

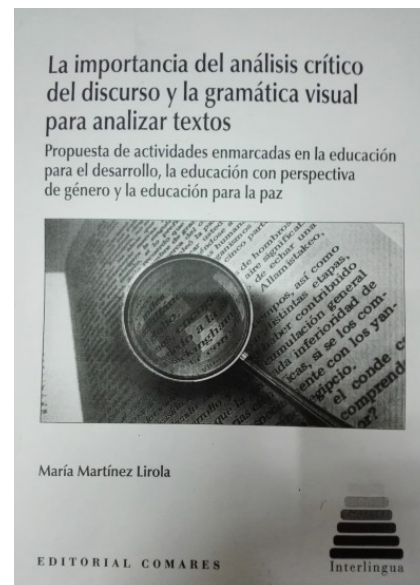
Book review

La importancia del análisis crítico del discurso y la gramática visual para analizar textos. Propuesta de actividades enmarcadas en la educación para el desarrollo, la educación con perspectiva de género y la educación para la paz

M. Martínez Lirola, Granada, Editorial Comares, 2017, Pp. 117, ISBN: 978-84-9045-488-6

In this book María Martínez Lirola maintains that EFL teaching can contribute to the construction of active, critical, committed citizenship. Her aim is to show that this becomes possible when teachers and students relate what happens inside the classroom with what happens in society. In order to establish this relationship, she proposes to approach texts with the aid of the categories provided by Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Grammar and Visual Grammar, and to adopt educational approaches which foster gender perspectives, human development and peacebuilding. When teachers work with these approaches and objectives, students acquire social competences such as communication, cooperation, problem solving and leadership. Her overall purpose is to encourage --especially higher-education-- teachers to design student-centered projects that will promote the acquisition of competences which will prove useful in students' lives and conducive to the building of a better world.

The book is divided into two main sections. The first part, *Introducción al Análisis crítico del discurso y a la gramática visual en un enfoque educativo basado en competencias*, is developed in three chapters. The first chapter, "La importancia de la enseñanza por competencias", addresses the importance of competence-based teaching for the development of critical thinking. The central question here is that the present century needs active, responsible, committed and critical citizens, defined as those who are empowered to make decisions, to state their opinions and to take part in the building of a better world. University teaching practices need to promote a critical attitude towards inequality, so that students develop social abilities that will allow them to solve conflicts, cooperate, influence and lead. This chapter proposes to understand competences as attitudes



or capacities which prepare students to respond to the demands of their professional contexts, and reviews different categorizations: as general or specific, and within the latter as instrumental, interpersonal and systemic; also as general or communicative; finally, as emotional, encompassing personal and social competences. In order to educate citizens it is important to develop critical thinking regarding all these competences, especially interpersonal ones. To attain that, it is necessary to become aware of what is hidden behind discourses and how society builds them.

The second chapter, “Aproximación al análisis crítico del discurso (ACD)”, states that CDA aims at those precise aims, i.e. to deconstruct what lies beneath visual and linguistic choices. The chapter reviews basic CDA concepts following Fairclough’s proposal, with a view to showing that discourse needs to be approached through the concepts of ideology and power. Foucault’s conception of power, Van Dijk’s ideas regarding social representations and Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar all contribute to educate critical citizens. The chapter closes with the definition of concepts which are central to discourse analysis.

The third chapter, “Aproximación a la multimedialidad y a la gramática visual: aprendiendo a leer textos multimodales”, approaches a field which is quite new to discourse studies, that of multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), which following O’Halloran is defined as “an emerging paradigm in discourse studies which extends the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other semiotic resources, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound”. This characterization of MDA is a valuable aspect of this book, considering the importance of multimodality in present-day communication. The chapter explains with utmost clarity the way in which multimodal texts may be approached: with the aid of the concepts of information value, salience and framing; through the analysis of vectors –in terms of dynamic force, directionality and orientation--, and considerations of social, relational and interactive distance; finally, in terms of their functions –representational, orientational and compositional.

The second section of the book, *Introducción a la educación para el desarrollo, la educación con perspectiva de género y la educación para la paz. Aplicación de sus principios a la realización de actividades de temática social en la educación superior*, is devoted to the presentation of educational approaches that can benefit from incorporating CDA as a teaching procedure, namely: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Education with a Gender Perspective (EGP) and Education for Peace (EP). In chapter four, “Aproximación a la educación para el desarrollo (ED), la educación con perspectiva de género (EPG) y la educación para la paz (EP)”, these three approaches are briefly but clearly described; their potential for uncovering the unequal distribution of power and empowering social groups to question and transform the status quo is highlighted and valued throughout. A further feature the selected approaches share is their close connection to Human Rights Education and Education for Global Citizenship. In the context of teacher and translation courses --the author’s own context-- the approaches are said to contribute to the

general goal of educating students so that they become global citizens who can interpret different social realities and commit themselves to their improvement, alongside with the teaching of English. ESD started in the mid-twentieth century with the purpose of eradicating poverty and exclusion and of promoting human development and general welfare. The description of the stages this approach has gone through is particularly relevant because the texts and tasks presented in the fifth chapter are said to be representative of the fourth and fifth stages, which focus on criticality and global citizenship respectively. The rationale behind the adoption of EGP is that of inclusive education; the decision is justified by highlighting the inequalities that still exist between men and women and the need to unveil and eliminate the stereotypes that permeate explicit curricula and institutional cultures. EP is intended to help students understand the processes that lead to conflict at individual and global levels, promote non-violent resolutions for these conflicts and teach social competences that facilitate harmonious relationships.

The fifth chapter, “Propuesta de actividades prácticas...”, presents a selection of didactic sequences which combine the linguistic analysis of socially relevant authentic texts --resorting to CDA and MDA-- with tasks meant to develop social competences within the frameworks of ESD, EGP and EP. These sequences were implemented within the subject English V as part of a course on English Studies at Alicante University; the specificities of the subject and the implementation are clearly described early in this chapter. A brief section is devoted to the description of the methodology adopted in this subject --cooperative teaching--, which is meant to foster both individual and group responsibility, interdependence, communication, interaction and reflection. The group oral presentation and the group debate constitute two of the selected sequences the book reports on: they concentrated on issues of social relevance selected by the students, such as racism, the environment and the role of NGO and were intended to promote public speaking, active listening and conflict resolution. The class also engaged in text analysis: they resorted to the tools provided by CDA to critically read Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King’s speeches. The analysis of these texts paved the way for a writing assignment that focused on the topic of leadership. In addition, students were involved in group translation and photo analysis tasks. The translation task can be understood within the framework of Human Rights Education, while the analysis of magazine front pages portraying women contributed to EGP aims. All throughout this chapter the author highlights the benefits of the tasks and procedures described in the context of a teaching project that seeks to educate global citizens and help them develop social competences they will need both as citizens and as professionals.

The chapters devoted to CDA, SFG and VG offer a clear and thorough introduction to these disciplines and will be useful for those teachers who have no prior experience in working with these approaches. The relationship established between CDA, SFG and VG --to approach texts--, with peace education, gender education and education of human

development --as overall aims and perspectives-- succeeds in providing readers with a critical, comprehensive pedagogical proposal. The book shows how typical language teaching tasks can promote critical thinking, responsible citizenship and committed action, in addition to teaching students how to better read, analyse and produce texts in English. The author's proposal can validate and contribute to the practices of teachers who are trying to depart from hegemonic teaching aims and methodologies and engage in similar projects.

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