

Implementing Critical Discourse Analysis as an Innovative Model to Improve Learners' Reading Criticality

Mettre en œuvre l'analyse critique du discours en tant qu'outil innovant Modèle pour améliorer la criticité de lecture des apprenants

OUME EL AZ Sihem *

University: 20 Août 1955, Skikda, Algeria

s.oumelaz@univ-skikda.dz

Abstract

Traditionally, reading was taught through the top down approach, the bottom up approach and the interactive approach. These traditional approaches were supposed to help learners decode the linguistic meaning, but they did not develop their criticality and their analytical skills. This article draws on the necessity to implement critical discourse analysis as an innovative model to concentrate on the macro level of reading and enhance learners' reading criticality. Hence, the focus of this study is to explore the effectiveness of this new model which is based on textual and social analysis. Accordingly, thirty participants were exposed to an instructional package on critical discourse analysis then they took part in analysing a political text. The findings revealed that after linking the reading process to the social context, learners' skills of text analyses have been developed, but they were unable to reveal the ideological agendas of the political speech. Based on these findings, we recommend the incorporation of the field of critical discourse analysis in the educational system to train learners gradually read between the lines and develop their analytical skills.

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1. Introduction

Providing learners with types of texts that make them analyse the ideological underpinnings of texts is very crucial to prepare future critical readers and thinkers. Critical discourse analysis is considered as an important skill to raise learners' awareness to read between the lines and to help them in better understanding of what is beyond the language. Hence forth, reading texts should tackle social problems and political issues because language in such types of texts is not neutral and the choice of words and utterances reflects power and ideology. Adopting principles of CDA in teaching will help learners process what is beyond linguistic-unit elements rather than just focusing on the surface structure and thereby raise their reading criticality.

2. Traditional Approaches of Reading

There are three approaches that help learners decode the linguistic meaning.

2.1 Bottom-up Approaches

In bottom up models, reading is initiated at the level of the bottom (text structure). The reader first processes the smallest linguistic unit to comprehend higher units. The emphasis is on text process. The reader decodes the linguistic information gradually from the smallest to larger units. Carrell (1988, 101) defined the bottom-up processing approach as "decoding individual linguistic units".

2.2 Top down Approaches

It involves processing beyond the analysis of linguistic information. The reader depends on his background knowledge to interpret the meaning of the text. That is to say, readers rely on their knowledge rather than passively identifying words in a text. Rajabi (2009) further mentioned that the top-down as a strategic model includes macro reading strategies such as previewing, predicting, guessing and inferences.

2.3 Interactive Approaches

Interactive model is a combination of bottom-up and top-down models. In other words, both bottom-up and top-down processes occur simultaneously for the reader to comprehend the meaning of the text. Here, the balanced approach to teaching is used.

3. The Concept of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis is a field which is concerned with examining the underlying power relationship or ideologies in discourse such as speeches or written texts. Its main concern is to identify the hidden meaning in a text and investigate how language can function ideologically. According to Van Dijk, "[CDA] primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (2003, 352).

CDA sees language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways social and political domination reproduced in discourse. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) stated that "language is a social practice" maintaining that there is a dialectical relationship between language and society, i.e., language affects society and society is shaped by language.

4. Faircloughs' Model in Critical Discourse Analysis

One model that helps in reading between the lines is Fairclough's model. According to him, there are three interrelated forms of analysis to interpret a text.

4.1 Textual Analysis (Description)

In this description stage, attention is paid to the formal and semantic features of the written language. This stage is concerned with the formal properties of the text (speech, writing, visual images) such as grammar, vocabulary and textual relations. At this stage, Fairclough (1989, 110-111) presented ten questions to analyse the formal properties of the text. The questions are about vocabulary, grammar and textual structure.

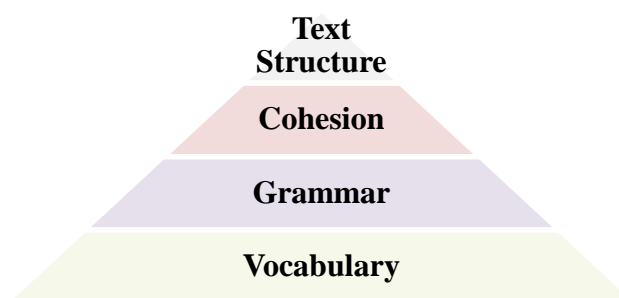


Fig 01: Text Analysis Model (Fairclough 1992, p.75).

❖ ***Vocabulary***

Question 1: What experiential values do words have?

What classification schemes are drawn upon?

Are there words which are ideologically contested?

Is there rewording or over wording?

What ideological significant meaning relations (synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy) are there between words?

Question 2: What relational values do words have?

Are there euphemistic expressions?

Are there markedly formal or informal words?

Question 3: What expressive values do words have?

Question 4: What metaphors are used?

❖ ***Grammar***

Question 5: What experiential values do grammatical features have?

What types of process and participant dominate?

Is agency unclear?

Are processes what they seem?

Are nominalizations used?

Are sentences active or passive? Are sentences positive or negative?

Question 6: What relational values do grammatical features have? What modes (declarative, grammatical question, imperative) are used?

Are there important features of relational modality? Are the pronouns we and you used, and if so, how?

Question 7: What expressive values do grammatical features have?

Are there important features of expressive modality?

Question 8: How are (simple) sentences linked together?

What logical connectors are used?

Are complex sentences characterized by coordination or subordination?

What means are used for referring inside and outside the text?

❖ ***Textual Structure***

Question 9: What interactional conventions are used?

Are there ways in which one participant controls the turns of others?

Question 10: What larger-scale structures does the text have?

Analysing the formal properties of the text encompasses three basic types of value which are experiential, relational and expressive. When analysing the experiential values, critical discourse

analysis shows the effect of “the text producers’ experience of the natural or social world” on the text (Fairclough 1989, 112). In other words, analysing the formal features of the text through the experiential value will reveal the text producers’ view of the world. Relational values show the social relationship of the text producer and the recipient. The expressive values show the text producer evaluation of the reality related to his ideology. This is reflected through the choices he made to convince the audience.

4.2 Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

Fairclough (1989, 26) says "interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as recourse in the process of interpretation". Since discourse is not only regarded as a text but also as discursive practice, analysis should be drawn to other factors such as speech act and intertextuality rather than analysing only the linguistic features of the text.

4.3 Social Features (Explanation)

According to Fairclough, (1989, 26), "Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects". The analysis in this stage covers the historical, social and cultural factors because discourse is regarded as a social practice.

5. Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough and Wodak (1997, 271-80) argued that the general principles of CDA are:

1. It deals with social problems.
2. Power relations are considered as discursive.
3. Discourse constitute culture and society.
4. It performs an ideological work.
5. Discourses are historical.
6. It mediates connection between society and text.
7. It is explanatory and interpretative.
8. Social action shapes discourse.

Critical discourse analysis addresses social problems to reveal inequality and dominance. In critical discourse analysis, power relations are discursive. In the sense that, critical discourse analysis explains how power is exercised through discourse. The third principle entails that discourse is related to social and cultural aspects and cannot be explained without considering language as part of culture and society. The fourth principle holds that discourse is a place to express a certain ideology; this ideology can be revealed when the analysis of the discourse goes beyond the linguistic analysis to include how discourse is produced and interpreted. The fifth principle refers to the fact that discourse can be interpreted when the analysis takes into account the historical context. This approach goes beyond micro analysis of the text; it covers the macro analysis to reveal the underlying ideological stances by analysis features of discourse. Principle six means that critical discourse analysis gives both structure and action equal status in the analysis.

6. Criticality in Reading and its Significance

It is important to focus on critical reading in education to prepare students with the required cognitive skills needed in any situation. Fairclough (1992) calls for language learning that focuses on the development of language skills and critical language awareness. Criticality in reading can be achieved through incorporating critical discourse analysis in the learning process. Smith (2004) claimed that the incorporation of critical discourse analysis in teaching raises students’ awareness of the use of language and it has lot of benefits especially in the reading subject. In the same vein, Fairclough (1995) stated that CDA instruction increases critical

language awareness. Therefore, critical discourse analysis empowers learners' criticality and gives them the opportunity to reflect on their reading.

7. Methodology

7.1 Participants

The study takes place with master two students during the academic year 2021-2022 at Skikda University (Algeria). Before the study took place, the teacher started with warming up in the form of questions to get insights about the students' familiarity about the field of critical discourse analysis. The students showed their ignorance and inability to engage in analysing any form of ideological texts since they are not knowledgeable about the principles of the field. The students then were exposed to an instructional package on critical discourse analysis and the steps they need to get through in analysing ideological texts. After the instructional stage, learners were provided with a political text and they were asked to figure out the hidden meaning. The text analysis involves description, interpretation and social analysis based on Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis. The aim of the task was to train learners analyse more complicated texts and therefore to raise their reading criticality.

7.2 Data Collection Tools

The text which is delivered to the learners is TRUMP's discourse addressed to the united nations general assembly in The White House, *September 22, 2020* to be analysed and examined by learners using Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis. The political speech was distributed among 30 students. After reading the text in class, students asked to fulfil the task at home since they confessed that they need more time to decipher the embedded meaning of the text. The following questions were slightly modified to help students process the meaning. The questions are as follows:

1. What classification schemes are drawn upon?
2. Did he use repetition of certain words? If yes, what was the reason behind that?
3. Are there words which are ideologically contested?
4. Did he use over-wordings (synonyms, antonyms and hyponymy) in his speech?
5. Are there markedly formal or informal words?
6. Did he use imperative sentences? If yes, explain
7. Did he use modality in his speech?
8. Did he use logical connectors in his speech?
9. Did he use intertextuality and speech acts?
10. How did Trump express his attitudes about the issue
11. What are the ideological agendas behind his speech?

7.3 Analysis of the Findings

The analysis involves description, interpretation and explanation. Two students' analyses of the political text have been chosen as it is illustrated below.

7.3.1 Description (Vocabulary and Grammar Analysis)

➤ The Experiential Value

This stage starts with the analysis of vocabulary and grammar to reveal the experiential values of the word. Analysing vocabulary is very crucial to understand what is in the mind of the speaker or writer. The benefit of vocabulary analysis is not to know the meaning of words but to reveal the political stance of the orator. The experiential value of the words will be revealed through the analysis of classification schemes, Repetitive use of words, and over wordings.

Question 1: *What classification schemes are drawn upon?*

STUDENT 1

"The classification schemes drawn upon appear in the positive and negative vocabulary used. Negative vocabulary is used to talk and attack china: the china virus, disease, unleashed a plague, china condemned, falsely declared, destroyed vast swaths, pollution...etc. Positive vocabulary was used to talk about the USA: pioneered lifesaving, unprecedented prosperity, human rights, peace and cooperation..."

STUDENT 2

"Trump used in his discourse classification schemes to draw upon both positive vocabulary: freedom partnership, prosperity, cooperation, peace, bright future, liberty. Negative vocabulary: enemy, virus, fatality, pandemic, defeat, infect, disease, struggle, pollution, terrorism, overfishing, ethnic cleansing, plague"

To analyse the linguistic properties of the linguistic of the speech, learners need to start with vocabulary and grammar analysis. The aim of this question is to make learners explore whether the speech has both positive and negative classification schemas. As it is clearly seen both students managed in detecting both negative and positive diction employed in the speech.

Question 2: *Did he use repetition of certain words? If yes, what was the reason behind that?*

STUDENT1

"Donald Trump used repetition of some words such as falsely-hold, china accountable, toxic...to emphasize his accusation of china in the corona virus pandemic and the Chinese government in general"

STUDENT 2

"Yes, he used repetition of some words such as: China, virus, vaccine, hold China accountable to emphasize on the subject of his speech aiming to raise reader's or listener's awareness about the issue of pandemic and the one responsible of it through a description of reality"

Generally, the aim of repetition is clarifying the powerful of the authors' messages and to convince the audience about a certain issue. Both learners stated that Trump used repetition of certain words providing their justification.

Question 3: *Are there words which are ideologically contested?*

STUDENT1

"There is an ideology behind his speech, and his words are ideologically contested representing his political attitudes as a political revival in all fields"

STUDENT 2

"he used words that can be ideologically contested: punish America: stands for the attitude that the world has towards America and its dominance in all domains. Invisible enemy: refer to China and the undeclared war it has with USA and the hidden competition between these two great dominating countries. Pandemic: the virus spread. The China virus: cause the virus appeared in China for the first time so it is accused of being responsible for infecting the world"

Indeed, the president used ideologically contested words to assert his power and confidence.

Question 4: *Did he use over-wordings (synonyms, antonyms and hyponymy) in his speech?*

STUDENT1

"yes, he used over wording. He used synonymy such as: virus, disease, plague; plastic, trash, toxic. To refer negatively to china and antonym to denote china and USA: peace, prosperity as opposite to: destroy, plague, abuse"

STUDENT 2: *"Trump used over wording through:*

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Synonyms:

fatality = struggle

spread = infect

liberty = freedom

virus = pandemic

unleashed = launched

agreement = accord

disease = plague

cooperation = partnership

Antonyms:

reduce ≠ increase

peace ≠ war

combating ≠ attacking

ban ≠ allow

friends ≠ enemies

Over-wordings are generally employed by authors or speakers to give prominence to the issue and to illustrate that it is a focus of the ideological struggle (Al Ghazaly, 2007). Therefore, this is a strategy that generally politicians use to make people trust their argument. Both students provided examples of over wordings.

➤ The Relational Value

The relational value of words concerns to “how a text’s choices of words depends on, and helps to create social relations between participants” (Fairclough, 2001, p.97). the relational value will be elicited through the following questions:

Question 5: Are there markedly formal or informal words?

STUDENT1

“The president words used are formal as he is using words in a highly formal political speech”.

STUDENT 2

“The majority of words he used are formal taking into consideration his position in government which requires him to use formal language”.

The formal language is usually used in the formal context. Both students provided reasonable answers.

Question 6: Did he use imperative sentences? If yes, explain

STUDENT1: “no, he didn’t”.

STUDENT 2

“Yes, he used imperative sentences requesting united nations to focus on the real problems of the world”.

The relational aspect is illustrated through the use of formal language, imperative sentences and modality. The presidential speech is absent of imperative sentences. This is because the president is in the status of showing ability, readiness, power to change things rather than giving orders and requests. The second student did not answer the question successfully.

Question 7: Did he use modality in his speech?

STUDENT1

“Yes, he did. He used modality in his speech: “will” to express his actions and attitudes directly”.

STUDENT 2

“Yes he used modality in his speech:

-It must focus on the real problems of the world.

-We must hold accountable the nation which unleashed this plague”.

Modality is employed to make influence in the listener because the purpose is to give promises and to show that the president and the government have capacity to make change.

Question 8: *Did he use logical connectors in his speech?*

STUDENT1

“he used two conjunctions only. He used “addition to” and “by contrast” to invoke statements about china and USA. Apart from this, he used direct statements”.

STUDENT 2

“the president used logical connectors in his speech such as conjunctions, continuatives in order to achieve connection between sentences and to develop a cohesive and coherent discourse”.

As it is indicated by the students, the president did not use many logical connectors. Cohesion is generally a feature of written language rather than speech. He emphasizes more on the use of direct statements to present his argument.

➤ **The Expressive Value**

The expressive value is concerned with how we express our views and react to the views of others. The speech used many appraisals to glorify the role of USA and uses many attacks towards china which is represented as an enemy that should be punished.

7.3.2 Interpretation Stage

Question 9: *Did he use intertextuality and speech acts?*

STUDENT1

“He used intertextuality, in terms of cohesion and coherence. Cohesion appears through the use of pronouns: we to refer to his government, they to refer to the Chinese government. Coherence appears through the logical order and link between sentences: through the use of logical connectors”.

STUDENT 2

“He used intertextuality through relying on prior knowledge and previous texts and events such as: the second world war environmental issue, Historic partnership with other countries to stop human smuggling and stand with them for their struggle for freedom. As well as speech act by using words which doesn't only represent information but also carry out actions for example: WHO falsely Declared that there was no evidence of human-to-human transmission”.

Both intertextuality and speech acts link the speech into its context. The president emphasises on the prior achievement of the USA as a strategy to convince the nation and to reassure people about the stable conditions and the welfare that awaits America and the Americans to create a kind of confidence between the government and the nation. Furthermore, Trump used speech acts as a strategy to convince the nation that they rendered different achievement and performed actions.

7.3.3 The Explanation Stage

Question 10: *How did Trump express his attitudes about the issue?*

STUDENT1

"Trump expresses his attitude about the issue both explicitly accusing China: We should hold this nation accountable- I will not stand for it and implicitly by using negative vocabulary as mentioned earlier and this is the role of Critical Discourse Analysis to decipher".

STUDENT 2

"Trump tried to express his attitude towards the issue of pandemic by accusing China for spreading the virus by banning travel domestically and allowing flights out of China along with the world health organization which he believes that it is controlled by China and it shares responsibility of spreading the disease through its falsely declarations. China is not responsible only for the countless lives lost in 188 countries but it is harmfully affecting the world because of the trash and plastic it dumps to the ocean, overfishing other countries waters, carbon emission, destroying swaths of coral reef. Additionally, he is glorifying USA's efforts to stop the spread of the virus and produce a vaccine that would save lives and share it with the world. moreover, he mentioned the increasing powerful military that us able to stood up to China's trade abuse".

Question 11: *What are the ideological agendas behind his speech?*

STUDENT1

"The ideological agenda behind his speech is its competition with China about great-power rivalry. The United States is in reality worried about China's rise especially economically that would threaten its position and own power".

STUDENT 2

"Trump's discourse is not free of power which can be revealed by analysing the political and social factors behind his speech such as the fierce battle between China and USA over controlling the world economically politically. Trump tried to show that China is the Evil by accusing it of being responsible for spreading the virus and the number of lives lost in addition to several problems in the world where as USA refers to the Good that helps everyone by trying to solve all the problems. He addressed the United Nations general assembly to direct its attention to China and its decisions that is negatively affecting the world".

Both learners could not reveal the ideological agenda behind Trumps speech because they only analysed textual properties of the text rather than linking it to its social context. Accordingly, both of them show an acceptable proficiency to analyse the formal properties of the text but they were not analytical enough to read between the lines and they did not link the text to its situation of occurrence. If we take into account the context of the speech production which is during the corona virus crises and after getting through the textual and the interpretation stage, we notice that the ideological underpinning behind Trumps speech is to raise the possibility of his re-election.

8. Discussion

In the explanation stage, Students were supposed to answer the first eight questions to analyse the formal properties of the text. In the interpretation stage, students were asked to answer two questions to link the text to its context by analysing two features namely speech acts and intertextuality as strategies used to convince people about Trumps' ideology. The last question which is related to the explanation stage is asked to make learners reveal the imbedded ideologies based on what they analysed before in the description and the interpretation stages. The findings illustrated that a sense of reading criticality has been developed in terms of textual analysis as students developed the skills of analysing the linguistic features of the text, but they could not provide a social analysis of the text.

Accordingly, learners were not able to process the hidden meaning of language because they still lack the appropriate analytical skills to develop their critical reading and be reflective in their learning. The results reflect the fact that students should be given more time to be trained to analyse the underpinnings of texts. Training students to read critically is of paramount importance to develop their analytical skills. As it is indicated in the findings, learners analysed the explicit language, but they failed to provide an interpretation to the presidential speech in relation to social and political ideologies. Accordingly, acclimatizing learners to such types of texts will for sure help them to be critical thinkers and readers.

Conclusion

To empower students' criticality, analytical skills should be given a prominent role. Students' roles in EFL classes should not just be confined to passive recipients of knowledge, but also to provide a high level reading ability. Accordingly, based on the findings of the study, critical discourse analysis should be incorporated into EFL classes to foster students reading criticality.

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Appendix: the political text September 22, 2020

The White House

PRESIDENT TRUMP: It is my profound honor to address the United Nations General Assembly.

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Seventy-five years after the end of World War II and the founding of the United Nations, we are once again engaged in a great global struggle. We have waged a fierce battle against the invisible enemy — the China virus — which has claimed countless lives in 188 countries. In the United States, we launched the most aggressive mobilization since the Second World War. We rapidly produced a record supply of ventilators, creating a surplus that allowed us to share them with friends and partners all around the globe. We pioneered life-saving treatments, reducing our fatality rate 85 percent since April. Thanks to our efforts, three vaccines are in the final stage of clinical trials. We are mass-producing them in advance so they can be delivered immediately upon arrival. We will distribute a vaccine, we will defeat the virus, we will end the pandemic, and we will enter a new era of unprecedented prosperity, cooperation, and peace. As we pursue this bright future, we must hold accountable the nation which unleashed this plague onto the world: China. In the earliest days of the virus, China locked down travel domestically while allowing flights to leave China and infect the world. China condemned my travel ban on their country, even as they cancelled domestic flights and locked citizens in their homes. The Chinese government and the World Health Organization — which is virtually controlled by China — falsely declared that there was no evidence of human-to-human transmission. Later, they falsely said people without symptoms would not spread the disease. The United Nations must hold China accountable for their actions. In addition, every year, China dumps millions and millions of tons of plastic and trash into the oceans, overfishes other countries' waters, destroys vast swaths of coral reef, and emits more toxic mercury into the atmosphere than any country anywhere in the world. China's carbon emissions are nearly twice what the U.S. has, and it's rising fast. By contrast, after I withdrew from the one-sided Paris Climate Accord, last year America reduced its carbon emissions by more than any country in the agreement. Those who attack America's exceptional environmental record while ignoring China's rampant pollution are not interested in the environment. They only want to punish America, and I will not stand for it. If the United Nations is to be an effective organization, it must focus on the real problems of the world. This includes terrorism, the oppression of women, forced labor, drug trafficking, human and sex trafficking, religious persecution, and the ethnic cleansing of religious minorities. America will always be a leader in human rights. My administration is advancing religious liberty, opportunity for women, the decriminalization of homosexuality, combatting human trafficking, and protecting unborn children. We also know that American prosperity is

the bedrock of freedom and security all over the world. In three short years, we built the greatest economy in history, and we are quickly doing it again. Our military has increased substantially in size. We spent \$2.5 trillion over the last four years on our military. We have the most powerful military anywhere in the world, and it's not even close. We stood up to decades of China's trade abuses. We revitalized the NATO Alliance, where other countries are now paying a much more fair share. We forged historic partnerships with Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to stop human smuggling. We are standing with the people of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela in their righteous struggle for freedom.