

## Implementing the Discourse-Historical Approach to Literature Teaching and Its Alignment with The Personal Growth Model: A Theoretical Perspective

اتباع مقارنة التحليل التاريخي للخطاب في تدريس الادب وتوافقه مع نموذج النمو الشخصي: مقارنة نظرية

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**Abstract:** It is a well-documented fact that the teaching of literature is commonly approached within the framework of the three major models: the cultural model, the language model, and the personal growth model (Carter and Long ,1991). Being the culmination of the first two, the personal growth model is regarded as the correlation of the societal and global textual message with the projection of it onto the learners' personal surroundings, awareness, and growth. Wodak and Meyer 's (2001) model; the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA henceforth), is one that outlines a set of systematic steps that can easily be integrated to the learning context. It begins with a formalist and textual approach to analysis before moving to the contextual and integrative aspect of analyzing the text. This paper attempts to highlight how the addition of DHA to literature analysis aligns with Carter and Long's personal growth model of teaching literature.

**Keywords:** The discourse-historical approach; teaching literature; the personal growth model; critical thinking; comprehension skills.

**المخلص:** من الحقائق الموثقة جيداً أن تدريس الأدب يتم تناوله عموماً في إطار النماذج الرئيسية الثلاثة: النموذج الثقافي ، نموذج اللغة ، ونموذج النمو الشخصي (كارتر ولونج ، 1991). نظراً لكونه تنويجاً للنموذجين الأولين ، يُنظر إلى نموذج النمو الشخصي على أنه ارتباط للرسالة النصية المجتمعية والعالمية بإسقاطها على المحيط الشخصي للمتعلمين ووعيهم ونموهم. نموذج التحليل التاريخي للخطاب (Wodak and Meyer (2001) (DHA من الآن فصاعداً) ، يحدد مجموعة من الخطوات المنهجية التي يمكن دمجها بسهولة في سياق التعلم. يبدأ بنهج شكلي ونصي للتحليل قبل الانتقال إلى الجانب السياقي والتكاملي لتحليل النص. يحاول هذا البحث تسليط الضوء على كيفية توافق إضافة DHA إلى تحليل الأدب مع نموذج النمو الشخصي لكارتر ولونج لتعليم الأدب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** نهج التحليل التاريخي للخطاب؛ تدريس الأدب؛ نموذج النمو الشخصي؛ التفكير النقدي؛ مهارات الفهم.

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## 1. Introduction

The teaching of literature has been revisited and refocused towards a more critical approach of both literary analysis and pedagogical course of teaching over the last twenty years. The attention is now removed from the absorption of readily-available knowledge to the development of a critical and autonomous set of skills (Rosenblatt, 1993). This prompts for the change of the teaching approach; from one that enables and celebrates the passive learning of content – which became obsolete—to one that advocates for the progressive development of the learner’s problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and analytical creativity in analyzing works of literature. Not only does this evoke and utilize the reader-response theory, but also sets in motion a more interactive framework of learning between the teacher and the learner. Which ultimately creates a more homogenous and motivating learning environment. The learner’s input is taken into consideration and is validated. Rosenblatt says: “An intense response to a work will have its roots in the capacities and experiences already present in the personality and mind of the reader.” (Rosenblatt, 1993). These capacities and experiences can only be utilized and developed by and through the learner always being active and the teacher engaging. The learner then is encouraged to improve upon his competencies through a more active interaction with both the text and the teacher.

## 2. Literature Use and Literature Teaching

### 2.1 The Three Models of Literature Use

Carter and Long, (1991) outlined three main models and approaches to literature use and vis-à-vis teaching; all three are dedicated to developing different aspects and skills and meeting different learning needs.

*The Language Model* pertains to the teaching of literature for language proficiency and accuracy purposes. It is the teaching of grammatical structures and rules, lexicon, and syntax through the study of literary works. This model is most suited for EFL classrooms as it is focused only on the acquisition of linguistic structures and automated deciphering of the text.

*The Cultural Model* transcends the study of the language to the study of its cultural background. In this framework the learner is expected to look beyond the grammatical and syntactic components of the text and to examine the historical, political, societal, ideological, and cultural components of its creation and

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interpretation.

*The Personal Growth Model* attempts to bridge the gap and create a culmination of the language and the cultural models. Much like discourse analysis, its focal point is language use; how language is used both to elaborate on and influence cultural contexts. This model is heavily reliant on the use of the learner's personal experiences in creating a connection between theirs and the text's cultural input. The latter task is partly the employment of what is also referred to as the reader-response theory. However, the reader-response theory makes use of the reader's personal reaction to the text alone; it completely neglects any accountability of the author's intentions or contextual background. That is to say, although the personal growth model takes on an aspect of reader-response, it is not limited to it alone. But rather comprises the cultural and the language models in order to cultivate an engaging learning environment, as well as developing and enriching the learner's critical thinking skills. Therefore, in this framework, and according to (Hammad, 2012) the choice of teaching materials and teaching approach should succumb to different parameters. Padurean (2015) suggests that the following aspects should be taken into consideration when adopting the teaching material:

- ⇒ The studied literary content ought to be one that is interesting and accommodating to the learner's needs, motivation, and overall involvement.
- ⇒ The literary text should not be rigid and inaccessible to further interpretation and input than what is already available and done.
- ⇒ The personal projection of the learner's experiences on the text's resources should be somewhat clarified and not too ambiguous.
- ⇒ Given that the lessons are student-centred and student-focus-oriented, the teacher in this context is not a lecturer or an informer, but is a guide, a coordinator, and a facilitator.
- ⇒ With the elimination of one correct and expected interpretation of the literary text, the focus of the study of all literary texts should be on the development of the learner and their personal growth, rather than the constant stress of examination and testing.

In an age of digital information and all-time access to information,

learners are less and less avid about reading and more inclined to research summaries and already-available interpretations and analyses of literary works. This calls for an immediate change of approach in supervising and coordinating literature classes. Instead of asking the learners to provide general knowledge on the text, they should be encouraged to create their own interpretations. Which guarantees an improvement on their analytical skills and widens their horizons of meaning-making and perceptions.

## **2.2 Discourse Analysis and Literature**

When language is used for a specific function, it is discourse (Tonkiss, 2004). Its analysis does not only consider the language used, but also the way, functionality, and context in which it was expressed, i.e. discourse analysis is the study of language beyond the sentence. Discourse analysis first came to be acknowledged as a part of the discipline of *rhetorica*. Whereas the linguistic *grammatica* was solely focused on the correct use of grammar and syntactic structures, *rhetorica* was mainly focused on how language came to be structured; it dealt with the organization and delivery of public discourse and speeches in political frameworks (TA, 1985). Nonetheless, it later transcended its public use orientation and came to encompass the aesthetic functions and usage of language. Yet, in the nineteenth century, the classical rhetoric was substituted by a structural study of language (mostly influenced by the Czech structuralism movement). It was not until the late Russian formalists such as Propp and Levi-Strauss offered their insights on the analysis of literary texts that the relevance of contextual and cultural paradigms of discourse resurfaced. All throughout the following literary criticism movements; from New Criticism, to the new Structuralism, to Modernism and Post-Modernism, the cultural aspect of the literary text was inseparable from its linguistic study. Meaning was deduced in relation to the historical, political, and societal setting of the text's origin. Later on, because language (both aesthetic and functional) and discourse share much of the functional parameters and aspects of semiotics, their analysis morphed into an interdisciplinary approach of semiotics. This cross-fertilization of disciplines between the social sciences, literature, linguistics, and history, led to the global realization that one discipline's resources are indispensable to the study of another.

By the 1970s, it became apparent that language was a key factor and tool in

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establishing power structures and relations. And what came to be known as the vast study and discipline of discourse analysis, branched into different focus-oriented aspects of analysis. Namely, a focused approach of linguistic analysis; or CL, and what came to be known in the 1990s as critical discourse analysis; or CDA.

Amongst a number of CDA's inferences is that the reader or listener is not a mere passive recipient of the discourse, and that the engaging relationship between them and the text is paramount to the interpretation of the text (Kress, 1989). Although most of the work was focused on institutional expressions of power, and mass media exertion of power through language (TA, 1985). Wodak (2015) elaborated on the necessity of resorting to the historical aspect and dimensions of analyzing discourse. This approach was labelled the discourse-historical approach. This paper attempts to highlight the correlation between CDA's assumption of meaning-making through a similar reiterated notion to that of the reader-response theory, and the systematic approach of DHA that allows the engagement of the reader in analyzing forms of discourse.

### **3. The Discourse-Historical Approach**

The discourse-historical approach; much like any given approach of CDA, embraces a critical approach of social practices, expressions, and manifestations in language. Its prime difference and distinction from other critical approaches is its multi-methodical attempt in studying all relative background information in defining in and out-groups, discrimination, and contextual "rights" and "wrongs" (Wodak R. e., 1999). Although the approach's endeavor –as its name suggests— entails an addition of a historical aspect to the discourse analysis discipline and study, its practice through the years manifested in a multiplicity of interests and neighboring disciplines. According to Reisigl, (2017), amongst a number of DHA's interests and focal points:

- ⇒ The discrimination present in discourse
- ⇒ Language barriers within social contexts and institutions
- ⇒ Media discourse
- ⇒ Organizational and institutional communication
- ⇒ Various aspects of ecological discourse

Regardless of the focus of its application, DHA remains a problem-oriented analytical method that attempts to outline problematic social structures of miscommunication and misrepresentation, and is deeply rooted in linguistics. As all critical approaches, it celebrates the inclusion of all input and insight. Van Dijk, (Van Dijk, 2001), contends: “Without being eclectic, good scholarship, and especially good CDA, should integrate the best work of many people, famous or not, from different disciplines, countries, cultures and directions of research. In other words, CDA should be essentially diverse and multidisciplinary”. Therefore, in what follows, there is an attempt to design a model of DHA adapted from Wodak’s suggested primary model to correspond with the goal at hand; the analysis of literary narratives to better meet the learners’ needs and literature teaching objectives.

First, an understanding and outline of Wodak’s DHA model is paramount to carrying out the framework of contrast and comparison between the first’s strategies and the latter’s objectives.

**Table N° 1 : Discursive Strategies**

Strategy	Questions	Objectives
Referential/ nomination	In what linguistic structure and choices are the people/ characters, concepts, or ideologies referred to?	Manufacture of in-groups and out-groups
Predication	What are the traits and characteristics attributed to them?	Positive and negative separation of labelling of social actors
Argumentation	How are these discriminatory attributions justified and legitimized?	Justification of the positive and negative labelling
Perspectivation/ framing	From what point of view or perspective are they expressed?	Expressing personal and perspective involvement of the speaker

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Intensification/ mitigation	Are these expressions uttered and articulated clearly and overtly?	Defining the knowledgeable status of the illocutionary force's presentation
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Adapted from Wodak and Meyer's *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, (2015), p.73

The table above shows the systematic procedure of carrying out a DHA analysis. The first strategy is nomination or referential, which seeks to determine the in-groups and out-groups present in discourse through examining the linguistic choices used to refer to them. The following step is predication. Predication is the attempt to qualify whether the nomination of the in-groups and out-groups is positive or negative. Then, an examination of how said attributes is justified is established through the argumentation strategy. The fourth step is the perspectivation or framing, which examines the personal perspective or point of view from which the argumentation is expressed. Finally, is the intensification or mitigation strategy. This final step accounts for the clarity and straightforwardness in which the personal perspective of argumentation is uttered and/or written in discourse.

Through these five preliminary strategies, discourse is analyzed in terms of both linguistic quantity and quality; the first refers to the numeration of positive and negative attributes that conclude and determine which stance is more prominent, and the second is the overall positioning of the speaker/ author's point of view in regards to their intended delivery of discourse.

#### **4. The Juxtaposition of DHA and The Personal Growth Model Objectives**

Due to the historical and culturally-purposeful nature of teaching materials chosen for literature classes, the choice to employ a historically-guided approach of interpretation that both enables and develops critical thinking skills must be considered. Upon examining the discourse-historical approach; and all it entails of cultural, historical, and personal implications of analysis, and observing the objectives and focus of the personal growth model and what it seeks to achieve of cultural, historical, and personal enrichment and development, it can be deduced that they share a number of objective devices. In that, they both make

use of the reader-response theory, and utilize critical strategies of analysis that encourage personal input in the interpretation of discourse. Accordingly, when the two approaches are cross-referenced and examined in juxtaposition, the following table exhibiting the correlation between DHA strategies, literature teaching devices of interpretation, and personal growth model objectives is obtained:

**Table N° 2 : A juxtaposition of DHA and PGM objectives**

Strategy	Activity (Device)	P.G.M Objectives
Referential/ nomination	Identifying linguistic descriptions/ structures	⇒ Better containment of the extent and use of nomination ⇒ Clarifying an initial political/ ideological stance
Predication	Determining the light under which characters are painted	⇒ Better understanding of discursive structures and language in use ⇒ Isolating topos of positive and negative argumentation
Argumentation	A view of the author's background	⇒ Finding justification of arguments ⇒ Building ground for critical analysis and critical thinking ⇒ Historical/ cultural enrichment
Perspectivation/ framing	Identifying the topos of personal view points	⇒ Understanding of the author/ text relationship ⇒ Establishing ground for interpretation
Intensification/ mitigation	Outlining the illocutionary force	⇒ Developing the according/ corresponding perlocutionary force ⇒ Implementation of the reader-response theory



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The layout of the previous table cross-references the teaching devices that correspond with the DHA strategies, as well as achieve the objectives shared by both literature teaching –specifically the personal growth model—and DHA comprehension objectives. Through the activity of identifying linguistic descriptions, or the referential strategy, an initial political/ ideological stance of discourse can be clarified. Then, through predication, the learner is inclined to better understand linguistic structures, vis-à-vis better comprehend different aspects of language in use. This step also helps in outlining and isolating topos of both positive and negative connotations. After that, the learner is encouraged to research the author’s background information/ other outspoken political and ideological views. This stage of argumentation helps in identifying the justifications which underline arguments. Afterwards, topos of personal viewpoints are established through the perspectivation strategy, which better exemplifies the author-text relationship, and lays ground for personal interpretation. Finally, through intensification, critical assessment of the illocutionary force is deduced and argumentative view-points of the learners are developed.

### **5. Conclusion**

Teaching literature is a task that often requires re-examination and constant change and improvement. In an age where the focus of all pedagogy frameworks is learner-centeredness, problem-solving and critical thinking skills development, it is vital to model an approach that is multi-faceted –that transcends dealing with the teaching material as a merely cultural and historical mirror of its time, but also ground for individual analysis and interpretation through multiple discursive devices and strategies.

Given the politics and history-oriented nature of the majority of material present in the curricula for teaching literature, it is inevitable to resort to discourse analysis in order to involve the learner in the interpretation and analysis process. Once the learner is engaged in the implementation of discursive strategies and devices, and is made aware of the layered functions of language, its aesthetics, and its use, they are much more likely to develop argumentative stances of interpretation. Rosenblatt says:

We are frequently being reminded that no criticism or teaching is ever

completely politically "innocent." True, but should we accept the swing to the indoctrination of an unqualifiedly negative attitude, which fosters a sense of alienation, of being a powerless victim? And should we permit a simplistic view of "power" to trigger simplistic notions of alternatives and processes of social change?

(Rosenblatt, *The Transactional Theory: Against Dualism*, 1993)

On a larger scale, the aim of all educative endeavors is and should not stray away from the cultivation of critical sound thinking and logical assessment of subject matters. The teaching of literature is no different. And in order to achieve such a goal, a view that encompasses all aspects and examines all variables is necessary. What critical discourse analysis attempts to achieve is rather similar; it views language "as social practice" (Fairclough, 1997). It essentially studies the relationship between power and discourse, and attempts to bridge the gap between linguistic representation and social malpractice, discrimination, control, and inequality. This paper highlights and suggests a structural course of action of a multi-faceted approach of literary analysis in the teaching framework in a new age. It inspects the relationship between the personal growth model of teaching literature and the discourse-historical approach of CDA and how their objectives overlap and complement one another. And concludes that the implementation of DHA in this framework can be the easiest and most transparent transition from traditional literary criticism to the new cross-discipline literary analysis, with much considerable benefits and positive outcomes of personal growth.

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