



**Shiraz University**

**Faculty of Literature and Humanities**

**M.A. Thesis in Teaching English as a Foreign Language – TEFL**

**IRANIAN ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS’  
PERSUASIVE WRITING DEVELOPMENT: THE  
EFFECTS OF TRAINING IN CRITICAL  
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

By

**Sina Saeedi**

Supervised by

**Dr. N. Rashidi**

September 2013

**In the Name of God**

## **In the Name of God**

### **Declaration**

**I – Sina Saeedi– an M.A. student of English language teaching at the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research, and that I have provided exact references wherever I have quoted someone. I also declare that the topic of my research is an original one and has not been worked upon before. I hereby promise not to publish the findings of this research and not to make it accessible to others without the permission of Shiraz University. Shiraz University holds the copyright on this research.**

**Name: Sina Saeedi**

**Date: September 2013**

**Dedicated to the revelation of God's  
kindness and mercy**

**E. Amiri**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me the possibility to complete this study. First of all, I would like to express my special gratitude and thanks to Dr. Nasser Rashidi for his sincere support, encouragement, and responsiveness at different stages of the study. My appreciation also goes to Dr. Sahragard and Dr. Saadat for their useful comments on the thesis. I would also like to thank the participants of the study who shared their precious time during the training course. I am especially grateful to my family for their love and understanding through the duration of my studies.

## **ABSTRACT**

# **IRANIAN ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS' PERSUASIVE WRITING DEVELOPMENT: THE EFFECTS OF TRAINING IN CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

**BY**

**SINA SAEEDI**

Representation of critical thinking may occur through writing, speaking, or other forms. However, this representation will be of no use unless it leads to action and change. This is because in critical pedagogical approaches, the important role of critical action has been always emphasized in the dialectical relationship with critical reflection. In the present study, persuasiveness in writing was proposed as the critical action that may arise out of the representation of critical thinking; an action which in turn can lead to critical thinking in audiences and change their minds. The objective of the study was to investigate critical discourse analysis as a tool that can improve EFL learners' persuasive writings about their critical thoughts; in this regard, five female MA students of TEFL at Shiraz University were trained in Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework for CDA. The training course was conducted in five ninety-minute sessions and the participants were taught how to use different elements of this framework to write persuasively. Each participant handed in two persuasive writings on a topic of her interest before and after the course. The results indicated that most of the participants were successful in using the elements of the framework in their post-writings to represent their critical thoughts about different topics in a more persuasive manner; although the increase in persuasiveness was not the same for all of the participants. Also, the results showed which types of elements had been used the most by the participants. By considering the elements which were used the most by the participants, the study provides some implications for teaching and learning persuasive writing.

*Keywords:* Action, change, critical discourse analysis, critical pedagogy, critical thinking, persuasive writing, representation

# Table of Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: Introduction</b>	
1.0. Introduction .....	2
1.1. Preliminaries.....	2
1.1.1. Critical Thinking.....	2
1.1.2. Critical Pedagogy.....	5
1.1.3. Critical Applied Linguistics.....	6
1.2. Theoretical Framework .....	8
1.3. Analytical Framework .....	11
1.3.1. Critical Discourse Analysis .....	11
1.3.1.1. CDA and Social Cognition .....	12
1.3.2. Text-Analytic Approaches and Persuasive Writing .....	13
1.3.3. Van Leeuwen’s Framework.....	14
1.3.3.1. The Rationale .....	16
1.3.3.2. Social Actors .....	17
1.3.3.2.1. Inclusion and Exclusion .....	17
1.3.3.2.1.1. Suppression and Backgrounding .....	18
1.3.3.2.2. Activation and Passivation .....	18
1.3.3.2.2.1. Subjection and Beneficialization.....	18
1.3.3.2.3. Personalization and Impersonalization.....	18
1.3.3.2.3.1. Abstraction and Objectivation.....	19
1.3.3.2.4. Genericization and Specification .....	19
1.3.3.2.4.1. Individualization and Assimilation.....	19
1.3.3.2.4.2. Collectivization and Aggregation.....	19

1.3.3.2.5. Determination and Indetermination .....	20
1.3.3.2.6. Association and Dissociation .....	20
1.3.3.2.7. Differentiation and Indifferentiation .....	20
1.3.3.2.8. Categorization and Nomination .....	20
1.3.3.2.8.1. Formalization, Semiformalization, and Informalization .....	21
1.3.3.2.8.2. Titulation and Detitulation .....	21
1.3.3.2.8.3. Honorification and Affiliation.....	21
1.3.3.2.8.4. Functionalization, Identification, and Appraisalment.....	21
1.3.3.2.8.5. Classification, Relational Identification, and Physical Identification .....	22
1.3.3.2.9. Single Determination and Overdetermination.....	22
1.3.3.2.9.1. Inversion, Symbolization, Connotation, and Distillation .....	22
1.3.3.2.9.2. Anachronism and Deviation .....	23
1.3.3.3. Social Actions .....	23
1.3.3.3.1. Reaction and Action .....	23
1.3.3.3.1.1. Unspecified, Cognitive, Affective, and Perceptive .....	24
1.3.3.3.2. Material and Semiotic .....	24
1.3.3.3.2.1. Transactive and Nontransactive .....	24
1.3.3.3.2.2. Interactive and Instrumental .....	24
1.3.3.3.2.3. Behavioral and Nonbehavioral .....	25
1.3.3.3.2.4. Form Specification, Topic Specification, Rendition, and Quotation.....	25
1.3.3.3.3. Activation and Deactivation.....	26
1.3.3.3.3.1. Objectivation and Descriptivization .....	26
1.3.3.3.4. Agentialization and Deagentialization .....	26
1.3.3.3.4.1. Eventuation, Existentialization, and Naturalization .....	26
1.3.3.3.5. Abstraction and Concretization.....	27



1.3.3.3.5.1. Generalization and Distillation.....	27
1.3.3.3.6. Single determination and Overdetermination .....	27
1.3.3.3.6.1. Symbolization and Inversion.....	27
1.3.3.4. Time .....	28
1.3.3.4.1. Location and Extent .....	28
1.3.3.4.2. Time Summons and Synchronization .....	28
1.3.3.4.2.1. Embodied and Disembodied.....	28
1.3.3.4.2.2. Personal and Instrumental .....	29
1.3.3.4.2.3. Social, Natural, and Mechanical.....	29
1.3.3.4.3. Exact and Inexact .....	29
1.3.3.4.3.1. Regulated and Deregulated.....	29
1.3.3.4.4. Unique and Recurring .....	30
1.3.3.4.5. Punctuality.....	30
1.3.3.4.6. Experiencing Duration .....	30
1.3.3.4.7. Managing Time .....	30
1.3.3.4.7.1. Scheduling Time.....	30
1.3.3.4.7.2. Budgeting Time.....	31
1.3.3.4.7.3. Transforming Time.....	31
1.3.3.5. Space .....	31
1.3.3.5.1. Acting in Space .....	31
1.3.3.5.1.1. Positions and Transitions.....	32
1.3.3.5.1.2. Setting.....	32
1.3.3.5.2. Preparing Space for Action .....	32
1.3.3.5.2.1. Arranging Space and Interpreting Space.....	32
1.3.3.5.2.2. Agentialized and Deagentialized.....	32
1.3.3.5.2.3. Spatialized and Descriptive .....	33
1.3.3.5.3. Subjective and Objective Space .....	33
1.3.3.6. Legitimation.....	33
1.3.3.6.1. Authorization.....	34
1.3.3.6.1.1. Personal and Impersonal.....	34
1.3.3.6.1.2. Expert and Role Model.....	34
1.3.3.6.1.3. Conformity and Tradition.....	34

1.3.3.6.2. Moral Evaluation.....	35
1.3.3.6.2.1. Evaluation, Abstraction, and Comparison.....	35
1.3.3.6.2.2. Positive and Negative .....	35
1.3.3.6.3. Rationalization .....	36
1.3.3.6.3.1. Goal Orientation, Means Orientation, and Effect Orientation .....	36
1.3.3.6.3.2. Agentialized and Deagentialized.....	36
1.3.3.6.3.3. Use and Potentiality.....	37
1.3.3.6.3.4. Result and Effect .....	37
1.3.3.6.3.5. Definition, Explanation, and Prediction .....	37
1.3.3.6.3.6. Experiential and Scientific .....	37
1.3.3.6.4. Mythopoesis .....	38
1.3.3.6.4.1. Moral Tale and Cautionary Tale.....	38
1.3.3.6.4.2. Single Determination and Overdetermination..	38
1.3.3.6.4.3. Inversion and Symbolization.....	38
1.3.3.6.5. Legitimation and Context.....	39
1.3.3.7. Purpose.....	39
1.3.3.7.1. Legitimizing and Nonlegitimizing .....	39
1.3.3.7.2. Goal Orientation, Means Orientation, and Effect Orientation.....	40
1.3.3.7.3. Nonspecific Strategy and Specific Strategy .....	40
1.3.3.7.3.1. Explicit and Implicit .....	40
1.3.3.7.3.2. Preparation and Precaution.....	40.
1.3.3.7.4. Instrumental and Technological .....	41
1.3.3.7.4.1. Agentialized and Deagentialized.....	41
1.3.3.7.4.2. Use, Function, and Potentiality .....	41
1.3.3.7.5. Result and Effect .....	42
1.4. Statement of the Problem .....	42
1.5. Objectives of the Study .....	43
1.6. Significance of the Study .....	44

## **CHAPTER TWO: Review of Literature**

2.0. Introduction .....	49
2.1. The Meaning of Critical Work in TESOL.....	49
2.2. Critical Issues in EFL/ESL Contexts.....	51
2.3. Critical Pedagogy Approaches in TESOL.....	57
2.4. Text-Analytic Approaches and Critical Literacy in TESOL.....	61
2.5. Persuasive Writing .....	66

## **CHAPTER THREE: Method**

3.0. Introduction .....	72
3.1. Context .....	72
3.2. Participants .....	72
3.3. Data Collection Procedure.....	74
3.4. Data Analysis procedure .....	80

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Results and Discussion**

4.0. Introduction .....	86
4.1. Results and Interpretations .....	86
4.1.1. Frequencies of Persuasive Applications of Elements.....	86
4.1.2. Explanations and Interpretations of Persuasive Applications of Elements.....	94
4.1.2.1. Participant 1 .....	95
4.1.2.1.1. Persuasive Actor Transformations .....	95
4.1.2.1.2. Persuasive Action Transformations .....	96
4.1.2.1.3. Persuasive Time and Space Transformations.....	98
4.1.2.1.4. Legitimation and Purpose Additions.....	99
4.1.2.1.5. Interpretations.....	99
4.1.2.2. Participant 2 .....	100
4.1.2.2.1. Persuasive Actor Transformations .....	100
4.1.2.2.2. Persuasive Action Transformations .....	101
4.1.2.2.3. Persuasive Time and Space Transformations.....	102
4.1.2.2.4. Legitimation and Purpose Additions.....	102

4.1.2.2.5. Interpretations.....	103
4.1.2.3. Participant 3 .....	103
4.1.2.3.1. Persuasive Actor Transformations .....	103
4.1.2.3.2. Persuasive Action Transformations .....	104
4.1.2.3.3. Persuasive Time and Space Transformations.....	105
4.1.2.3.4. Legitimation and Purpose Additions.....	106
4.1.2.3.5. Interpretations.....	107
4.1.2.4. Participant 4 .....	107
4.1.2.4.1. Persuasive Actor Transformations .....	108
4.1.2.4.2. Persuasive Action Transformations .....	108
4.1.2.4.3. Persuasive Time and Space Transformations.....	109
4.1.2.4.4. Legitimation and Purpose Additions.....	110
4.1.2.4.5. Interpretations.....	110
4.1.2.5. Participant 5 .....	111
4.1.2.5.1. Persuasive Actor Transformations .....	111
4.1.2.5.2. Persuasive Action Transformations .....	112
4.1.2.5.3. Persuasive Time and Space Transformations.....	113
4.1.2.5.4. Legitimation and Purpose Additions.....	113
4.1.2.5.5. Interpretations.....	113
4.2. Discussion .....	114

## **CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion**

5.0. Introduction .....	123
5.1. Summary .....	123
5.2. Conclusion.....	124
5.3. Implications .....	127
5.4. Limitations of the Study .....	129
5.5. Suggestions for Further Research.....	130

<b>References</b> .....	132
-------------------------	-----

<b>Appendix</b> .....	140
-----------------------	-----

## List of Tables

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 4.1. Frequencies of Persuasive Applications of Social Actor Transformations in the Pre- and Post-writings .....	88
Table 4.2. Frequencies of Persuasive Applications of Social Action Transformations in the Pre- and Post-writings .....	89
Table 4.3. Frequencies of Persuasive Applications of Time Transformations in the Pre- and Post-writings .....	90
Table 4.4. Frequencies of Persuasive Applications of Space Transformations in the Pre- and Post-writings .....	91
Table 4.5. Frequencies of Applications of Legitimizing Elements in the Pre- and Post-writings .....	92
Table 4.6. Frequencies of Applications of Purpose Elements in the Pre- and Post-writings .....	93
Table 4.7. Total Frequencies of All Persuasive Elements in the Pre- and Post-writings .....	93

# **CHAPTER ONE**

# **Introduction**

## **1.0. Introduction**

In this chapter, an overview of critical thinking and critical pedagogy alongside their similarities and differences will be presented. Then, by providing an explanation of critical applied linguistics in general and critical discourse analysis in particular, it will be explained how this study proposes a new method for teaching persuasive writing; a method which is based on both critical thinking and critical pedagogy. At the end, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, and significance of the study are explained.

## **1.1. Preliminaries**

### **1.1.1. Critical Thinking**

It may be a very difficult task to define the notion of ‘criticality’ or explain the activities that one should carry out in order to become a ‘critical being’. However, ‘critical thinking’ seems to be the most relevant concept in this regard that comes to one’s mind before considering anything else. For example, Mingers (2000) and Pennycook (2004a) refer to critical thinking in the first instance when they explain different dimensions or forms of criticality. This may be due to the fact that being critical requires a person to ‘think’ before doing anything else. Interestingly, critical thinking itself has been defined in many different ways by different scholars and each of

them introduces a different set of activities that constitute the act of critical thinking (see e.g., Mason (2008) for five definitions). Moon (2008), after recognizing a wide range of definitions, activities, and common-sense views regarding critical thinking from the viewpoint of different educators, learners and scholars, defines it as follows:

Critical thinking is an aspect of the activity of thinking. It is a form of learning in that it is a means of generating new knowledge by processing existing knowledge and ideas using what we have called the ‘tools of manipulation of knowledge’ (e.g. analysis, understanding, synthesis). We might call critical thinking itself a ‘multiple’ tool for the manipulation of knowledge. (p.33)

She also identifies “the assessment of what might be called evidence, in order to make a judgment” as the central activity of critical thinking (Moon, 2008, p.33). However, by providing a general review of literature, Moon (2008) lists six main approaches which she believes to “have been generated when there has been work to do with critical thinking” (p. 35).

These include:

1. Logical approaches.
2. Approaches concerned with component processes, skills and abilities of critical thinking.
3. Pedagogical approaches to critical thinking.
4. Approaches that view critical thinking as characterizing a way of being.
5. Developmental approaches to critical thinking.
6. Approaches that take an overview. (pp. 38-53)

Based upon the concept of criticality, the field of ‘critical pedagogy’ is closely related to critical thinking. As Burbules and Berk (1999) discuss, both fields “invoke the term ‘critical’ as a valued educational goal” and “share a passion and sense of urgency about the need for more critically oriented classrooms” and the most important of all, both of them support the idea that



by helping to make people more critical in thought and action, progressively minded educators can help to free learners to see the world as it is and to act accordingly; critical education can increase freedom and enlarge the scope of human possibilities. (pp. 45-46)

The last point is what Freire (1970b) has called ‘humanization’ which “is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity” (p. 28).

Obviously, it cannot be denied that these two fields share some common concerns. However, in spite of these similarities, they are different in terms of their conceptions of the notion of criticality. If we consider the above-mentioned six approaches to critical thinking which are identified by Moon (2008), only two of them may be considered as critical pedagogical approaches: ‘pedagogical approaches’ and ‘approaches that view critical thinking as characterizing a way of being’. Even these two approaches need some additional features in order to be considered as part of the educational movement of critical pedagogy. The feature that ‘pedagogical approaches’ lack is ‘dialogue’ and those elements which must be integrated to ‘a way of being’ are ‘social concern’ and ‘critical action’. According to Burbules and Berk (1999), these features are the important concepts which distinguish critical pedagogy from critical thinking. As Freire (1970b) puts it, humanization can be obtained only in a dialectical relationship between reflection (critical thinking) and action. He believes this is only possible through a dialogue between students and the teacher and in critical pedagogy, all of these processes are directed toward one important aim: ‘social change’.

Critical thinking has been criticized for three main reasons. First it views criticality mostly in terms of logic or a set of skills that can be transferred to learners. Second it does not consider dialogue as a factor in the process of thinking; as a result, it teaches learners to think in an

individual manner not through a direct engagement with others. Last but not least and of course the most important of all, is that it addresses issues in an item-by-item and isolated manner without taking into account larger political and social contexts and relationships among these contexts and other issues (see e.g., Burbules & Berk, 1999; Pennycook, 2004a).

On the contrary, critical pedagogical thoughts and practices always take into account larger social contexts and power relations within which different issues and structures are formed; they address different problems from this viewpoint. Maybe it is due to this fact that although Freire (1970a) (who is considered by many to be the most prominent figure in critical pedagogy) has mostly focused on ‘education’ as the ‘cultural action for freedom’, many fields such as “postcolonial theory, ethnic studies, cultural studies, adult education, and theories of literacy, language, and human development” are influenced by his thoughts (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 5). By adopting a critical approach to language teaching, the present study proposes a new way of teaching writing which is based upon ‘critical thinking’ and ‘action’ as will be described in the following sections.

### **1.1.2. Critical Pedagogy**

By identifying humanization as the main vocation of humankind, Freire (1970b) introduced the ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’ “as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy” (p. 40), which “must be forged *with*, not *for*, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity” (p. 33). This kind of pedagogy aims to transform students into ‘conscious beings’ through what Freire (1970b) has called ‘conscientização’. Freire (1970b) defines conscientização as a process which makes students aware of political and social contradictions and as he believes, this process “does not stop at” this level “but through action prepares men for the struggle against the obstacles to their humanization”

(p. 112). This is what he has identified as the dialectical relationship between reflection and action which is realized through dialogue and analysis in a “problem-posing” mode of education (Freire, 1970b, p. 66); a kind of education in which both the teacher and students are at the same time teachers and learners. In this form of education, it is not anymore the teacher that knows everything and fills students with knowledge but knowledge comes out of “inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, 1970b, p. 58).

### **1.1.3. Critical Applied Linguistics**

As mentioned above, one of the fields that have been influenced by Freire’s work is language and specially ‘applied linguistics’. Pennycook (2004a), under the rubric of ‘critical applied linguistics’, identifies six main domains that have been generated as a result of a critical disposition toward applied linguistics:

1. Critical discourse analysis and critical literacy (which are governed by a concern to understand texts and practices of reading and writing in relationship to questions of social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement).
2. Critical approaches to translation (concerned with the ways in which translating and interpreting are related to concerns such as class, gender, difference, ideology, and social context).
3. Critical approaches to language education (which take as their central interest an attempt to relate aspects of language education to a broader critical analysis of social relations).
4. Critical language testing (which asks whose agendas are implemented through tests, and suggests that there is no such

thing as ‘just a test’. It demands that language testers ask what vision of society tests presuppose).

5. Critical approaches to language planning and language rights (which deals with issues such as the role of language in the construction of difference in a society, dominance of certain languages over others, and the right to identify with, to maintain and to fully develop one’s mother tongue(s)).

6. Critical approaches to language, literacy, and workplace settings (with a focus on workplace uses of language in terms of power, access, and difference and drawing a connection between workplace uses of language and relations of power at the institutional and broader social levels). (pp. 786-794)

On the other hand, Luke and Dooley (2011) have identified “two major approaches to critical TESOL: critical pedagogy and critical text analysis” (p. 857). In critical pedagogy approaches, as Luke and Dooley (2011) discuss, “the focus is on ideology critique” and “this entails working with learners to use language to name and problematize the world; that is, to take everyday ideological constructions of social relations, of class, race, gender relations, and to make them problematic through dialogue” (p. 860). The second group which is ‘text-analytic approaches’, according to Luke and Dooley, has been developed mainly as a result of “the adoption of ‘critical discourse analysis’ for pedagogic purposes” (p. 862). The aim is to uncover the ideological and hegemonic functions of texts and to reveal how texts serve the interests of political and social parties and figures. In fact, critical approaches to TESOL attempt to change traditional views toward language teaching by making students’ voices heard and by trying to turn the focus of TESOL to issues such as access to dominant languages, language rights, cultural hegemony, and codes and texts of power (Luke & Dooley, 2011).