



Skills for Life Quality Initiative

ESOL 4.6: Discourse for ESOL teachers

Session 3: Critical discourse analysis and introduction to lexical cohesion

Session plan and resources



Learning+Skills Council

Session 3: Critical discourse analysis and introduction to lexical cohesion

Aims

For participants to:

- develop awareness, understanding and knowledge of lexical cohesion and textuality in talk and writing, concepts linked to theories of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and activities for developing spoken and written discourse with learners.

Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- reinforced understanding of the concept of coherence and schema with particular reference to bilingual learners
- examined principles underpinning CDA
- analysed elements of lexical cohesion within spoken and written discourse
- considered classroom applications in relation to both spoken and written discourse.

Time	Content	Resources		
		No.	Style	Title
5 (5)	Welcome, aim and learning objectives Show OHTs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 to introduce the session aims and learning objectives.	3.1.1 3.1.2	OHT OHT	Session 3: Aims Session 3: Learning objectives

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10	<p>Revision of terminology, concepts and framework from Sessions 1 and 2</p> <p>Purpose: to reinforce the framework for analysing learners' discourse introduced in Session 1 and to clarify concepts and the meaning of specific terminology.</p> <p>In Activity 3.2.1 participants work in pairs. Give each pair a set of framework cards made from the trainer material sheets and ask them to match terms and definitions. Fast finishers should arrange the cards in terms of macro and micro elements.</p> <p>Remind participants that these are the concepts and terminology introduced in Sessions 1 and 2.</p> <p>Discuss how some of the ideas were expanded on in the post-session reading and will be returned to later in the session.</p> <p>Explain that other aspects of the framework and their applications to teaching spoken and written English will be explored in a more detail in this session and in Session 4.</p>	3.2.1	Trainer material/ Activity	Terminology and definitions
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20	<p>Coherence and cohesion Purpose: to reinforce and develop understanding of the notion of coherence and cohesion.</p> <p>Show OHTs 3.3.1a and 3.3.1b. Both slides show complete short paragraphs but the one on OHT 3.3.1b is just a set of random sentences, whereas that on OHT 3.3.1a is a coherent text – elicit what makes the difference. (You may need to show the OHTs a couple of times for comparison.)</p> <p>Refer back to definitions of coherence and cohesion from Session 1. Stress that the process of making sense of text, getting it to hang together, or to stick, involves piecing together clues – some which are overt, others which are covert – and relies on us interpreting these clues correctly. For example, when reading OHT 3.2.1a we inferred that the girls were the sisters referred to in the first sentence. (Show OHT 3.2.1a again.)</p> <p>Ask participants to read a message or note that has certain words blanked out, an example is provided as Activity sheet 3.3.2 (BT advertisement): Save your liver and bacon. Your dinner is in the dog.</p>	<p>3.3.1a 3.3.1b</p> <p>Activity</p>	<p>OHT OHT</p> <p>Text 1 Text 2</p> <p>BT advertisement</p>
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(35)	<p>The bold words here have been deleted from the activity sheet for participants to guess.</p> <p>Give participants a couple of minutes to fill in the blanks. Elicit how they made sense of the phrases. What were the clues? What knowledge did they draw on? Take feedback.</p> <p>Highlight that the struggle for coherence involved us not only in applying knowledge of genre and activating schema but also in picking up lexical clues, using knowledge of collocation, idiom, and word play.</p> <p>Knowledge of collocation, idiom and word play entails knowledge of language which implicates cohesion.</p>			
45	<p>Lexical cohesion</p> <p>Purpose: to develop understanding of key elements of lexical cohesion and to explore classroom activities that can help learners to develop skills of lexical cohesion.</p> <p>For Activity 3.4.1, show an excerpt from a video that has authentic talk. The example used here is from the BBC 2 programme 'Who Do You Think You Are?' Participants watch</p>	3.4.1	Activity	<p>Lexical cohesion</p> <p>Video excerpt from BBC programme 'Who do you think you are?'</p> <p>Video player</p>

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	<p>and read the transcript a couple of times.</p> <p>In small groups, participants complete the lexical cohesion activities on the activity sheet.</p> <p>(Each participant will need two highlighter pens in different colours.) They find and analyse as many examples of the following as possible: repetition, synonyms, items from the same lexical field, reiteration, how speakers collaborate in unfolding topics.</p> <p>Refer participants to Handout 3.4.2 for feedback on the activity.</p> <p>Use the points on Handout 3.4.3 to draw out how the use of lexical cohesive devices operates within the sentence and between sentences to produce unified and meaningful texts that 'stick together'.</p> <p>Give out the jigsaw reading cards (Activity 3.4.4). Ask participants in small groups to reconstruct the text.</p> <p>Give out the text on Handout 3.4.5 and draw attention to the discourse organising words.</p> <p>Discuss how these are linked to the characteristic</p>			<p>Highlighter pens in different colours</p> <p>Transcription for lexical cohesion: feedback</p> <p>Lexical cohesion devices</p> <p>Jigsaw reading cards</p> <p>Discourse-organising words</p>
		3.4.2	Handout	
		3.4.3	Handout	
		3.4.4	Trainer material/ Activity	
		3.4.5	Handout	

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<p>(1.20)</p>	<p>pattern of many formal texts: the problem–solution pattern (often found in writing).</p> <p>Give other examples of texts that have a situation, problem, response, evaluation of response pattern and other examples of discourse-organising words.</p> <p>Prepare cards for Activity 3.4.6. The cards have classroom activities for developing lexis and knowledge of lexical cohesion. Participants should work in pairs.</p> <p>Ask pairs to discuss how they would group the cards in terms of activities they would try first and those they might then use as follow-up activities. Participants who finish quickly should walk around and look at how others have grouped their cards.</p>	<p>3.4.6</p>	<p>Trainer material/ Activity</p>	<p>Discussion – activities for lexis</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>Discourse and socio-cultural context</p> <p>Purpose: to reinforce the notion that readers and listeners use socio-cultural knowledge to make sense of texts and that the interpretation of discourse is not ideologically neutral.</p> <p>Ask participants to spend a few minutes discussing</p>			

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(1.40)	<p>their notes on the pre-reading. Elicit how we are able to relate new knowledge to existing knowledge.</p> <p>Distribute Activity sheet 3.5.1 and show participants the video excerpt, which contains a stretch of authentic talk requiring inference and the application of socio-cultural knowledge in order to be fully understood. (The example used here is again from the BBC 2 programme 'Who Do You Think You Are?').</p> <p>Ask participants to consider the questions on the activity sheet about what is being inferred by the speaker and what cultural knowledge participants used to make sense of the excerpt. Also ask what ideological issues come into play in relation to the speaker.</p>	3.5.1	Activity	<p>Socio-cultural context</p> <p>Video excerpt: 'Who do you think you are?' (BBC 2) Video player</p>
	<p>Use OHT 3.5.2 to summarise. The OHT points out the role of inference in helping us make sense of texts, the socio-cultural dimension of schema and how inference also brings into play knowledge of the ideological allegiances and frameworks within which people normally operate.</p>	3.5.2	OHT	Socio-cultural context

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2.15	<p>Critical discourse analysis (CDA) Purpose: to develop awareness of the concepts that underpin CDA and to explore the implications for ESOL teaching.</p> <p>(You will need to provide copies of the extracts needed for Activity 3.6.1.) Ask participants to look at ESOL materials from two different sources (extract from Unit 3 Entry 3, <i>Skills for Life</i> ESOL materials and extract from Unit 12: <i>Chart Your Course in English</i> (Wilkins and Spiegel, 1993) and compare them, using the questions on Activity sheet 3.6.1.</p> <p>Take feedback: use the points on Handout 3.6.2 to give a brief overview of CDA. Focus on the notion of 'discourses', language and empowerment, the idea of meaning as socially constructed, underpinned by different ideologies.</p> <p>Point out that CDA asks participants to consider some of the assumptions that lie below the surface of language use and to see the implications for different approaches within ESOL.</p>	3.6.1	Activity	<p>Learning materials and CDA</p> <p>Unit 3, Entry 3 <i>Sfl</i> ESOL materials</p> <p>Wilkins, M. and Spiegel, M. (1993) <i>Chart Your Course in English</i>. Unit 12.</p> <p>Overview of CDA</p>
		3.6.2	Handout	<p>Implications for ESOL of CDA</p>

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	<p>Give brief input using OHT 3.6.3 on the implications for ESOL for CDA in relation to: contexts chosen, roles assigned to learners, approach taken in relation to problem posing, critical reading, language analysis and awareness raising.</p> <p>Discuss Kress and the notion of 'interrogating text': why the topic is being written about, how it is being written about and other ways it could be written about. (You will need to provide participants with copies of the learning materials, poem and a magazine article.)</p> <p>Ask participants to choose one of the three activities described on Activity sheet 3.6.4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an Entry 1 or Entry 2 dialogue from <i>Skills for Life</i> ESOL Learning materials and rewrite it, modifying the roles of the participants or context. • Nicolas Guillen's poem on Martin Luther King from <i>Language and Power</i> (Harris, 1990) and devise discussion questions • a newspaper or magazine article or text from the internet. This should be an article that on the surface looks neutral. 	3.6.3	OHT	
		3.6.4	Activity	<p>Implications for ESOL of CDA</p> <p>Entry 1 or Entry 2 dialogue from SfL ESOL learning materials</p> <p>Guillen's poem on Martin Luther King from Harris, R. (ed) (1990) <i>Language and Power</i>.</p> <p>Magazine article</p> <p>Critique of CDA</p>

(2.15)	<p>Ask them to devise a critical reading activity using Kress' notion of interrogating the text.</p> <p>Conclude with OHT 3.6.5, which outlines the main criticisms of CDA.</p>	3.6.5	OHT	
10	<p>Discourse and cross-cultural factors</p> <p>Purpose: to extend awareness of cross-cultural factors that impact on ESOL learners' discourse.</p> <p>(You will need to provide an example of an ESOL learner's writing as part of Activity 3.7.1.)</p> <p>Ask participants to read an example of a learner's writing (in English), which contains features and conventions from another written culture.</p> <p>Using a flipchart, note views on the learner's knowledge of genre, discourse structure, formulaic expressions, register and layout. What cross-cultural issues arise?</p> <p>Briefly raise the issue of giving learners choice through knowledge of English written discourse conventions alongside the importance of authenticity and the learners' voice, if these points are not brought up by the participants.</p>	3.7.1	Activity	<p>Learner's writing</p> <p>Sample of a learner's writing</p> <p>Flipchart and pens</p>
(2.25)				

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<p>5</p> <p>(2.30)</p>	<p>Evaluation and follow-up activities</p> <p>Recap and review the session, with reference to the aim and objectives.</p> <p>Go through the follow-up activities on Activity sheet 3.8.1. Distribute Handout 3.8.2: introduction to genre theory and the associated tasks (Activity 3.8.3).</p> <p>Ask participants to complete their professional development journal (PDJ) sheet and evaluation form.</p>	<p>3.8.1</p> <p>3.8.2</p> <p>3.8.3</p>	<p>Activity</p> <p>Handout</p> <p>Activity</p>	<p>Follow-up activities to Session 3</p> <p>Introduction to genre theory</p> <p>Introduction to genre theory: DARTS</p> <p>Unit from Spiegel, M. and Sunderland, H. (1990) <i>Writing Works: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing for ESOL and Basic Skills Students</i>. Appendix. London Language and Literacy Unit.</p>
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Aim

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Session 3: Learning objectives

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Trainer material for Activity 3.2.1

Terminology and definitions

Spoken or written texts which occur in the same situations tend to have common features that can be predicted: structure/staging, register, grammar and vocabulary.

Two types of talk. We use the first type for getting business done, the other lubricates the social wheels, for instance confirming and consolidating relationships.

A variety of language selected for use in a specific social situation. In particular, it differentiates formal from informal use of language.

These are mental representations of typical situations. The mind, stimulated by key words and by the context, activates this knowledge to predict the content of the particular situations.

Rise and fall of the voice or the way in which changes in the musical pitch of the voice are used to structure speech and contribute to meaning.

continued ...

Trainer material for Activity 3.2.1

Terminology and definitions continued

Vocalisations such as *mm*, *ah-ha*, and short words and phrases such as *yeah*, *no*, *right*, *mm*, *sure* ... used for making it clear to the speaker that we are attending to the message.

Participants correct either their own words or those of another participant, edging towards a situation in which maximum communication is achieved.

This concept relates to the way a text hangs together, to the way we make sense of it, and to the fact that a text is not just a jumble of sentences.

This is concerned with the surface linguistic links or ties in a text ... grammatical and lexical ones.

This is the study of language independent of the notion of the sentence and concerns the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used.

continued ...

Trainer material for Activity 3.2.1

Terminology and definitions continued

Part of the structure of a sentence has been missed out. It may already have been mentioned.

A reference which links back.

A reference which links forwards.

This is where the meaning of pronouns, adverbs, etc. is determined by the physical context – the setting, time, people involved, e.g. here, there, now, this, that.

A cohesive device or tie used to structure spoken or written discourse. Those mainly used in speech include: *well, right now, mind you, you know, you see*. They are used to move the conversation on. Others, used mainly in writing, include: *in conclusion, on the other hand*.

continued ...

Trainer material for Activity 3.2.1

Terminology and definitions continued

This refers to meaning 'groups' and the relationship of words in a text. This may take the form of word repetition; or the choice of a word that is related in some way to a previous one ... synonymous, or collocationally.

Schema

Genre

Anaphoric

Cataphoric

Register

Coherence

Cohesion

continued ...

Trainer material for Activity 3.2.1

Terminology and definitions continued

Lexical field

Discourse markers

Ellipsis

Repair strategies

Back channel

Transactional and interactional talk

Intonation

Deixis

Discourse

Text 1

The sisters walked to school. They walked quickly because it was cold and wet. At the corner, the girls stopped to let a car go by. It splashed them and they screamed.

Text 2

The sisters walked to school. Breakfast was served on time. No one saw what was in the alleyway. There was a roll of thunder and it started to rain.

Activity

BT advertisement

Read the following text – it is an old BT advertisement.
Fill in the missing words.

Save your liver and.....

Darling

Your.....is in the dog.

How did you know what words were missing?

Activity

Lexical cohesion

1. Watch an excerpt from the video of the BBC2 programme 'Who Do You Think You Are?' then read the transcript (below).

This excerpt is from the beginning of the programme when Jeremy Clarkson is setting out to investigate who his ancestors were. He is talking to his mother.

2. In small groups do the exercises under the heading Lexical cohesion – tasks. These explore various elements of lexical cohesion.

Video transcription

From 'Who Do You Think You Are?' (BBC2)

¹ **Mother:** Well, my mother used to bottle fruit, like you did in the war. You put fruit in these bottles, these jars and then you boiled it and everything expanded, you screwed the lid on tight with a ⁵rubber seal and as it...

JC: I thought Kilner jars were a lever arrangement ...?

Mother: No, I've got some of those, they're not Kilner ones, these are screw top with a rubber seal¹⁰ and you screw the top on and then as the fruit or the heat contracted inside, it formed a vacuum ... and the factory was in Conisbrough, where Conisbrough Castle is ...

JC: (mumble ...) I'm interested in is the notion that ¹⁵you've got this ... if it became a household name, and globally too ...

Mother: Yes.

JC: 'cause they know about Kilner jars in America. I'm assuming it must have been colossal.

²⁰ **Mother:** Oh, it was enormous. He was a millionaire in his day, I should think.

JC: Was he?

Mother: Well, he must have been, if he'd any business acumen at all, he must have been but ²⁵where did it go, I don't know.

continued ...

Activity

Lexical cohesion continued

Lexical cohesion – tasks

Work in small groups.

1. Trace the lexical chain about bottling fruit, highlighting relevant words and phrases in one colour.
2. How is cohesion maintained through repeating the same word or phrase? How is it maintained through the use of words with similar meaning? How is it maintained through the use of related words and phrases?
3. What are the links between household name, globally, colossal, enormous? Highlight these in a different colour. Are there other words you would highlight as part of this new lexical field? What is this lexical group about?
4. How do the two speakers collaborate to develop the topic and unfold the conversation?
5. Look for examples of discourse markers and fixed expressions. How do these features of spoken English help to structure the discourse and frame the conversation and lexical chains?

Handout

Transcription for lexical cohesion: feedback

Video transcription

¹ **Mother:** Well, my mother used to **bottle fruit**, like you did in the war. You put **fruit** in these **bottles**, these **jars** and then you boiled it and everything expanded, you **screwed the lid** on tight with a **rubber seal** and as it...

JC: I thought **Kilner jars** were a lever arrangement ...?

Mother: No, I've got some of those, they're not **Kilner ones**, these are **screw top** with a **rubber seal**¹⁰ and you **screw the top on** and then as **the fruit** or the heat contracted inside, it formed a vacuum ... and the factory was in Conisbrough, where Conisbrough Castle is ...

JC: (mumble ...) I'm interested in is the notion that ¹⁵you've got this ... if it became a **household name**, and **globally** too ...

Mother: Yes.

JC: 'cause they know about **Kilner jars** in America. I'm assuming it must have been **colossal**.

²⁰ **Mother:** Oh, it was **enormous**. He was a **millionaire** in his day, I should think.

JC: Was he?

Mother: Well, he must have been, if he'd any **business acumen** at all, he must have been but ²⁵where did it go, I don't know.

Green: bottling fruit

Yellow: money

Handout

Lexical cohesion devices

Lexical chains are established through reiteration:

- repetition
- use of synonymous words and expressions
- use of words from the same lexical field or group.

Speakers collaborate in the reiteration of lexical items and 'echo' as a way of building up and developing a topic.

Discourse markers and fixed expressions provide a framework for the development of lexical chains, punctuating the discourse and signalling topic changes.

Lexical choice is strongly influenced by register, context and appropriacy.

Trainer material for Activity 3.4.4

Jigsaw reading cards

Prepare the following five cards and give a set to each small group of participants.

The issue is that week by week, the amount of car traffic on the road grows, 13 per cent in the last year alone.

Each day as I walk to work, I see the ludicrous spectacle of hundreds of commuters sitting alone in four or five-seater cars and barely moving as fast as I can walk.

Our traffic crisis now presents us with the classic conservation dilemma – too many people making too much demand on inadequate resources.

There are a number of possible solutions: one provide more resources, in this case build more roads and car parks; two restrict the availability of motorised transport in the town centre; three license only those with a good reason for needing motorised transport; four introduce a toll to discourage use of private vehicles.

All four possibilities are to be considered at next week's sub-committee meeting. A decision will be announced by the end of the month which it is hoped will ease the situation.

Handout

Discourse-organising words

The issue is that week by week, the amount of car traffic on the road grows, 13 per cent in the last year alone.

Each day as I walk to work, I see the ludicrous spectacle of hundreds of commuters sitting alone in four or five-seater cars and barely moving as fast as I can walk.

Our traffic crisis now presents us with the classic conservation dilemma – too many people making too much demand on inadequate resources.

There are a number of possible solutions: one – provide more resources, in this case build more roads and car parks; two – restrict the availability of motorised transport in the town centre; three – license only those with a good reason for needing motorised transport; four – introduce a toll to discourage use of private vehicles.

All four possibilities are to be considered at next week's sub-committee meeting. A decision will be announced by the end of the month which it is hoped will ease the situation.

(adapted from McCarthy, M. (1996) *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers*. Cambridge University Press.

situation – problem – response – evaluation

This is a common structural pattern in many written texts and the patterns are often rendered by certain discourse-organising words – see the words underlined in the text.

Trainer material for Activity 3.4.6

Discussion – activities for lexis discussion

Prepare the following 13 cards and give each pair of participants one set.

tree diagrams for presentation of lexical groups:
superordinate and hyponyms

continuum lines for lexis - from formal to informal

activities using topic-based dictionaries

level 1 and level 2 strategies to encourage the learning
of lexis, for example building up a bilingual vocabulary
book organised by lexical groups

multiple choice or gapped texts focusing on lexical
repetition or use of synonyms

continued ...

Trainer material for Activity 3.4.6

Cards for activities for lexis discussion continued

spot the synonyms/repetition in a text

find someone who has a synonym/antonym to your word

happy families – lexical sets

pairs – synonyms and antonyms

jigsaw texts

spidergrams and mind maps to build up knowledge of words in the same lexical field

tasks or discussions that allow for authentic conversations

'noticing' activities in relation to lexis and lexical choices using authentic texts

Activity

Discussion – activities for lexis

Discuss which of these activities on lexis you would try out as first-stage activities and which ones you would go on to use as follow-up activities. You trainer will give you a set of cards to sort into two piles based on your discussion.

- tree diagrams for presentation of lexical groups: superordinate and hyponyms
- continuum lines for lexis from formal to informal
- activities using topic-based dictionaries
- level 1 and level 2 strategies to encourage the learning of lexis, for example building up a bilingual vocabulary book organised by lexical groups
- multiple choice or gapped texts focusing on lexical repetition or use of synonyms
- spot the synonyms/repetition in a text
- find someone who has a word which is the synonym/antonym to your word
- happy families – lexical sets
- pairs – synonyms and antonyms
- jigsaw texts
- spidergrams and mind maps to build up knowledge of words in the same lexical field
- tasks or discussions that allow for authentic conversations
- 'noticing' activities in relation to lexis and lexical choices using authentic texts.

Activity

Socio-cultural context

Watch the video excerpt from the BBC programme 'Who do you think you are?' A transcript is supplied below for your reference.

What is the inference being drawn about the judge?

What cultural knowledge did you use?

Were you surprised by anything you heard Jeremy Clarkson say? Did it in any way confound any preconceptions you have about him?

Video transcription: Socio-cultural context

This is a transcript of a short excerpt from a television programme, 'Who Do You Think You Are?' screened on BBC2. It features Jeremy Clarkson, a well-known British journalist and presenter of television programmes about cars and the motor industry. He has fairly outspoken views and he would not normally be associated with liberal causes.

Jeremy Clarkson has gone in search of his ancestors and found that his great-great-great-great-grandfather was John Kilner, a Yorkshire glass blower who founded a business empire. He owned a huge glass and bottle factory in Thornhill Leys, near Conisbrough. Clarkson is trying to find out what happened to the Kilner family fortune and has been reading the records of a court case involving John Kilner and the Earl of Scarborough. He believes this court case may have had something to do with the disappearance of the Kilner fortune.

'... what happened was is all that countryside around...umm..the plant, round the factory in Thornhill Leys belonged to the estate of the Earl of Scarborough and they argued that their trees were dying and their crops were being killed by the smoke

.....
and the judge made a decision which ... we ought to check **his lines** actually and see if he's produced Jonathan Porritt because the judge said, yeah, it's a nuisance and I made a note of his line, no man has the right to interfere with the supply of pure air. I mean, this is the dawn of Greenpeace, if you like ...'.

Socio-cultural context

- Inference plays a key role in helping us make sense of texts.
- Inference involves activating schema.
- Many aspects of schema are socio-culturally determined.
- Inference also brings into play knowledge of the ideological allegiances and frameworks within which people normally operate.

Activity

Learning materials and CDA

Look at the Unit 3 Entry 3 ESOL materials.

Although both have a similar grammatical focus – ‘will’ for future arrangements and plans, they differ in other ways.

Consider:

- the power relations between the participants
- the role an ESOL learner is most likely to be given to act out
- the social context and setting of the material
- the underpinning attitudes about learners and their lives.

Handout

Overview of CDA

Critical discourse analysis puts forward the view that:

- language is never neutral
- a number of meanings or 'discourses' can be recovered from listening or reading a text
- these discourses relate to social practices and beliefs
- discourses typically reflect differences of power among members of different social groups
- the role of the linguist is to take a critical stance towards texts and highlight the assumptions and ideologies that underpin them
- critical text analysis can reveal how language choices, consciously and unconsciously, aid the manipulation of meaning in support of dominant ideologies.

Implications for ESOL of CDA

- Contexts
- Roles assigned to learners
- Adopting a problem-posing approach (Auerbach)
- Development of critical reading skills, including language analysis
- Gunther Kress: learners should ‘interrogate’ texts:
 - why the topic is being written about
 - how it is being written about
 - other ways it could be written about.

Activity

Implications for ESOL of CDA

Choose to work on one of the following activities

- Take one of the dialogues from the *Skills for Life* ESOL learning materials and rewrite it, modifying the roles of the participants and/or the context.
- Consider Guillen's poem on Martin Luther King. How could you exploit it with ESOL learners? Devise some discussion questions.
- Consider the magazine article you have been given. What critical reading activity might you devise to help learners 'interrogate the text'?

Critique of CDA

CDA has been taken to task for:

- lack of rigour and absence of comparative methodology (across texts and across cultures)
- small samples of data used
- ideological agenda of the analyst.

Activity

Learner's writing

Look at the example of an ESOL learner's writing and comment on it.

Consider the following:

- genre
- discourse structure
- formulaic expressions
- register
- layout
- other features.

What cross-cultural issues arise?

Activity

Follow-up activities to Session 3

1. Read Wallace, C. (1992) *Critical Language Awareness*. Harlow: Longman, extract: Chapter 3.
2. Read the follow-up discussion questions on Guillen's poem from Harris, R. (ed) (1990) *Language and Power*. ILEA. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
3. Reread all the handouts from Session 3.
4. a) Read Spiegel, M. and Sunderland, H. (1999) *Writing Works: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing for ESOL and Basic Skills Students*. London Language and Literacy Unit, handout: 'An introduction to genre theory' (from the appendix).
b) Read the unit from *Writing Works: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing for ESOL and Basic Skills Students*. (Spiegel, M. and Sunderland, H., 1999) and consider the way in which the unit has been structured.
c) Do the DARTS activity. Bring your work to Session 4 and be prepared to give feedback to others.
5. Complete the PDJ sheet.
6. Bring the 'Features of discourse: framework' to each session.

Handout

Introduction to genre theory

A genre approach to teaching writing for ESOL Students (from Spiegel, M. and Sunderland, H. (1990) *Writing Works: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing for ESOL and Basic Skills Students*. Appendix. London Language and Literacy Unit)

What is a genre approach to writing? For the last ten years there has been considerable and often heated debate amongst linguists and educationalists on the application of genre theory to the classroom, in particular the primary school classroom. Passionate advocacy has met with robust criticism, yet at its heart lies a deeper issue of equity and the role of education to empower.

Genre theory states that pieces of writing which share a common purpose will tend to share a common structure and common language patterns. A genre approach to teaching writing can be defined as a way of analysing the generic textual and linguistic features of writing produced for similar purposes and similar contexts and then supporting students to reproduce these features.

Genre theory has its origins in the linguistic theories of M. A. K. Halliday and its pedagogical applications in Australia, and more recently in Britain, the USA and other countries. Hallidayan linguistics is complex but his general principles are interesting and an understanding of them is important when considering the background to genre.

Halliday argues that linguistics should not abstract itself from the study of meaning. He sees language as a social phenomenon with a purpose or function behind all communication. He maintains that communication takes place because of what people already know, and when speakers engage in interactions they make predictions, using situational and linguistic clues available to them in the given situation. Language use is thus intimately linked to context and it is his view that participants make choices about language, to convey particular meanings, utilising as their sources their knowledge of the general properties of the linguistic system and their sensitivity to the particular cultural and situational setting.

continued ...

Handout

Introduction to genre theory continued

In the mid-1970s, Halliday took up the newly-founded Chair of Linguistics at the University of Sydney and was instrumental in supporting research initiatives in Australia, within the field of educational linguistics, which attempted to translate some of his theories into teaching practice. One of the most well-known and documented is the LERN Project in New South Wales, led by J. R. Martin, which investigated the textual demands of school literacy and identified six key genres: report, explanation, procedure, discussion, recount and narrative. The LERN Project established a three-part teaching/learning cycle in the shape of a wheel, which has had considerable influence in establishing a pedagogy of genre literacy. The three stages of the wheel are: modelling, joint negotiation of text and independent construction of text.

There is now a corpus of research and writing about genre theory and though there are disagreements amongst genre linguists (about the nature of language and the pedagogic applications of their ideas) there is a consensus on the underlying principles.

- The focus of genre is on whole texts, looking at the underlying purpose or function of the whole rather than on individual sentences.
- Genres are social processes given that texts are patterned in reasonably predictable ways according to patterns of social interaction in a particular culture.
- Genre analysis enables people to identify shared or generic features of texts which are produced with a common purpose and with a common context. These features relate to both the organisation of the text and linguistic patterns and conventions.
- Genre explores and recognises the differences between the grammar of writing and the grammar of speech and makes these explicit.
- Recognition of these generic features helps to empower individuals, enabling them to learn to manipulate the most powerful genres within contemporary society, opening up access not only to education but to social mobility.

Activity

Introduction to genre theory: DARTS

1. True or false: Genre theory states that texts produced in similar contexts with similar purpose do not share common features.
2. A genre approach to teaching writing can be defined as a way of analysing the generic.....and.....features of texts that share similar purposes and contexts.
3. Genre theory has its origins in the linguistic theories of Halliday or Hymes?
4. What three things did the LERN Project investigate, identify and establish?
5. The text describes genre theory as having three, five or seven underlying principles.
6. What is the last principle mentioned?
7. Read the unit from *Writing Works: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing for ESOL and Basic Skills Students*. (Spiegel, M. and Sunderland, H., 1999). How is the unit structured?
8. How could you adapt this unit to the contexts and interests of your own learners?