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Critical Discourse Analysis and Its Implication in English Language Teaching: A Case Study of Environmental News Text

Lishi Zhang¹, Andrew Jocuns²

¹PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand. Lecturer, College of Foreign Languages, Yunnan Agricultural University, Kunming, China. Email: zhanglishi1988@hotmail.com, p6229529@au.edu

²Assistant Professor, MA TESL Program of Wenzhou-Kean University, China. Email: jocunsa@gmail.com, ajocuns@kean.edu

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Abstract

English learners are usually taught English in university by focusing on improving learners' language skills instead of critical aspects of language use. However, critical reading is crucial in English language learning. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach to deal with the analysis of linguistic features, and the deployment of these linguistic features in the texts can dramatically influence how humans perceive social changes. Accordingly, this study employs CDA in English Language Teaching (ELT), which aims to cultivate students' critical thinking (CT) and critical language awareness (CLA). The present study integrated CDA into the English reading of English and Translation majors to enhance students' critical learning. Eighteen students were chosen to attend the training workshops. Six news items were purposively selected as the reading materials for students. After the training, the study found students' CLA increased, and students were interested in analyzing and criticizing the English language. Furthermore, students were motivated to learn English and equipped with critical thinking skills. The findings imply that deploying CDA for authentic texts (e.g., news outlets) in ELT is effective, and English language teachers can integrate it into daily teaching.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis; environmental news discourse; EFL; critical thinking; critical language awareness; English reading.

Introduction

Conventionally, language learning develops learners' basic receptive and productive language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing while focusing on something other than critical matters. However, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners are also exposed to and are influenced by a wide range of sociocultural aspects of language in the learning process, which needs more attention to develop the critical capacity to question. EFL

teaching provides a plethora of approaches and techniques to facilitate the learning process, whereas the teaching neglects the learning of critical components. The current language classroom is isolated from reality, and the teaching practices hinder the cultivation of students' critical perspectives for evaluating social reality. As Fairclough (2014) and Van Dijk (2001) called for, education should promote the development of a critical ability to criticize and question the social surroundings, and language learning could fulfill this task effectively.

To address the critical aspects of language learning and teaching, researchers propose Fairclough's (2001) framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is effective. Researchers used CDA to notice the ideology and identity construction (Lobatón & Carolina, 2011). Based on Fairclough's CDA approach, Cots (2006) and Martínez (2014) proposed practical teaching strategies to raise EFL students' critical awareness of language use. They deployed CDA to improve EFL students' reading, writing, and critical thinking skills (Dar et al., 2010; Najarzadegan et al., 2018; Rahimi & Sharififar, 2015). These studies seek to use CDA to develop the critical perspective of language in the process of EFL learning.

CDA in language teaching is persuasive with the contemporary changes affecting the role of language in our social life. EFL teaching is a social practice that aims to develop the knowledge and skills of students and enable them to use English correctly. Students' attitudes will be affected by linguistic devices and their social functions (Amari, 2015). Applying CDA to the learning process makes EFL learners competent and efficient in using a new language and attending to new and unfamiliar linguistic, cultural, and social factors (Amari, 2015). For instance, it is worthwhile to apply CDA to grammar learning. Thus, students will learn grammar structures from another perspective (Lock, 1995). CDA serves as the learning approach for the present study, and performing CDA develops students' English language learning.

In EFL context, reading is a prominent way for students to gain ideas, especially for students in the university. Wallace (1992) contended that many readers found it hard to gain critical awareness of texts by themselves. The relationship between language development and thinking is disconnected. To re-connect the relation, CDA could be used to raise students' critical language awareness (CLA) and critical thinking (CT) when teaching reading. Language learning should not be limited to communication, and it could be changed by raising awareness of the social reality, therefore, appropriate training programs for EFL reading courses are needed.

The present study aims to raise students' CLA through English reading by using CDA as the analytical framework with three research questions:

1. How do CDA techniques help increase students' CLA?
2. How do CDA techniques make reading more exciting and motivating for students?
3. What is the level of English language students' critical thinking (CT) through CDA training in English reading?

To answer these questions, Fairclough's CDA framework was applied in an English reading class within a qualitative study of environmental news outlets. Six news texts about ice melting and mass extinction were used, and three training workshops were designed to analyze these texts.

The relevant literature on the CDA framework was reviewed before going on to introduce CDA implemented in English language teaching and its outcomes. Then the material and methods were presented before reporting and discussing the findings. In the final section, some concluding remarks were offered.

Literature Review

The construction of teaching mode of training workshops applying CDA to improve CLA and CT was based on demonstrating the relationship between CDA and EFL teaching and findings of related previous studies.

Critical Discourse Analysis and EFL Teaching

The CDA approach emerged in the 1980s and was developed by Fairclough (2014) to find a mixture of social theory and language studies. Different from other forms of linguistic analysis, CDA is used to uncover the hidden meanings and relationship between discourse, ideology, and power. The reason for applying CDA is that the uneven distribution of power controls the social practice; in other words, some social groups are dominant while others are dominated. In an educational context, EFL learners are constantly confronted with new cultures and foreign thoughts which eventually are transferred into their society. Thus, learners should know the embedded meaning of the text and discourse so that the dominant group is unable to impose power on them. CLA and critical thinking (CT) skills help identify the embedded meaning, and CDA is an effective way to enhance learners' CLA and CT.

Pedagogically, the research hopefully raises students' CLA and CT. Students should know how and why a discourse, especially news discourse in the present study, is produced with specific effects on readers and society. The definition of language awareness (LA) can be traced back to the early 1980s. It is "conscious attention to properties of language and language use as an element of language education" (Fairclough, 2014, p.1). Language practice reflects changes in society and is changed by changes in society (Fairclough, 1993). Raising students' LA assists students in realizing how the language pattern is employed to form a stance to communicate with others. LA makes learners pay more attention to their learning process so that better and more effective learning happens. Learners are deliberately aware of the difference in language features by noticing their performance and native speakers' performance. Thus, learners are prepared to acquire these language features, which are prominent in their minds (Dar et al., 2010). Moreover, CLA is regarded as an "internal capacity" developing from practicing with CDA (Dar et al., 2010, p. 460). The term critical language awareness (CLA) is built upon CDA, which means "a critical conception of language education" due to "the contemporary changes affecting the role of language" (Fairclough, 2014, p.2). Students should read with CLA to adapt to the "contemporary changes" of language.

A set of "lifelong learning skills" was suggested by Van Lier (2014) as goals of education: "1) deal with the unexpected, 2) make informed choices, 3) develop sharp observational skills, 4) construct useful knowledge in one's interaction with the world, and 5) be guided by internal values, convictions, and reasons". These five goals containing words "unexpected, informed, sharp, interaction and internal values, convictions and reasons" are needed by learners to equip them with the critical capacity and skills to achieve learning goals.

When CT skills are developed through the practice of CDA, the skills of learners for life-long learning are cultivated (Amari, 2015). Fairclough (1992) pointed out that language teaching materials and programs do not give sufficient attention to the social aspect of language, such as the relationship between language and power, which should be highlighted. As Wallace (1992, p. 62) contended, “EFL students are often marginalized as readers; their goals in interacting with written texts are perceived to be primarily those of language learners.” With our society’s changing and varied discourse, understanding lexis and grammar does not mean understanding the texts. Students’ CT is absent. Thus, dominant groups win thoughts and hearts through control. Today’s world is changing faster than ever, and CT is valuable and regarded as an essential survival skill nowadays (Facione & Facione, 1996; Moon, 2007; Wright, 2002). CT is the fundamental goal of learning, especially for higher education (Paul, 1987; Renner, 1996). As for university students, critical thinking skills can be a powerful weapon to reach their ends.

Studies of CDA in the EFL Classroom

It is essential to develop higher-order thinking skills in second language learning at a higher level of education. Higher-order thinking skills enhance higher-order learning skills, contributing to a higher language proficiency (Liaw, 2007; Renner, 1996). The significance of cultivating higher-order thinking skills in foreign language classrooms is focused on by educators (Chamot, 1995; Tarvin & Al-Arishi, 1991). CT is a sort of higher-order thinking. CT skills have increasingly been conducted to deal with student achievement and attitudes, promote higher-order thinking skills, and find out the positive influence of CT on learners’ achievement (Davidson & Dunham, 1996). The studies on applying CDA in EFL are all positive and promising. They use CDA to notice the ideology and identity construction (Lobatón & Carolina, 2011). Based on Fairclough’s CDA approach, Cots (2006) and Martínez (2014) proposed practical teaching strategies to raise EFL students’ critical awareness of language use. They deployed CDA to improve EFL students’ reading, writing, and critical thinking skills (Dar et al., 2010; Najarzadegan et al., 2018; Rahimi & Sharififar, 2015). Other studies applied CDA to study EFL textbooks and their representations of ideology (Xiong & Qian, 2012) and gender (Aljuaythin, 2018; Setyono, 2018; Sulaimani & Elyas, 2018). The effectiveness of CDA in EFL learning indicates that the diversity of applying CDA is encouraged to conduct more effective studies on reaching and training strategies. CT ability is influential in academic success and is beneficial to learning; thus, it is vital to find approaches to developing this ability (Amari, 2015). Some empirical evidence from previous studies can support the view that teaching CT skills with foreign language learning is effective (Chapple & Curtis, 2000; Davidson, 1998). A critical approach to language learning is absent in EFL learning. Cots (2006, p.336) pointed out that we should implement CDA in EFL classes to “prioritize the development of the learners’ capacities to examine and judge the world carefully and, if necessary, to change it.”

In language classrooms for university students equipped with specific independent thinking capabilities, the cultivation of CLA should be integrated into the reading pedagogy. Critical reading was put forward by Wallace (2003); she pointed out critical reading is “an awareness of the role that language plays in conveying not just a propositional message but an ideological one” (Wallace, 1992, p.69). The reading process she suggested involves three stages:

pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. The process should deal with three issues: how social groups differ in their reading practices, how particular sorts of texts involve specific production processes designed for certain expected readers, and how contextual factors influence the interpretation of texts as Goatly (2000) argued that reading should read meanings for the text and read meanings into the text. While solving these issues and digging out the implications of the text, CLA is needed and would be developed. EFL learners can construct and reconstruct the world as a part of the social world by developing a critical stance on language use for communicating within the target language. As for English teachers, our teaching approaches need to be re-designed to adjust to the changes in discourse and develop students' critical capacity to these discourses. The workshops are designed to apply CDA in EFL to analyze language critically to give a specific evaluation needed to judge the ongoing events and a stream of information on environmental news items.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research was a qualitative study. Three training workshops were designed and implemented into the reading class for English and Translation majors. English news texts were selected as the reading material, and CDA was adopted to analyze the texts. Students' in-class perception was noted. Three homework tasks of analyzing news texts by CDA were assigned and collected after class. Moreover, an interview was conducted at the end of the workshops to investigate students' opinions towards CDA of English text.

Research Participants

Participants were selected using convenience sampling from the researcher's reading class in the second semester of the academic year 2022 to 2023. The number of participants is eighteen. They major in English or Translation, and their native language is Chinese.

The role of the teacher (researcher) in the workshops was both moderator and instructor. Guidelines were given and the tasks were scaffolded to approach the essence of the theory. CDA practice, which helps cultivate higher-order thinking, entices learners and uncovers the ideological assumptions of texts through teachers' support from the scaffolding of activities (Rahimi & Sharififar, 2015). Although CDA is a valuable resource for educating college students, "CDA must be teachable, and hence comprehensible. If students do not understand us, they can neither learn from us nor criticize us" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 97). Thus, teachers' scaffolding of reading activities is effective. Teachers should conduct more higher-order thinking activities, initially needing teachers' guidance. Brunner (1976) pointed out that when learning occurs, teachers should give explicit instructions to help learners reach their full potential. Reading between the lines and unraveling ideological assumptions is challenging and needs teachers' scaffolding of reading activities.

Research Instruments

Reading Material

When the reading materials are divorced from reality, language is removed from the confined textbooks and made tangible. Thus, reading becomes an interaction instead of a grammatical unit (Amari, 2015). Teaching materials need to be carefully selected to trigger critical thinking, such as environmental news reports, to make them more visible to the hidden ideologies and relations of power (Amari, 2015). News and information on mass media hide ideology and need to be questioned. Reading texts from the real world, such as news items or any other discourse, will motivate learners and help them improve the learning process (Amari, 2015). Since the present study is a qualitative study mainly dealing with the analysis of discourse and learners' perception, reading materials was the essence of the workshops. The reading materials were the selected news items chosen from the present discourse. Six news items were selected; specifically, they come from the Western (the Guardian, CNN, and NBC) and Asian news agencies (the Straits Times and China Daily) on ice melting and mass extinction.

Training Workshops

Workshops were conducted in the reading class to achieve a friendly environment. Every workshop lasted around one hour. Three workshops involved achieving textual meaning of the news with skimming and scanning reading skills, analyzing the news by completing the task form shown in Table 1, asking how and why the news author employed these linguistic devices in their writing, and critically exposing students to CLA and CDA knowledge, which aimed to evoke students' awareness of these essentials in reading. Furthermore, three homework using the task sheet in Table 1 to analyze three news items assigned after class for analyzing the news outlets consolidated the skill of analyzing and revealed students' CT level. Through the above training for students, their CT and CLA development benefited their language learning and thinking patterns for learning in other fields.

Specifically, a task sheet for analyzing news discourse was designed based on some linguistic devices related to CDA, and it examined two aspects of the assigned environmental news items: the lexical and grammatical levels. As seen in Table 1:

Table 1

Task Sheet Form for Reading News

Linguistic devices	Times	Examples
Overlexicalization	<i>e.g., 2</i>	<i>e.g., significant/ vital; decrease/ decline</i>
Repetition	<i>e.g., 2</i>	<i>e.g., melt-6 time; rise-3 times</i>
Figures of speech	<i>e.g., 1</i>	<i>e.g., poster child-polar bear</i>
Nominalization	<i>e.g., 2</i>	<i>e.g., destruction; overfishing</i>
Active and passive voice	Active <i>e.g., 1</i> Passive <i>e.g., 1</i>	Active <i>e.g., we need to act...</i> Passive <i>e.g., the habitat was decimated...</i>
Quotations	<i>e.g., 2</i>	<i>e.g., 1) the expert said, we need to act...</i> <i>2) "the habitat was decimated...", the authority said.</i>
How participants are represented	<i>e.g., 2</i>	<i>the expert; the authority</i>

Interview

The interview was to probe and explore the impact of CDA on learners. Since the interview collected the data to show students' comprehensive knowledge and understanding of CDA, fourteen students, who attended training in three workshops and finished three homework tasks, were chosen to be interviewed. Interview questions were designed to dig deeply into the influence of CDA on participants. Referring to Rahimi and Sharififar's (2015) study, most of the questions dealt with "Do you think?". Five open-ended questions targeted judging the students' CT and the effect of CDA on their learning. The full questionnaire is seen in the Appendix.

Data Collection

There were several steps for collecting data. The first step was concerned with analyzing the news in workshops. Students analyzed news items assisted by the teacher's instruction of CDA. Students' answers to task sheets and perceptions of the CDA of the texts during the workshops were recorded by sending messages at the TenCent Meeting. Secondly, homework for analyzing the news outlets was required to be sent to the teacher's WeChat by the deadlines and was carefully checked. The interview data was noted by the teacher when students were giving answers. Moreover, the study procedures were relayed to the participants in advance to let them be ready to participate. Students were given informed consent.

Data Analysis

Students' in-class answers to task sheets and perceptions of the CDA of the texts were analyzed from the screenshots of messages on the TenCent Meeting. The data from homework tasks were analyzed by comparing homework 1, 2, and 3. Furthermore, the analysis for the interview referred to the Weston et al. (2001)'s codebook for analyzing the interview data, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2

Example from Codebook

Type of Evaluation Statement: The nature of the professor's evaluation of the teaching and learning		
Code	Definition	Key words or phrases from transcripts
POS	Positive. Any comment indicating evaluation of any aspect of the teaching and learning which is explicitly stated as positive.	Key words: good, well, okay Positive descriptors: relaxed, happy "I thought they were pretty happy."
NEG	Negative. Any comment indicating evaluation of any negative aspect of the teaching and learning which is explicitly stated as negative.	Key words: bad, terrible "I'm a bad model: I lose stuff." "I felt rushed." "I have too much stuff here." not as good as I wanted."
N	Neutral. Neutral comments that are neither positive nor negative. This includes descriptive comments about the teaching and learning that do not include an evaluation.	"This is exactly what I planned to say."

Type of Evaluation Statement: The nature of the professor's evaluation of the teaching and learning		
Code	Definition	Key words or phrases from transcripts
MX	Mixed. The evaluation keeps going back and forth. It could be positive, then negative, and then back to positive. It could be presenting both sides and then balancing the good and bad.	"There were good parts and bad "It went okay. But then I started to talk too much. But it was better than the last time."

Students' answers to interview questions were classified by their evaluation statements for learning the critical thinking principles. The codebook provided a clear guideline for marking the transcripts of the interview data.

Results and Discussion

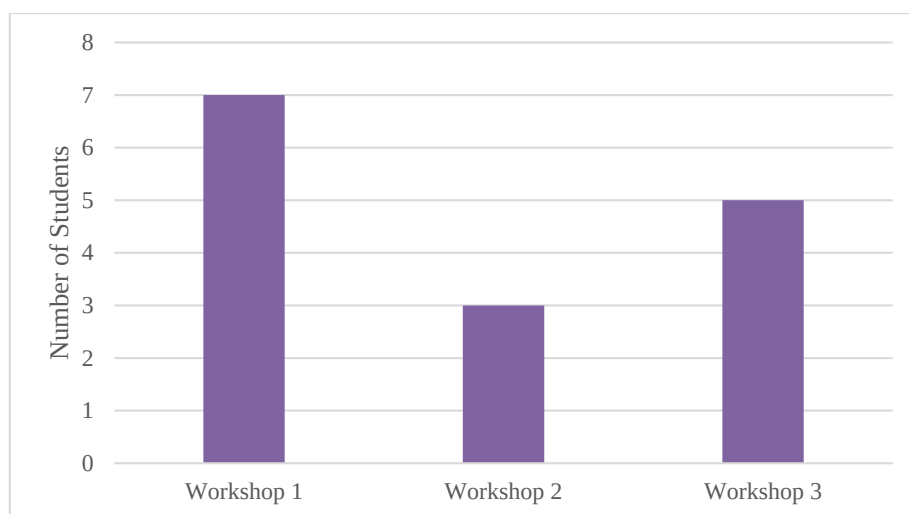
From the findings of students' perceptions during workshops, homework tasks, and answers to the interview questions, students' CT and CLA were cultivated by applying CDA in reading news articles. At the same time, the impact of CDA was identified as well.

Increasing CT and CLA through CDA

The increasing perception during the workshops and the progress students achieved in homework tasks indicated the development of students' CT and CLA.

Students' Increasing Perception in Workshops

With the training in applying CDA to analyze the news texts, students' perception of CT and CLA from Workshops 1 to 3 was on the right track. The number of students who gave answers to task sheets during workshops revealed students' perception. As shown in Figure 1, seven students gave answers to questions on CDA raised by the teacher in Workshop 1, which showed their readiness to explore the news text with CDA. In Workshop 2, fewer students gave answers to the task sheet on CDA, however, the answers were completer and more accurate than that of Workshop 1. The good tendency was that an increasing number of students gave complete and accurate answers to the task sheet in Workshop 3. The specific answers to the task sheets were shown in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Figure 1*Number of Students' Responses in Workshops*

As for the first Workshop, the students were interested in the research topic after the researcher demonstrated the whole research and the aims of the workshops. The analysis was conducted after perceiving the literal meaning of linguistic devices. When news item 1 was analyzed, students actively participated in typing answers to the platforms, as shown in Table 3. Responses to the literal Chinese meaning of linguistic devices (e.g., 名词化), frequency of repeated words (e.g., nine times), overlexicalization (e.g., destroyed/ devastating), and the usage of passive voice (e.g., was pushed) were given by some students who were engaged in the training of CDA.

Table 3*Students' Answers to Questions of Workshop 1*

Pointers	Students' Answers
Literal Meaning	Student 2 - <i>figures of speech</i> ; Student 16 - <i>nominalization</i> ;
Repetition	Student 2, 6, and 4 - <i>nine times</i> ; Student 8 - <i>nine times; twice</i> ; Student 15 and 16 - <i>nine times; seven times</i>
Overlexicalization	Student 2 - <i>destruction; destroyed; disturbances; devastating</i> ; Student 16 - <i>destroyed</i>
Passive Voice	Student 7 - <i>was driven; were pushed; objective</i> ; Student 16 - <i>were pushed</i>

As Van Dijk (2001) and Pennycook (2001) proposed, CDA provided a new perspective on language use, which 1) was questionable and problematic, 2) reflected ideological processes, and 3), at the same time, affected those processes (as cited in Cots, 2006). Students were asked why the author uses this linguistic device, such as nominalization, instead of verbs. Then, the representation of the ideological process of hiding the act will be identified by students. This

is an effective thinking process for learners when they read. However, this is absent for students reading English articles. Students' performance in the three workshops improved. In the first Workshop, students found little information about each linguistic device, and the task was time-consuming. In the following Workshops 2 and 3, an increasing number of students can identify the information of all linguistic devices and show their answers in the completed format within a limited period, as shown in Tables 4 and 5.

After demonstrating the implied meaning of using these linguistic devices in the matching activity in the first Workshop, students did the task efficiently and effectively. Table 4 showed that three students gave responses to the task, and student seven was prominent and found the answers to four linguistic devices. According to students' answers, the identification of repetition and figures of speech were significant. Students merely spent around fifteen minutes identifying these linguistic devices, typing, and sending them on the platform. Compared with the perception of the first Workshop, their answers were more accurate and done in a shorter time.

Table 4

Students' Answers to the Task Sheet of Workshop 2

Student No.	Linguistic Devices	Students' Answers
Student 7	Repetition	<i>coastal/coastal regions/coastal areas/coastal sea level</i> - six times <i>rising sea levels</i> – three times <i>accelerated-</i> twice <i>marine disasters</i> - twice
	Passive and Active voice	None
	Figures of Speech	Metaphor: <i>China's coastal areas. from the rising sea level</i> , comparing sea level rise to threats and risks; Contrast: <i>Last year, the country ..normal years</i> , The gravity of the problem was highlighted by comparing the height of the sea level in the most recent year with that in normal years; Parallelism: <i>the expansion of seawater, and the melting of glaciers and polar ice caps</i> , The multiple factors contributing to sea level rise are highlighted through the juxtaposition of different causes.
	Overlexicalization	The use of verb expressions such as <i>face growing threats</i> and <i>magnify the impact</i> highlights the impact and threat of rising sea levels on coastal areas.
	Quotations	<i>According to an assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</i> , the article supports the argument by citing the assessment results of authoritative institutions.
Student 9	Repetition	<i>coastal</i> - eight times, <i>sea</i> - twelve times; <i>level</i> – eleven times
	Passive and Active voice	Passive voice: none Active voice: Twelve sentences
	Figures of Speech	None
	Overlexicalization	None
	Quotations	None

Student No.	Linguistic Devices	Students' Answers
Student 17	Repetition	<i>costal sea level</i> – four times; <i>rising</i> – five times
	Passive and Active voice	None
	Figures of Speech	None
	Overlexicalization	None
	Quotations	None

Compared with students' answers to the task sheet of Workshop 2, an increasing number of students gave complete and accurate responses within a limited time, around fifteen minutes. Five students gave answers to the task. Student 14 gave a prominent answer, as shown in Table 5, involving the information to all linguistic devices. All the responses were appropriate, while more over-lexis and participants could be identified. Another prominent answer was from student three sent to the platform, which also gave the complete solutions, as seen in Table 4. The student found the appropriate information on the linguistic devices and underlined the signal words of passive voice. However, more repetition, over-lexis, and participants should be identified.

Table 5

Students' Answers to the Task Sheet of Workshop 3

Student No.	Linguistic Devices	Students' Answers
Student 14	Overlexicalization	<i>restore = save</i>
	Repetition	<i>effort</i> – three times; <i>endangered</i> – three times; <i>population</i> – twice; <i>decline</i> – seven times
	Figures of Speech	None
	Nominalization	<i>restoration; adaptation</i>
	Passive and Active voice	1. <i>said Aruho, adding that the animal <u>is believed to be extinct</u> in most of its natural habitats.</i> 2. <i>As we speak, the mountain bongo antelope <u>has suffered massive decline</u> and we are left with less than 100 of the species in the wild.</i>
	Quotations	<i>“As we speak, the mountain bongo antelope has suffered massive decline and its decline in this area therefore means its decline in the world,” <u>said Aruho.</u></i>
	Participants	<i>Robert</i>
Student 3	Overlexicalization	<i>restoration = save</i>
	Repetition	<i>decline</i> – seven times
	Figures of Speech	<i>repetition</i>
	Nominalization	<i>restoration; extinction</i>
	Passive and Active voice	<i>As we speak, the mountain bongo antelope has suffered massive decline and <u>we are left with</u> less than 100 of the species in the wild. What makes this animal special is that <u>it is only found</u> in the wild in Kenya and its decline in this area therefore means its decline in the world,.....</i>
	Quotations	<i>“As we speak, the mountain bongo antelope has suffered massive decline and its decline in this area therefore means its decline in the world,” <u>said Aruho.</u></i>

Student No.	Linguistic Devices	Students' Answers
	Participants	<i>Robert Aruho</i>
Student 7	Overlexicalization	None
	Repetition	None
	Figures of Speech	None
	Nominalization	None
	Passive and Active voice	Active voice: <i>The mountain bongo <u>has seen a dramatic decline</u> in numbers in the last few decades.</i> Passive voice: 1. <i>Intensified efforts <u>have been made by the Mount</u> ...from extinction;</i> 2. <i>A milestone <u>was reached this year</u> by staff members ...wild.</i>
	Quotations	None
	Participants	None
Student 16	Overlexicalization	None
	Repetition	<i>endangered</i> – eight times; <i>save</i> – four times; <i>effort</i> – eight times; <i>forests</i> – six times
	Figures of Speech	None
	Nominalization	None
	Passive and Active voice	None
	Quotations	None
Student 17	Overlexicalization	None
	Repetition	<i>decline</i> – seven times, <i>wild</i> – seven times
	Figures of Speech	None
	Nominalization	None
	Passive and Active voice	None
	Quotations	None
	Participants	None

As for the final part of Workshop 3, the researcher proposed what quality should be noted when reading; one student answered “critical” promptly.

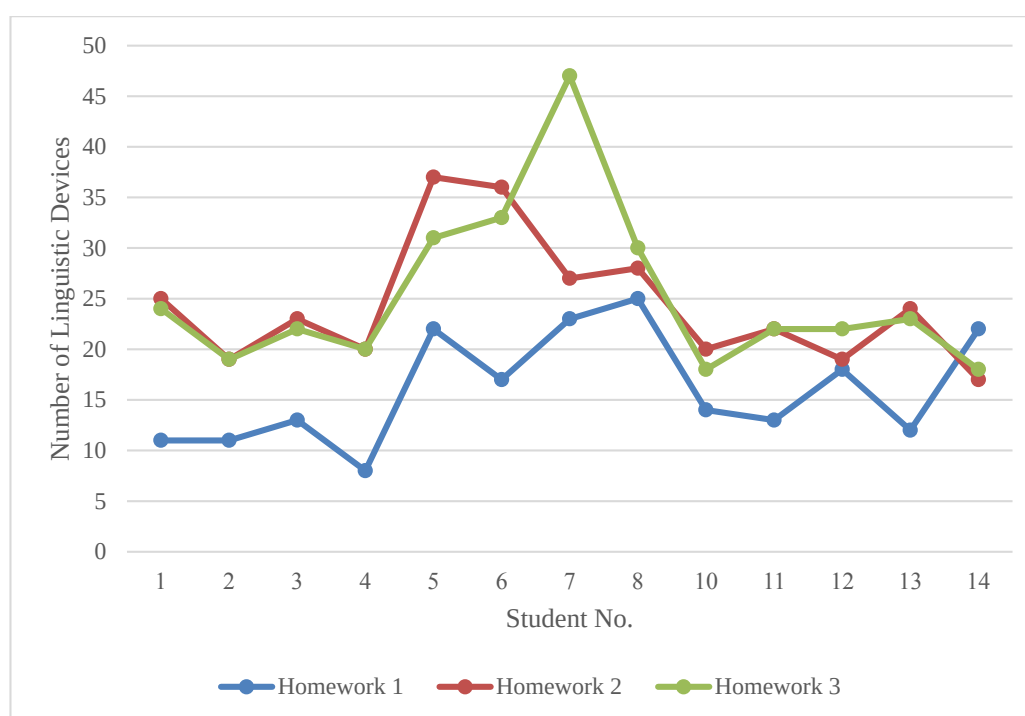
Their speed in conducting tasks during the workshop indicates students’ motivation and enthusiasm for analyzing the news text with CDA, which coincides with the findings of Hamdi’s study; that is, the enthusiasm of participants in the present study shows their readiness to explore (Hamdi, 2022). The increasing information of linguistic devices they found means that the reaction of learners proves that critical learning ability can be developed through the appropriate training. It coincides with the findings of Dar et al. (2010), that is, a growing ability to question assists in better learning.

Students’ Progress in Homework

The evidence of students’ increasing CT and CLA can be indicated by their progress in their three homework tasks. Four students merely handed one or two homework so that their homework was not involved in the analysis. Three homework tasks of fourteen students were analyzed. As shown in Figure 2, the number of linguistic devices identified by students was increasing. The identification of linguistic devices was nearly the same as in homework 2 and 3, meanwhile, students identified many more devices in homework 2 and 3 than that of homework 1. According to Figure 2, students 1 and 7 made significant progress in their homework tasks, and the specific answers to tasks were shown in Tables 6 and 7.

Figure 2

Number of Linguistic Devices Identified in Homework



As shown in Table 6, three homework done by student seven revealed significant progress. The student can not only find out more over-lexis but also can categorize these synonyms with varied themes such as “melt: dissolve, thaw, liquefy,” “lost: misplaced, missing, vanished” presented in homework 3; moreover, the student can directly mention that verbs are transformed into nouns, for instance, the verb form of “melt” was transformed into noun form “melt”. Another prominent progress was in finding participants in the news discourse; no participant was identified in the first homework task; nevertheless, both aggregated mass and individuals were found in the following homework, for example, “scientists, a new study” and “a study in Communication Earth & Environment, Povl Abrahamsen, Shenjie Zhou.”

Table 6

Homework Tasks of Student Seven

Linguistic Devices	Homework No.	Student's Answers
Repetition	Homework 1	<i>marine</i> - six times; <i>extinction</i> - seven times; <i>warming</i> – six times
	Homework 2	<i>Antarctic</i> – ten times; <i>ocean</i> -eight times; <i>deep</i> – seven times; <i>water</i> – seven times; <i>sea ice</i> – four times; <i>bottom</i> – three times; <i>global warming</i> – twice; <i>climate change</i> – twice; <i>volume</i> – twice; <i>saltiness</i> – twice; <i>circulation</i> – twice; <i>human-caused carbon pollution</i> - twice
	Homework 3	<i>Greenland</i> - nine times; <i>ice</i> - thirteen times; <i>melt/melting/melts</i> -twelve times; <i>record</i> - three times; <i>summer</i> - four times; <i>water</i> - six times; <i>billion</i> - four times; <i>tons</i> - four times
Overlexicalization	Homework 1	<i>extinction/ die-off/ catastrophe/ demise/ lose/ disappear/ destruction</i>

Linguistic Devices	Homework No.	Student's Answers
	Homework 2	<i>far-reaching consequences/ crucial/ excess</i>
	Homework 3	Record: <i>Achieve/ establish/ set/ break</i> ; Melt: <i>Dissolve/ thaw/ liquefy</i> ; Ice: <i>Frozen water/ frost</i> ; Lost: <i>Misplaced/ missing/ vanished</i> ; Amount: <i>Quantity/ volume/ number</i>
Figures of speech	Homework 1	None
	Homework 2	Metaphor: <i>As the water freezes, it pushes out salt and as salty water is denser, it sinks to the bottom of the ocean.</i>
	Homework 3	Metaphor: <i>the melt massive enough to cover California in more than four feet (1.25 meters) of water.</i> Hyperbole: <i>That's more than 140 trillion gallons (532 trillion liters) of water.</i> Personification: <i>Greenland blocking...either super-charges that or dampens climate-related melting.</i> Allusion: <i>last summer shattered all records.</i>
Nominalization	Homework 1	<i>emission; depletion; a lack of; habitat destruction; overfishing; coastal pollution</i>
	Homework 2	None
	Homework 3	<i>melt; record</i>
Active and passive voice	Homework 1	<i>Will be determined</i>
	Homework 2	<i>were first visited; less carbon can be absorbed by</i>
	Homework 3	Active voice: <i>Greenland lost a record amount of ice during an extra warm 2019; Last summer shattered all records with 586 billion tons of ice melting.</i> Passive voice: none
Quotations	Homework 1	<i>WASHINGTON (AFP); said the paper's authors; according to UN climate experts; wrote scientists Malin Pinsky and Alexa Fredston; the paper said</i>
	Homework 2	1. <i>"Some of these sections were first visited... sampled regions in the Weddell Sea,"</i> 2. <i>"We used to think that changes ... But these key observations ... over just a few decades,"</i> 3. <i>"To have combined decades of ship-based observations and ... will form in the future,"</i> 4. <i>"The ongoing changes in ... in the direction that we want."</i>
	Homework 3	1. <i>"Not only is the Greenland ice sheet melting, but it's melting at a faster and faster pace," said study lead author Ingo Sasgen.</i> 2. <i>"Last year's Greenland melt added 0.06 inches (1.5 millimeters) to global sea level rise. That sounds like a tiny amount but 'in our world it's huge, that's astounding,'" said study co-author Alex Gardner, a NASA ice scientist.</i>
How participants are represented	Homework 1	None
	Homework 2	<i>scientist; Povl Abrahamsen, Holly Ayres, Shenjie Zhou, Shenjie Zhou</i>
	Homework 3	<i>A new study; a study in Communications Earth & Environment; lead author Ingo Sasgen; study co-author Alex Gardner</i>

Similarly, student 1 made noticeable progress in doing homework tasks. As shown in the comparison in Table 7 below, the identification of linguistic devices was increasing and more accurate by comparing homework 1, 2 and 3. Only one repeated word, “extinction,” in the task sheet of homework 1 was found, while two and three repeated keywords in task sheets of homework 2 and 3 were identified, which were “ocean water, shrinking” and “melt, Greenland, summer.” Similarly, the identification of nominalization and quotations was on the rising tendency. The range of participants he found was enlarged, as merely aggregated participants such as experts and fishermen were identified in the task sheet of homework 1.

Table 7*Homework Tasks of Student 1*

Linguistic Devices	Homework No.	Student's Answers
Repetition	Homework 1	<i>extinction</i> – eight times
	Homework 2	<i>ocean water</i> – seven times; <i>shrinking</i> - three times
	Homework 3	<i>melt</i> - sixteen times; <i>Greenland</i> - thirteen times; <i>summer</i> - four times
Overlexicalization	Homework 1	<i>catastrophe</i>
	Homework 2	<i>play a crucial role</i> 、 <i>has a vital role</i>
	Homework 3	<i>warm</i> 、 <i>sea</i>
Figures of speech	Homework 1	None
	Homework 2	repetition
	Homework 3	None
Nominalization	Homework 1	<i>emission</i>
	Homework 2	<i>observations</i> ; <i>variability</i> ; <i>circulation</i>
	Homework 3	<i>measurements</i> ; <i>melting</i>
Active and passive voice	Homework 1	<i>...the best-case and worst-case scenarios will be determined by the choices that...</i>
	Homework 2	Active voice: <i>is heating up and shrinking</i> ; <i>They also circulate...</i> Passive voice: <i>were first visited</i> ; <i>can be absorbed by</i>
	Homework 3	Active voice: <i>there were many years when...</i> ; <i>Last year's Greenland melt added...</i> ; <i>That sounds like a...</i> Passive voice : none
Quotations	Homework 1	1. <i>But limiting planetary warming to 2 deg C above pre- industrial levels will stave off such a catastrophe, said the paper's authors, Justin Penn and Curtis Deutsch, both affiliated with the University of Washington and Princeton University.</i> 2. <i>"Because marine extinctions... time to turn the tide in favor of ocean life,"</i> 3. <i>Exactly where the future falls ... and coastal pollution."</i>
	Homework 2	1. <i>this vital water mass is in decline, due to long-term changes in winds and sea ice, according to...</i> ; 2. <i>Povl Abrahamsen, a physical oceanographer at BAS and co-author, said in a statement;</i>

Linguistic Devices	Homework No.	Student's Answers
		3. Alessandro Silvano from the University of Southampton in the UK, a co-author of the study, said in a statement.
	Homework 3	<i>according to satellite measurements reported...; ...a study in Communications Earth & Environment; ...said study lead author Ingo Sasgen; ...said study co-author Alex Gardner; ...Gardner said; ...said Ruth Mottram; Mottram and several other outside scientists said...; In her own study this month in the International Journal of Climatology; New York University ice scientist David Holland</i>
How participants are represented	Homework 1	<i>scientists; experts; fisherman; paper's authors</i>
	Homework 2	<i>the British Antarctic Survey; Povl Abrahamsen; Alessandro Silvano; Holly Ayres; scientists; Shenjie Zhou</i>
	Homework 3	<i>Ingo Sasgen; Alex Gardner; Mottram; David Holland</i>

From the comparison of students' homework tasks, some learners can apply their understanding of CDA to the reading after the task. Their capacity to be critical is on the rising tendency as well. Although the teacher assigned the homework tasks, their perception of CT and CLA for homework tasks, to some extent, can provide evidence to support their increasing CT and CLA through the CDA training. Applying CDA to language teaching makes students become better, more active, and critical readers to disclose the hidden meanings of texts (Wallace, 1992). This is the real significance for reading comprehension, and metaphors, nominalization, and over-lexicalization, which are abstract forms, can be taught concretely in real-world texts. At the same time, students can collect, analyze, and interpret discourse data by themselves within their own experience.

The impact of CDA on learners

The interview findings showed the positive effect of CDA on students. Students' answers to the five interview questions indicated five aspects that impacted them: their changing opinion of the English language, increasing interest in English, ability to criticize, interest in analyzing and paying attention to the essentiality of CT, and motivation to learn English as shown in Table 8:

Table 8

Codebook for Interview Data

Code	Question No.	Example Transcripts from Students
POS (positive)	Q1. Changing opinion to English language	1. Reading with thinking: Student 1 - <i>in-depth understanding of the texts; ...</i> 2. Assisting language learning: Student 1 - <i>help me to better understand English grammar; vocabulary and usage, learned to appreciate the diversity and beauty of English;</i>
	Q2. Interesting language	Evidences for "interesting": Student 1 - <i>understand the logic and way of thinking behind language, discover the diversity and flexibility of languages, showing unlimited creativity; ...</i>

Code	Question No.	Example Transcripts from Students
	Q3. Ability to criticize	Student 1 - <i>When I read a Chinese text, I use my critical thinking and analytical skills to assess the language quality, logical rigor and depth of thought of the text; ...</i>
	Q4. Interested in analyzing text, essentiality	1. Essentiality: Student 1 - <i>In modern society, we are constantly bombarded with various opinions and information, and critical thinking helps me to distinguish between true and false information, important and secondary information, and make decisions based on facts and logic.; ...</i> 2. Interested in analyzing text: Student 14 - <i>think of these principles when I read articles and will apply them to article analysis;...</i>
	Q5. Being motivated to learn English	1. Clearly: Student 1 - <i>learning these principles has really inspired me with greater enthusiasm and motivation for learning English as a language”, and gave extensions such as “made me appreciate the infinite possibilities of this language, ...</i> 2. Evidences: Student 2 - <i>I will try to extend my horizon and English ability by learning different articles of different themes;...</i>
NEG (negative)	Q3	Student 11 - <i>I have not yet been able to learn the ideas and abilities to criticize Chinese well.</i>
N (neutral)	Q5	Student 7 - <i>it may vary from person to person...</i>

Before the training, students' understanding of the English language is to gain the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students' opinions changed. Students changed the idea of learning English and started to rethink their learning. One student mentioned that the learning changed from being *very boring* to being *very vivid*, as seen in one student's answer in Excerpt 1:

Excerpt 1

Before: *very boring with just some monotonous and repetitive words and sentences;*
After: *many things in English are very vivid* (Student 11).

Learning a language is not merely to understand the surface and literal meaning but also to achieve an in-depth understanding of the texts, different interpretations of a simple sentence, and elements behind the language demonstrated by some students. As seen in Excerpt 2:

Excerpt 2

in-depth understanding of the texts (Student 1); *A simple sentence can be interpreted differently if it is described in a different way* (Student 6); *when we read some materials, we should pay more attention to those elements behind the language itself* (Student 9).

Most students showed their interest in language learning and showed their readiness to find out more about languages. Verbs of “discover, found, pay attention to” were used by students to express their start of interest in language learning. They discovered the diversity, flexibility, and fun of languages. At the same time, they found something the text wanted to tell with plenty of exciting phenomena they had never noticed before. And they were ready to “understand and explore” the language. They intend to understand the way of thinking behind

the language and further explore the hidden meaning of every language. Even one student put her interest into practice by looking for synonyms in her daily reading as shown in Excerpt 3:

Excerpt 3

I understand the logic and way of thinking behind language, discover the diversity and flexibility of languages, language is constantly evolving and adapting to the needs of the times, showing unlimited creativity (Student 1); every language has a hidden meaning and needs to be further explored (Student 4); I am in the habit of looking for the synonyms contained in the article, as well as its subject, and its over-linguistic usage (Student 14).

Some students said their ability to criticize different languages has improved. They can critically assess the quality of both English and Chinese language by using critical thinking and analytical skills and keep critical thinking in learning. One student even mentioned that she has the skills to analyze texts more comprehensively and critically for any other language one is familiar with as seen in Excerpt 4:

Excerpt 4

When I read a Chinese text, I use my critical thinking and analytical skills to assess the language quality, logical rigor and depth of thought of the text and learning these key principles not only improved my English reading ability, but also my native Chinese reading level. Now, I can be more sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of the text and give appropriate comments and feedback (Student 1); keep critical thinking in my learning and daily life and no matter in English or Chinese, she has learned to further analyze the text to help me understand the text deeply (Student 9).

Some students directly mentioned that they were interested in analyzing text. They will think of critical principles when they read articles. One student mentioned the process of their change for reading. Before they understood the topic of an article by doing the reading questions, they developed a strong interest in text analysis by learning these critical rules as seen in Excerpt 5:

Excerpt 5

I have developed a strong interest in text analysis by studying these critical rules. Before this, many times we could only understand the article and options by connecting with the context and grasping the topic when doing reading questions (Student 12);

I became more interested in analyzing texts (Student 11);

I am more interested in analyzing text and I believe that these principles are crucial in my daily life (Student 8).

This is in line with the findings of a previous study, which found a considerable improvement in applying discourse skills in analyzing news items identified by the participants (Hamdi, 2022). Students' awareness of the role of society in effecting a positive change is developed. They realize that language has the power to judge world matters critically. One student mentioned that modern society is full of information, which must be distinguished between true and false. Thus, critical thinking skills are required. One student proposed that high-quality judgment is needed in our lives, and critical thinking could assist as seen in Excerpt 6:

Excerpt 6

In modern society, we are constantly bombarded with various opinions and information, and critical thinking helps me distinguish between true and false information, important and secondary information, and make decisions based on facts and logic. This is very important for my personal growth, interaction with others, and participation in social and public affairs and by developing critical thinking and analytical skills, I can better tackle complex challenges, make informed decisions, develop independent thinking, and foster interdisciplinary learning and innovation (Student 1);

High-quality judgment to guide our life and work; Not to argue or refute. It makes our thought processes and outcomes more rational, objective, and accurate (Student 4).

All students expressed that they were motivated to learn the English language. Some students pointed out that they were inspired and gained stronger motivation to learn English. They gave further evidence of how they were motivated. For instance, one student said that learning critical principles increased their confidence in learning English and inspired their determination to challenge higher goals for English language learning. That is to say, workshops assist in developing independent learning and critical thinking skills as seen in Excerpt 7:

Excerpt 7

Learning these principles has really inspired me with greater enthusiasm and motivation for learning English as a language and gave extensions such as revealed to me the mystery and charm of English, made me appreciate the infinite possibilities of this language..... (Student 1);

I think I have gained stronger motivation for learning the English language, and compensated, because these principles are very practical, and I will always keep them in mind for my future studies (Student 8);

I have become more motivated to learn English than before because I have mastered some learning skills and realized that deep learning English is not that difficult (Student 11).

However, one student admitted that she has yet to be able to criticize Chinese. In contrast, several students did not point out that they were motivated to learn the English language, as one mentioned that “it may vary from person to person.” That is to say, further training is needed to deepen the cultivation of CT.

From the discussion above, the research questions are answered. Integrating CDA in English reading classes helps raise students’ CLA, and students are motivated in English reading. CT, to some extent, is cultivated through teaching CDA.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study employed a qualitative research method to conduct an empirical study on applying CDA to English reading teaching. Students’ perceptions during the workshops and students’ homework tasks indicated students’ CLA and significant understanding of CT in English reading. In contrast, students’ answers to the interview questions implied the positive impact of CT on students.

The positive findings of applying CDA in developing learners' CT and CLA provide the value of CDA in the English language or even other languages. The significant implication of the study agrees with the view of Thornbury (2009), which demonstrates that the CDA teaching approach is conducted by connecting language learning to driving social changes. As for EFL in higher education, reading materials are confined. As for the university where I work, English reading materials are the texts from the unified textbooks assigned by my college (College of Foreign Languages), and teachers are strictly required to teach the same texts with the same number in one semester. The variety and authenticity of texts are not guaranteed as Wallace (1992) proposes that conventional reading classes should be improved by increasingly using more provocative texts. Students' attitude is empowered to choose provocative texts and detect them from a CDA view. Thus, students' active and positive attitudes toward CDA are promoted (Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2012). It implied that teachers should have the right to select texts related to students' majors and suitable for students' English level, for example, environmental news items for students majoring in the science of the environment. The authentic texts might be complex for some students; as mentioned by Amari (2015), the texts should be revised for lower-level students.

Wallace (1992) proposed that conventional reading classes should be improved by connecting the reading activity and texts to the broader social context and a method or framework helping to uncover the hidden content and ideology underlying texts. As Zinkgraf (2003) mentions, EFL learners have the risk of transferring the hidden ideologies if they become teachers in the future. Teachers should develop CDA as their teaching method and a tool for interaction among language learners, that is, our students. Developing CDA is ideal for conducting task-based teaching, which could be considered in further training. Learners will benefit from CDA and understand the language and how to use it to achieve communicative goals in varied contexts.

Moreover, an EFL learning environment can more accurately reflect how language is used in reality and encourage learners toward their goal of language proficiency (Amari, 2015). For students, they could build the mini-corpus for targeted discourse (Amari, 2015). Students could compare varied news with the same topic on different platforms, such as online news reports or short videos on TikTok (Amari, 2015).

The present study has some limitations. News texts should align with the participants' language proficiency levels for discourse analysis. Close observations are needed due to the varied learning levels. Finally, more workshops should be conducted to enhance learners' development of CT because it is not a short process.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

Please answer the following questions extensively:

1. By learning these critical principles, do you think your opinion has changed toward English language?
2. By learning these critical principles, do you think language is a more interesting phenomenon?
3. By learning these critical principles, do you think you have reached an ability to criticize texts not only in English but also in your own language, Chinese?
4. By learning these critical principles, have you become more interested in analyzing texts? Do you think learning the critical principles is essential in your life? Why do you think so?
5. After learning these principles, are you motivated more than before to learn English language?