

The Value of Enhancing Students' Critical Awareness of Discourse

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1. Introduction

A critical approach to discourse has continued to gain popularity and influence since the 1980s (Fairclough, 1989; Jaworski & Coupland, 1999; Widdowson, 2001:4-5; Burns, 2001:138-9), yet despite the increase in literature, there is very little tangible research (van Lier, 2001:163), particularly on EFL classroom applications in Japan.

This paper aims to provide an overview of a critical approach to discourse, examine critical approaches to language learning and teaching in my current context, and discuss the arguments for and against raising students' critical awareness of discourse in English and, possibly by implication, Japanese. In addition, **A Critical Questioning Framework for Text Analysis** is developed and briefly evaluated as a pedagogical tool. Finally, personal beliefs are examined with consideration for students' reactions to lessons involving critical discourse skills.

2. Critical discourse literature review

2.1 What is a ‘critical awareness of discourse’?

2.1.1 Background

Discourse analysis examines the organisation of language above the level of the sentence, particularly with regards to its social context (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999). A critical approach to discourse analysis has roots in systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1973, 1985) and critical linguistics (Fowler *et al*, 1979), and is closely related to critical language study, critical language awareness (CLA) (Burns, 2001), and literacy studies, including critical literacy and new literacy studies (Coffin, 2001). It is multidisciplinary (van Dijk, 1997; 2001) if not interdisciplinary (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999) or even transdisciplinary (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), and encompasses linguistics, semiotics, pragmatics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, education, media and critical studies.

Many approaches, for example, share the aim of developing in learners a critical orientation towards discourse.

Coffin (2001:94)

2.1.2 The purpose of critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), recognising that language is never neutral, seeks to address the relationship between language, power, and ideology behind text (Coffin, 2001:99; McCarthy; 2001:54). Consequently, it is essentially political (Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard, 1996:xi), and social issues, such as inequality and discrimination, are often the focus of study (Fowler,

1996); by examining *how* people, places and events are written and talked about, the author’s ideology can be revealed (Carter & Nunan, 2001:220). In contrast to a descriptive approach to discourse studies (such as Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), van Dijk (2001:352) claims that, “critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose and ultimately resist social change.” **Table 1** outlines some of the recent research into critical discourse.

Table 1: Summary research into critical discourse

Author	Area of research
Van Leeuwen (1996)	Representation (and non-representation) of social actors in the media
Van Dijk (1996)	Patterns of access to discourse, especially media discourse, and the relationship with social and political power.
Krishnamurthy (1996)	Language of racism and portrayal in the media, dictionaries, and a large language corpus suggesting that culture-bound language may lead us to unwittingly adopt those attitudes and opinions.
Hoey (1996)	Sexism in the COBUILD dictionary and corpus. Value-loaded language and how language shapes our thinking.
Stenglin & Iedema (2001)	Visual images and cultural conventions for organisation and layout, e.g. information which is given is situated on the left with new information on the right
Feldman (2002)	Interaction between stereotyping, texts and images: the interdependence of cultural production of images and texts.

Caldas-Coulthard & Holland foresee another purpose, particularly for translators and teachers:

Translators and teachers are crucial social agents that can transform social practices. In your private and professional activities, therefore, by

deconstructing hidden agendas and discriminatory practices, you can help to produce a better society.

(2000:138)

Martin (2004) shares this view and, in addition to Janks & Ivanic (1992) writing on CLA and emancipatory discourse where awareness is turned into successful action, he believes CDA requires *both* deconstructive *and* constructive activity in what he terms *positive discourse analysis*. Fairclough concurs:

It follows that it is becoming essential for effective citizenship that people should be critically aware of culture, discourse and language ...

(1995b:201)

2.1.3 A three-dimensional view of discourse and discourse analysis

Fairclough (1989:10-11) explains the importance of understanding the interaction between text production and interpretation, and the nature of the text itself, together with the social context in which it occurs. These notions form the basis of his three-dimensional view of discourse and discourse analysis as cited in Caldas-Coulthard & Holland:

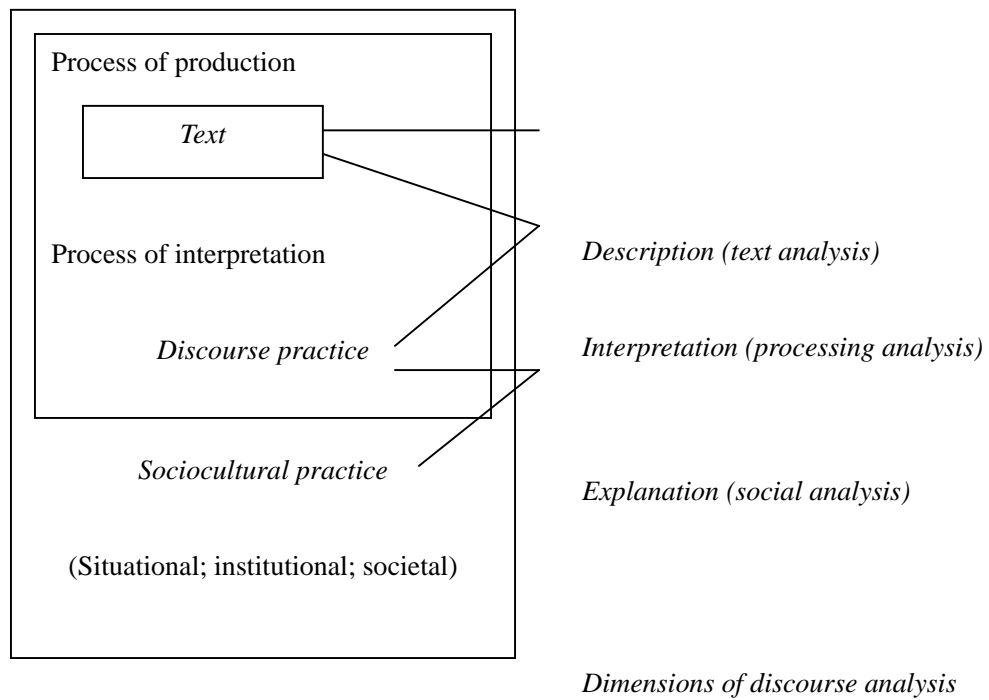
... **description** of the **text**, **interpretation** of the **interaction**, and **explanation** of how the first two dimensions are inserted in **social action**.

(2000:121)

Building on the notions of 'context of situation' and 'context of culture' (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), Fairclough (1989:13) posited that in order to understand the relationships between language, power and ideology, the social dimension needs to be investigated at three levels of social organisation: the

societal level, the institutional level, and the situational level (Figure 7.1 below).

Figure 7.1 **Dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis**
Reproduced from Fairclough (1995a:98) in Coffin (2001:100)



Dimensions of discourse

Taking a multimodal view, Fairclough considers text to include all the available language or communicative data (Breen, 2001:310), and textual analysis to include linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis:

...I understand linguistic analysis in an extended sense to cover not only the traditional levels of analysis within linguistics (phonology, grammar up to the level of the sentence, and vocabulary and semantics) but also analysis of textual organization above the sentence, including intersentential cohesion and various aspects of the structure of texts... Whereas linguistic analysis shows how texts selectively draw upon linguistic systems ..., intertextual analysis shows how texts selectively draw upon *orders of discourse* – the particular configuration of conventionalized practices (genres, discourses, narratives, etc.) which are available to text producers and interpreters in particular social circumstances ...

Fairclough (1999:184)

Interpretation examines the use of interactive conventions whilst explanation aims to relate the discourse to social action with consideration for its political and ideological uses (Caldas-Coulthard & Holland, 2000:121).

Lastly, CDA is based upon eight main tenets, summarised by Fairclough & Wodak (1997:271-80):

1. CDA addresses social problems
2. Power relations are discursive
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture
4. Discourse does ideological work
5. Discourse is historical
6. The link between text and society is mediated
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social action

Reproduced from van Dijk (2001:353)

2.2 Critical discourse awareness at a private language school

Presently, in a private language school in Japan, *NOVA*, without being made explicit, a critical approach to discourse, either indirect or direct, is taken in a small but certain number of regular textbook-determined lessons for intermediate level students and above, as illustrated in **Appendix A**: for example, *Zone F* lesson *F44 Discussing discrimination in the workplaces* asks students to discuss how job advertisements presented are discriminatory and what changes could be made to make them non-discriminatory. In addition, *ad hoc* discussion either in those classes or a conversation room, *Voice*, may also help raise our critical awareness of discourse.

Voice provides students with an opportunity to experience English in a friendly, relaxed learning environment where “they can develop and experiment with their English skills.” *Voice* aims to improve students’ fluency and conversation skills, reinforce previously learned language, and build confidence. Students predominantly come to *Voice* in order to have fun, practise what they know, meet new people, and learn something new (*VOICE: A Manual for Teachers*, 2001:3-5). However, the fact that they have a wide range of abilities and interests and can attend class at their convenience poses problems for teachers.

There are typically 4-8 mixed level students in a *Voice* class and a number of upper intermediate and high level students regularly attend three to five days a week, staying for as many as four lessons a day. Finding new and interesting

topics, materials, and ways to engage them is therefore a constant challenge. Yet the chance for teachers to decide and plan class content up to a month in advance for scheduled 'special' *Voice* lessons creates a wealth of interesting possibilities. It is with regards to these students especially that the question of raising critical awareness of discourse shall be considered.

The arguments for raising students' critical awareness of discourse primarily stem from the purposes of CDA itself. In unmasking the creation and recreation of social structures, and the use and abuse of power, it is potentially empowering as it illuminates what might otherwise pass unnoticed; social and cultural reproduction by the dominant class (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991). Raising critical awareness of language, both in English and in Japanese, may also help to deepen our understanding of other important social issues. For example, Kanno (2006) illustrates how school policies and practices shape students' identities and, "... contribute to the reproduction of existing class structure ... [but] ... can also act as an agent of social change." Following Fairclough (1999:205), Jaworski & Coupland (1999:35) thus recognise CDA as, "a democratic resource to be made available through the education system."

Although Janks (1997) warns that claims for empowerment need further research, the point is made that increasing awareness and understanding of social and political power and hegemony might place students in a better position to negotiate power relations: for example, with respect to 'gate-keepers' (Burns, 2001:139-40), and participating in lectures

(Dudley-Evans, 2001:135); or in addressing discrimination such as racism, for instance, through the development of anti-racist strategies (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001). Janks & Ivanic (1992:313) stress the importance of emancipatory discourse due to the fact that all language shapes meaning and attitudes, and is in turn shaped by them.

Lastly, Holland (2002) underlines the need to consider the role of English as an international language:

It is no longer admissible simply to accept as a given the status of English as prime international tongue; a critical appreciation of its role, and a critical approach to English-language pedagogy are indispensable.

(2002:21)

A number of reasons why CDA might not be taught or even avoided in language teaching in my context relate to the students, teachers and teaching practices, institutional and social contexts. There are essential factors to consider:

Age and proficiency are two major contextual variables that will affect every aspect of your lesson or curriculum. They may, in fact, be the most important variables. But two other domains also emerge for the language teacher – socio-political and institutional contexts, without consideration of which your classroom lessons may miss their mark. The domains intertwine in such a way that it is sometimes impossible to disentangle them and examine one without considering the other. They, subsumed under institutional considerations, are the general purposes for which learners are taking a course in English.

Brown, 2001:115

2.2.1 Student expectations and goals

Our students are studying English as a foreign language. Although our institution describes itself as 駅前留学 (which literally translates to ‘study abroad in front of the train station’), language learning is promoted as fun rather than study; most students primarily come to our institution to learn to speak English and enjoy themselves (Brown, 2005; 2006c). Secondly, most students who travel abroad do so for limited time periods, either on holiday or business, and only a minority of students will live abroad and study or work on a more permanent basis. Thirdly, Japanese students represent a majority of what is often believed to be essentially a mono-cultural society (Debito, 2006). Therefore, it seems that our students do not fit the profile of the typical target audience for CDA in classrooms, which van Lier (2001:162) identifies as, “discriminated minorities or otherwise disenfranchised populations.” Students may thus logically regard CDA as too serious or academic, and of little practical use or relevance.

Nevertheless, Japanese students often seem curious to find out how they are viewed by foreigners, who may be seen to represent the outside world. Moreover, many students do travel, and in an ESL context it may be beneficial to understand how they, as a minority, are viewed by the majority, and what shapes people’s perspectives: CDA may provide them with a useful means to discover more. In addition, Janks & Ivanic (1992:306) shrewdly point out that, “... most people are top dogs in some situations and underdogs in

others.”

In EFL and ESL contexts, CDA has been applied in general English programmes with the focus on critical reading (Wallace, 1992; Coffin, 2001:101). Although, students primarily come to *Voice* in order to improve their conversation skills, discussion based on newspaper articles are not uncommon for upper-intermediates and high levels, as shown by class records (*Voice Comments*). For higher level students in particular, the examination and discussion of ideology behind written texts might be interesting and intellectually stimulating, building upon more challenging topics (such as human rights, politics, media, language, and power) introduced in regular classes (**Appendix A**). Furthermore, issues of social, economic, and political inequality become increasingly important when considering that language may not be neutral and free of cultural and political influences as might sometimes be assumed (Pennycook, 2001):

As a case in point, we analyze a critical incident that took place in Mackie’s postsecondary ESL classroom in Canada, in which there were conflicting readings of the film *Pearl Harbor* (2001), which addresses the Japanese invasion of the United States in 1941. While one Japanese student, Mikiko, read the film as a problematic portrayal of Japanese characters, a South Korean student, John, challenged Makiko’s claims to knowledge.

Norton (2006)

Cotter (2001:431) concludes, “To study media discourse, then, is to work to make sense of a great deal of what makes up our world.”

Brown (2000:196-200) underlines the importance of the connection between

culture, language, and thought; the way ideas are conceptualised; connotation and nuance; and explicit and implicit meanings. CDA may offer tools which develop students' ability to understand how language is used in various contexts to fulfil different purposes and hopefully, in turn, improve their command of English. Jaworski and Coupland proclaim:

The ability to reflect critically on and analyse discourse will increasingly become a basic skill for negotiating social life and for imposing a form of interpretive, critical order on the new discursive universe.

(1999:38)

Whilst this may appear somewhat grandiose, the need for language learners to be able to use language appropriately in different social contexts (i.e. requiring pragmatic, cultural and sociolinguistic competence) may well determine the success of both social and transactional interactions (Carter & Nunan, 2001:214; Kramersch, 2001).

Finally, by developing our critical awareness, we can become more responsible and empowered language users contributing to social relations (Janks & Ivanic, 1992; Redfield, 1994); CDA may be used to raise awareness of our own prejudices and bias:

Rosello shows that it is possible to use imaginative tactics to neutralize ethnic stereotypes. But when our identity is itself built like a stereotype by the history lessons that we learn as children, lessons that tell us who we are as a nation, as a people, the result is quite different and sometimes problematic. "Declining" a stereotype, acknowledging its various identities within a larger linguistic unit, highlighting its very nature in diverged contexts, might be the way of depriving it of its harmful potential.

Feldman (2002:574)

2.2.2 Teachers and teaching practices

Fowler (1996) admits that CDA is complex and lacks clear methodology but van Dijk (2001:363) attempts to establish a theoretical framework needed to analyse discourse and power, despite conceding that, “several methodological and theoretical gaps remain.” Whilst critical discourse literature outlined in **Section 2** may inform our teaching, they do not propose a language-teaching methodology. This will be considered further below in **Section 3**.

Teachers have limited preparation time and finding appropriate teaching material is initially both challenging and time-consuming. Due to the fact that one can never be sure of which students will attend any given class, it is exceedingly difficult to plan effectively, and the success of *Special Voice* classes may depend upon student dynamics and the teacher’s ability to facilitate and adapt the lesson in progress. Teachers need to carefully consider both bottom-up and top-down approaches to processing when selecting and creating teaching materials and tasks to ensure that they are achievable (Cook, 1989; McCarthy, 1991:168; Carter & Nunan, 2001:215).

In addition, teachers need to be careful not to implement their own political agenda (Brown, 2001:443-444), and it is extremely difficult, if not arguably impossible, to avoid politicising students:

Teachers need to ask whose interests are served by their curriculum and classroom practices. In some cases the learning of English may be the key to economic mobility. In others it may be part of a process of social and

economic marginalisation.

Carter & Nunan (2001:215)

Students often seem keen to hear their teachers' individual opinions, and, rightly or wrongly, may consider them as representative of their countries as well as the institution or the status quo. However, developing learners' critical awareness should in fact help them to recognise this (Janks & Ivanic, 1992:322). Wilson (2001:399) reminds us that political bias is often revealed in studies of political language, and it is therefore important to make it explicit to our students that our own bias may be evident.

Lastly, a critical discourse approach or methods are tools which might be used either to liberate or manipulate and enslave, possibly creating a dilemma for all educators (Janks & Ivanic, 1992:314).

2.2.3 Institutional policies

NOVA teachers are explicitly instructed to avoid certain topics in class that might create confrontation, embarrassment or a negative classroom atmosphere: sex, drugs, the Second World War, profanity, company policy and employees, and other sensitive issues, such as religion, are deemed inappropriate.

Although, teachers are only allowed to employ company approved teaching materials in class, *Voice* is more flexible, and teachers are positively encouraged to use photos, magazines, and newspapers to stimulate conversation (*VOICE: A Manual for Teachers*, 2001:17).

2.2.4 Social context

In my experiences living in Japan for six years and growing up with Japanese friends in the UK, most Japanese people seem less likely to express personal opinions, especially amongst strangers, compared with Americans, Europeans, or Chinese. Together with the Japanese language being well-noted for its comparative vagueness and ambiguity, this may be viewed as a means to facilitate consensus building, protect face, and establish rapport (Bolstad, 2006). In contrast, the discussion of sensitive, politically-charged topics might be more likely to lead to discussions which potentially threaten students' face (Scollon & Scollon, 1995; Preti, 1996), so students may adopt strategies to preserve harmony and consensus, avoid questioning the status quo or the opinions of those with higher status. Furthermore, Janks & Ivanic (1992:330) rightly warn that people may put themselves at risk when challenging power, although to a lesser extent if they do so collectively. Our institution provides teachers with the following information:

Education Model: The Japanese approach to education is based on a model that deeply values the opinion of the instructor. This approach, coupled with the Japanese tendency to avoid confrontation and to focus on harmony, may contribute to a seeming passivity. While we may want and encourage our students to debate with or question us, they may still hesitate for what they see as an issue of respect.

Language and Culture: Japan is often referred to as a high context culture. By that it is meant that a great deal of meaning and subtlety is inferred rather than explicitly stated. The context, the relationship between the speakers and tone all convey meaning that actual words do not. In contrast, most western languages are considered low context languages; a great deal is explicitly stated.

Speaking one's mind is considered important in personal and professional relationships. This difference may result in a great deal of misunderstanding. The plain expression of ideas and opinions in western languages may appear obvious or crude to the Japanese student. Likewise the less direct expression more familiar to Japanese students may give the instructor the mistaken impression that students are without opinion on the topic of discussion.

(*VOICE: A Manual for Teachers*, 2001:6)

On the other hand, students of English, and high levels in particular who have been using English for a significant length of time, may not be representative of the majority, non-English-speaking Japanese population (Masuyama, 2000:42). Notably, textbooks used for upper-intermediate and high-level classes have a significant focus on developing students' discussion skills (*Diplomat: Zone F; Diplomat: Zone G*). Moreover, the development of a second language (L2) personality or ego (Brown, 2000:64) is reflected by students who explicitly affirm that they experience a greater sense of freedom to express their opinions when using English, supporting the notion that language and culture are inseparable (Brown, 2000:198).

In an academic and professional context, Jaworski & Coupland (1999:36) point out that discourse analysis and by implication CDA are essentially interpretative, qualitative approaches that need substantiation. McCarthy (2001:55) identifies Stubbs (1997) and, particularly, Widdowson (1995a, 1995b, 2001) who criticise CDA specifically for its lack of academic and scientific rigour, and inability to satisfactorily address the complexities of interpretation. This, however, might suggest argument *for* further classroom research and the development of teaching methodology.

3. Teaching a critical awareness of discourse

3.1 Developing critical pedagogy

Carter and Nunan neatly define critical pedagogy as:

a way of teaching that strives not only to transmit linguistic knowledge and cultural information, but also to examine critically both the conditions under which the language is used, and the social, cultural and ideological purposes of its use

(2001:220)

Moreover, Janks & Ivanic (1992:319) believe that educators should show all learners how to move beyond a critical awareness to action, provide opportunities for practice, and support their efforts towards emancipatory discourse which may be self-empowering or resisting disempowerment of themselves as well as others. To do so, Brown helpfully suggests four principles for engaging in critical pedagogy:

1. Allow students to express themselves openly.
(be sensitive to power relationships, encourage candid expression)
2. Genuinely respect students' points of view.
(seek to understand their cherished beliefs and traditions)
3. Encourage both/many side of an issue.
(welcome all seriously offered statements, opinions, and beliefs)
4. Don't force students to think just like you.
(delay or withhold your own opinion)

(2001:444)

Ludwig (2003) presents a taxonomy of, "... capabilities required to be functionally literate" (**Appendix B**). An important assumption is that the knowledge and skills identified are not acquired in a linear fashion, i.e. "...

[the four]... resources are not hierarchical or developmentally based”. The text-analysing resources might be used for the basis for developing a questioning framework which aims to raise learners’ critical awareness of discourse (**Table 2**).

Table 2: A Questioning framework for critical practice

Critical questions for consideration
What is the writer/speaker’s purpose? How might the text influence the reader/listener’s ideas?
What opinions does the writer/speaker express? What is the writer/speaker’s point of view? What biases does the writer/speaker have? What are the dominant readings in the text? What gaps or silences are there in the text?
How do the writer/speaker’s values, views, and interests influence the text?
How are information and ideas expressed and represented to influence and position readers/viewers/listeners?
What alternative positions might be taken?

(Based on Ludwig, 2003)

Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) seek to establish a framework for CDA which they concede is complex but claim, “... [it] can be slimmed down in various ways for various purposes (for example, pedagogical purposes, in relation to ‘critical language awareness’ in education).”

Of more immediate practical use, however, Lankshear *et al* (1997) share how students can be taught to deconstruct texts through a text analysis exercise. After reading the text students are instructed to, “explore the following questions”:

1. What version of events/ reality is foregrounded here?
2. Whose version is this? From whose perspective is it constructed?
3. What other (possible) versions are excluded?
4. Whose/ what interests are served by this representation?
5. By what means – lexical, syntactic, etc. – does this text construct (its) reality?
6. How does this text position the reader? What assumptions about readers are reflected in the text? What beliefs, assumptions, expectations (ideological baggage) do readers have to entertain in order to make meaning from the text?

[Reproduced from Coffin, 2001:104-5]

It is interesting to compare these questions with the framework proposed above (**Table 2**) and present them together below (**Table 3**), clearing illuminating a high degree of similarity and overlap:

Table 3: Comparison of critical questioning frameworks

A Questioning framework for critical practice (based on Ludwig, 2003)	A text analysis exercise (Lankshear <i>et al</i> , 1997)
What is the writer/speaker’s purpose? How might the text influence the reader/listener’s ideas?	Whose/ what interests are served by this representation?
What opinions does the writer/speaker express? What is the writer/speaker’s point of view? What biases does the writer/speaker have? What are the dominant readings in the text? What gaps or silences are there in the text?	What version of events/ reality is foregrounded here? Whose version is this? From whose perspective is it constructed? What assumptions about readers are reflected in the text? By what means – lexical, syntactic, etc. – does this text construct (its) reality?
How do the writer/speaker’s values, views, and interests influence the text?	How does this text position the reader?
How are information and ideas expressed and represented to influence and position readers/viewers/listeners?	What beliefs, assumptions, expectations (ideological baggage) do readers have to entertain in order to make meaning from the text?
What alternative positions might be taken?	What other (possible) versions are excluded?

Fairclough (1989:110-12) also highlights a number of language areas for possible focus when examining text in a CDA lesson (**Table 4**).

Table 4: Examining Text through CDA

Area of focus	Considerations	Comments/ Examples
Vocabulary	Ideological contested lexis	e.g. <i>sexism, racism</i>
	Classification of people	Names, positions, social roles
	Formality/ Informality	Terms of address
	Expressive values	Use of evaluative words
	Metaphors	e.g. <i>unemployment is a disease</i>
Grammar	Predominance of participants and verbal process	e.g. Disproportionately long quotes afforded to particular parties
	Agency	e.g. <i>Rioters arrested</i> c.f. <i>Rioters arrested by police</i>
	Nominalisation	Use of noun phrases to depersonalise
	Active vs passive voice	e.g. <i>Police shoot suspected terrorist</i>
	Mode	Declarative, grammatical question, imperative
	Modality (hedging, mitigation, tentativeness, or hesitancy)	e.g. <i>It might be somehow possible ...</i>
	Use of pronouns	e.g. <i>we, you, them vs us</i>
	Positive vs negative sentences	e.g. <i>They failed</i> e.g. <i>They did not succeed</i>
	Use of subordination and coordination to characterise complex sentences	[See further Richards <i>et al</i> , 1992:77]
Textual structure	Main information placement	Title, beginning, middle, end.
	Clause relations	[See further Winter, 1977; 1986, 1994 (cited in Coulthard <i>et al</i> , 2000:16)]
	Generic structures	Narratives, explanations, reports, etc.

Based on Caldas-Coulthard & Holland (2000:123)

These language areas, together with the two frameworks examined in **Table 3**

above might thus be synthesised (**Table 5** below):

Table 5: A Critical Questioning Framework for Text Analysis

Critical Questions
What is the writer/speaker's purpose? How might the text influence the reader/listener's ideas?
What opinions does the writer/speaker express? What is the writer/speaker's perspective? What biases does the writer/speaker have? What are the dominant readings in the text? What gaps or silences are there in the text? What assumptions are made about the reader/viewer/listener? What beliefs, assumptions, expectations (ideological baggage) do readers/viewers/listeners have to entertain in order to make meaning from the text?
How do the writer/speaker's values, views, and interests influence the text?
What choices (lexical, grammatical, textual, etc) are made to construct (its) reality? How are information and ideas expressed and represented to influence and position readers/viewers/listeners?
What alternative positions might be taken? What possible views are excluded?

(Based on Fairclough, 1989; Lankshear *et al*, 1997; Caldas-Coulthard & Holland, 2000; and Ludwig, 2003)

These are all features of texts and contexts which help make meaning. As we learn to grasp this, we appreciate how different language carries different meanings for different people in different situations:

Whatever you intended, the important thing to understand about your communication is what response it gets from the other person due to their map [i.e. perspective and understanding] of the world.

Bolstad (2004:3)

Finally, van Lier (2001:163) points to some useful sources for classroom

activities, such as the critical language series by Janks (1993). Another potential resource might be *This is Culture* by Kajiura & Goodmacher (2005) which, according to Harrison (2006), "... is not so much a textbook but a survey of cultural issues designed to enhance communication, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills." Both resources would need further investigation and careful consideration of company policy (**Section 2.2.3** above). However, Janks & Ivanic (1992) demonstrate that a number of activities, such as role-plays, simulations, discussions, and rewriting can be used to examine a range of texts (e.g. newspaper articles, advertisements, TV, everyday conversations) from a variety of perspectives within the social fabric.

3.2 Approaches to teaching CDA in *Voice* class

In the light of the arguments above (**Sections 2-3.1**), and following discussion with fellow educators (Brown, 2006a; 2006e), four basic approaches to consciously introducing a critical approach to language studies in my context were considered; namely through music, images, everyday interaction, and the news. The first two of these were implemented in classes as outlined below (**Section 3.2.1-3.2.2**).

It was evident that in order to better understand my students, an investigation into their beliefs was necessary. Accordingly, questionnaires (**Appendices D**, and **K**) were created to be administered before and after each class as part of classroom research. Personal learning teaching journal entries were also made for self-reflection and further insight (Richards & Lockhart, 1996:7)

(Appendices E, F, L and M).

3.2.1 CDA and music

John Lennon's *Imagine* was chosen as a suitable song for adopting a critical approach to language learning. It was believed that students might already be familiar with it and, possibly, John Lennon due to his marriage to a Japanese, Yoko Ono; the language was considered level-appropriate for anticipated students; and the song lyrics relatively easy to listen to, in terms of both language and delivery.

A lesson plan (**Appendix C**) was developed based upon moving students along the following continuums (**Figure 1**):

Figure 1: Basic principles of language teaching
(Based on Scrivener, 1994; Nunan, 1999; Muller, 2006)

1) easy	→	more difficult
2) familiar	→	new
3) teacher-controlled	→	learner-centred
4) scripted and controlled	→	unscripted, authentic, free
5) teacher-dependent	→	independent
6) receptive skills/ input	→	productive skills/ output
7) casual and informal language	→	formal language
8) private performance	→	public performance

First, **Task A** requires students to work individually to complete the questionnaire based upon their prior knowledge of John Lennon and *Imagine*.

This enables students to ask the teacher or each other for help in the private domain and avoid potential embarrassment (Muller, 2006). Then students work together in pairs, asking each other.

Task B is a double listening task. The first encourages guessing and is simple in order to allow students to tune-in and gain confidence. The second task aims to develop prediction and discrete listening skills. Students work in pairs and then compare their answers in groups of four to maximise opportunities for discussion.

The final discussion questions in **Task C** examine meaning above the sentence with a critical approach, and together with **Task A** have incorporated some of the questions outlined in **Table 5** (**Section 3.1** above).

The lesson was initially piloted on 27th August 2006 (**Appendix E**).

3.2.2 CDA and images

Based on materials in Jamall (2006) (**Appendix H**) and informed by the questioning framework in **Table 5**, a lesson examining the use of pictures through a critical approach (**Appendix I**) was developed for a Special Voice class on Friday 22nd September. This was piloted with three native and two non-native English language teachers who made helpful suggestions for improvement and provided me with insight as to how the tasks might be completed (**Appendix J**) (Brown, 2006e). One teacher also trialled the

lesson with three university classes then shared classroom observations and student feedback based on **Appendix K** (**Appendix L**, Brown, 2006f). Following these steps, I decided not to administer a lesson survey for the lesson on 22nd September due to the potential difficulties students' would have completing the questionnaire and the problems of analysis and interpretation.

4. Discussion

4.1 Student beliefs, expectations, and goals

In my teaching context, classroom observations and student feedback indicated that they enjoyed the lessons and found them interesting though challenging and, in some cases, difficult. In this sense, the lessons might be deemed a limited success but there are improvements to be made, especially to help students address abstract questions and, possibly, make the lessons more relevant to their lives. Perhaps more common situations, such as the task below, might prove a more suitable starting point:

Think in what ways your language changes when you talk to:

Your doctor

Your family members

Friends and colleagues

Make a note of these differences

Caldas-Coulthard & Holland, 2000:119

This could feasibly be used in *Voice* with minimal, if any, adaptation, guided by questions from **Table 5 (Section 3.1)**.

Measuring students' beliefs, however, with just a numerical questionnaire proved impossible although, arguably, it may have been beneficial for the students as a means of foregrounding the lesson and thinking about their own values and practices.

Whilst it is questionable whether or not there was in fact any change in students' critical awareness of discourse, classroom observation and student

feedback suggests that, after the lesson, the students generally placed a slightly greater importance on thinking about what, how, and why something is said either when listening to song lyrics or learning English (**Appendix E**). However, without interview, it is impossible to be certain so, in future, a triangulation method would be better. Nevertheless, language improvement and ‘success’ remains notoriously difficult to measure, and beyond the scope of this paper.

4.2 Teaching practices

Developing an understanding of a critical approach to discourse, and finding and developing suitable teaching materials was challenging and time-consuming, especially due to the fact that it was impossible to know in advance student numbers, needs, interests, and abilities.

However, the questions formulated in **A Critical Questioning Framework for Text Analysis** (**Table 5** in **Section 3.1**) provided a practical reference for materials development and implementation, in conjunction with the **Basic principles of language teaching** (**Figure 1** in **Section 3.2.1**). In addition to Wilson’s (2001) advice to make my own bias explicit, following the four principles set out by Brown (2001:444) (**Section 2.2**), together with principles and practices outlined in Janks & Ivanic (1992), offer good grounding for future classes.

For example, a media awareness-raising lesson examining media values and

newsworthiness could be developed with students taking part in a questionnaire (**Appendix N**) at the beginning and end of class. The questionnaires include some questions similar to those in **Table 5** and seek to promote critical thinking and discussion.

4.3 Institutional policies

A critical approach to discourse already underlies a limited number of textbook tasks (**Section 2.2**). Arguably, this might reflect the institution's recognition that it has a place in language learning for intermediate level students and above.

Even though the possibilities for CDA may be constrained by company policy (**Section 2.2.3**), there *is* scope for taking a critical approach to discourse and the Special Voice lessons developed were enthusiastically approved and supported by my immediate supervisor and Japanese manager.

4.4 Social context

Classroom observations indicated that students were comfortably able to offer a number of opinions with varying degrees of complexity regarding ideology in *Imagine* (**Appendices E and F**). The use of mixed pair work, small groups, and open class activities may have been conducive to building rapport and establishing a comfortable learning environment. However, the *Images and Media* lesson proved more challenging and, whilst students did well working in pairs and small groups on the initial three tasks, the abstract

question about assumptions made by the text producer proved too difficult. As students became less certain, it appeared that they became increasingly teacher-dependent and less willing to take risks or offer opinions. Perhaps using more familiar images (e.g. Japanese advertisements) and topics (e.g. age or gender discrimination) might be more conducive to promoting student-to-student discussion.

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined the arguments for and against raising students' critical awareness of discourse in my teaching context, with particular respect to intermediate and high levels who frequently attend a 'conversation lounge', *Voice*, at a private language school in Japan.

The literature indicates an increasingly held belief, particularly amongst language researchers, that developing learners' critical awareness of language is beneficial if not essential, namely as an increasingly transdisciplinary democratic tool for unmasking the relationship between language, power, and ideology, as well as (re-)constructing it; resisting disempowerment and empowering ourselves and others.

There is growing support for critically-informed language-teaching materials and pedagogy, and a number of authors have sought to examine and organise the wide-range of methods that may be used in a critical approach, perhaps attempting to counter criticisms that a lack of clear methodology undermines critical discourse.

As with teaching in general, instigating CDA in my context required a careful consideration of a number of factors: students' motivation, interests, needs, expectations and goals; the suitability of teaching materials or methodology; institutional policies; and social context. Despite initial concerns and arguments against a critical approach, all lessons were warmly received by

those who attended. Even so, whilst students found the materials and most activities achievable and interesting, aspects of the lesson were noticeably challenging, and tasks requiring abstract thinking proved difficult for intermediate learners and below. Developing increasingly suitable materials and methods therefore remains a vital consideration to increase classroom success. **A Critical Questioning Framework for Text Analysis (Section 3.1)** is perhaps one small step in the right direction in providing teachers with a pedagogical tool for developing and implementing classroom materials and activities, although further classroom research is needed.

Personally, it has been a rewarding voyage of discovery and the learning process is a valuable investment into the improvement of my teaching practice, as well as further opportunity for personal and professional growth. As my understanding of the subject has deepened, so too has the belief that raising our critical awareness of discourse should be an integral part of language use, learning and teaching. It is a valuable means to enhance communication, understanding, and society as we learn to more effectively read between the lines, listen more attentively to what is *really* being said, and hopefully think more carefully before we speak or put pen to paper.

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix A: Examples of critical approaches to discourse in *Diplomat* textbook lessons for intermediate (Zone E), upper-intermediate (Zone F), and high level (Zone G) students.

Textbook	Lesson title and aims	Specific task(s)	Comments
<p><i>Diplomat:</i> Zone E (2005)</p>	<p>E35 Discussing fashion and clothes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your own or someone else's fashion sense in general terms. Offer an opinion on common topics related to clothes and fashion 	<p><i>Read the following signs. Where do you think you would see them? What should you wear for each of these dress requirements? What kinds of clothes should you avoid wearing for each one?</i></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>NO SHIRT, NO SHOES, NO SERVICE</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Smart casual dress only</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><i>Strictly black tie attire</i></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>No football colours</p> </div> </div> <p><i>Are there any occasions where you have to wear special clothes?</i></p>	<p>In addition, asking students why there are dress codes would seem to be an important CDA question.</p>

	<p>E43 Modern-day problems</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask for someone's opinion on a topic. 2. Agree or disagree with another person's position. 3. State your own opinion in relation to the topic. 	<p>Listening Task: <i>Look at the pictures. Some people are discussing a modern-day problem on a talk show. Do you agree or disagree with the person's opinion about TV? Why?</i></p> <p>[Students listen to a scripted conversation between the TV host and a psychiatrist, Dr Sanders]</p>	<p>Pre-listing CDA questions might also be set, such as: <i>What do you think a psychiatrist or doctor would say? Do you think you would agree or disagree with 'medical opinion'? Why or why not?</i></p>
<p><i>Diplomat:</i> <i>Zone F</i> (2005)</p>	<p>F11 Making a complaint</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complain and demand an explanation. 2. Adjust the strength of complaints depending on the situation. 3. Discuss occasions when they might need to or have needed to complain 	<p>The lesson introduces language for complaining; asking for explanations; responding to complaints either apologetically and helpfully, or unhelpfully; and dealing with unhelpful responses.</p> <p>Students have to look at a number of statements and decide which ones are neutral and which ones are assertive in tone.</p> <p>A number of discussion tasks and role-plays are also used.</p>	<p>This introduces language to negotiate with 'gate-keepers' and maintain conversation as well as be more assertive in English.</p>

	<p>F25 Trends in society</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Express concerns about trends in society. 2. Support views with anecdotal evidence. 3. Disagree and offer counter examples. 	<p><i>Read the following article and decide with your partner whether the media in your country portrays young people in a similar fashion.</i></p> <p>Yobs, thugs, hooligans. Just some of the terms used to refer to young people in the British media in the last few years. The media presents young people at best as problems and at worst as criminals: 71 percent of stories about them are negative and one in three focus [<i>sic</i>] on crime.</p> <p>The majority of young people are not criminals. Just seven percent of young people in school have committed crime requiring police involvement. But when news coverage of productive and law-abiding young people is the exception rather than the rule, public opinion and policy tends to target young people en masse, with measure such as curfews and the power to move on young people who are perceived as a threat. Young people are stereotyped and marginalised.</p>	<p>This is a challenging lesson and many students at this level struggle to understand the vocabulary and structure of the article, especially the second paragraph.</p> <p>However, this article is highly suitable for CDA and might be utilised more successfully with a lesson approach that better addresses students' needs.</p>
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	<p>F39 Evaluating advertisements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Express scepticism about an advertisement or product. 2. Discuss advertisements, the promises they make, and the demographics they target. 	<p>The first discussion task asks students if they ever watch a shopping channel on TV and if they believe what they say about the products.</p> <p>Another tasks asks students to read four advertiser’s claims and decide how convincing they are, then change them to sound more reasonable.</p> <p>The third task examines two advertisements and raises the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of product is being advertised? 2. Where might you see the ad? 3. Who is the ad targeted at? 4. What does the ad highlight about the product? 5. In what other ways do companies try to persuade people to buy their products? 	<p>This lesson contains tasks which develop students’ critical awareness of discourse by examining advertising language and images.</p>
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	<p>F44 Discussing discrimination in the workplace</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand and use vocabulary specific to discrimination. 2. Discuss discrimination with particular reference to age and gender. 	<p>Vocabulary and expressions which focus on talking about gender and age issues are introduced to the students, reflecting reality and opinions from both ends of the spectrum. For example:</p> <p>It seems natural that men should be the breadwinners. Women are better suited to some jobs. Management is far more likely to listen to male than female employees. Men tend to be promoted faster and higher than their female colleagues.</p> <p>The listening task has a male nurse talking about his profession and asks students to state whether or not they agree with his opinions.</p> <p>There are two opinion-seeking tasks which consider gender stereotypes, abilities, and jobs. A discussion task instructs students to discuss discrimination issues which have features in the news recently or there is an alternative task which examines the ways in which two job advertisements are discriminatory and how they might be changes to be non-discriminatory.</p>	<p>This lesson provides ideal opportunity for CDA although it is notable that racial discrimination (e.g. with respect to ethnic minorities or foreigners in Japan) is avoided, and there is a cautionary note for teachers on the teachers' page:</p> <p><i>Japanese cultural values of gender roles and the aged are still fairly traditional. The Instructor must be respectful in dealing with opinions different from their own by maintaining a neutral stance.</i></p>
<p><i>Diplomat: Zone G (2005)</i></p>	<p>G16 The language of advertising</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand language commonly used in 	<p>Students are instructed to discuss how advertising makes products attractive, which ads they remember most, and why.</p> <p>The lesson contains a task to match slogans to likely products; words and</p>	<p>Similarly to lesson F39, there is opportunity to raise students' critical awareness of advertising</p>

	<p>advertising.</p> <p>2. Discuss the suitability of slogans and advertising approaches for different products.</p>	<p>pictures which can be used to help make suitable advertising slogans for a car and coffee; a discussion task comparing and evaluating advertising standards rule in the UK and Japan; and finally a task to use similes or metaphors to describe products.</p>	<p>language and social values as reflected in advertising standards.</p>
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6.2 Appendix B: Four literacy resources (Reproduced from Ludwig, 2003)

CODE-BREAKING resources or CODING PRACTICE	TEXT-PARTICIPATING resources or SEMANTIC PRACTICE
<p>How do I crack this code?</p> <p>The emphasis is on decoding and encoding the codes, symbols and conventions of written, spoken, visual and multimodal texts in response to contextual factors which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognising and using the alphabet, sounds in words, whole words, letter/sound relationships • using graphophonic, syntactic and semantic sources of information • spelling accurately and understanding the functions of spelling • recognising and using grammar and vocabulary including punctuation and intonation and rhythm • recognising and shaping patterns of letter, sound, word, clause, sentence and text/generic structure • recognising and shaping visual, nonverbal and auditory codes 	<p>What does this mean to me?</p> <p>The emphasis is on comprehending and composing or making meaning from written, spoken, visual and multimodal texts which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drawing on social and cultural background and prior knowledge to construct meaning from texts • comparing own social and cultural experiences with those described in the text • relating previous experiences with similar texts • seeing own interests and lifestyles reflected in texts • interpreting and using literal and inferential meanings in texts • attending to the way texts are constructed to make meaning • recognising and constructing concepts and processes that characterise different ways of constructing knowledge in text
TEXT-USING resources or PRAGMATIC PRACTICE	TEXT-ANALYSING resources or CRITICAL PRACTICE
<p>What do I do with this text?</p> <p>The emphasis is on understanding the purposes of different written, spoken, visual and multimodal texts and using texts in different ways for different cultural and social functions which also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding that different cultural and social contexts and purposes shape the way texts are structured • understanding the purpose of a text and recognizing the purpose in using it • using appropriate text types for particular purposes both inside and outside school • recognising what to do with a text in a particular context and what others might do with it • recognising that each text type has particular structures and features • understanding the options and alternatives for using a text to convey particular meanings effectively. 	<p>What does this text do to me?</p> <p>The emphasis is on understanding that written, spoken, visual and multimodal texts are not neutral but represent particular points of view and silence others which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognising the writer, speaker, or shaper's purpose in creating a text and that texts influence people's ideas • recognising opinions, bias, points of view, gaps and silences and dominant readings in a text • understanding how texts are crafted according to the values, views and interests of the writer, speaker, or shaper • identifying the ways in which information or ideas are expressed and represented to influence and position readers, viewers or listeners • presenting an alternative position to the one taken by a text or deciding to endorse the position taken by a text.

(Adapted from Freebody & Luke, 1990; Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn, 1995; Luke & Freebody, 1999)

6.3 Appendix C: *Imagine* Special Voice Lesson Handout

Imagine

J. Lennon

A. Warm up questionnaire

Complete the questionnaire below:

Questions	You	Your partner
1. Have you heard of John Lennon?		
2. What do you know about John Lennon? (Who was he? What did he do? What happened to him?)		
3. Do you know the song <i>Imagine</i> ? Have you ever sung it in karaoke?		
4. Do you like it? Why or why not?		
5. What is the song about? Why did John Lennon write it?		

B. Listening

- i. Read the song lyrics. Try to put the verses in order.
- ii. Listen to the song and check your answers.
- iii. Read the lyrics again. Try to guess the missing words
- iv. Listen to the song again and fill in the missing words.

C. Discussion

- i. What 'messages' are in the song? What does Lennon believe? What does the title mean?
- ii. Who might disagree with this song? Who might support it?

Imagine

J. Lennon

You may say a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope you'll join us
And the world will live as one

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
all the people
Living life in peace...

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
for today...

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the will be as one

Imagine no
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all world...

6.4 Appendix D: *Imagine* Special Voice Lesson Survey

Confidential information

Sex: Male/ Female

Age: U20 20-30 30-40 40-50 50-60 60-70 70+

NOVA Level: 7C 7B 7A 6 5 4 3 2 1

Beginner-----Intermediate-----Advanced

Please fill in the shaded boxes at the start and complete the survey at the end.

1) How important is it to think about ...when ...?

	listening to song lyrics	learning English
a) what is being said		
b) how something is said		
c) why something is said		
d) who the writer/speaker is		

4 = very important 3 = important 2 = not very important 1 = not important

2) How often do you think about ... when ...?

	listening to song lyrics	learning English
a) what is being said		
b) how something is said		
c) why something is said		
d) who the writer/speaker is		

4 = always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1 = never

3) Do you think these questions are important in your everyday life (e.g. watching the news, reading a book, talking to people, etc)?

4) What did you like about today's lesson?

5) What didn't you like about today's lesson?

Thank you for your time and help

6.5 Appendix E: Pilot *Imagine* Special Voice – Journal Entry

Sunday 27th August 2006 *Imagine* Special Voice

7 students attended: 3 high levels, an upper-intermediate, two high beginners, and one low beginner. 4 students specifically came for the Special Voice. 3 students were there incidentally.

Students completed the questionnaires themselves comfortably and clarified with me and each other. I helped the low beginner who then became my partner. Two students were very familiar with the song and another three students had heard of both John Lennon and *Imagine*. **Tasks A** and **B** engaged the students very well and student talking time was high. **Task B Part i** brought a lot of surprises when pairs discovered they had made completely different predictions.

Five students had to leave after the first 40-minute period, leaving 2 students for the second 40-minutes which looked at **Task C**. The high level student, a law major, was suitably challenged throughout and drew comparisons between utopian idealism and communism. The high beginner, however, needed help with vocabulary and decoding meaning at the sentence level, although the fact that utopia and ideology are almost the same in Japanese only pronounced differently, ユートピア and イデオロギー, seemed to help, and her familiarity and love of the song meant that she remained interested and knew of its underlying message of peace.

The questionnaire was not given due to time constraints and the departure of five students after the first period

Brown (2006b)

6.6 Appendix F: *Imagine Special Voice* – Journal Entry

Tuesday 12th September 2006 *Imagine Special Voice*

3 high level students attended including two of the regular ladies

There was initial uncertainty regarding ‘ideology’ when the topic was introduced, but examples and reassurance helped. After talking to the students, we discovered that the Japanese word イデオロギー actually has a slightly different nuance which is closer to ‘revolution’ according to my students, although this is not apparent from dictionary entries.

The lesson went smoothly and two students completed and handed in the questionnaire. The third student thanked me directly for “a really interesting lesson” and said, “I could learn many things”. “Me too”, I agreed.

Brown (2006d)

6.7 Appendix G: CDA and music lesson survey results for Questions 1 & 2

Student 1 Female Age 50-60 Nova Level 3 (High)

Student 2 Female Age 40-50 Nova Level 3 (High)

1) How important is it to think about ...when ...?

Student 1	listening to song lyrics		learning English	
a) what is being said	4	4	3	3
b) how something is said	3	4	3	4
c) why something is said	3	4	4	3
d) who the writer/speaker is	2	2	2	3

Student 2	listening to song lyrics		learning English	
a) what is being said	4	4	3	4
b) how something is said	3	3	3	4
c) why something is said	4	4	3	4
d) who the writer/speaker is	3	3	2	2

4 = very important 3 = important 2 = not very important 1 = not important

2) How often do you think about ... when ...?

Student 1	listening to song lyrics		learning English	
a) what is being said	2	3	4	3
b) how something is said	3	2	3	4
c) why something is said	3	2	3	3
d) who the writer/speaker is	2	3	2	2

Student 2	listening to song lyrics		learning English	
a) what is being said	4	4	2	3
b) how something is said	2	3	2	3
c) why something is said	4	4	2	3
d) who the writer/speaker is	2	2	2	2

4 = always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1 = never


Lesson survey: student feedback from questions 3-5

3) Do you think these questions are important in your everyday life (e.g. watching the news, reading a book, talking to people, etc)?	
Student 1:	Yes. They are very important. To understand the news, a book, or someone, these questions are very important.
Student 2:	Yes. 雑学は人間の幅を広げます。 [Knowledge of various things makes people broad-minded]
4) What did you like about today's lesson?	
Student 1:	It's hard for me to understand song lyrics when I listen to a music. The lesson satisfied me because I could understand "Imagine".
Student 2:	I could recognize that not only the sound but the words of the songs of Beatles are very interesting.
5) What didn't you like about today's lesson?	
Student 1:	Nothing
Student 2:	I liked everything of today's lesson. It was very interesting. Thank you very much.

6.8 Appendix H: Teaching materials resource

SPEAKING 1

1 Work in pairs and discuss what you think is happening in this photograph.



2 The photograph is actually part of an advertisement and this is the caption which goes with it.

**'ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF POLICE PREJUDICE?
OR ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF YOURS?'**

Reproduced from Jamall, M (2006) *Classroom Management*. Handout for English Teachers in Japan (ETJ) Certificate in Teaching Japanese Students. Sponsored by Oxford University Press & David English House.

6.9 Appendix I: *Images & Media Special Voice Handout*



Task 1 (Pairs)

Talk about this picture. The man on the left is wearing a British police officer's uniform.

Task 2 (Small groups)

What alternative language could be used to describe what is happening?

Task 3

Originally, the picture appeared as an advertisement with the following text:

=====

Another example of police prejudice or another example of yours?

Do you see a policeman chasing a criminal or a policeman harassing an innocent person?

Wrong both times.

It's two police officers, one in plain clothes, chasing a third party.

=====

- Who do you think produced the text (and picture)?
- Where and when do you think it was produced and displayed?
- What was their purpose?
- Who was it written for?
- What assumption(s) did the producer make about the audience?

Task 4

What stereotypical images (age, gender, religion, race, physique, etc) do we see in the world around us (on TV, in newspapers, advertising, etc)? How does this affect us?

6.10 Appendix J: Samples of language used by English language teachers

Task 1

It must be England or the UK.

There's a police officer chasing a black man.

The man's running away from the policeman. Maybe he's committed a crime.

Or running *with* [the police officer]. Why do you think he's committed a crime?

It looks like a bad area. There's graffiti on the wall.

Maybe there's a fire or some kind of disaster – like a building falling down.

Yeah. Maybe.

Task 2

We thought that

Same sort of thing.

I think ...

Or [it] could be ...

Yeah – look at the environment.

Task 3

a) The Commission for Racial Equality, language Educators, the police or pressure groups.

b) A novel or drama, art gallery, poster or advertisement.

c) A public campaign to educate and raise awareness about racist attitudes, our beliefs or prejudices.

d) White people, black people, anti-police, everyone.

e) ***Feedback and suggestions led to a discussion on how to help students answer this question. Teachers might ask them to focus on:***

1) *Who does the author believe might see “a policeman chasing a criminal”?*

2) *Who does the author believe might see “a policeman harassing an innocent person?”*

3) *What does the audience have to know or understand already in order to understand the text? e.g. what a British police officer's uniform looks like.*

Task 4

Examples on TV include: commercials for *Nissin Cup Noodles* and *Asience Shampoo*, and coverage of the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue after the end of the Iraq War.

All words carry meaning and different words mean different things to different audiences and in different contexts.

6.11 Appendix K: CDA Lesson Survey

Confidential information

Sex: Male/ Female

Age: U20 20-30 30-40 40-50 50-60 60-70 70+

Level: Beginner-----Intermediate-----Advanced

Please fill in the shaded boxes at the start and complete the survey at the end.

1) How important is it to think about ...when ...?

	learning/using English		learning/using Japanese	
a) what is being said				
b) how something is said				
c) why something is said				
d) who the writer/speaker is				

4 = very important 3 = important 2 = not very important 1 = not important

2) How often do you think about ... when ...?

	learning/using English		learning/using Japanese	
a) what is being said				
b) how something is said				
c) why something is said				
d) who the writer/speaker is				

4 = always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1 = never

3) Do you think these questions are important in your everyday life (e.g. watching the news, reading a book, talking to people, etc)?

4) What did you like about today's lesson?

5) What didn't you like about today's lesson?

Thank you for your time and help

6.12 Appendix L: Classroom observations and student feedback from trial lesson on Images and CDA with university students

Background

The students were studying genetics at the masters, doctoral and post-doctorial level. Two classes were intermediate English level and one advanced class.

Classroom observations

The teacher reported the following that overall, students enjoyed the lesson and reacted positively to the lesson materials (**Appendix I**) but had difficulty with completing the questionnaire, namely Question 1 – perhaps due to its abstract nature (**Appendix K**); seeing the connection between the questionnaire and the materials; and answering Question (e) in Task 3, which was also felt to be abstract:

The teacher commented: “Although my students English is high and they are scientists (used to looking for things in places where others have not searched), this exercise was very difficult! I had to do a lot of explaining!”

(Brown, 2006g)

Student feedback

16 questionnaires were returned with 10 fully completed.

11 students thought it was important to consider questions about *what*, *how*, *why* and *by whom* something is said and gave the following reasons:

“I want to reduce the number of prejudices I have.”

“These question will make you easy to criticize how new are presented.”

“I think these are important, when you want to understand what people says.”

“These affect me fundamentally in thinking way.”

“To think about the connotation behind what is said is important. But it’s hard to do it in English.”

“Those are very important to think about something when watching TV, reading books, etc. We should avoid to get biased information to discard stereotypical images.”

“Since we are scientists, we must not judge something by the first look, and we have to show the evidence and search the truth.”

6.13 Appendix M: *Images & Media Special Voice* – Journal Entry

Friday 22nd September 2006 *Images and Media Special Voice*

8 students attended: 3 high-levels, 2 upper-intermediates, 3 intermediates.

6 students (including 4 regulars) specifically came for the Special Voice although 2 had to leave early and one arrived late.

Task 1 involved the students very well as they talked about the picture in pairs. After about 10 minutes, two pairs joined together of their own accord, effectively carrying out **Task 2**. After, we shared ideas as a class then I showed them the language used by the English language teachers last week (**Appendix J**). They found this very interesting and were visibly pleased to see that they had used virtually the same type of language.

In **Task 3**, some students asked for clarification and explanation of vocabulary in the text (*prejudice, harass, innocent, in plain clothes, a third party*). The students were mostly able to explain to each other and provide examples. I asked some concept check questions for *prejudice* and *harass*. The students opted to work in small groups of 3 or 4 to answer the questions (a)-(e), and I joined each group periodically to listen to their discussion or answer occasional questions. Question (e) proved difficult and students needed guiding questions, although, I was aware that I had to be careful not to 'lead' them to answers I might have wanted them to find.

By the time we reached **Task 4**, the students had turned to me to lead a discussion although this was not what I had intended at all. They continued to ask questions but were reluctant or had difficulty offering their own examples. I brought in a magazine and some pamphlets to help them and we then looked at the images portrayed and considered the target audience, and representation of people in the texts.

Personally, I felt that the first three tasks had been successful in generating good discussion between students about discrimination, awareness, and prejudices. However, as the lesson became more teacher-focused towards the end, I felt like I was doing too much to lead the discussion. Even so, the students themselves thanked me for a very interesting lesson and branch manager reported that the feedback from students was good and they all left talking enthusiastically in Japanese.

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6.14 Appendix N: Lesson on News and the Media

News and the Media: Initial Questionnaire

- 1) What news sources do you read, watch or listen to?

- 2) Do you believe the news?
 - a) How often?
Never-----/-----Always
 - b) How much?
None-----50:50-----All of it

- 3) Does the news influence your beliefs?
Not at all-----/-----All the time
How might the news influence your beliefs?

- 4) When you see or hear the news, do you think about:
 - a) Who writes the news?
Never-----/-----Always
 - b) How news items are selected?
Never-----/-----Always
 - c) Why news items are selected?
Never-----/-----Always
 - d) What happens to news from the actual event to the production of a news story? (e.g. event → reporter → desk editor → chief editor)
Never-----/-----Always

- 5) Do you think these questions are important when learning English?
No, not at all-----Maybe-----Yes, of course
Why or why not?

News and the Media: Final Questionnaire

1) What do you think about the news now?

I should _____ believe _____ of the news

Never-----/-----Always

None-----50:50-----All of it

2) Will the news influence your beliefs more or less than before this lesson?

Much less-----less-----no change-----more-----much more

3) When you see or hear the news, will you think about:

a) Who writes the news?

Never-----/-----Always

b) How news items are selected?

Never-----/-----Always

c) Why news items are selected?

Never-----/-----Always

d) What happens to news from the actual event to the production of a news story? (e.g. event → reporter → desk editor → chief editor)

Never-----/-----Always

4) Do you think these questions are important when learning English?

No, not at all-----Maybe-----Yes, of course

Why or why not?

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