



## CDA, Critical Thinking, and ZPD: A Comparative Study

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The major aim of this study was to make a connection between CDA, critical thinking, and ZPD. To this end, following the guidelines laid down by Thompson (1987), the researchers, first analyzed two texts (taken from New Interchange series and high school books) and then related the analyses to critical thinking and ZPD. The results of the analyses of the texts exhibited that mostly texts are laden with hidden ideologies and power relations, and this is the teacher's responsibility to make students aware of these hidden ideas and ideals. Finally, the results were discussed in the context of education in Iran and some suggestions were made.

**Key terms:** CDA, Critical thinking, Reading texts, ZPD,

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Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with its focus on language and power and the claim that language is not neutral, tries to destabilize the stabilized institutions and ideas. In fact, the aim of CDA is to investigate hidden power relations in a text and have an especial interest in uncovering inequalities, power relations, injustices, biases, etc. (Corson, 2000).

Thus, critical thinking is an essential ability because we are living in times of advanced technology and widespread expansion of information, when each individual needs to be a critical thinker to uncover biases, prejudices and misinformation. In recent years 'critical thinking' has become something of a buzz word in educational circles. However, Iranian students are very reluctant to question ideas and take for granted what is presented in reading materials. This becomes serious at high school level because at school, students pay more attention to form rather than content. This is compounded by the fact they are obliged to be the recipient of the discourse. Therefore, with assistant of the teacher, learners should be guided to develop skills to think and read more critically; also, they should be instructed on how to unmask texts laden with values associated with power.

Therefore, the major aim of this study is to link CDA, as a tool in the teacher's hands, to critical thinking inspired by the notion of 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD). In order to achieve the stated goal, the researchers first, using Thompson's model (1989), analyze some sample texts selected from high school and New Interchange textbooks to find major ideologies and power relations. Second, following the idea that, critical thinking is often woven in concepts, topics and texts coming from Western culture (Cam Le, 2005), the researchers examine the extent to which the texts themselves incorporate and appreciate elements of critical thinking. Finally, based on the results of the analysis, a proposed model of teaching motivated by the ZPD is presented.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. CDA

CDA is the approach to discourse analysis which attempts to uncover the relationship between discourse, ideology, and power. Within the framework of CDA, discourse is defined as something "more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice" (Fairclough, 1992, p.28). "Discourse is pregnant of the language users' ideology. Discourse and language can be used to make unbalanced power relations and to make portrayals of social groups appear to be commonsense, normal, and natural when in fact the reality is prejudice, injustice, and inequities. Actually, ideologically dominant groups, consciously or unconsciously, attempt to impose their ideology over less-powerful and non-dominant groups through their language. Therefore, their language includes a lot of hidden ideologies not observable for ordinary readers" (Hodge, Kress & Jones, 1979, p. 81). The analysis of language is a necessary part of any attempt to uncover the ideological assumptions that are hidden in the words of our written and oral speech in order to resist and overcome negative power relations or ensure positive power relations (Macgregor, 2003).

"The critical approach to language study is consistent with a view of education which prioritizes the development of the learners' capacities to examine and judge the world carefully and, if necessary, to change it. The introduction of CDA in language classes does not necessarily involve a change in teaching method or techniques. Rather, CDA offers a new perspective on language, which considers that language use (a) is questionable and problematic (b) reflects social/ideological processes and (c) constitutes, at the same time, a resource to act upon these processes" (Cots, 2006, p. 336).

### Non-critical and critical views of D and DA (Cots, 2006)

#### What is discourse?

##### Non-critical view

##### Critical view



Stretch of language perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive.

Ideologically determined ways of talking or writing about persons, places, events or phenomena.

Different ways of talking/writing about (and structuring) areas of knowledge or social practice (e.g. medical discourse, ecological discourse).

A mode of social practice that is both structured by society and, at the same time, contributes to structuring that same society.

**What is DA?**

<u>Non-critical view</u>	<u>Critical view</u>
Description of natural spoken or written language.	Analysis of how texts work within specific socio-cultural practices.
Study of what gives a stretch of language unity and meaning.	Explanation of how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideology and, at the same time, is used to construct social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief.

**1.2. Critical thinking**

Critical thinking is the cornerstone of a well-rounded and complete education. Students graduating with a strong critical thinking background tend to use their talents quickly and maintain high levels of success. “Almost everyone agrees that one of the main goals of education, at whatever level, is to help students develop general thinking skills, especially critical thinking skills” (Gelder, 2005, p.1). He indicated that students do not acquire these skills as much as they could and should. Therefore, we need to generally improve our teaching and our educational system.

In recent years, the nature of critical thinking has received considerable attention in the field of education. Many researchers have attempted to offer satisfactory definitions; however, the term continues to be redefined. Educator John Dewey (1993) is often cited for first bringing attention to “reflective thinking.” He defined this as “the kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious consecutive consideration” (P. 3). Siegel (1997) refers to the “critical spirit” that encompasses a whole set of dispositions, including attitudes, habits of mind, character traits, that incline one to seek reasons and evidence carefully while rejecting partially. In addition to these specific definitions, many others have tried to encapsulate critical thinking into a few words. Siegel calls the critical thinker one who “is appropriately moved by reasons” (p. 3). Norris and Ennis (1989) define critical thinking as “reasonable and reflective thinking that is focused upon deciding what to believe and do” (p. 3), whereas Lipman (1991) defines it as healthy skepticism. Others remark on how difficult critical thinking is to define. Nickerson (1990) explains how language is limited in its ability to describe thinking skills and processes. Likewise, Resnick (1987) claims, “Thinking skills resist precise forms of definition” (p. 2).

In 1974, Barnes and Shemilt conceptualized two types of education:

Transmission: Learning is the accumulation of a knowledge store acquired in a process of simple transfer of information from a source to receiver. The focus in learning is on the source



and the characteristics of the information the source provides which make it which make it easy or difficult to receive.

Interpretation: Learning is the personalization of information acquired by interacting with input, processing it and re-processing it to form a new mental schema of ideas. The focus in learning is on the receiver and the processes by which the individual acquires and transforms the input.

This is the first model that Freire (1970) attacks and calls it “banking” concept of education, in which the student is viewed as an empty account to be filled by the teachers. In such kind of education, transmission of mere facts is the goal of education. Teacher knows all the answers, and students are there just to memorize and regurgitate teachers` and books` opinions. The good student is the one who is humble, a parrot-like learner, never criticizing the teachers and only conforms to the teachers` expectations.

### 1.3. ZPD

In 1934 Vygotsky coined the term “Zone of Proximal Development” to make a distinction between actual and potential development of child, believing that IQ tests measure only current knowledge of the child, neglecting the potentiality of the child. Vygotsky believed that the development of higher mental functions must be considered in the contexts of the child`s interactions with other social agents. In his view, a child`s “developmental level” and his learning capabilities cannot be assessed without considering both his “actual” and “potential” levels of development: The actual developmental level “characterizes mental development retrospectively” by indicating which aspects of various psychological functions are consolidated and enable the child to perform in a given situation independently from other agents, the potential level of development characterizes psychological functions that have not yet matured enough to enable him to perform independently, but can be elicited by means of various “hints” “leading questions” or pieces of solution provided by others (Vygotsky,1978, p.85). From these two measures of the child’s developmental level, Vygotsky defines “the zone of proximal development” as :

*The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (1978, p.86).*

Schneuwly (1994) has argued, persuasively, that the ZPD was Vygotsky’s response to a difficult theoretical problem, namely, the tension between the internal self-propulsing mechanisms of development and the impact of external cultural forces, as embodied in instruction. In fact, the ZPD is where the cognition and culture create each other. Vygotsky and his students called their approach a “sociocultural” theory of psychological processes. For Vygotsky, development of a behavior occurs on two levels which form the boundaries of the ZPD. The lower level is the child's *independent performance*-what the child knows and can do alone. The higher level represents the maximum the child can reach with help and is called *assisted performance*. Between maximally assisted performance and independent performance lie varying degrees of partially assisted performances.

Vygotsky (1978) believed that if you investigate two children on entrance into school, both of whom are ten years old chronologically and eight years old in terms of mental development, you can say that they are at the same age mentally, meaning that they can independently deal with tasks up to the degree of difficulty that has been standardized for the



eight-year-old level. If you stop at this point, you would imagine that the subsequent course of mental development will be the same, because it depends on their intellect. But if you don't terminate your study and at this point, and show them various ways of dealing with the problem, for example you may run through an entire demonstration and ask the child to finish it, or offer leading questions and under your assistance the first child can deal with problems up to a twelve-year-old's level, the second up to a nine-year-old's. In other words, according to Vygotsky, two children might exhibit the same IQ score, supposedly indicating that they had achieved the same developmental level and thus readiness for instruction, but one of them might well be able to perform more complex tasks under someone else's guidance than the other could with the same assistance. Vygotsky referred to this difference between actual and potential IQ-between twelve and eight, or between nine and eight- as the zone of proximal development.

## 2. Purpose of the study

The present study, first, aims to investigate the major ideologies in the contents of English textbooks used at the public schools and those which are used in language institutions to verify a relationship between ideology and the way it is manifested in the text i.e., to peruse how language is manipulated in order to attain specific ideologies. In fact, the goal is to determine the underlying power relations that may be strengthened and/or reproduced by language education. Second, it attempts to explore the extent to which the texts themselves appreciate elements of critical thinking. Finally, based on critical features of the texts, a proposed model of teaching reading comprehension motivated by the ZPD will be suggested.

## 3. Methodology

Ten texts, five taken from English books of high school and five taken from New Interchange, are purposefully selected and analyzed. Out of ten texts only two as representative samples are presented in this paper. Drawing upon CDA and Thompson's model of analysis (1987), the researchers examine and discuss how language textbooks expose language learners to the ideological contents constructed in the English textbooks.

There are several necessary components of analysis that a study such as this should take into account. Among different components that different approaches in CDA advocate, two stand out as similarities across all of them: a need for contextual analysis and a need for textual analysis. In addition to the above two components of analysis, Thompson (1987) mentions the need for interpretive analysis.

### 3.1. Contextual analysis

Contextual analysis consists of explaining the specific context where English language textbooks are written and used. A text is a description of something that is happening in a larger social context (Macgregore, 2003). In order to interpret a text, one needs to know about the environment of the text (Halliday & Hassan, 1989). Knowing where and when the text is set will help to understand the text better.

### 3.2. Textual analysis

Textual analysis includes identifying and analyzing the ideological content of the text. To do this, one needs to critically read each text, focus on each phrase, each clause, and each sentence separately and in conjunction with neighboring phrases clauses and sentences.

#### 3.2.1. Macro-analysis



This phase involves the analysis of the contents in relation to the task of identifying the manner in which the interests of underlying power relations are served through such ideological contents. Thompson (1984) identifies four modalities of the operation of ideology in which meaning serves to sustain relation of domination: legitimation, dissimulation, fragmentation, reification. Eaglton (1991) further adds the following six methods may interact in complex ways to legitimate a dominant power: promotion of beliefs, naturalization, denigration, excluding of rival forms of thought, and obscuring social reality in a way convenient to itself.

In summary, the two framework of analysis described above assume that power relations are essentially negative. However, the above modalities/methods may be applied to analyze the ways in which ideology serves positive power relations. i.e., ideology that works not only in the interests of the individuals or groups that are thought to be dominant, but also in the interests of everyone in the society, especially the learners that are learning from the textbooks.

### 2.3 Interpretive analysis

The third component involves the educational and social implications that can be drawn from the interaction of the text and context, i.e., the interpretive analysis of the relationship between the context and the text. Essentially, this component of analysis is concerned with the subject of power and the nature of power relations, i.e., who has the power in what kind of situation? And is the power relations predominantly positive, negative or both?

## 4. Analyses of sample texts

### 4.1. Texts written in western culture

The first sample text is taken from 'New Interchange 3' titled 'Yes or No' (Richards, Jonathan & Proctor, 2005, p. 21).

This lesson is about a group of Americans who used to teach English in other countries. In this text they are talking about their experiences. They decided that miscommunication is *always* possible even over something as *simple* as 'yes' or 'no'.

The overt message of the text is that in the process of language learning nonverbal communication is as important as verbal aspect of language. According to Brown (2000) "We communicate so much information nonverbally in conversations that often the verbal aspect of conversation is negligible" (p. 262). Thus by drawing learners attention to this important aspect of language learning the text helps students to be more powerful language learners and communicators. Looking critically at the text, one will notice the text itself raises some questions over some issues that prove the passage does not simply stop in expressing the idea of the importance of nonverbal communication, although it starts with it, it raises the issue of Hegemony of English and the related fallacies thereby engaging language learners in critical thinking.

Here are questions:

What is taken for granted is that the readers of this text are English language learners. Thus the first question that begs an answer is that why the author instead of making learners familiar with samples of nonverbal language used in different English speaking countries, he/she talks about the body language of non-English speaking countries and misunderstandings that happen for the American teachers.

The first possibility is that the author does not like to limit the ownership of English language to some specific countries thereby showing his/her avoidance of being involved in



the discussion of 'World Englishes' (Kachru 1985, 1992, cited in Brown, 2000). Or simply he agrees with the issue of 'World Englishes'. Let us go to the details. If the writer was supposed to exemplify nonverbal language used in English speaking countries to show the interrelatedness of language and culture he had to name those countries. Typically, he/she is supposed to name 'inner circle' (Kachru, 1985, cited in Gaffly, 2005) countries which are the US, UK and Australia while there is a heated debate about whether English as a native language is limited only to these countries or not. Richards (1979) argues that the process of 'nativisation' or 'indigenization' of English has spread to 'outer circle' that includes India and South Africa. Thus the author simply avoids being involved in this discussion or agrees with it.

There is one more question. Why are the stories about American *teachers* visiting/living in a foreign country and not American businessmen or tourists? If miscommunication happened for the second and the third group, the following questions would never arise. A closer scrutiny will reveal issues other than the importance of teaching/learning nonverbal language, those of Hegemony of English and Fallacies related to English language teaching. It might not be expected from a businessman or a tourist to learn some things about nonverbal communication prior to arriving a foreign culture, but for sure, not language teachers. Brown (2000, p. 262) believes that "Today, virtually every book on communication explains how you communicate and miscommunicate ...." Language teachers should be educated in language teaching. It is part of language studies that it is not what you say that counts but how one says it- what one conveys with body language, gestures, eye contact, physical distance and other verbal messages (Brown, 2000). They are supposed at least to be aware of the existence of body language and cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variation in interpretation of gestures if not being familiar or knowing the body language of their students.

Philipson (1992), in his argument about 'Hegemony of English', mentions five tenets of English language teaching that have served to strengthen the 'Hegemony of English'. In the discussion of these tenets, he redesigned them as fallacies and asserts that these tenets/fallacies have been extensively propagated all over the world as underlying ideology that sustains the Hegemony of English. Of the five tenets, the second one is the concern of our study, i.e. the ideal teacher of English is 'a native speaker' (Philipson, 1992). This tenet has become part of the ideology that is conveyed to language teaching profession, students and the general public through the mass media, English textbooks and English textbook writers. Thus because of this tenet/fallacy some native speakers travel to 'expanding circle countries' (the term is used by Kachru, 1985, cited in Gaffly, 2005) such as China, Japan and Taiwan in the hope of earning easy money as English teachers even though they do not have proper qualification.

However, there are some arguments against this tenet. First, the very notion of native speaker has argued to be inappropriate in the field of linguistic studies. The concepts 'native speaker' and 'mother tongue' are no longer viable linguistic concepts. Therefore, Paikeday (1985, cited in Moussu, 2000, p. 5) goes on to assert that "the native speaker is dead". Yet, people still use the notion of 'native speaker' and the ideology for the Hegemony of English live on in the minds of most speakers and learners of English. That is why native speakers are able to get the job because people are led to believe that if a person is a native speaker of English, he/she knows the language and is able to teach the language.

Such attitudes of native speakers, without doubt, result in unequal power relations between the learners of English and the native speakers of English. According to Baik (1994) some of these native speakers (though not all) do not even have high school diploma and they do not certainly speak any language other than English. In addition, when language teachers know only one language, these are they who speak most of the time in class and there is a one-way communication. Thus the students endure the one-way communication and the English native speaker teacher plays significantly dominant role.



Those who believe in the idea that the ideal teacher will be a native speaker argue that in this way, the teacher can serve as model for students to aspire towards. Thus native speaker teachers' authoritative status and a monopoly over meaning of words can be ensured. The domination of teachers over the meaning of words also smoothes the progress of a possible stratification within the English language, with so called Standard English holding the highest position, followed by American English (Gaffly, 2005). In addition, the norms are provided by native speaker, and only by native speakers. Therefore, the ideology and imbalance of power relations are quite obvious.

Therefore, the text is in line with Philipson that the tenet (the ideal teacher of English is native speaker) is just a fallacy. It is interesting to investigate and disclose how the text questions the tenet and makes students think critically and judge for themselves whether it is right or wrong to have native speakers as language teachers. This is the point where we can argue that critical thinking is often woven in concepts, topics and texts coming from Western culture (Cam Le, 2005).

The first American teacher is in a store. She asked the waiter for a cold drink. In her own word the "waiter said nothing". Lisa, the American teacher rephrased her question and the he remained silent. Lisa *gave up* eventually and left the store. Only later, she realized that he had raised his eyebrows which are a positive response in that culture. This reminds us of what Shakespeare (cited in Brown, 2000, p. 262) wrote in *The Winter's Tale*: "There was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture." Why didn't the American teacher realize his facial gesture while from what we see in the picture she was looking straight at his face? Maybe the text aims to tell the reader something. If she had been educated in language teaching, she wouldn't have been frustrated in understanding something as *simple* as yes or no or getting her meaning across that she hadn't understood him (the problem of intelligibility). And if she could, the waiter would open his mouth and say something.

The second story happened in a restaurant. Jan asked for stuffed cabbage. The waiter nodded his head to respond 'no'. Jan misinterpreted nodding as 'yes' and waited eagerly. On the basis of "subtle difference" version of CAH (contrastive analysis hypothesis) learning of language items would be difficult when subtle distinctions are required between the target language and native language. (Oller & Ziahosseiny, 1970, cited Brown, 2000). Predictably then, where there are sharp contrasts between two language items in the source and target language realizing and learning of the items are easier.

The situation became even worse and more serious when it came to a native speaker teacher who was confused while teaching English to Indians. It is absolutely purposeful and deliberate of the author to depict a class with a puzzled language teacher. What happens if a language teacher does not understand the body language of his/her students? Thanks God. The situation was so unusual (students' shaking their heads in different ways) that gave the native speaker teacher enough motivation to understand soon, though not in class, what his students meant. Maybe he became tangled in similar conditions. Almost everyone knows that India is a multicultural nation. One can encounter many cultures even in a limited area. A language teacher is expected to be prepared and qualified to teach such a nation.

It is doubtful whether Lisa, Jan and Tom knew their students' native language. But it can be implied from the text that they do not have proper qualifications. They teach in those countries because people are directed to believe that the best English teacher is a native speaker. That is why English learners are willing to pay them. But the ideology mostly serves the hegemony of English not language learners. How does the text make students think critically about such an issue? The pre-reading question is "where did the three events occur"? The post reading question is "What were these Americans doing in these countries"? The reading passage draws students' attention to the place where each story happened and what Americas do in those countries. What is expected from a language teacher? If a teacher cannot communicate with their students how she/he can teach them to communicate in a new



language in which the interpretation of a message depends heavily on body language which is part of every culture.

#### 4.2. Text written for high school students in Iran

The second representative text is taken from 'English Book 3' titled 'TV or No TV' (Birjandi, Mahmoodi, & Norozi, 1384, lesson 1, p. 6).

On the surface, this lesson promotes the value of selective TV watching. In the first paragraph the author provides information about TV and that in some countries there are various TV channels and viewers can choose between as many as forty different channels. Superficially, this statement aims to inform students, but actually it lets students compare their own status with that of some other countries. But for what purpose? What are the underlying power relations that are created, recreated and sustained through such comparison? As it was mentioned before, the nature of power relation can be positive, negative or both at the same time.

On the one hand, if students are not informed about other countries, concerning TV channels, by this kind of comparison learners get to know that they as viewers are not provided with the same kind of facilities/services that are provided for people in some other countries. At its best, this can empower students. Knowing that they are behind other nations can make students work harder to have a more developed country. However, the text emphasizes negative influences of TV. There is no single instance of positive aspect of watching television. So, it is unlikely that learners want to improve the situation. At worst, learners are repressed by feeling inferior to other nations having more number of choices. They will accept that they live in a third world country. Thus this text divides the viewers into two types: the viewers from the nations given a lot of choices, and those not having the right to choose as many as other viewers based on their interests from some other countries. This way, this lesson portrays some nations as having the luxury of choosing as many as forty channels, while the others do not have such choices. Then two groups, i.e. the nations from developed countries and the nations from underdeveloped or developing countries are put in opposing relations in which the dominance of one group is justified. Thus the strategy used here can be described as fragmentation of different nations that function as legitimizing of cultural dominance.

But deciding on the kinds of power relations involved depends on careful reading of the rest of the text. The following paragraphs show that TV can influence families' life negatively. For example, TV can cause daily struggle among family members to decide what program to watch. Psychologically, limited number of choices can make decision easier for people. Thus students will feel lucky that they don't have many TV channels. They should thank God that there are less or no daily struggles among family members to decide what program to watch. Moreover, the lesson ends with the result of the absence of TV in homes. After ending the experiment, the families wanted TV back but they said that in future they would watch only certain programs, not allowing their lives to be influenced by television. Again, when there are few channels and not a lot of choices, families can decide more easily and their lives will not be influenced negatively by television. TV is an example of technology and it can be said that in this text it is the symbol of technology. The implication is that the text suggests technology causes problems. Thus the text legitimizes current state of things by denigrating the blessing if technology.

The text does not give any information about where the research has been done; who did the research and when. It uses passive structure in order to hide part of information. Therefore, the passage uses the strategy of mystification in order to "...express particular perspectives delicately and covertly; because they are covert, they are illusive of direct challenge, facilitating what Kress calls retreat into mystification and impersonality". (Atkins, 2002, p.3). By mystifying where the research has been done, the students cannot decide for



themselves whether in those countries which have many TV channels, their people really encounter the problems mentioned in text or not, thereby excluding rival ideas to legitimize the ideas presented in this lesson. In this way the passage does not accept the responsibility for correctness or incorrectness of information in the text. The word *recent* in the first paragraph (a recent research ...) also used to relate the research, the findings and the results to any time and thereby students accept them as *timeless truth*.

Using a scientific approach is another strategy to justify the problems concerning limited number of choices in Iran. Nester, et al. (1993, cited in Van Dijk, 1998, p.8) mention that "Unless inconsistent with our personal belief and expectations, recipients tend to accept beliefs (knowledge and opinions) through discourse from what they see as authoritative, trustworthy, or credible sources, such as scholars, experts, professionals or reliable media". Generally, we take for granted the findings of science and trust science blindly. Because students have to pass tests, they are obliged to learn the contents of the textbooks without further questioning the truth validity of the given. They do not demand justification and evidence. Therefore, the text conforms to the transmission model of education that we witness in Iran. In this model of education, students are considered empty recipient (Felstiner, 1992). It implies that critical thinking is not appreciated in this country. This model of education does not require students to challenge the contents of reading materials; to seek for connections and explanation and to be alert to unclarity. This is a suitable model to transmit ideology, in this case government ideologies, and to make students accept them as timeless truth.

The next point that deserves attention is the issue of gender relation. The first paragraph continues with a statistics about TV viewers and that housewives are the biggest group of viewers. They spend five hours a day watching television *while their husbands are out working*. On the surface, it seems to be quiet scientific and neutral, but closer scrutiny will reveal the underlying power relations that are supported. There is no reason why the author juxtaposes these two sentences. May be the writer was going to give the text a humorous tone. But why women should become the subject of such a silly joke? Another possibility is that the passage aims to compare housewives with their husbands. The passage depicts women as having nothing to do but sitting at home and watching TV (five hours a day), the activity which is portrayed as being negative one since watching TV is associated with negative ideas such as something that stops children from doing their homework (an intellectual activity), stops families from reading (an intellectual activity), doing sports (having to do with health), being close (in the absence of TV families have less time to talk and play), and being relaxed. Also watching TV causes daily family struggles. Therefore, the lesson implies that women spend a lot of time on doing something that has so many negative effects on both themselves and their families, while their husbands are depicted as persons who work out and earn money. But in real life, women complain about not having enough time to watch TV even when all family members but mothers watch TV. So, the passage dissimulates sexual dominance by distortion of reality.

In the sixth paragraph similar idea is disseminated. It shows that these are television programs which provide topics for talking for both children and their mothers while men are excluded from this part of experiment (such a silly activity provides the subject of thinking and talking of women) Therefore, TV programs are the major source of ideas for *several* mothers. They are hardly involved in other activities such as reading to get any idea. Even they did not benefit from the outcomes of the experiment such as reading or playing or doing sport or if they did, they would not be intelligent enough to get any idea.

*TV or not TV* tries to naturalize and legitimize the current situation. It makes student content with what they have. But when students are constantly suggested that everything is good or those who have better and more opportunities have more problems, they won't strive for the better. It seems that the text is concerned with other issues than language learning issues. The



text does not teach and encourage students to learn language. Probably it aims to make students be good Iranian citizens. In this way the purpose of language education becomes accumulation of legitimized knowledge. It is argued that teaching materials propagate and thereby legitimize socially accepted knowledge.

### 5. Discussion and conclusion

As the results of the analyses demonstrate each culture tries to promote its own ideology. It seems that some texts allow room for critical investigation of the texts by posing thought-provoking questions, but others try to repress the readers, leading them to conform to the prescribed ideologies.

As for the text taken from New Interchange, it promotes the ideologies and thereby re/produces and sustains power relations that benefit language learners in particular. Limiting the ownership of English to some specific countries and yielding to hegemony of English and the fallacy that ideal teacher is a native speaker results in unequal power relations that serves the interests of 'inner circle countries' and their nations. This unequal power relation surely, is repressive for other countries other than inner circle countries and their nations. The text 'Yes or No' although written in an English speaking country, does not enforce the ideology of the power of the English language. It does not distort the reality concerning the idea that the ideal language teacher is a native speaker. As we argued before, the way the text depicts native speaker teachers in different situations especially in language class and the pre/post reading questions shows the reading passage appreciates enhancing critical thinking in language learners.

As for the text taken from Book three of high school, it disseminates ideologies that results in re/creating and maintaining unequal power relations that are repressive to the learners in particular and the majority of population in Iran in general. Legitimizing of cultural dominance, legitimizing of current status of things by denigrating technology, excluding rival ideas to legitimize the ideas presented in the text, and dissimulation of sexual dominance by distortion of social reality are covert manifestations of ideology that suppress the majority of the society. Similar ideologies have been found in other texts taken from high school textbooks. As discussed before, the text conforms to the transmission model of education that does not value enhancing critical thinking in students. In general, it is probably fair to say that in some textbooks there is a tendency towards making students conform to a perceived status quo, and towards the enforcement of codes of behavior and discipline. This is the teachers' responsibility as agents of change to shift the dominant paradigm and create a better one.

Therefore, this necessitates a model of teaching reading in which with the help of the teacher (ZPD), students examine the texts critically. In fact, to increase students' critical thinking abilities, a perceptive teacher with the help of CDA can pinpoint the areas of concern in a text, sharing them with his/her students. For instance, the teacher can put some questions in order to provide students with food for thought. Some good questions which can be posed for the second text as post-reading activities are:

1. How many hours a day does your mother spend on watching TV?
2. Does the text say anything about where the experiment was done?
3. Does the text say anything about when the experiment was done?
4. Does the text say anything about who did the experiment?
5. Who wrote this text?
6. Whom is the text written for?
7. What is the purpose of the text?



In a nutshell, to have a better society, we need people who are creative. Creativity is not approachable unless individuals are equipped with some strategies to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate seemingly set-in-stone ideas. To increase students' critical thinking abilities, teachers through CDA can come to the aid of their students (ZPD). In fact, CDA, critical thinking and ZPD can come together to create a new paradigm shift in education.

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## Appendices

**A. Reading Text taken from New Interchange three** (Richards, Jonathan & Proctor, 2005, p. 21).

**Yes or No?** Scan the article. Where did the three events occur?

Living in a foreign culture can be exciting, but it can also be confusing. A group of Americans who taught English in other countries recently discussed their experiences. They decided that miscommunications were always possible, even over something as simple as “yes” or “no.”

on her first day in Micronesia, Lisa thought people were ignoring her requests. The day was hot, and she needed a cold drink. She went into a store and asked, “Do you have cold drinks? Lisa rephrased the question. Still the woman said nothing. Lisa gave up and left the store. She later learned that the woman had answered her: she had raised her eyebrows, which in Micronesia means “yes.”

This reminded Jan of an experience she had in Bulgaria. She had gone to a restaurant that was known for its stuffed cabbage. She asked the waiter, “Do you have stuffed cabbage today? He nodded his head. Jan eagerly waited, but the cabbage never came. In that country, a nod means “no.”

Tom had a similar problem when he arrived in India. After explaining something in class, he asked his students if they understood. They responded with many different nods and shakes of the head. He assumed some people had not understood, so he explained again. When asked again if they understood, they did the same thing. He soon found out that his students did understand. In India, people nod and shake their heads in different ways depending on where they come from. You have to know where a person is from to understand if they are indicating “yes” or “no.”

**B. Reading text taken from English book 3 of high school** (Birjandi, Mahmoodi, & Norozi, 1384, lesson 1, p. 6).

**TV or no TV**

Today there is a television set in almost every house. In some countries, you can choose between as many as forty different channels; some show only a single type of program- news, sports, music, theater, or movies; most show different kinds of programs, giving a viewer a lot of choices to choose from. In one country, a recent research showed that the average person spent three and a half hours a day watching television. Housewives were the biggest group of viewers. They spent an average of about five hours a day watching TV while husbands were out at work.

For families with children, a big problem is getting the children away from the television to do their homework. Then what is the effect of television on people's lives?

To find out, an unusual experiment was done recently. A group of forty-four families were asked not to watch TV for one month. The families were studied to see how their lives would change not by watching TV during this period.

Four of the families found that family life simply could not continue without TV, and they left the experiment. They said they could find no other way to spend their free time. Among those who successfully did not use television, several interesting observations were reported.

Some parents were glad to end the daily struggle among family members to decide what program to watch. In some families, the family went to bed earlier. Family members found other things to do, such as reading, or playing volleyball. Many families found that they had more time to talk and play among themselves without television. Dinner times were more relaxed without the pressure of TV. Children's eyesight improved in several cases.

Some children found they had nothing to talk at school. Several mothers found they had less to talk about with their young children.

At the end of the experiment, most of the families wanted to have a television back in their homes. But they said in future they would watch only certain programs, and not allow their lives to be influenced by television.