feel better but I don't know what].
Sechaba:	**Hayi mshaye ngesaprayizi** [Give her a surprise]. Women love these things.

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Sizwe:	**Yenziwanjani leto** [How do I do it]?
Sechaba:	**Thetha no Lerato** [Talk to Lerato]. She will tell you exactly what you can do.
Sizwe:	**Ayizoba ndiyamkhathaza** [Won't I be bothering her]?
Sechaba:	No no no, just tell her that **ukuthi mina ngithe uze kuyena uyaba lapho** [I sent you and everything will be okay] salon **aphendlini** [in the house] **kuzoba** [it will be okay] **sharp** [cool].
Sizwe:	Okay **enkosi, bhuti** [Thank you, brother].
Sechaba:	**Sharp** [Cool].

Even though Sechaba starts off the interaction in isiZulu, Sizwe only replies in isiXhosa throughout the conversation. Sechaba uses a lot of isiZulu to perform his social role. He also uses features of Afrikaans, 'Ja'; tsotsitaal, 'sharp'; and English throughout the interaction. Just like Zukisa, Sizwe also just moved from the Eastern Cape. Sizwe is performing his identity through the use of isiXhosa. This scene shows his limited linguistic competence through his speech being almost completely in isiXhosa. Like Lerato, Sechaba makes use of tsotsitaal to signal his urban identity (Makalela, 2013). In essence, the producers are creating different identities through the use of tsotsitaal, which is different from the characters coming from the Eastern Cape. Even though Sechaba speaks isiZulu mostly, he accommodates (Giles, 1977) his friend by using a word which is associated with isiXhosa, 'yintoni' and 'aphendlini'. However, what is clear is that these two social actors are positioning each other as Nguni brothers. These are the identities they are portraying. The idea, here, is that one does not need to speak the same languages to communicate effectively. Even though different languages are being used, it does not stop the characters from communicating with each other and establishing close relationships and each other's respective social roles.

The producers give voice to Sizwe through language choice by indicating his Xhosa cultural heritage. However, the producers use Sechaba to show the modern globalised way by letting him use bits and pieces of English. The producers also show Zulu as Sechaba's optional identity by having him use the isiZulu language. However, Sechaba switches from tsotsitaal, 'orait'; then English, 'compliments'; to Zulu, 'Siyakuvuyela angikubonanga kulonyaka omtsha' in one stretch of talk. By

doing this, Sechaba's identity is established as a multilingual. Sechaba as a multilingual is further demonstrated when he makes use of Afrikaans, 'ja' and English, 'I must meet this small boy of yours'. Sechaba continues his dialogue in English for a few turns. He then switches over to isiZulu and English for the next few turns. He then ends off the conversation with tsotsitaal, 'sharp', which means, 'okay' in English. Here, Sechaba is creating a multilingual identity. At the same time, these various linguistic options make it possible for him to achieve multiple voices.

Zukisa and Sizwe have been positioned as Xhosa. In all their interactions they are affiliated with the Xhosa culture and it makes them look real and believable. This is illustrated in the extract below, taken from 9 January 2015. We do not see any isiZulu and little English.

26:12 Sizwe: **Wenzi endisithnadayo istew** [You made my favourite, stew].

Zukisa: **Ewe, ungayitsibeli inyama isaqinile** [Yes, the meat is still tough though].

Sizwe: **Ewe, kodwa ke nkosikazi** still **iseyi** favourite **yam** [Yes, but it is still my favourite].

Zukisa: **Kwawutsho kutheni ufike layithi? Ubuhleli no Duma** [Why are you home so late tonight? Were you with Duma]?

Sizwe: **Hayi. Nkosikazi ndiyendagqitha njekwenye indawo ndithi mandifumane nje into encinci** [No. I just had to make a quick stop to get you something].

Zukisa: **Yintoni** [What]?

Sizwe: **Nantsi nkosikazi. Ndikuphathele lento** [This. I got you this].

Zukisa: **Yintoni lento kanye** [What is it]?

Sizwe: **Yithathe uyijonge** [Have a look].

Zukisa: **Yeyam** [It is mine]?

Sizwe: **Nkosikazi yijonge** [Open it].

Zukisa: **Yho, umntanam** [Oh, my boy].

Sizwe: **Ewe, né** [Yes, hey].

Zukisa:	**Ayisentle. Yho. Ndiyayithanda, enkosi kakhulu jonga ume nemoto yakhe. Yho, unoba ibibiza** [It's beautiful. Wow. I love it, thank you and he is standing next to his car. Wow, I'm sure it was expensive].
Sizwe:	**Hayi, ketana thu. Ndifumane iframe ku Lerato mna into endiyenzileyo ndiye faka iphoto. Ndayidibanisa nantso ke** [No, not at all. I got the frame from Lerato and I just put the photo into it. There you go].
Zukisa:	**Enkosi kakhulu, intle kakhulu. Yazintoni xa simane siyijonga sizocinga amaxesha ethu eKrismisi** [Thank you so much, it's really beautiful. Every time I look at it I will remember our wonderful Christmas together].
Sizwe:	**Ewe mani, nkosikazi** [Oh yes, my dear].
Zukisa:	**Yho, andisamkhumbuli** [Wow, I miss him].

The excessive use of isiXhosa makes this couple's constructed socio-cultural role as Xhosa look real and believable. Here, we see Zukisa's social role as an isiXhosa speaker. Her social role is being performed linguistically through communicating in only isiXhosa. It is interesting to see that Zukisa, yet again, only sticks to isiXhosa like she did in her interaction with her boss, Katlego, as explored earlier. Her husband, Sizwe, prefers to communicate in isiXhosa the majority of the time. There are a few instances where Sizwe uses English in the interaction. He uses words such as 'still' and 'favourite'. By doing this, Sizwe maintains his social role and identity as a person affiliated to the Xhosa cultural heritage.

The scenes above are common ways of conversing in South African contexts. These are all examples of fusing English with indigenous South African languages. The use of these phrases is popular in urban South African cities, especially, amongst the youth and young adults. Even if the viewers do not fully understand the language(s) at hand, they are familiar with phrases such as *sharp sharp, tjo, yho* and *askies*. Blending indigenous South African languages with westernised English evokes the popular way of day-to-day talking in South Africa.

6.2 Summary

This chapter explored how the producers are using language as social practice in *Isidingo.* This is an attempt to reflect the outside world where South Africans from various cultures use the linguistic repertoire at their disposal as discourse practice. Language choices are a function of socio-cultural, political and economic factors in both the production of the soap opera and the outside world.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter supplies general remarks based on the analysis. The thesis looked at semiotic resources including language as social practice in the South African produced soap opera, *Isidingo*. The idea was to investigate how the *Isidingo* producers use new technologies and editing tools to merge and/or manipulate different semiotic material in the production of the soap opera. This was achieved by the producers showing how different stories and narratives were infused into the storylines and re-figuring socio-cultural-histories as semiotic resources. The episodes chosen for this analysis included the very first aired episode and eight randomly opted episodes of later years. Another four randomly chosen episodes were added in order to advance the arguments surrounding the objectives of this study. This enabled me to carry out a thorough analysis of *Isidingo*. The thesis used an ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis that is qualitative-based. Moreover, this study used recent theorisation of semiotics, such as semiotic remediation, resemiotisation, intertextuality and multimodality as its theoretical framework to explore the manner in which texts and discourses are re-worked, recycled, and repurposed in a South African produced soap opera.

7.1 Fulfilment of Research Objectives

Most of the objectives outlined in chapter 1 were achieved. The first objective was to explore how South African and other lifestyles are stylised by referring to the traditional versus the modern and the hybrid lifestyle. The producers use the Sibekos as an example of a Zulu family to show how people live a hybrid lifestyle. They live a modern lifestyle by residing in a penthouse and the use of the latest gadgetry. However, they still believe in cultural beliefs such as ancestors. There are also times when the traditional is challenged. This was proven through Jefferson and Katlego not being able to have a baby of their own. They chose to do things the westernised way by having a surrogate mother instead of Jefferson taking Bianca as a second wife. Here, modern medicine was chosen over the traditional way of doing things.

Therefore, producers recontextualise aspects of the Zulu culture to portray the new hybrid lifestyle.

The second objective investigated the manner in which texts are borrowed and transformed. Issues from real life have been infused into the soap opera's plotline. For example, issues of transformation in the new South Africa are brought up by using the characters of Mike and Zeb to indicate the social change and political shift of South Africa becoming a newly democratic country. The producers also adapted the aspect of time from the real world by having the storyline fall on the same day the episode originally aired. Texts such as divorce papers from the real world are also infused. Other examples are the social issue of rape and an unsafe South Africa into the fictional world. The producers also advertise products from the real world in the plot through subliminal advertising of clothes and various gadgets.

The third objective was an exploration of the recontextualisation of semiotic materials in space and time. The producers reconstructed a mining town along with various character developments and different levels of social class. The reconstructed mining town consists of footage of a mine shaft, business offices and hangout places. This makes it possible for the reconstruction of character development and social identities to what one would typically find in a mining town. Examples of these are the Sibekos who form part of the upper class, the Matabanes are from the middle class and those who reside in townships belong to the lower class. By doing this, the producers were able to show how apartheid is still affecting the current era through a conversation on the radio in the background, as well as the conversation where Jefferson tells Barker that he does not do business with people who benefited from apartheid. In essence, producers show how the past still affects the country as a whole through the recontextualisation of semiotic materials of space and time.

The fourth objective is how the socio-cultural-histories are reported, recreated, repurposed and relived. This has been demonstrated through the re-use of real life cross-cultural artefacts and symbols. Cultural conflicts are re-enacted in storylines. This is demonstrated by Mike and Ted talking at the bar about their frustration and confusion regarding the new dispensation. The producers have taken in some of the frustrations of the previous ruling where whites were in charge. The producers have

also taken on board the transformation of South Africa in which blacks have taken over. Like in the real South Africa, the producers ensure equal opportunities for their characters regardless of race. They also emphasise female empowerment and affirmative action in the workplace. In the process, the producers perpetuate some of the cultural stereotypes, such as Frank, who epitomises a stereotypical coloured man who does not seem to want to get married.

The fifth objective explored how actions, dress codes and mannerisms such as stereotypes and speech styles are re-performed and re-voiced in the soap opera. This has been demonstrated by using Daniel semiotised as a game warden through his dress code of khaki clothing with heavy duty boots. Actions such as the *Isidingo* studios that burnt down are re-voiced and re-performed in the plotlines. Speech styles were demonstrated through language as social practices where languages are not regarded as autonomous systems. By doing this, the producers have shown that it is possible for characters to indicate their social identity through their linguistic repertoire. Examples of these are Lerato and Sechaba indicating their urbanised social roles through the use of tsotsitaal. This analogy gives credence to Heller (2007) and Pennycook (2010).
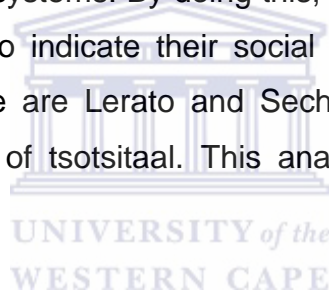
The sixth objective endeavoured to show how the producers were able to manipulate the soap opera as a genre. By doing this, the producers are doing what we call immediacy. This was done through incorporating real celebrities and events such as the black market, Nicki Minaj and the 2010 Soccer World Cup. Real organisations have also been brought into the soap opera's credits to facilitate the social issue of an unsafe South Africa. In addition to this, the producers evoke immediacy by using the latest cellphones, computer software, clothes and background props as a means to subliminally advertise products to the audience (Bolter and Grusin, 2000).

This study suggests that semiotic remediation and resemiotisation have become discourse practices in the South African soap opera, *Isidingo.* The analysis has shown that these concepts are useful in theorising and analysing soap operas. These notions also allow "careful tracing [of] semiotic analysis across chains and for a subtle and precise vocabulary for practices of alignment as well as processes of transformation across media, genres and events" (Prior and Hengst, 2010).

7.2 Conclusion

Through the demonstration of resemiotisation and semiotic remediation, this thesis has shown how storylines and other semiotic resources are transformed in *Isidingo*. Inferring from the selected episodes, it should be recognised that the discourse of soap operas depends on societal discourses such as socio-cultural-histories, language-in-use and popular culture as its base for composing believable plotlines. The use of everyday discourses is used as strategies by the producers to recreate reality into the fictional world, as well as demonstrate semiotic remediation and resemiotisation as discourse practices.

7.3 Questions for Future Research

This thesis explored semiotic remediation and resemiotisation as discourse practices to explore the South African soap opera, *Isidingo*. Further research may be conducted on other genres i.e. advertising, theatre plays and literature in order to establish their respective discourse practices. In addition to this, more research is needed on issues such as immediacy, the use of technology, as well as the blending of different genres in post-modern times.
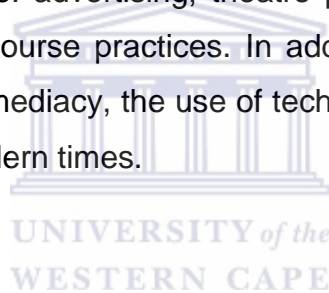
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