



# The Effect of Learning a CDA Model on Promoting EFL Undergraduates' Reading Comprehension Ability across Different Proficiency Levels

Sahar Najarzadegan

Department of English Language, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran, [snajarzadegan@gmail.com](mailto:snajarzadegan@gmail.com)

---

## Article Info

## ABSTRACT

---

### Article Type:

### Research Article

### Received:

29/05/2021

### Accepted:

11/05/2022

The current research explored the effect of learning a model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) on the performance of university students' reading comprehension across different levels of proficiency. Through Oxford Placement Test, 96 EFL undergraduates participating in this study were divided into three various levels of language proficiency. A journalistic reading comprehension test selected from a series of TOEFL tests were administered to all of them as a pretest. They received the same test after a treatment of van Dijk's model instruction in the class. The analysis of results of the posttest through one-way ANCOVA showed that CDA positively affects learners' reading comprehension. Then, a post hoc comparison applying the Bonferroni test clarified that the highly proficient group performed significantly different from the low and mid proficiency groups. Also, the mid proficiency group significantly differed from the low one. Taken together, these findings suggested that CDA training had an effect on L2 learners' reading comprehension for high and mid groups. So proficiency of the language learners has a direct role in the extent to which boosting knowledge on a model of critical discourse analysis can promote students' reading comprehension ability. The outcome of this research can inspire the curriculum designers as well as the teachers to include critical discourse analysis techniques not only in teacher training courses but also in language learners' textbooks.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Reading Comprehension Ability, van Dijk's Model, EFL Undergraduates

---

**Cite this article:** Najarzadegan, S. (2022). The effect of learning a CDA model on promoting EFL undergraduates' reading comprehension ability across different proficiency levels. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, 9(4), 75-92.

DOI: 10.30479/jmrels.2022.15612.1905



© The Author(s).

**Publisher:** Imam Khomeini International University

---

## 1. Introduction

Discourse analysis has the potential of being an instrument for language teaching (Martinez, 2012). Critical discourse analysis awareness gives students the ability to understand when manipulated by others and academic places are the starting point to make them conscious of this capability. It will lead them to be critical citizens as well as critical students. This way they can be critical analyzers of the information they receive as input; whether daily information or something learned in the classrooms, and they can reveal the hidden potential meanings of their mind input. Actually, CDA is not only a pedagogical approach but also a piece of knowledge about language which is explicit or conscious in language learning (Koupaee Dar et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, practicing reading skill in an EFL context is a good activity for the students to comprehend skills that are relevant to areas of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. Then making an endeavor to acquire the target structure of the reading comprehension text, language learners interact with the texts, so being trained for efficiency and appropriacy as well as providing the society with creative residents is the goal of CDA models (Cots, 2006).

In EFL learning various researches had been carried out to see in what ways four main skills of language learning including reading can be promoted. Any kind of instruction, practice or exposure that can be of help in improving these skills are of salient significance (Piper et al., Trudell, 2016). Thus, various CDA models that are of potential help are crucially important. An emerging body of studies exists in this regard implementing CDA models in EFL teaching (e.g., Hashemi & Ganizadeh, 2012; Ko & Wang, 2013; Ramos, 2004), but rarely ever are those studies considering van Dijk's model.

Actually, with psychological and sociocultural frameworks language users in media and politics try to manipulate others to achieve their ultimate goals. Besides, many college freshmen were not trained to read between the lines and to generate expertise while reading (Downs, 2000; Valeri et al., 2000). Thus, in order to obtain a complete reading skill not only comprehension skills but also critical ones should be learned through CDA training courses by the students (Marashi & Yavarzadeh, 2014). The goal of this research study is to explore how practicing a CDA model and implementing it in EFL classes can influence undergraduates across different levels of proficiency. So according to the aim of this research the question is addressed as follows:

Does instructing van Dijk's CDA model significantly improve the journalistic reading comprehension ability of the EFL undergraduates?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Concerning CDA different but overlapping definitions have been put forward to date. CDA has its roots in the fact that we use language purposefully, no matter whether we apply discursive choices willingly or unwillingly (Mullet, 2018). According to Sengul (2019) it is essential to understand that when we talk about critical discourse analysis, it does not mean that we are talking about a homogenous approach which has the resembling methods of conducting discourse analysis. For instance, Fairclough (1989) sees discourse as the language building blocks that points to the complete procedure of interaction in the society that a text is merely a part of. Thus, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) consists of the larger socio-cultural and sociopolitical contexts, which include discourse and then unbox the packages of ideological discourse that actually became natural at this macro-level of analysis as time passes. These bases are considered as acceptable, cool, sensible and natural features of discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Wodak (2002), on the other hand, defined a limit between text and discourse. To him discourse is a complex of memory and knowledge, in comparison with text, which barely represents oral recitations, or written texts. However, as van Dijk (1988) puts it, basically discourse is not a conversational or textual composite in isolation, it actually is a communicative occurrence in a complex form that serves as a social situation as well, and contains society members and their assets.

Concerning van Dijke's perception of CDA Cots (2006) believes that CDA has the potentials to be used in a foreign language class. Cots tried to present CDA as a supportive model in order to plan activities for learning languages and explore language use, and demonstrated that there could be the possibility that teachers 'choices which they make in selecting and adapting texts be critically analyzed. This way the EFL teacher's task can go beyond linguistic training and help students raise their critical ability.

Hashemi and Ghanizadeh (2012) believe in illumination of the relations between ideology, discourse, social inequality, hegemony, dominance, and marginalization, through use of CDA. And that as an interdisciplinary field discourse is placed intensely in social practices, so it can potentially be implemented in various fields, like: law, politics, business, and education. As Rogers (2004) puts it, in two different methods CDA is relevant to the understanding of learning. First, on the basis of a critical domain discourse is analyzed then an individual is permitted to realize the procedure of learning in much more complicated form. Second, performing

CDA make the scholars and students who are learning promote via this process. In addition, according to Rahimi and Sharififar (2015) some skills can be applied to persuade the students to approach critically to the text and reveal the ideologies hidden in it. They also believe that CDA strategies have the potentiality to be applied by the instructors in the academic situations to help the learners interpret discourse and discover the meaning that is concealed in it. This activity will most probably guide the students toward having a permanent skill in thinking critically.

Discourses are beliefs and values that belong to a specific social group and supported by their ideologies (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2017). Thus, CDA itself focuses on strategies that reveal the data that seem neutral but in essence is manipulative like news reporting, political speeches, and job interviews (Teo, 2000). Through various gimmicks and strategies, the authors tend to deliberately make readers believe in the ideologies embedded in an essay (Ebrahimi & Rahimi, 2013). Critical discourse analysis leads readers to distinguish this manipulative exercise and unveil the tacit ideology in essays. It uncovers the significant ideological biases and as a result practicing dominance and hegemony in texts (Widdowson, 2000). Thus, although discourse seem neutral due to repeated use, it never is. In the end, it should be examined concerning political ideology, social history, and power structures that it contains (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

Drawing upon critical assumptions of language awareness, pedagogy, and discourse analysis, Ramos (2004) made an attempt to achieve critical literacy goals through analyzing newspaper discourse critically within the wider spectrum of instruction. Although he focused on media discourse analysis of immigration in the EFL classes, there was emphasis on the advantages of CDA as a significant tool for elevating awareness regarding language in various situations. The subjects were provided by some texts that they had to understand and the framework which was essential for critical discourse analysis. The participants claimed that while learning Spanish they have achieved awareness of their own positions, critical literacy related to media, and knowledge concerning the topic. Thus, the conclusion is accomplished that practicing CDA in the foreign language academic situation can result in the improvement of language learners' concerns about linguistic selections and their social outcomes.

## **2.2. Van Dijk's Model**

Van Dijk (2013) believes that Critical Discourse Analysis as a field explores how the discursive sources like prejudice, power, sovereignty, and discrimination are kept and regenerated within special social, historical, and political contexts. According to van Dijk (2004) all the political phenomena like, parliamentary speeches, elections, propaganda, political campaigns, etc.,

are highly ideological. His model is one of the best models of CDA, which can be practiced on in academic areas, specifically used for denaturalizing ideologies conveyed in journalistic texts. Concerning this, he points out that there are 27 ideological techniques such as categorization, consensus, generalization, authority, evidentially, euphemism, etc. Except for these rhetorical devices, he focused on two more discursive techniques, which are called negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation strategies as the significant basic section of analyzing discourse.

Van Dijk (2009) sees CDA as a combination of theory, application and analysis. He applied his discourse analysis theory mainly to media texts. That is why his model is preferred to be practiced when dealing with journalistic texts (Abdulmajid, 2019; Najarzadegan et al., 2017; Rezaei et al., 2019). Actually, political speeches are both information-building and ideology conveying (Kondowe, 2014a as cited in Salayo, 2020).

### **2.3. CDA and Reading Comprehension**

Reading is the capability to extract meaning from the written text and interpret the information that is gained in an accurate way (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Naunan (1999) believes that people have various techniques in reading. For instance, reading a label on something bought from a supermarket does not need the resembling techniques that reading academic books do. In the same vein, reading journalistic texts that are mostly argumentative are dealt with differently compared to narrative reading comprehensions, for instance. While Kurland (2000) believes reading demands higher order thinking, reading journalistic texts seems to need even much of that thinking. This may well be done through a CDA model practice in the class. Nimasari (2016) considers CDA as a pertinent discourse mindset in interpreting and instructing reading comprehension, specifically for texts that are argumentative.

Correia's study revealed that the EFL students who read critically in their first language, require help to devise reading critically and cognitively. Instructors also need to be critical in their teaching lessons; however, there is no guidance for them. They require a bridge in this regard which is really difficult to be built in reality (Clarke & Whitney, 2009).

In a research carried out by Zingraf (2003), techniques concerning CDA were applied by EFL learners for analyzing the texts. The findings of his study demonstrated that students as well as teachers need to be provided with the required critical tools in order not to be manipulated with ideological texts.

Applying Fairclough's (1989) model, Hashemi and Ganizadeh (2012) also instructed language learners how to analyze the articles critically. At first, students in both groups did not show any interest to practice journalistic news stories that were ideologically loaded with controversial issues; however, unbelievably after the treatment the experimental group participants preferred to focus on the more challenging articles loaded with opinions, prejudices, judgments, etc. Besides, they paid more attention to the inherent ideological suppositions as well as the propositional content. The same model was also drawn upon Yang's (2004), analyzing seven promotional radio shows. He believed having an ideologically biased load, the shows demonstrated the social impact of marketing in discourse. CDA proved to be of paramount impact concerning raising people's critical language awareness.

According to what he did in his classes, Huang (2011) claimed that, language learners improved with the help of critical learning courses both in conventional and critical English writing and reading skills which is "reading the word and the world" (p. 149). Of course, EFL learners experience some disadvantages in comprehension-oriented reading classes; however, in her experience with the high school participants, İçmez (2005) concluded that despite all the problems they could improve the students' critical reading ability. But, there were also some other researches like that of Taspınar and Cubukcu (2020) who came to a totally different result in which critical literacy instruction showed no impact on the reading comprehension ability of adult EFL learners'.

#### **2.4. Purpose of the Study**

A lot is inspected about CDA theoretically (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 2007), but a few researches were carried out to focus on the practical aspects and describe how CDA and its strategies are fulfilled in order to promote EFL undergraduates' learning ability. Among those researches, there were some which explore the effect of practicing a CDA model in the class on the students' reading comprehension ability like those of Hassani et al. (2013), and Hashemi and Ghanizadeh (2012). However, due to paucity of research based on van Dijk's model they were still disputable. Because, while van Dijk's model (2004) is one of the most known CDA models which has the potentiality to be worked on in the classrooms (Sheyholislami, 2001), most of the studies done are on the basis of those of Fairclough and Wodak'. Van Dijk's model is specifically used for denaturalizing ideologies conveyed in journalistic texts. Besides, previous research was mostly qualitative while quantitative studies are also needed. On the other hand, while the other pieces of research made comparisons between a control and an experimental group, the current research examined this issue across different levels of language proficiency among university students. Thus, this article is actually an attempt to implement critical discourse

analysis to improve students' reading comprehension ability and see how it works across different proficiency levels. Since van Dijk's model is mostly used for journalistic texts, students' reading comprehension of journalistic texts is checked.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Participants**

There were 120 BA students studying English translation in the Islamic Azad University of Isfahan (Khorasgan) who were considered as the participants of this study. Of these subjects, 96 attended their classes regularly and so were accepted as real participants of this research. Both male and female, studying in the seventh-semester, they were attending a Reading Journalistic Text course in groups of three, each with thirty-two students. Though the age range was considered to be between 18 and 24, actually age and gender were not considered as moderator variables, and their impacts on the research were not significant. On the basis of the results of the Oxford Placement Test, the students of all three classes were chosen to be in three different groups of low, mid, and high.

#### **3.2. Materials and Instruments**

##### **3.2.1. Instrument 1**

An Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 2004) employed in the classrooms according to which students fell into three groups of low, mid, and high

##### **3.2.2. Instrument 2**

A journalistic reading comprehension test chosen from among a series of TOEFL tests to measure students' performance on journalistic reading comprehension, modified after piloting

#### **3.3. Procedure**

The current study is a quantitative research with the pre-experimental design since the participants were not randomly chosen, and were the university students who had taken reading journalistic texts as their university courses. The study employed a pretest-treatment-posttest design carried out over a period of four weeks, one hour every week. The instruction of van Dijke's model of critical discourse analysis was considered as the independent variable while the EFL undergraduates' reading comprehension ability was considered to be the dependent variable. The participants in all three groups received treatment before the posttests, and to answer the

research question, the scores of students in the two posttests were then entered into SPSS software for quantitative analysis.

The participants were told about the saliency of answering accurately and patiently to the tests dedicated to any research in general. The researcher preferred not to set any time limit for completing the test items, and the candidates were free to ask their questions regarding the tests instructions or the content of the tests if there were any.

The journalistic reading comprehension test selected from TOEFL tests needed piloting. After piloting it, the learners were divided into three groups of low, mid, and high through the Oxford Placement test. The journalistic reading comprehension test was then administered to all of them as pretest. This same test was again given to them after they received the treatment. The steps taken are fully explained as follows:

### ***3.3.1. Pilot Study***

To pilot the journalistic reading test 15 students majoring in English translation were randomly selected. Though the researcher preferred not to set any specific time limit for the students, the rough time the participants spent on the test was almost 60 minutes. Piloting also revealed that two items in the test were confusing. This confusion could easily be cleared up through underlining some key words of the test and the Persian explanations they were provided with. The items relevance to the participants' proficiency levels were also revealed to be appropriate through this pilot study. Finally, the test-retest reliability was estimated which resulted in the index of 0.89.

### ***3.3.2. The Oxford Placement Test***

After piloting, "the Oxford Placement Test" was given to the participants who were as mentioned before a group of undergraduates studying English translation in the Islamic Azad University of Isfahan in their course of reading journalistic texts. The test taker was also their instructor for the course of reading journalistic text. As clarified in Dave Allen's 12 proficiency chart, it is almost improbable to find truly advanced students. Thus, the learners were preferably sorted into three distinct groups of low, mid, and high instead of elementary, intermediate, and advanced.

### ***3.3.3. Pre-Test***

The candidates' journalistic reading comprehension in three different proficiency levels needed to be explored. In order to make sure about the test validity, there was an endeavor to find a standard test. Besides, it had to be journalistic as well since van Dijk's model deals with journalism. Thus, the test was chosen from among a series of TOEFL tests. It comprised two texts



along with their comprehension questions; one with 10 and the other with 9 comprehension questions.

### ***3.3.4. Treatment***

To instruct van Dijk's model, EFL learners received both US and Iranian presidents' speeches (2013), Rouhani and Obama delivered from the podium of the UN general assembly. To practice with this model there should be some exemplifications through comparing and contrasting these two ideology-loaded texts. In order to specify the accurate nature of rhetorical devices and discursive techniques that were applied by the politicians and to compare the discursive properties and major viewpoints in the lectures, each paragraph in the texts was regarded as a macro unit. Every one of these paragraphs or macro units were inspected in accordance with the ideological techniques. Through practicing in the class, they learned how to analyze and understand the deep structure of the text. Macro units were exercised every session in the class a student came to the board practicing a macro unit, and then the controversies were provoked by the students concerning strategies and rhetorical devices used in the journalistic text. To practice more, after direct instruction, and exemplification of macro units, another paragraph was assigned to be exemplified as homework. Then the assignment was reviewed and argued about the next session.

### ***3.3.5. Post-Test***

To provide a response to the research question, as soon as the treatment is done, the "journalistic reading comprehension test" was again administered to find out in what way they were affected in different proficiency levels by the treatment.

## **3.4. Data Analysis**

To examine the finding of instructing a model of CDA in order to raise awareness of the participants' critical thinking ability, a one-way ANCOVA was conducted. Later, post hoc comparison was carried out using the Bonferroni test.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. Results**

#### ***4.1.1. CDA and Comparing Proficiency Group's Development***

Prior to conducting one-way ANCOVA, the underlying assumptions of this statistical test had to be checked. One of the most important assumptions underlying parametric test such as ANCOVA is the assumption

of normality. To check this assumption, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted on the reading comprehension pretest and posttest scores of the undergraduates in the low, mid, and high-level groups. The outcomes of this test are clearly shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Kolmogorov-Smirnov Results for Reading Comprehension Pretest and Posttest*

Groups	Tests	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Low	Pretest	.116	32	.200	.959	32	.256
	Posttest	.112	32	.200	.944	32	.217
Mid	Pretest	.110	32	.200	.935	32	.055
	Posttest	.124	32	.169	.939	32	.072
High	Pretest	.120	32	.182	.942	32	.167
	Posttest	.122	32	.161	.941	32	.125

As it could be seen in Table 2, the p values under the Sig. column of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were all found to exceed .05, leading to the conclusion that the pretest and posttest scores of the reading comprehension in all three groups formed normal distributions. Additionally, in order to conduct one-way ANCOVA, the assumptions of linearity and homogeneity of regression slopes had to be checked. This being so, further analyses were conducted, and through a line graph, it was revealed that the assumption of linearity was not violated; besides, the p value for the interaction effect between the independent variable and reading comprehension was .44 ( $p > .05$ ), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was not violated either. After ensuring that all the underlying assumptions were met, the researchers examined the outcome of the one-way ANCOVA for comparing the reading comprehension posttest scores of the three groups.

**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Statistics for Reading Comprehension Posttest Scores*

Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Low	10.1562	1.93623	32
Mid	11.7187	1.87056	32
High	12.1250	2.09069	32
Total	11.3333	2.12586	96

As it is shown in Table 2, the reading comprehension posttest mean score of the low proficiency group ( $M = 10.1562$ ) was smaller than the reading comprehension posttest mean score of the mid proficiency group ( $M = 11.7187$ ), which was in turn lower than the reading comprehension posttest mean score of the high proficiency group ( $M = 12.1250$ ). To figure out whether these differences among the mean scores of the three groups were

statistically significant or not, one has to look at the Sig. column in front of the Groups row in Table 3 below:

**Table 3**

*One-Way ANCOVA for Reading Comprehension Posttest Scores of the Three Groups*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	184.423	3	61.474	23.093	.000	.430
Intercept	124.537	1	124.537	46.782	.000	.337
Pretest	115.277	1	115.277	43.303	.000	.320
Groups	46.890	2	23.445	8.807	.000	.161
Error	244.911	92	2.662			
Total	12760.000	96				
Corrected Total	429.333	95				

Table 3 represents the outcome of the comparisons pointed to the existence of significant differences among the three groups  $F(2, 92) = 8.807$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ . The magnitude of this difference, displayed under the Partial Eta Squared column was found to be .161, which shows a very large effect size (according to Cohen, 1988, as cited in Pallant, 2020). Now that there are significant differences among the three groups, the results of a post hoc test are needed to reveal where exactly the differences among these three groups are located. Table 4 thus presents the results of the Bonferroni test, run as the post hoc test of this ANCOVA analysis:

**Table 4**

*Results of the Bonferroni Post Hoc Test*

(I) PL	(J) PL	Mean Difference			95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
		(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low	Mid	-1.420*	.408	.002	-2.417	-.424
	High	-1.558*	.413	.001	-2.565	-.552
Mid	Low	1.420*	.408	.002	.424	2.417
	High	-.138	.410	1.000	-1.138	.862
High	Low	1.558*	.413	.001	.552	2.565
	Mid	.138	.410	1.000	-.862	1.138

The results of the post hoc analyses showed that there was a significant difference between the reading comprehension posttest mean scores of low and mid proficiency groups ( $p = .002 < .05$ ); likewise, the difference between the reading comprehension posttest mean scores of the low and high proficiency groups reached statistical significance ( $p = .001 < .05$ ). However, the difference between the high and mid proficiency groups in

terms of their reading comprehension failed to be of statistical significance ( $p = 1.000 > .05$ ).

## 4.2. Discussion

Although utilization of CDA as a method is increasing fast in education studies, much of the research is based on Fairclough's approach not those of Kress, van Dijk, and Wodak. Actually, this homogeneity in approach is what van Dijk (2001) warned against since CDA is multi-disciplinary in nature. That is why this research is an attempt to draw on an approach to education different from the previous ones.

This research is among the scarce studies that utilized a CDA framework to check its possible effect on the undergraduates' reading comprehension ability. It manifests how successfully reading ability can be developed across mid and high-level university students through practicing CDA in academic situations. The results would lead to the major point that CDA-integrated EFL instruction can be a significant aide for the learners' language learning, as it contains practices and homework that would enrich or expand upon textbook materials. Generally speaking, this result is in line with Norton (2008) and Tomalin (2008) which came to the conclusion that through critical discourse analysis students learn to tackle with language skills. In fact, the challenge of evaluating critically leads to engagement in a promoted level with the course materials, which resulted in not only a higher-order thinking (Reed & Stavreva, 2006) but also promoted academic and target language performance. However, the results were at odds with that of Taspinar and Cubukcu (2020) in which critical literacy instruction proved to have no impact on adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' reading comprehension.

Correia's (2006) stresses the efficacy of instructing reading on the basis of critical discourse analysis. He thinks this way the students can feel themselves in an equal setting with the authors, and as a result can understand the reading comprehensions much better. He has also provided various reasons for not considering reading comprehension exercises as the sole type of practicing reading in the classrooms. This study supports not only Correia's but also that of Zingraf (2003) in which the learners' language awareness was raised and their attitudes toward the excerpts from the press changed due to the CDA-based instruction for non-native speakers of English in which texts were analyzed. Fredricks' (2007) integration of CDA to teaching reading also led to both convincing improvements in reading skills and awareness-raising of the learners. Except for these studies, there were other researches in the field of English teaching which proved CDA's positive and significant effect on teaching and learning outputs (e.g. Cots, 2006; Icmey, 2009; Janks, 2005; Koupaee Dar et al., 2010; Wallace, 1992;

Wallace, 1999; Yang, 2004) ever since Fairclough (1995) introduced CDA. Thus, one of the prominent tasks of language teachers is to promote the learners' level of thinking as well as helping them to realize the accurate meaning of the text (Waters, 2006); which actually refers to the meaning underneath the surface not the one intending to manipulate the audiences.

Another interesting and remarkable outcome of this study is derived from the Bonferroni post hoc outcomes, which revealed that the high proficiency group scores were significantly different from the low proficiency condition and mid proficiency condition at significance level of *.001*. Also, the mid proficiency group significantly differed from the low one at the level of *.002*. Taken together, these findings suggested that CDA training really had an effect on L2 learners' reading comprehension for high and mid groups. The results concentrated on the distinguished role of critical discourse analysis for the more competent students. The outcome apparently testified that the more proficient an EFL learner is the more efficiently he will utilize CDA techniques to develop his reading comprehension ability; that is language proficiency positively has a direct role in the extent to which raising a CDA model awareness can promote the students' reading comprehension ability. The reverse is also verified to be true; i.e. the least proficient students cannot raise the CDA model awareness to promote their reading comprehension ability in spite of receiving full practice about that.

There were few limitations to this research. This study could have been experimental if the researcher had not faced the problem of lack of randomization. Since the researcher had only access to a population who had already been placed in three groups, the very samples had to be used for the research, and so the design was pre-experimental. Another limitation was the small number of male participants, which did not make it possible to have gender as a moderator variable.

## **5. Conclusion and Implications**

After research studies like this, the participants learned how intensely they had been influenced by the authors while they thought they were just being informed, and how easy it is to prevent oneself from being manipulated through the same tool used by them which is language. To them these linguistic elements were nothing but innocent vehicles for communicating with each other before becoming familiar with the CDA while after getting CDA instruction, they could mention those special critical elements as presenting the author's ideological status (Koupae Dar et al., 2010).

Once, revoking this manipulation, one can have a more assertive, confident, and critical approach to whatever read or heard by him/her from then on. Accordingly, any method or instruction that can make critical

readers would be of high saliency. That is why the chief problem was to check the effect of implementing van Dijk's CDA model in EFL academic situations on the ability of reading in three different levels of students' proficiency.

In this regard further studies seem to be necessary. For example, gender can be taken into consideration as a variable provided that there are enough number of both genders to show the difference. Here, due to the small number of male participants, it was not possible. The researchers can also make use of concurrent verbal protocol and thought listing to have a qualitative research as well. This way thought process can also be inspected while through other researches they are hardly ever achievable. Since van Dijk's model is ideological in essence, in future studies not only political lectures, but also magazine articles, advertisements and news reports that might include ideological backgrounds can be chosen to be analyzed and practiced in the class.

The outcome of such studies can change EFL teachers' previous comprehension-based methods and lead them to incorporate critical discourse analysis techniques into reading comprehension skills. As a result, they can have students who do not just comprehend the reading passage, rather analyze it enthusiastically while reading between the lines. Moreover, instructors can develop their professional knowledge and mastery through utilizing critical-based approaches, and as a result awaken the consciousness of language learners. This awareness would help them to increase the ability of analyzing texts, providing inferences, and making argumentations in order to defend their ideologies. That will lead a passive learner to an active critical thinker; sole comprehension of the text would be replaced by interpretation and evaluation of complex scenarios in the reading comprehension texts. It might later help them develop their skill of writing because once the students can read a text critically, they will be able to do the same with their own written essay. The results of this research can also inspire the curriculum designers to incorporate critical discourse analysis techniques not only with language learners' textbooks but also with teacher training courses. Textbooks the learners are in need of are the ones that can enhance their ability to read critically and reinforce it then.

### **Acknowledgement**

I would like to appreciate the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedbacks, and Dr. Shafiei for his comments on statistics

## References

- Abdulmajid, A. (2019). Media and ideology in the Middle East: A critical discourse analysis. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 28(1), 23-47.
- Allan, D. (2004). *Oxford placement test*. Retrieved August 20, 2010.
- Clarke, L. W., & Whitney, E. (2009). Walking in their shoes: Using multiple-perspectives texts as a bridge to critical literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(6), 530-534.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (2000). *Discourse and context in language teaching: A guide for language teachers*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Cohen, J. (1988). Set correlation and contingency tables. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 12(4), 425-434.
- Correia, R (2006). Encouraging critical reading in the EFL classroom. *English Teaching Forum* 9, 16-20.
- Cots, J.M., (2006). Teaching 'with an attitude': Critical discourse analysis in EFL teaching. *ELT Journal*, 60(4), 336-345.
- Downs, D. (2000). Rethinking dogma: Teaching critical reading in freshman composition. Paper presented at the National Council of Teachers of English conference. ERIC ED.
- Ebrahimi, N.A., & Rahimi, A. (2013). Towards a more efficient EFL reading comprehension classroom environment: The role of content and critical reading. *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 7(2), 1-15.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). Discourse and text: Linguistic and intertextual analysis within discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 3(2), 193-217.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fredricks, L. (2007). A rationale for critical pedagogy in EFL: The case of Tajikistan. *The Reading Matrix*, 7(2), 22-28.
- Flowerdew, J., & Richardson, J. E. (2017). *The Routledge Handbook of critical discourse studies*. Routledge.
- Grabe, W. & Stoller, F.L. (2002). *Teaching and researching reading*. Pearson Education.
- Hashemi, M. R., & Ghanizadeh, A. (2012). Critical discourse analysis and critical thinking: An experimental study in an EFL context. *System*, 40(1), 37-47.
- Hassani, M. T., Rahmany, R., & Babaei, M. (2013). The relationship between Iranian EFL learners 'critical thinking and reading comprehension

- performance in journalistic texts. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(10), 1873-1878.
- Huang, S. Y. (2011). Reading “further and beyond the text”: Student perspectives of critical literacy in EFL reading and writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(2), 145-154.
- İçmez, S. (2005). *The impact of a critical reading course in the Turkish high school context* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Warwick).
- İcmez, S. (2009). Motivation and critical reading in EFL classroom: A case of ELT preparatory students. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*, 5(2), 123-145.
- Janks, H. (2005). Language and design of text. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 4(3), 97-110.
- Ko, M.Y., & Wang, T.F. (2013). EFL learners’ critical literacy practices: A case study of four college students in Taiwan. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 22(3), 221-229.
- Kondowe, W. (2014a). Presidents and Ideologies: A Transitivity Analysis of Bingu wa Mutharika Inaugural Address. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 2(3), 174-180.
- Koupaee Dar, Z. K., Shams, M. R., & Rahimi, A. (2010). Teaching reading with a critical attitude: Using critical discourse analysis (CDA) to raise EFL university students’ critical language awareness (CLA). *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 3(2), 457-476.
- Kurland, D. (2000). What is critical thinking? WWW: [http://www.Criticalreading.Com/critical\\_thinking.htm](http://www.Criticalreading.Com/critical_thinking.htm) (Accessed 22 September 2011).
- Marashi, H., & Yavarzadeh, E. (2014). Using critical discourse analysis instruction in argumentative and descriptive writing classes. *Issues in Language Teaching*, 3(2), 209-236.
- Martínez, D. F. (2012). Critical learning: Critical discourse analysis in EFL teaching. *Journal of Language Teaching & Research*, 3(2), 285-295.
- Mullet, D. R. (2018). A general critical discourse analysis framework for educational research. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 29(2), 116-142.
- Najarzadegan, S., Dabaghi, A., & Eslami-Rasekh, A. (2017). A critical discourse analysis of Iran and US presidential speeches at the UN: The Sociopragmatic Functions. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(9), 764-774.
- Naunan. D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Heinle & Heinle.



- Nimasari, E. P. (2016). Critical discourse analysis in teaching reading. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 6(2), 119-130.
- Norton, S. (2008). Discourse analysis as an approach to intercultural competence in the advanced EFL classroom. *doi.10.21427/D79X9Q*.
- Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS*. Routledge.
- Piper, B., Schroeder, L., & Trudell, B. (2016). Oral reading fluency and comprehension in Kenya: Reading acquisition in a multilingual environment. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 39(2), 133-152.
- Reed, S. L., & Stavreva, K. (2006). Layering knowledge: Information literacy as critical thinking in the literature classroom. *Pedagogy*, 6(3), 435-452.
- Rezaei, S., Kobari, K., & Salami, A. (2019). The portrayal of Islam and Muslims in western media: A critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*, 16(1), 55-73.
- Rogers, R. (2004). *A critical discourse analysis of family literacy practices power in and out of print*. Lawrence Erlbaum
- Rahimi, E., & Sharififar, M. (2015). Critical discourse analysis and its implication in English language teaching: A case study of political text. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(3), 504–511. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0503.08>
- Ramos, B. (2004). Power Relation in the EFL class through oral interaction (Master's thesis). *Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá*.
- Salayo, J. D. (2020). Women's right, a call for life: A critical discourse analysis of pres. Donald Trump's speech for the 2020 march for life. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies*, 7(1), 115-135.
- Sengul, K. (2019). Critical discourse analysis in political communication research: a case study of right-wing populist discourse in Australia. *Communication Research and Practice*, 5(4), 376-392.
- Sheyholislami, J. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. Retrieved from <http://www.carleton.ca/~jsheyhol/cda.htm>.
- Taspinar, H. K., and Cubukcu, F. (2020). The impact of critical literacy instruction on adult EFL learners' reading comprehension. *Language Teaching and Educational Research*, 3(1), 34-55.
- Teo, P. (2000). Racism in the news: A critical discourse analysis of news reporting in two Australian newspapers. *Discourse & Society*, 11(1), 7-49.

- Tomalin, B. (2008). Making culture happen in the English classroom. URL: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/making-culture-happen-english-languageclassroom>.
- Valeri-Gold, M., & Deming, M. P. (2000). Reading, writing, and the college developmental student. In R. F. Flippo & D. C. Caverly (Eds.), *Handbook of college reading and study strategy research* (pp. 149–173). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1988). *News as discourse*. Erlbaum Associates.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism*. Sage Publications.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Multidisciplinary CDA: A plea for diversity. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, 1*, 95-120.
- van Dijk, Teun A., (2004). Politics, ideology and discourse. In: *Wodak, R. (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Language and Politics, Section Language and Politics*. Universitat Pompeu Fabra.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2009). *Society and discourse: How social contexts influence text and talk*. Cambridge University Press.
- van Dijk, T.A. (2013). *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News in the Press*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Wallace, C. (1992). Critical literacy awareness in the EFL classroom. *Critical Language Awareness, 59-92*.
- Wallace, C. (1999). Critical language awareness: Key principles for a course in critical reading. *Language Awareness, 8(2)*, 98-109.
- Waters, A. (2006). Thinking and language learning. *ELT Journal, 60(4)*, 319-327.
- Widdowson, H. G. (2000). On the limitations of linguistics applied. *Applied Linguistics, 21(1)*, 3-25.
- Wodak, R. (2002). Aspects of critical discourse analysis. *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik, 36(10)*, 5-31.
- Wodak, R. (2007). Pragmatics and critical discourse analysis: A cross-disciplinary inquiry. *Pragmatics & Cognition, 15(1)*, 203-225.
- Yang, Y. F. (2004). The pilot study of diagnostic reading assessment. In *The proceedings of the 21<sup>st</sup> international conference on English teaching and learning in R.O.C.* (pp. 241-254). Chaoyang University of Technology.
- Zinkgraf, M. (2003). Assessing the development of critical language awareness in a foreign language environment. Retrieved January, 2016 from [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERIC\\_Docs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/1b/52/9c.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERIC_Docs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1b/52/9c.pdf).