

An analysis of a Mexican  
EFL textbook: A written  
discourse perspective.

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**Final Assignment Task # WD/10/05**

Select an intermediate or advanced level English course book commonly used in your teaching context. Discuss the extent to which the book takes account of the findings of written discourse analysis and suggest ways in which it could be improved. You can think, for example, about the ways social actors are represented linguistically and visually, the ways cultural values are reinforced, etc.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays teachers are expected to evolve their teaching practices and adapt it to their constantly changing students. It seems only logical to constantly develop teaching approaches to suit learners' evolving needs. Students are expected to become reflective and autonomous while teachers are expected to reflect on the real use of language and portray it in the language classroom. Discourse analysis is a tool that aids teachers in analyzing use of language in real contexts. Therefore, the more information teachers have as to how discourse units are structured, organized and formed the more teaching tools they have at hand to develop real communicative competence in their students. Additionally, discourse analysis enlightens teaching paths as to which are the most appropriate materials for teaching and learning purposes.

This paper has the purpose of analyzing linguistically and pedagogically a specific textbook in relation to findings in the area of discourse analysis. First, I intend to describe aspects such as types of written discourse, critical discourse analysis and the role of social practice in written discourse. Then, this paper provides a brief description of discourse analysis and language teaching. Finally, it focuses on linguistic and pedagogical aspects of discourse analysis found in the specific textbook under observation. I conclude this paper by giving my personal insight as to possible suggestions to improve the textbook.

## **2. Discourse Analysis and its main elements.**

### **2.1 The concept of discourse analysis.**

Although authors give various definitions to fully explain the scope of discourse analysis (DA), they all agree in defining it as the analysis of language in use both form and function (Douglas, 2001). In other words, DA looks deeply into the actual use of language and analyzes its use beyond the sentence (Celce-Marcia & Olshtain, 2000). It involves interpreting the production of language from a different number of perspectives: ideological, socio-cultural, linguistic, textual and psychological (Hollad, 2010).

DA developed in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of work in areas such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, semantics, psychology, anthropology and sociology (McCarthy, 1991; Douglas, 2001). Some important authors in the U.K. were fundamental for the development of DA such as 1) M.A.K. Halliday who puts

strong emphasis on the importance of social functions of language use and the thematic and informational structure of spoken and written communication; 2) Sinclair and Coulthard in 1975 contributed by developing a model for analysis of student-teacher talk according to discourse units; 3) Grammarians such as Van Dijk in 1972 and Beaugrande in 1980 considered there existed important links between grammar and discourse therefore contributing greatly to this discipline (McCarthy, 1991).

## **2.2 Types of discourse.**

The most common classification of discourse entails its channel of communication: written or spoken (Celce-Murcia & O'Neil, 2000). However, other important characteristics can be identified (Figure 1). For instance, discourse can be further classified according to register and gender. That is, the first referring to the level of formality/ informality and usage of technical/general vocabulary and the second focusing on the communicative purpose, audience, conventionalized style and format of the discourse (ibid). Other classifications include planned or unplanned (discourse which is formal or informal in terms of its planning), monologic (single participant), dialogic or multiparty (two or more participants), context-embedded (discourse relies on context) or context-reduced (relies on participants) and transactional (discourse which transmits information) or interactional (Users transmit opinions and attitudes).

As noted in Figure 1, discourse classifications consider context influence and the social aspects in which discourse is embedded emphasizing the importance of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The following section focuses on CDA and attempts to explain the influence of context and social aspects.

**Figure 1 Types of Discourse**  
(Adapted from Celce-Murcia & Obstein, 2000)

Type of discourse	Description	Examples
Unplanned	Informal discourse	Informal conversations, letters, notes
Planned	Formal discourse	Prepared speeches, carefully planned and published written work.
Monologic	One speaker, little or no interaction among others	Speeches or talks.
Dialogic or multiparty	Two or more participants interacting and constructing discourse together	Interviews.
Context-embedded	Discourse which heavily relies on the context within it develops and social conventions.	Family conversations or letters and texts.
Context-removed	Discourse, which is removed from the context and relies heavily on users' knowledge of the language code and genre types. Context is less familiar, less accessible and less immediate.	Literate spoken and written discourse.
Transactional	Transmission of information, or exchange of goods and services.	A newspaper report.
Interactional	Discourse that shapes and maintains social relations in which users express their attitudes toward a topic or interlocutor.	Narrative or a family conversation.

### 2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis: Social practice, social actors and cultural influence.

Van Dijk considers CDA to be

*'a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context'* (2000: 352).

According to Huckin (1997) it is a 'context-sensitive' discipline that has the main

objective of improving society by analyzing how language discourse is used. It considers three main elements and its interaction: 1) the text, 2) the linguistic process and 3) the social context it bears upon (Ibid).

The importance of social practice to CDA appeared in the 1970s when researchers found it hard to analyze text without considering the 'world knowledge' or the 'background knowledge' of its participants (van Leeuwen, 2008). CDA is perceived as a problem-solving discipline concerned with issues experienced by women, lower socioeconomic classes, ethnic and racial classes among others (Celce-Marcia & Olohtain, 2000). Additionally, for some linguists, discourse has the power of modifying and transforming social practices (van Leeuwen, 2008). For social practices to be possible, social actors or agents are necessary.

According to Fairclough (2003:22) social agents 'texture texts' and have some freedom when articulating discourse. In other words, social actors have the power of using discourse to suit their communication purposes and providing semantic meaning. This semantic meaning can be developed according to culture customs or personal views of the social actor (Ibid). For instance, the text "You really should put your cell phone away...people are starting to stare at us" has a negative connotation that only the participating agents understand due to the unapproved use of mobile phones in public places in their culture. Therefore when analyzing this piece of spoken discourse in written form, the context, the semantic meaning and the social actors are of great importance. In written discourse, social actors can play the roles of instigator, agent, affected or beneficiary of a text (Van Leeuwen, 2008). That is they can either be the source of a social practice or the receiver of it. Furthermore, social actors can be categorized in text in terms of their functionalization (things agents do or functions they perform) and identification (based on who the social actor is: classification, relational, identification and physical identification) (Ibid).

In an attempt to incorporate CDA in language teaching, Celce-Marcia & Olohtain (2000:10) consider it to focus on deconstructing and exposing social inequality expressed in language as used in public media and situations such as classrooms, courtrooms, interviews or everyday talk. They add that

*Many critical discourse analysts believe that education in general and foreign and second language education in particular are ideological and political, but that most language teachers are unaware of this. They argue that discourse in the language classroom as well as the discourse of language textbooks and teaching materials are all in the need of critical examination to ensure that discourse that is discriminatory and that reinforces social inequality be avoided to the extent that this is possible, or at the very least explicitly and critically discussed if it comes up' (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000: 10).*

#### **2.4 Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

Another area of DA that has commonly been approached is multimodal analysis. Its procedures acknowledge meaning not only to written discourse, but also to visual images. Theorists such as Ferdinand Saussure believed that signs had a role in society and were part of social life. According to Saussure, a sign consisted of a signified (our concept and definition of the sign) and a signifier (the actual picture and its meaning) (Bennet, 2010). Additionally, according to Roland Barthes, signs and images carry specific connotations and myths, which are culture specific (ibid).

Written discourse and images go beyond this analysis. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) believe images can interact with the audience in some of the following ways:

**Demand/offer.** When actors address the audience directly it is considered to be a demanding semiotic position. When the audience is not directly acknowledged it is known as an offer semiotic position (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

**Social Distance.** Images can portray agents at different distances. That is, the closer to the viewer the image is the more familiar or friendly they are to each other (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

**Detachment/involvement.** Image agents and audience can be detached or



involved according to the position in which the agent is portrayed in the picture. A picture taken from the front entails more involvement with the audience than taken from a horizontal angle (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

**Social Power.** If a picture is taken from above and the agent in the image looks upon the audience, then the agent has power over the audience. When taken from below and audience looks upon the image then the audience is in power of the visual resource (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

Finally, images commonly found in textbooks are those that do not carry a specific relationship between the viewer and the image agent. They serve the purpose of representing concepts or conceptual relationships (Barnet, 2010).

## **2.5 Discourse Analysis and language teaching.**

The birth of the communicative approach (CA) led to new ways of incorporating discourse analysis in teaching practices (Obstain & Celce-Murcia (2001, Celce-Murcia & Obstain, 2000). In the following section the interaction among language teaching and DA will be discussed.

When CAs began influencing language teaching around the world, DA gained importance. According to Obstain & Celce-Murcia, 'it would be ill advised to teach language via the communicative approach without relying heavily on discourse analysis' (2001: 707). The main purpose of CAs is to obtain in

learners communicative competence, which consists of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Celce-Murcia & Obstain, 2000). Therefore,

*'It is in discourse and through discourse that all of the other competencies are realized. And it is in discourse and through discourse that the manifestation of the other competencies can best be observed, researched and assessed'* (Celce-Murcia & Obstain, 2000: 16).

The CA has allowed language instructors to move away from the analysis of single sentences. Instead of focusing on grammar units, DA has encouraged

textbooks and other teaching materials to use short and long texts as the backbone of the lesson and as examples of language practice in meaningful contexts (Olshtain & Celce-Murcia, 2001). Moreover, using DA in communicative classrooms allows lessons to include the sociolinguistic factor every communicative act entails: age, culture, social status, gender among others.

However, DA is not a method for teaching languages (McCarthy, 1991). It is suggested as an approach that allows language teachers to understand how language is used in real contexts and to decide on the best teaching strategies with the information obtained.

Olshtain & Celce-Murcia (2000: 13-15; 2001: 710-711) propose a language-teaching model, which integrates DA to its processes (Figure 2). Elements such as 1) *prior knowledge* (what the agent knows or has experienced in relation to the topic) 2) *discourse knowledge* (knowledge of structure, syntax, and rhetoric) and 3) *socio-cultural knowledge* (learner's personal and cultural characteristics) interact in *knowledge-driven (top-down)* or *data-driven (bottom-up)* in learning processes. Depending on students' proficiency and learning background they will depend more or less on their prior knowledge. For instance, as seen in figure 2 learners who are beginners and have more trouble interpreting written or spoken discourse rely more on a top-down learning process in which their content and formal schemata are activated to process new information. On the other hand, proficient discourse users can rely on a bottom-up procedure where linguistic features such as syntax, morphology, phonology and vocabulary can combine with the specific communication features and produce new knowledge. According to Olshtain & Celce-Murcia (2001: 711) a discourse oriented curriculum emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge to build new knowledge and perform among the four language skills. In the following section I intend to briefly describe the role of DA in the teaching of productive language skills.

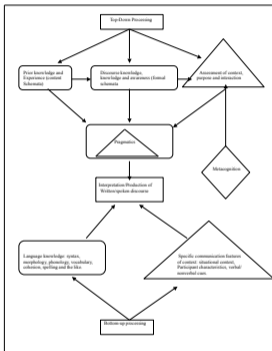


Figure 2 Discourse Processing Framework (Colce-Marcia & Olshtain, 2000: 15).

## 2.6 Discourse Analysis and the Teaching of Language skills.

### 2.6.1 The role of discourse in productive skills.

Regarding speaking skills, a discourse approach emphasizes the importance of authentic and meaningful opportunities to engage in communicative tasks. However,

*'Complete naturalness is probably impossible in the classroom, but the feeling that one is engaging in an authentic activity is important to the learner, as is the feeling that one is being taught authentic and naturally occurring structures and vocabulary to use in simulations of real-life...'*  
(McCarthy, 1991: 145).

Furthermore, speaking entails moving from a linguistic perspective to a pragmatic focus in which specific context and specific situations should be an integral part of the everyday speaking practice. Activities such as role-plays, group discussions, debates, teacher/student feedback, and encouraging the use of target language outside classroom settings can favor spoken discourse (Celce-Marcia & Olshtain, 2000).

While speaking is spontaneous and heavily dependent on context, written discourse is 'freestanding' (McCarthy, 1991: 149). It is produced in a context-free environment that makes the writing skill more difficult: writers need to learn to produce 'reader-friendly' texts and have the ability to gradually liberate from the context dependent process and move towards the de-contextualized production process (Olshtain & Celce-Marcia, 2001). Additionally, writers need to find ways to suit their communicative purposes by matching the reader's background knowledge and schemata repertoire. That is, writers need to find ways to understand who the reader is, what the relationship reader-writer entails and to find the appropriate text type to suit the specific reader (McCarthy, 1991).

A discourse approach to teaching writing focuses learner's attention on the process of writing and considers the written product a unit of discourse that is

constantly evolving throughout the stages of brainstorming, planning, drafting and revising (McCarthy, 1991). The main goal of this process is to produce coherent and cohesive text that unifies its individual sentences and parts and makes them 'hang' together through out the discourse (Celco-Marcia & Oshlain, 2000).

Finally, it is crucial to point out that DA serves many purposes in language skill teaching. However, the more information teachers have on how spoken and written discourse is composed, organized and created the more tools they count with to develop discourse-oriented curriculum, produce authentic classroom materials to suit the curriculum and create and guide activities that promote context-driven knowledge (McCarthy, 1991: 147). Furthermore, DA provides language instructors with extra insight to reflect on the best options available in terms of material and textbooks.

### **3. The Case of Attitude level 3.**

In this section I intend to focus on a specific textbook and analyze ways in which its contents approach written discourse analysis. First I give some general features of the textbook, and then I analyze its contents in terms of linguistic and pedagogical features. Finally, I provide some recommendation that according to my opinion may improve the text.

#### **3.1 General features of Attitude 3.**

Attitude is a six level series of textbooks published by Macmillan Publishers (2006). Written by Kate Fuscoe, Barbara Garside and Luke Prodromou, Attitude aims to take teenagers and young adults from beginner to advanced levels of English (Macmillan, 2010). It focuses on engaging students in reflective activities based on interesting topics that attract their attention. According to the editorial its key features are:

- Up-to-date interesting topics that motivate learners to use English communicatively
- Integrated-skills practice.
- Helps students develop solid learning foundations through a program of

language exposure, analysis and practice.

A task-focused lesson in each unit that recycles language' (Macmillan, 2010).

It consists of 12 units and 4 review units that focus on language development (pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary) and skill development (reading, listening, speaking, writing). These develop language by engaging students in communicative and task-based activities. At the end of each unit, learners are presented with an alternative activity that enhances real life skills such as dictionary use, reading strategies and writing skills.

On the back cover of the book, three statements attract audience's attention (Fusco, Garvise, Prodromou, 2006):

***Build positive attitude***

*Ensuring that students have a positive attitude to learning is the key to their success. Through a series of high-interest topics, challenges, and reflective activities, Attitude engages students in a learning experience that is both meaningful and relevant to their current reality.*

***Develop with Attitude.***

*Attitude introduces a unique focus on the development of study and writing skills, empowering students to become effective learners through awareness-raising activities, learning tips and follow-up tasks.*

***Communicate with Attitude***

*With solid learning foundations, students will have the confidence to express themselves, reflect who they are and approach learning with attitude! ' (Fusco, Garvise, Prodromou, 2006)*

In reference to its content, the first paragraph found on the back cover, suggests students are engaged in reflective activities. However, it is not clear as to what type of reflective activities students are encouraged to complete.

It is quite clear the authors and publishers of the book are heavily relying on building positive environments towards English learning in the target students.

Although these statements are quite vague regarding teaching methods and motivational strategies, their use of written discourse attracts potential students' and language teachers' attention, which I consider is the main purpose of the front and back cover of any textbook.

The following section provides a brief description of my own analysis of specific parts of unit 4 of the textbook under observation. I intend to exemplify Celce-Marcia & Olshtain's (2000) gender and register classification described in section 2.2. Then I focus on the aspect of social actors and culture in text as described by Fairclough (2003) and discussed in section 2.3 of this paper. I then focus on visual resources such as the front cover of the book and analyse it according to Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) image categorization described in section 2.4 of this paper. Finally, I focus on pedagogical aspects of the textbook such as the teaching of productive language skills according to Celce-Marcia & Olshtain (2000) and McCarthy's perspective (1991).

### **3.2 Linguistic Analysis of Attitude 3.**

#### **3.2.1 Types of discourse.**

As mentioned in section 2.2 of this paper, written discourse can be classified according to its register (use of formal/informal or general/technical vocabulary) or gender (a specific purpose, context and audience is approached) (Celce-Marcia & Olshtain, 2000). Figure 1 describes that written discourse classifications include planned or unplanned, context-embedded or context-reduced and transactional or interactional (*ibid*).

In unit 4 of the textbook, an article that approaches techniques to quit smoking is included. According to the instructions of the textbook it is an article that has the purpose of guiding students in finding specific information (Figure 3). Following the categorization described in section 2.2, this sample text seems to follow an informal and general register. The use of contractions ('won't' in line 2) and first and second person ('your' in line 1 and 'you' throughout the whole sample) in the text suggest it has an informal and non-technical purpose. Additionally, in terms of gender the text seems to follow the characteristics of a magazine article or persuasive text. It appears to have the purpose of persuading the reader of using specific techniques to help people or close

relatives quit smoking. The author first presents a situation, 'If someone in your family still smokes after hearing all the anti-smoking messages, nagging them to quit won't work', then a solution is proposed followed by facts supporting the suggestion:

*Smoking is linked to behavioral patterns, so if you want to help someone quit, try to persuade them to change routine...you need to break the pattern by doing things as differently as you can, explains life coach and anti-smoking expert Suez Graves (Macmillan, 2006:39).*

However, the text seems incomplete. It starts describing smoking and abruptly ends the article: '...friends and family who are willing to listen can really help you cope'. There is no description or extra information that can exemplify this conclusive statement.

Furthermore, I consider this text to be planned, context-reduced and interactional. An article that includes information stated by experts or other people clearly needs specific planning. This article is perhaps a context-reduced text because no further background in terms of context or place of interaction is mentioned. Finally, I consider this text interactional for it seems to try to establish a confidential relationship with the reader by using first person and expressing writer's opinions: '*...so if you want to help someone quit, try to persuade them to change their routine during the first crucial cigarette-free week.*'

**Figure 3 Sample Written Text 1  
(Fusco, Garabito, Proctorson, 2006:39)**

Is this the key to giving up?  
If someone in your family still smokes after hearing all the anti-smoking messages, nagging them to give up won't work. Smoking is linked to behavioral patterns, so if you want to help someone quit, try to persuade them to change their routine during the first crucial cigarette-free week. "You need to break the pattern by doing things as differently as you can," explains life coach and anti-smoking expert Suez Graves. "So if you normally get home from work and take a bath, take a shower, and if you normally get home from work and take a bath, take a shower, and if you start your day with coffee and a cigarette, go for a jog instead." Having people there to offer support also plays a valuable part in the quitting process. "Smoking is a way of avoiding dealing with feelings, so when you stop, you may feel more vulnerable-friends and family who are willing to listen can really help you cope."



### 3.2.2 Social actors and culture in text.

In section 2.3 of this paper, I briefly describe the concept of social actors in written discourse and the role that context and semantic meaning plays for these agents. According to Fairclough (2003:22) social agents can give meaning to text and create their most important elements by providing semantic meaning to the discourse.

To point out the semantic importance of discourse in Attitude 3, I focus on a newspaper column found in unit 4, lesson 3 (figure 4).

Some sentence structures of this excerpt have specific semantic meanings that the author is giving to the text. For instance, the sentence *He is very supportive and has asked me to marry him...* is given a positive connotation implied by the word 'supportive'. While for this social actor the action of marrying someone is a positive act, for other cultures or social actors getting married may mean losing certain freedom or bachelor privileges that they are not willing to loose. In this case, as proposed by Fairclough, this text is molded according to the agent's personal beliefs of marriage.

Figure 4 Sample Written Text 2  
(Fusco, Garbide, Prodronu, 2006:43)



The social actor in this text mentions *... but the problem is that he has some very bad habits. He smokes a pack a day and drinks fairly heavily...*. From this

text it is clear that the agent considers smoking a pack a day carries a negative semantic meaning. I consider this issue to be a cultural aspect that is creating the meaning of this text. In some cultures, smoking is considered an activity that represents power, security and masculinity in men while in women it represents promiscuity or low self esteem. In some European and Asian countries smoking is widely accepted. However, in America, for instance, smoking carries a negative connotation.

On the other hand, as mentioned in section 2.3, social actors in text can play the roles of instigator, agent, affected or beneficiary of a text (van Leeuwen, 2008). In the sentence '*...he seems to expect me to do all the cleaning and cooking*', 'he' refers to the boyfriend and therefore the beneficiary of the cleaning and cooking while 'me' refers to the writer of the letter and the affected of the actions in this sentence. Finally, the word 'boyfriend' categorizes this social agent according to its identification as a relational identification to the writer of the letter.

### 3.2.3 Visual Resources

A full size, close-up image of a black teenager (appendix A) screaming is found on the front cover of the book.

As mentioned in section 2.4 of this paper, DA can approach a multimodal analysis. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), a viewer can interact directly with the image being portrayed. In this case, the close-up image is suggesting a close relationship with the viewer. A category suggested by these theorists is that of social distance in which the closer the image the more familiar the viewer is to it.

I believe the main purpose of this image is to help students feel comfortable with the textbook and have a sense of positivism towards the course. As Barthes suggests (cited in Bennet, 2010), pictures can transmit specific connotations to viewers depending on cultural contexts. I consider that the expression of surprise and happiness on the agents face has a universal meaning that is worldwide recognized.

On the other hand, this picture is serving a conceptual purpose: agents are not

looking directly at viewers, and social power is not represented.

### **3.3 Pedagogical Analysis of Attitude 3**

#### **3.3.1 Teaching Writing in Attitude 3**

As described in section 2.6.1 of this paper, an important aspect of teaching written discourse is teaching writing by focusing on the process of brainstorming, planning, drafting and revising the final product or discourse unit (McCarthy, 1991). This process has the purpose of creating coherent and cohesive text that unifies its individual sentences and parts and makes them 'hang' together through out the discourse (Celce-Murcia & Obbstein, 2000). On page 25 of the textbook under observation a "Developing your writing activity" is included (Appendix B). In this lesson students are encouraged to brainstorm ideas, analyze a small sample text about an unusual event and write their own text using their brainstorming map. Finally, they are encouraged to revise their work. This activity corresponds to the discourse principles described at the beginning of this section. However, this activity does not encourage drafting of the written text.

This analysis of texts leads to the following section in which I intend to provide specific suggestions to flaws, which according to my opinion, can be improved in the textbook under observation.

### **4. Possible improvements to Attitude 3.**

#### **4.1 Linguistic Features**

Regarding text sample 1 (Figure 2), I would consider including more information. As I discussed in section 3.2.1 of this paper, the text seems incomplete. The text begins by approaching the reader directly in relation to smoking and possible strategies for quitting. However, there is no introductory information that can build the reader's schemata. Additionally, I consider it is a context-reduced text because no further information about the setting or actors of the text is given.

I would suggest two additions to the text: 1) Adding an introductory paragraph that could set a context and put forward a specific problem. Information such as "*Smoking has become an increasing issue in North America. People nowadays*

*find it harder and harder each day to stop smoking. I personally had a big issue with my father who was a heavy smoker...*" could be added to the text; 2) adding more information to the concluding statement "...friends and family who are willing to listen can really help you cope" could provide a conclusive paragraph to the article. For instance the following could be added, "If you have a friend or a family member in which you confide it is advisable to approach him/her to liberate some steam and allow the process of quitting easier. Finding people who have coped with quitting smoking is much better for they have experience and can give you tips that can help you".

In relation to social actors and cultural practices, sample text 4 was described in section 3.2.2. This text is an informal letter that implies in its discourse that smoking has a negative connotation provided by the context. Although, it is not directly stated in the letter smoking is not culturally accepted, the sentence '...the problem is that he has some very bad habits. He smokes a pack a day...' implies the negativity towards smoking. I consider this letter could also benefit from an introductory statement which could provide the reader extra background to the discourse. This background information could provide the reader some extra information about the writer and could facilitate the understanding of the writer's opinions and requests. For instance,

"Dear Sally:

My name is Tracy and I live in McAllen, Texas USA. I am single but I have a wonderful boyfriend. He is very supportive and has asked me to marry him..."

#### **4.2 Pedagogical Features.**

Regarding the specific writing assignment mentioned in section 3.3.1 of this paper, the drafting stage is missing. I consider the drafting stage of the process is important and time-consuming. However, this process can be divided among several units, several class sessions and be focused on a single writing assignment. Therefore I believe it is important to have learners draft their written discourse for it is in this stage that they reflect on the true meaning they are communicating to the reader.

The materials used can be even more interesting for Latin students. The text includes a few materials that culturally correspond to the target students but more can be done. Pictures of Latin artists, reading texts that approach Latin issues, or technology driven topics can attract students' attention and match the need for meaningful materials in discourse approach to teaching. Textbooks such as this are known worldwide; therefore I understand the difficulty in making an audience specific text.

Including more material that represents real life situations such as authentic telephone conversations, authentic everyday talks, magazine excerpts, weather forecasts, and newspaper articles among others, is suggested. For instance, the magazine article discussed in section 3.2.1 lacks authenticity. It does not state the resource nor the author of that article which implies it is not authentic and is material specifically created for classrooms. It could be suggested to seek articles that are authentic in real magazines that treat smoking and ways to quit. This could ensure students' exposure to authentic materials as a discourse approach proposes.

## **5. Conclusion**

DA has provided important tools that have led to the discovery of how language works in specific contexts. This paper discussed the influence of social actors, social practices and visual media to written discourse. Finally, the role DA in language teaching was described based on a process approach to writing. During the writing of this paper, it came to my attention how context and social practice influences all types of written texts and discourse units. Therefore, if our purpose as teachers is to attain in our students communicative competence it is rather foolish to not consider the findings of DA into our daily teaching practice. However, it is important to bear in mind that although very useful, DA is not a teaching method. Rather it is an approach that reminds teachers that they can no longer base their lessons on single grammar or sentence units. After all, language is developed in social practice. Therefore, I believe

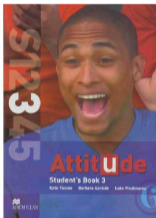
*'The competent language teacher can no longer limit herself or himself to being an educator and a grammarian. To a certain extent, he or she also has to be a sociolinguist, aware of and interested in various aspects of discourse analysis' (Olshtain & Celce-Murcia, 2001: 709).*

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**7. Appendixes**

**7.1 Appendix A Front cover of Attitude 3**





7.2 Appendix B Activity “Developing your Writing”.  
Attitude 3 page 25.

## Describing an unusual event

**1 Brainstorming ideas**

- Think of two ideas connected to a writing assignment: “Describe something memorable that happened at a celebration you have attended.” In pairs, look at the sentences. Which of the words or phrases below refer to the event in general and what refer to a specific memorable event at the celebration? Indicate phrases in the correct places in the maps.

**wedding**

**Independence Day**

- wedding flowers and music / wedding / best man dropped the cake / brides chose salad
- Independence Day / backyard and picnic / street party / fireworks / house caught fire

• Think of a celebration you have attended where something fairly unusual, or terrible happened. Does a event map with ideas you want to include in your story.

**2 Connecting the ideas in the story with linking words**

- In pairs, look at these sentences. Mark ‘T’ if the sentence idea happened before the other event, ‘A’ if they happened after, and ‘B’ if they happened at the same time.
  - 1 We went to camp before the rain. T
  - 2 Miss called while we were driving to the school. ---
  - 3 When the teacher asked questions, everyone listened. ---
  - 4 Their passports were stolen during their vacation. ---
  - 5 We bought our car before we moved to Kansas. ---
- Finish the story and **underline** phrases that indicate sequences of events.

My cousin's wedding began the same other wedding. The church was decorated with pretty blue and white flowers. Beautiful music was played before the ceremony. We all stood up when the bride entered with her father and walked to the altar. The best man's speech when the guests kissed the bride. After the ceremony was over, we all went to a nice hotel for the wedding reception.

All the guests sat in the reception before the bride and groom. During the reception, the best man went to the local kitchen to bring out the wedding cake. He wanted to make a good entry with the huge cake. While he was carrying the cake to the table, he tripped on a rug and fell on his face. The bride was standing next to him when he fell, and the cake went all over her. Her dress was ruined, and there was no cake for the bride and groom to eat. I'll never forget that wedding reception!

**3 Writing the story**

- Now write your story based on your brainstorming in Exercise 1. Include linking words from the list below. Write one paragraph with a general description of the celebration and another paragraph telling about the specific event that happened during the celebration.
- Exchange stories with a partner. Read your partner's story and ask your partner to mark OMAK about the story if you want to. What's a word? Every story has a story! What did you think?
- Now look at the language and make any mistakes you find, especially with linking words.
- With your partner, discuss and correct the mistakes in your story.

DEVELOP

YOUR WRITING

**WRITING TIP**

In order to start writing, you need to get the idea of what you want to write. One way of starting ideas and brainstorming activities.

**WRITING TIP**

Organize sentences, start by using linking words to make the sentences connected. Start make the sentences too long, though, so they make good sentences.

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