

Can't I Read Without Thinking?¹

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INTRODUCTION

"Can't I read without thinking?" ask some of my students on a critical reading course which has been running since 1996 at the Advanced English Unit of the School of Foreign Languages, Bogazici University, and at the English Language Department of Yildiz Technical University only recently. I usually tell the following Charlie Brown joke in reply;

"Lucy writes: 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Laurel N. Hardy'. Charlie Brown explains: 'That's Thomas Hardy'. She replies 'Really?' He responds with: 'I can't believe you read this whole book'. Lucy: 'I read the first word 'on'. Charlie then questions: 'How can you write a book report if you've only read the first word?' 'No problem' says Lucy, and writes 'Right from the first word I knew this was going to be a good book'... [Finally] Charlie says: 'I can see you're going to be a lover of great literature' to which Lucy responds: 'Those who can't do, fake it!'"

(taken from Bernhardt 1991:185)

Later I comment that if they want to read properly, and not "fake it", then reading without thinking is not possible. I discuss this claim as my first task in this paper. I then present Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which I see as a pedagogically useful instrument enabling the practice of the sorts of thinking skills so necessary for reading efficiently, before I consider the issue of the teachability of reading and thinking skills. Finally I describe the critical reading course that I run by outlining the procedures that I adopt with my students, the concepts I teach, the list of questions which I have put together with my students and which we have found beneficial in getting us thinking about a reading text.

WHAT IS READING?

Schema Theory (Anderson 1977, Spiro 1978, 1979, *Script Theory* (Schank & Abelson 1977), or *Frame Analysis* (Tannen 1979, Minsky 1982), have provided an influential alternative to the "traditional" notion of reading, which observed meaning

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to be embedded “in the utterance” as Carrell & Eisterhold (1987:218) define it in their article on schema theory.² The grounds for Schema Theory probably go as far back as Kant (1781/1963 in Carrell & Eisterhold 1987:218), who stated that new information can only have meaning when the individual can relate it to what he/she already knows. A good summary of Schema Theory is provided by Spiro (1978 in Carrell 1987:147) as follows:

Schema-theory research has shown that the most efficient processing of text is interactive, a combination of top-down and bottom-up processing modes. Top-down processing consists of making predictions about the text based on prior experience or background knowledge, and then checking the text for confirmation or refutation of those predictions. Bottom-up processing implies decoding individual linguistic units (e.g. phonemes, graphemes, words), building textual meaning from the smallest units to the largest, and then modifying preexisting background knowledge and current predictions on the basis of information encountered in the text. Skilled readers constantly shift their mode of processing, accommodating to the demands of a particular text and a particular reading situation. Less skilled readers tend to over-rely on one process or the other and suffer deleterious effects on comprehension as a result.

The important elements of this quotation are:

1. Reading is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. This has significant implications, one of which is that a text cannot carry meaning on its own, and that there may be different readings, or interpretations, of the same text.³
2. The information in the text has to be compatible with the “schema”, or the system of knowledge, already existing in the mind of the reader. Meaning can only be got out of a text if, at least, some of the ideas, values, facts, genre, language, style etc. represented in the text are in our repertoire of knowledge.
3. **Predicting** is an important skill for comprehending a text; however, it is only through our existing knowledge that we can predict. That is, the more we know about the text we are about to read, the more we are able to limit our processing choices, which increases our reading efficiency.
4. **Acknowledging** incoming information, or “building textual meaning from the smallest units to the largest” as the quotation puts it, is an important skill in reading.
5. Reading involves “checking the text”, or what I call **comparing** what one knows about that text and texts of that sort with the actual text.
6. “Confirming or refuting our predictions” suggests a confirmation or modification of our preexisting knowledge, and thus there is a need for **evaluating** and **decision-making** skills as a part of the reading process.⁴

7. Reading involves an ability “to shift modes of processing accommodating to the demands of a particular text and a particular reading situation”, which suggests skills usually associated with intelligence, such as adaptability, practicality, and quick-thinking.

I should note here that points 3, 4, 5 and 6 are the same skills necessary for any academic inquiry⁵: hypothesizing or identifying a problem, collecting data, analysing the data by comparing and evaluating, and confirming or refuting the hypothesis, and solving or restating the problem. To this sequence, I should like to add **communicating** conclusions or opinions to interested others, which is customarily left out of the definition of “thinking” and which appears to be missing from the cycle of academic inquiry. I believe it is often the case that people share with others what they have read or found out at the end of an academic inquiry. It may well be that many readers who are not skilled in this order of thinking are less efficient as readers.

The second point is that the two “modes of processing” outlined in Spiro's (1978 in Carrell 1987:147) quotation on page 3 in this text, are both included in the higher level “academic” thinking process that I have outlined above, and that these two lower-level thinking modes correspond to the deductive versus the inductive modes of thinking (also called analysing and synthesizing), which are much emphasized in formal logic. If this is the case, then we can suggest that reading is an activity which is closely associated with thinking; therefore, it seems sensible to suggest that considering the development of thinking, or reasoning skills, should be an indispensable component of any planning for teaching reading.

If the above assumptions are correct, then I can also suggest that there is a lot to be gained from Fairclough's (1989, 1990, 1991, 1992) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. Since it follows that the more deeply we can analyse a text and form opinions about it, that is the more we can be “critical” of it, the more efficient our reading will be for all purposes, and not just for “democratic citizenship” as Fairclough (1992:3) suggests. I will turn to this issue of how CDA can help in the teaching of reading and thinking skills, but firstly, in the following section, I will outline CDA and its basic principles.

FAIRCLOUGH'S CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

According to Fairclough (1992:10-11), every instance of language use has three dimensions: it is a spoken or written language **text**, it is an **interaction** between people involving processes of production and interpretation of this text, and it is also a **social action**. The relationship between social action and text is mediated by interaction: that is, the nature of the interaction, how the text is produced and interpreted depends upon the social action in which it is embedded, and the nature of the language and the style of the text depends upon and constitutes the ways in

which it is produced and interpreted, also forming the social action. CDA itself also has three dimensions: the *description* of the language properties of the text, the *interpretation* of the interaction processes and their relationship to the text by making use of our knowledge of the wider society and our knowledge of similar texts, and the *explanation* of how the text and the interaction processes relate to the social action, in terms of their functions and effects in society (see Figure 1).

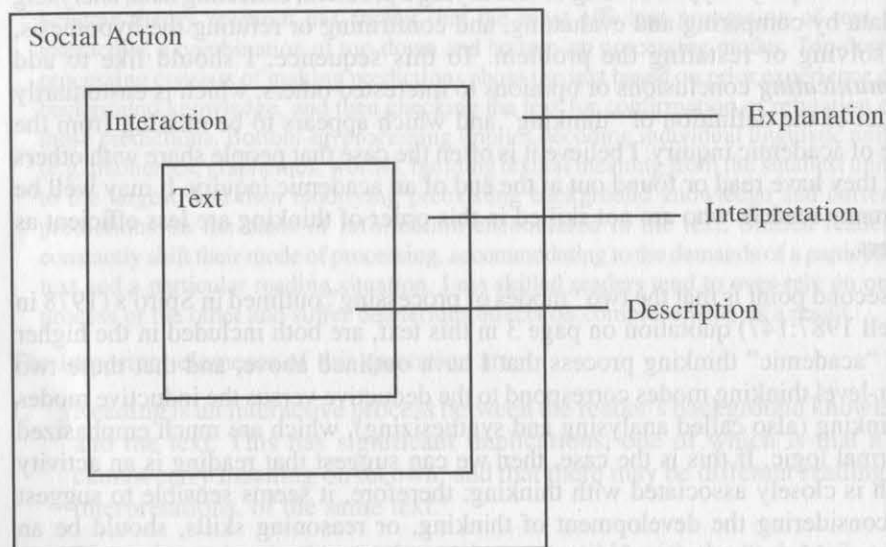


Figure 1: Fairclough's CDA Framework

SOME KEY CONCEPTS IN CDA

Both Fairclough's framework and the underlying concepts on which CDA is based are presented to the students in the first part of the course. Below I briefly gloss some of them, in the simplified language that I present them to my students. In the lessons, after the students have read the assigned relevant articles (the Reading List is in Appendix A), these concepts are discussed in more detail with elaborations and example. Some of the concepts are related to theory, while others are to do with language and its use. The terms are in alphabetical order to suggest that they are equally significant in CDA.

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

1 CONVERSATIONALISATION

One of Fairclough's observations about the social changes taking place in the Western world, is that, more and more, the aspects traditionally thought to belong to the

private spheres of our lives are penetrating into the public spheres. To be precise, language used in institutions, such as classroom talk or doctor-patient talk, is becoming more and more like a conversation between friends. This process is called *conversationalisation*. For example, doctors and teachers tend to use more indirect language with their patients and students these days, typically the use of tentative language marked more and more by the use of phrases such as "it seems to me that..." or modals such as "may", "can" and "could" or the use of informal or even slang language, as opposed to the more direct questioning format of the old days which required short and abrupt answers. This change has many implications, one of which is that this new way of using language suggests different social identities and more equal and democratic relationships.

2 INTERTEXTUALITY

Writers and speakers cannot be totally creative. They can only produce their own texts either by making use of other texts written or spoken previously in similar social contexts, or they may choose to make use of other texts used in different social contexts. Producers of texts may also choose to produce their own texts in normative ways by more or less replicating previous or other texts or they may choose to produce new texts by incorporating parts or aspects of different texts from different times and social contexts in creative ways. This feature of the production process of texts is called *intertextuality*. For example, a letter from a bank today, may incorporate elements of advertising language into the traditional, more formal, institutional, banking language of the past.

3 NATURALISATION

This is the name of the process through which people consider and accept any change that is made in the way language is used in a social context as natural, or normal, from then on. After a specific aspect of a language or its use is accepted, or *naturalised*, it is taken-for-granted by people. This, however, can be dangerous in cases where an individual may not wish to comply with such language use and its implications if there were a choice. It is the business of CDA to help uncover, or destructure, those naturalised aspects of language use. For example, if the use of the second person "you", very much an aspect of daily language belonging to our private lives, comes to be used quite frequently in the formal language of an institution such as in a tax office document, then people get accustomed to this use and it becomes "natural" or "normal" from then on, leading to an unquestioning acceptance of the institution's and people's altered roles.

4 INTERACTIONAL CONTROL

In order to interpret texts we need to examine how social identities and relationships are formed. A crucial aspect of all identities and relationships is the degree of power or control each participant has in the interaction (including the writer and

the reader in written language use). Some aspects of language which can be controlled are turns, topics, agendas, and the whole exchange structure. For example, above, I stated that a questioning mode which demands short answers from the other person was prevalent in traditional classrooms and doctors' surgeries. In the past, through this style of direct questioning, the teacher or the doctor can be said to have been in control of the whole exchange structure; in other words, he/she was the one who decided how the student or patient was supposed to answer because it would be socially quite inappropriate, even risky, to react in any other way than a short answer to these questions. In this sense, the other's range of choices for answers are/are intended to be limited by those in power.

LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS

1 COHERENCE

This is the name given to the totality of meaning arrived at after a text is interpreted and each bit of information is logically linked to form a consistent whole. Fairclough (1991:134) states that this is not a property of texts but a property which interpreters impose upon a text. In other words, meaning is derived not only from the text but from the interaction between the properties of the text and the personal qualities of its reader, and every bit of information has to be consistent with, or compatible with, the others as well as with those other bits already existing in the minds of the readers. By associating every single bit of information in this way, readers always try to form a whole system made up of each one of these bits of information standing in certain positions with respect to one another. However, not everyone forms his/her associations and systems in the same ways. So this implies that there can be many different interpretations of the same text by different people and even by the same people at different times. Useful pointers for understanding the writer's rationale and argument in a text may be: the ordering of the information, for example which sentence comes after which; the cohesive words and phrases for example "and", "however"; and reference words such as "this" and "it".

The following example illustrates the effort a reader makes to find a text coherent. I once had difficulty understanding the following sentence written by a student: "I left the garage door open today although it was sunny." In order to interpret this sentence, I had to work hard to try to fill in the missing information and make the links between the two parts of the sentence. The sentence would have made sense to me if the connecting word was "because" suggesting perhaps that the garage door was left open to get some dry air in, so that the garage would not be damp or stuffy. However, the student's explanation when asked was that there was a lot of oil, wax, and paint in the garage, which should be kept cool, so he did not want sunshine to get in through the garage door.

2 IRONY

Irony can generally be defined as saying one thing but meaning another. However, the interesting thing about irony is that it echoes someone else's words at a different time and place, and it depends on the interpreter's recognition of this echoed utterance. This recognition, or knowledge, is what we mean by *cultural knowledge* in daily language. This is perhaps why irony is one of the most difficult aspects of language to learn for foreign language learners. For example "What a handsome man!" is irony when you use it for someone who is acknowledged by many to be ugly. However, one needs to be familiar with this shared notion of "handsomeness" (and of "ugliness") and with situations where the phrase is normally used, to be able to understand the ironical use in the above situation.

3 MODALITY

This is the degree to which a speaker or a writer wants affiliation with or takes responsibility for, a proposition stated by another person. Modals such as "can", "should" and "must" are typical indicators of affiliation as are phrases such as "It's likely that...", "a bit", "Researchers claim that..." and "I think...". For example, "researchers claim that reading is an interactive process between the text and the reader" is different from stating "reading is an interactive process between the text and the reader". In the first statement the speaker or writer feels the need to hide behind researchers to make the proposition. The motives could be various, such as lack of authority, the desire not to take full responsibility in case of powerful challenges, lack of certainty, and honesty.

4 PRESUPPOSITION

These are the ideas, positions, and values which are taken for granted by a writer or speaker. They are often in first positions, i.e. beginnings of sentences, paragraphs or longer stretches of discourse because the usual rule is that writers and speakers give old information first to establish common ground with listeners or readers before introducing new or controversial information. Another area to look for understanding presuppositions is negation which is usually used for polemic purposes, where the alternative of the negated proposition would be what the writer presupposes for the reader or listener. For example, "I can hardly agree that teachers are overworked and underpaid" assumes that a good number of people out there in the world as I see it (even if not the majority) think and claim the contrary. Otherwise I would not be addressing them in the negative.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA) AND THE TEACHING OF READING

Some writers question the validity of CDA. Girle (1991:45) notes that "there is no theory of reasoning which is generally accepted as an orthodoxy." Widdowson (1998) observes that CDA is in need of a strong theoretical basis. Nevertheless,

pedagogically speaking, I suggest that CDA, by means of its underlying concepts and Fairclough's framework, provides a potentially useful instrument to develop (in others and oneself) the sorts of thinking skills one needs to carry out a reading task. Some writers argue that learners cannot or need not be taught how to read and think, either because they merely need to experience these skills to learn them naturally (Smith 1985:5), or because their "native language" provides them with the skills (Byrnes 1987:178). However, I have found that people do need to be taught to read and think. Many years of teaching experience has shown me that thinking in the way described above does not happen automatically just by exposing my learners to various sorts of text. Nor could I rely much on their Turkish reading skills. This may be because they lack such reading skills, or because a different mode of thinking may underlie the Turkish language.⁶ The purpose of this paper is to describe a course which I have found to be successful in helping my learners develop thinking and reading skills. I hope that the paper will provoke debate and sharing of experience. The course described is based on assumptions about what happens in my classes. In addition to such descriptions there is a need for research which can investigate the issues described here more systematically. I hope to carry out such research in the future and would be interested in hearing from others working in this area.

As a reading teacher, I have worked on the assumption that the problems I and my students have faced on reading courses stemmed from the following situation:

1. a lack of trust in self and/ or the environment to carry out the reading task,
2. a lack of interest in the task and the environment to carry out the reading task,
3. a lack of language knowledge,
4. a lack of background content knowledge,
5. a lack of thinking and communication skills as described above.

CDA can help in all these areas. First of all, one of the underlying principles of CDA is that there may be an infinite number of interpretations of a text (Kress 1989:42-44, for example). And if learners see that their interpretations of a reading text, no matter how different they may be from the teacher's or the majority's, will receive equal attention and weight in the classroom, they may gain trust in themselves and others, and gain interest in the reading task and their learning situation. Also, if they see that they can successfully read and understand a text they are interested in, form an opinion and communicate it convincingly to others who are willing to listen, this may also contribute to their sense of trust and interest. Success is likely to breed a positive attitude.

In terms of item number 3 above, it is necessary to have some basic knowledge of the language of the text before the introduction of any sort of Critical Reading task in the classroom. However, because language is the starting point of analysis in CDA, a close study of language form and meaning is called for. This focussed analysis of the language of a text is very likely to improve the learners' own knowledge and use of the target language. And secondly, because it is almost impossible to carry out CDA in a classroom situation without discussion, that is without providing interpretations, explaining positions and listening to others, if the language of the classroom is the target language, the very fact that CDA is carried out in class provides a purpose for much genuine language use by learners. This practice is likely to improve learners language skills.

Number 4, lack of background content knowledge, seems to be the most difficult problem to overcome in the short term since background knowledge covers all sorts of world knowledge, from cultural and experiential knowledge to encyclopedic knowledge. CDA can be a useful addition all the things that teachers traditionally do to help learners increase their world knowledge. The various texts that the teacher and the learners bring into class, and the class discussions based on different interpretations and their explanations by so many individuals from different backgrounds, can provide invaluable additional sources of information.

The teaching of thinking and communication skills appears to be the major strength of CDA in the language classroom. As will be recalled, the thinking skills have been listed as *predicting, acknowledging, comparing, evaluating, and decision-making* above. Firstly, CDA, by means of immersing learners in situations where the requirements are thinking and communicating, provides the maximum of opportunities for learners to practise these skills, just as Smith (1985:5) suggests. Secondly, CDA provides opportunities for learners to discuss (with other learners and the teacher) the information presented in a text so that they get the chance to differentiate between fact and opinion, see underlying values and ideas and the connections made between them by the producers of a text, as well as also seeing whether the conclusions they have drawn and the connections they have made are acceptable and comprehensible to others. Thirdly, by means of discussion, CDA creates circumstances for alternative ideas and interpretations to emerge in the classroom (especially useful if alternatives are not so readily available in the text to enable the practice of the thinking cycle.) Fourthly, the feedback provided for an individual in the classroom through discussion is also likely to raise awareness of different modes of thinking and help to make students more flexible, quicker-thinkers. Finally, by means of the basic concepts of CDA, learners are stimulated to ask useful questions for in-depth analysis.

A CRITICAL READING COURSE

In this section I describe a course based on the framework and concepts outlined above. The course is a part of a remedial Advanced English course for first and second year students of a prestigious English-medium state university, Bogazici University, in Istanbul. The students admitted to the university have to sit the Bogazici University English Proficiency Exam on entry, and while those who are able to get a passing grade immediately start their studies in their departments, those who fail have to attend a one-year preparatory programme of General, and skills-based English (EAP) before they resit the Proficiency Exam. Most of those who pass the Proficiency Exam with a grade C, either on entry or after studying English as part of the preparatory programme, are required to take Advanced English courses for two semesters alongside their departmental courses. This Critical Reading course has been designed as the second component of this Advanced English course. In other words, students usually take this course after their preparatory General English and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, and after the first component or semester of the Advanced English course. The first component is usually based on academic reading and writing of scientific or literary texts. If we consider that the preparatory programme consists of approximately 20-25 hours a week of intensive English for a whole year, and the first semester of the Advanced English course is three hours a week for a period of approximately three and a half months, students usually come to this Critical Reading course after about 700 hours of experience with English language learning (even if they had not studied English in their primary or secondary education). The students are usually aged between 18-20 and are from various departments of the university.

The Critical Reading course was planned as a one semester 3-credit course, with a timetable of three hours a week over a period of about fourteen weeks. The course begins with a presentation of the rationale for the course; namely my reasons for designing a critical reading course, which I have discussed above, and Fairclough's (1990, 1992 especially) observations on the changes he thinks are taking place in Western societies. These are a shift from explicit forms of power to implicit forms, together with associated shifts in language practices as described in the section on key concepts such as "conversationalisation". These ideas are discussed in detail at this initial stage because the changes all make the point that detailed critical analysis of the language around us is necessary for everybody in today's world.⁷ The discussion usually considers the validity of these observations both in the so-called Western context and related to the situation in Turkey.

The academic thinking cycle is presented as a necessary sequence for efficient reading. Students are also made aware that engaging in CDA will be beneficial for their English language skills. The first half of the course focuses on theoretical issues such as Fairclough's framework, the underlying concepts in CDA, and the

applications of CDA in two situations for two different purposes (Talbot 1992, Wallace 1992). Students read articles written by such authors as the ones above, and we discuss the concepts and questions which the authors raise (see the reading list in Appendix A⁸). We also spend time looking at the sample texts in these articles, looking up unknown words and clarifying certain segments of these texts in order to understand them before every individual (including myself) is invited to think of answers to the comprehension or interpretation questions set by the authors or by me as teacher. In the early stages of the course, I encourage all types of interpretation by the students regardless of how unconvincing and ill-proved they may be. This is done to overcome shyness and to provide the freedom necessary for voicing all types of opinions. Gradually students are led to providing convincing evidence from the text.

Those students who have not had much experience with and have not developed a liking for social science issues usually need some preliminary warning and convincing that they need to go through this theoretical period in order to be able to analyse texts more in depth at a later stage. This convincing is probably necessary because a study of theory is not normally part of reading courses and students may therefore find it surprising. The reasons I give students are:

1. Fairclough's theory puts language at the centre of attention for anybody wanting to study society and people, in addition to those who want to study language for its own sake. Since society and the values and behaviour of people are abstract concepts, by looking at language as a means of study, we are presented with a concrete object to study to enhance our understandings of them.
2. Fairclough's framework provides an instrumentally useful structure for ways of looking at language and society. It is useful because it presents a manageable, meaningful and cohesive theory; it provides a satisfactory explanation of the dual role of language; one being the shaping and reshaping of society and the other being the mirroring of the existing values inherent in society. To put it simply, the students are presented with a very valid reason for analysing and developing language if they are keen on understanding the society and the people involved.
3. The key concepts and terms provide the students with the necessary material to look for in language, and the background concepts on which to base their opinions. In other words, by means of these concepts and terms, the students are informed of the linguistically customary ways to encode explicit and implicit meaning. Their job is to decode and uncover this meaning while at the same time they are made aware of the nature of language, its use and how to process it more efficiently and deeply.

4. Fairclough's views on the changes taking place in the Western world present alternatives to, if not valid observations of, the changes taking place in their part of the world, so that the students are presented with a substance to compare with what they are studying, a necessary prerequisite for understanding and development as stated previously.
5. Fairclough's views on the changes taking place in the Western world also present a rationale for why language should be studied more extensively and carefully by all citizens in today's world in order to develop a more democratic society.

If we started the second part of the course without the theoretical basis, the resulting analyses would be very superficial with claims lacking any firm foundation both intellectually and communicatively. I think I can confidently say that, in the second half of the course, i.e. the last six or seven weeks, the pleasure the students get out of being able to recognize concepts and ideas in a text, which they were not able to see prior to the teaching of theory is worth the burden of the first half of the course. Meanwhile, some students have to take the teacher's word for this pleasure to come.

In the middle of the course, one lesson is allocated to the pooling together of all the guiding questions which we have come across especially in Talbot's (1992) and Wallace's (1992) articles, and which we have made use of in order to analyse the various aspects of a reading text before we make personal or collective conclusions about that text. These instrumental questions are discussed in class in terms of clarity, salience and applicability to a variety of possible texts. Some are discarded, reworded, or newly suggested questions are added to the list. The aim is to come as close as possible to a final list of questions which we can use as a tool-kit to get us thinking more deeply about any text in all its possible aspects so as to enable a more complete analysis. The questions have been evolving. The most recent version is below.

USEFUL QUESTIONS FOR CRITICALLY READING A TEXT

1 About yourself (i.e. the reader)

- Why are you reading this text?
- What is your role as a reader of this text?
- Is this type of text of interest or relevance to you? Why/Why not?
- Are you the type of person(s) this text addresses?
- Why do you make sense of the reading in the way that you do?
- What background knowledge do you need to understand this text?
- Will you think differently or do something differently after having read this text?

2 About the creation of the text

- Who has produced this text? For whom and why?
- Who has written this text? To whom and why?
- What is the topic (i.e. what is it about)?
- Why has this topic been written about?
- How has this topic been written about?
- What other ways of writing about the topic could there be?
- Which different ways of writing about the topic have been combined?
- What is the writer's position with respect to the topic?
- Why has it been written this way and not in another way?

3 About the text itself

- How often is the topic in the subject position in sentences? Why?
- What/Who is in the subject position mostly?
- What kind of verbs are used (active, passive, dynamic, state, modals)? Why?
- What adjectives or nouns collocate with the topic? What does this mean?
- What is the genre (style, formality, discourse type)? What does this mean?
- What mood is selected (statement, order, question)? Why?
- What personal pronouns are used? Why?
- How does the writer refer to self, characters and the reader? Why?
- What kind of words are used (formal or slang, process or nominal etc.)?
- What do the words mean in isolation and in this context?
- What kind of sentences are used (simple, short, complex, compound, long)?
- What information is selected for first position? Why?
- What information is put in main clauses and helping clauses? Why?
- What kinds of connectors are used (linking words/phrases, references, ellipsis etc.)?
- How is the information ordered and joined (at sentence, paragraph levels)? Why?
- What other information is revealed (e.g. time of writing, setting, pictures etc.)?
- Is language used in the "normal" way or differently (e.g. definitions)? Why?

4 About the people and relations involved

- What identities/relationships are implied (between writer-characters-reader)?
- What characters are in the text and what are their roles?
- Is the writer or reader similar to the characters? What does this mean?
- Does the writer approve/disapprove of self, reader and the characters? Why?
- Does the writer approve/disapprove of the relationships between the people involved?

5 About the meaning

- What ideas and beliefs are approved/disapproved of or merely presented?
- Why were they presented, approved or disapproved of?
- What rules are presented/approved/disapproved of? Why?
- Where do these ideas and rules come from?
- What logical relationships are formed between ideas/rules (causal, conditional etc.)?
- What emotions are reflected (i.e. happiness, pessimism, anger etc.)? Why?
- How much responsibility is the writer assuming when presenting ideas/rules?
- How certain is the writer about the validity of these ideas and rules?

6 About the function of the text

- What is the function of this text in the society at large?
- What will the effect of this text be on other readers? Why?
- What will other people understand and do as a result of having read this text?

I warn the students that the task of answering the questions is only a beginning phase in the critical process, and that they need to make four sorts of decisions for the process to be complete.

1. Decide which of the questions are relevant for the text in hand so that you can spend more time on answering those questions in your own ways.
2. Synthesize the points you want to make about the text into perhaps *three* or *four* main points or two-three A4 page long written accounts).
3. Find convincing evidence from the language of the text to prove these points.
4. Decide on how best to express your thoughts and the evidence to others, either in spoken or written form.

These four elements are the focus of the second half of the course, when my students and I bring in texts of one-two pages as samples of spoken or written language. The texts may be on any topic in any genre. The texts need to be originally written in English to avoid the cultural complexities of the intermediary process of translation. With the help of a dictionary, the list of questions, and support from the others (including my support) we engage in critical reading in class. Students get practice in communicating their thoughts about the text in both written and spoken form for a week or two before they take their Mid-term exam. This requires them to write an essay in reaction to a short unseen text and a very general question involving a concept(s) we have discussed (see a sample exam question and a sample analysis by a learner in Appendix B). Students are free to make use of the list of questions

and a dictionary during the 50-minute examination. The assessment criteria for this examination are as follows. The students need to illustrate that:

1. they have understood the text,
2. they are familiar with the concept(s),
3. they can form their own ideas about the text,
4. they can provide convincing evidence for these ideas,
5. they can communicate their ideas and the evidence in understandable ways in written form.

The rest of the time after the Midterm exam is allocated to 'project work'. Two lessons immediately after the Midterm exam are spent on organizing the project work. The students choose a short text keeping in mind the work process and the assessment criteria outlined above, and decide whether they want to work individually or in groups. They are reminded of the advantages and disadvantages of both modes of working. (Some of the advantages of working individually, for example, could be freedom of opinion and text/topic choice, flexibility of worktime and place, while the disadvantages could be loneliness, and no assistance. And some of the advantages of pair or groupwork could be support, improving language skills, and sharing responsibility, while some disadvantages could be the need to negotiate decisions, the need to share responsibilities and the workload⁹, personal problems between group members, and the practical difficulties of meeting.)

We negotiate the dates and time of each presentation. For the presentation, the students are told that the lecturer will be one of the participants (rather than being in charge) and that they are responsible for organising and preparing the 50-minute lesson, so they must make enough photocopies of the text they will analyse and give time at the beginning of the lesson to read it. They are told that they will not be allowed to read the written report of their analysis in class, and are strongly encouraged to engage the class members in tasks and not to choose the lecture mode. During the two planning lessons, alternatives to lecturing, such as posing questions to the class, discussion, role-play, and information-gap and matching techniques are also presented and discussed. The students have to hand in their written report on the same day as their presentation. The written reports have to be in essay form, word-processed on three to five A4 pages with a title page and neatly organized under subheadings.

The same criteria for the Midterm exam are valid for the assessment of both the oral presentations and the written reports. For the oral presentations the last item reads: *that they can communicate their ideas and the evidence in understandable ways in spoken form*. And item 2 is not as directly influential as in the Midterm, although a lack of familiarity with the concepts studied is likely to lead to shallow thinking and analysis. The oral presentation and the written reports account for

30% each of the overall final grade. The individual members of the pairs and groups get the same grade for these components. The Midterm is worth another 30%, and 10% is allocated to the lecturer's evaluation of student attitudes, amount of effort put into coursework, attendance, and general linguistic and thinking capacities.

The course has been run for six semesters since 1996 for 15 different groups, made up randomly of students from all the possible disciplines available in the university. Class size for each group has varied from 5 to 21. From 1996 until the end of 2000, a total of 166 students enrolled on the course. Most passed the course. 53 failed. Included in the failures are students who never turned up or who dropped out during the semester. The course has a reputation among students of being difficult, especially in the first part, but also of being one which pays off in the second part when they get the pleasure of noticing ideas and features of texts they have not been able to notice before, and of carrying out analyses on their own using their newly-acquired skills. No differences have been noticed amongst students from different disciplines, neither in their attitudes towards the course nor in pass/fail rates.

CONCLUSION

The first aim of this paper has been to suggest that it is not possible to read without thinking, and to suggest that Critical Discourse Analysis is a useful instrument for teaching the necessary thinking and communication skills, namely predicting, acknowledging, comparing, evaluating, decision-making and communicating. In addition I have argued that CDA can be helpful in overcoming other sorts of reading difficulties, such as lack of language knowledge. My second aim has been to describe a Critical Reading course, which has taken the above assumptions as its theoretical basis for its design. So far research has not been undertaken to investigate whether this CDA-based course does, in fact, serve the intended purposes in the language classroom and whether the assumptions made are correct. This should be the next step, however, intuitively from my experience of working with a number of groups I can say that it certainly seems to work!

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APPENDIX A

AE 112

Bogazici University

Critical Reading Course:

READING LIST:

Fairclough, N. (1990) 'Critical linguistics, *New Times*, and language education' in R. Clark, N. Fairclough, R. Ivanic, N. McLeod, J. Thomas & P. Meara (eds.) *Language and Power: Papers from 22 Annual Meeting of the British Association of Applied Linguistics*, CILT, pp. 7-20

Fairclough, N. (1991) 'Intertextuality' chapter 4 of N. Fairclough (1991) below, pp. 101- 136

Fairclough, N. (1991) 'Text analysis: constructing social relations and the self' chapter 5 of N. Fairclough (1991) below, pp. 137-168

Fairclough, N. (1991) 'Text analysis: constructing social reality' chapter 6 of N. Fairclough (1991) below, pp. 169-197

Fairclough, N. (1992) 'Introduction' to N. Fairclough (ed.) (1992) below, pp. 1-29

Talbot, M. (1992) 'The construction of gender in a teenage magazine' in N. Fairclough (ed.) (1992) below, pp. 174-199

Wallace, C. (1992) 'Critical literacy awareness in the EFL classroom' in N. Fairclough (ed.) (1992) below, pp. 59-92

OPTIONAL READING LIST:

Fairclough, N. (1989) *Language and Power*, Longman

Fairclough, N. (1991) *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press

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APPENDIX B

AE 112

Bogazici University

1996-97 2nd Semester Midterm (30% of overall final grade)

Total Time: 50 Minutes

NAME:

NUMBER:

DEPARTMENT:

DATE:

Analyse the following text in terms of ONE of the following concepts¹⁰:

(Choose One!)

1. naturalisation,
2. the implied reader identity,

In your analysis, give evidence that;

- you understand these concepts,
- you understand the text,
- you understand how these concepts are at play in the text.

Write your answer in essay form in not more than two pages.

Before the night was through they would reveal a lot more to each other than just their watches.

Copacabana danced below as he came face to face with her bewildering elegance.

Her movements held him spellbound as she slipped her immaculately manicured fingers inside her leather handbag to emerge with a cigarette pack.

It was the same American brand of Light 100's he always carried. Her pack was empty. "Have one of mine". Hesitating slightly, she took one and lit it herself.

That's when he noticed her watch. Like his, it was a modern Roman face with a stitched leather strap. "We obviously share the same excellent taste in watches, too. What's your favourite champagne?"

She laughed and spoke at last. "Same as yours?"

Appendix B2

The text that I am going to analyze is "Before the night..." which is probably an advertisement item. "Before the night..." is about a watch brand that is unknown now.

Obviously, every advertisement has a target audience. Most of the time this target is not manifested in the advertisement. But the characteristics of the advertisement reflect the implied reader of it. Persons, places, tastes etc. all of those describe the certain aspects of the target audience.

In this case, the writer assumes that the reader is a young or middle-aged person and nothing but a rich person. First of all "Copacabana" which is a night club is a symbol of the elite class tastes. The persons of the text, "he" and "she" meet in the Copacabana because of their high status in the society.

The roles of the persons of the text are different. The "he" is the dominant character, because he is in action but on the contrary she has a passive role.

Like "Copacabana" symbol, there is another symbol which shows their tastes "American brand of Light 100's". The cigarette which they smoke is "American" and "Light". Both of them reflect the writer's assumption about the reader whom is elite and elegant.

After that the writer builds a connection between these symbols and the certain brand of watch. He/she tells the reader that, the brand is in the same category of other symbols.

Behind the curtain, the writer's idea is that, if you want show your richness and status, you should use this brand. If you don't use it nobody could understand your richness.

Appendix B3

Finally, Attractive women, expensive cigarettes are well-known tricks among advertisers. They always use them in order to affect the implied readers of advertisement's behaviour.

A very successful
for attempt

