

# Integrating Critical Discourse Analysis in the Language Classroom: A Proposed Framework for Developing Media Critical Literacy

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant challenges that have highlighted the importance of media literacy, especially in navigating the surge of misinformation. This paper addresses the necessity of integrating Critical Language Awareness (CLA) into language education to enhance students' ability to critically evaluate media

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discourse. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), the proposed framework equips higher education undergraduate students with the skills to analyze media texts critically. This approach not only improves language proficiency but also fosters critical engagement with socio-political contexts, ultimately promoting responsible information consumption. The framework includes practical implementation steps, encompassing both online and face-to-face activities, enabling students to understand how language shapes social realities. Emphasizing a hybrid educational model that blends technology with critical pedagogy, the study addresses the evolving demands of the post-pandemic digital landscape.

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed unprecedented challenges, particularly manifesting a profound impact on global digital systems (Lathouris, 2021); its ramifications transcend immediate contexts and resonate with future crises. This “infodemic” (World Health Organization, 2020) has exacerbated the dissemination of fake news and conspiracy narratives, fostering confusion and eroding public trust. These developments have posed significant hindrances to public communication, democratic processes, and mental health. As digital media became the primary source of information, the necessity for enhanced media literacy became evident, particularly for young people navigating this complex landscape. Amidst the struggle to discern reliable information from misinformation, individuals have faced a pressing need for heightened vigilance in evaluating digital sources. Hence, the necessity of

equipping individuals with essential skills for adeptly navigating digital communication (Buckingham, 2020) became evident.

In the post-COVID era, marked by the ubiquity of media and the rampant spread of misinformation, the demand for comprehensive media literacy education is more crucial than ever. The rapid adoption of digital technologies necessitates an educational shift towards hybrid learning models that integrate technology with critical pedagogy. Language learning, therefore, must also adapt to these challenges, employing methodologies that prioritize digital literacy and interactive engagement. Technological advancements are considered essential for enriching online interactive learning experiences and facilitating remote language acquisition (Stockwell, 2021).

This paper proposes a framework to address these educational challenges by promoting critical literacy through the enhancement of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) and effective use of technology. CLA is essential for developing the cognitive and analytical skills needed to resist manipulation and counteract misinformation. By encouraging a critical approach to media and communication, CLA enables individuals to identify biased language and persuasive techniques in texts, fostering an ability to distinguish between factual information and deceptive content (Svalberg, 2021). Moreover, emphasizing the importance of contextualizing discourse within socio-political and cultural contexts, CLA aids in identifying potential sources of misinformation and fosters critical engagement with language, instilling a habit of skepticism and inquiry. Integrating CLA into educational curricula (Wallace, 1992) emerges as a crucial step toward promoting responsible information consumption by empowering individuals to evaluate information critically, verify claims, and consider

multiple perspectives, thereby acting as a deterrent against the spread and acceptance of misinformation.

For enhancing learners' CLA and critical media literacy in university language learners, the framework proposed draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the social constructionist perspective of learning (Lave & Wenger, 2020), and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach (Savignon, 1987); it amalgamates conventional teaching methods with technology-driven activities to nurture indispensable soft skills vital for active engagement in media discourse.

Language Centers play a crucial role in advancing CLA and media critical literacy. They can therefore implement the proposed framework, and integrate CDA into their methodologies, enhancing students' language proficiency and critical skills necessary for effective media discourse navigation. Their diverse roles include designing curricula, providing training for language instructors, offering resources and pedagogical support, and fostering media critical literacy within the community.

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

To enhance students' critical thinking capabilities and empower them to engage meaningfully with language and media, the integration of CLA through CDA emerges as a promising approach (Fairclough, 2015; Buckingham, 2020).

Grounded in Critical Linguistics, CDA offers a robust framework for scrutinizing language usage in social contexts, unveiling power dynamics, and examining how media discourse perpetuates societal norms (Fairclough, 1992a). It enables learners to approach media and political discourse with a discerning eye, fostering a nuanced comprehension of social issues and ideologies.

At its core, CDA delves into the intricate interplay between language, societal structures, power dynamics, and ideologies within both immediate and broader societal contexts. Central to CDA is the notion of ‘representation,’ encompassing the discursive techniques used to construct, categorize, and assess subjects and objects while simultaneously exerting symbolic power through language or other semiotic practices (Fairclough, 1992 p. 57). Discourse within this framework is shaped by social conditions and constructs social and cultural realities. Through exploring how language molds social reality, CDA enables students to cultivate a deeper understanding of the intricacies inherent in communication and discourse.

The approach outlined in this study suggests using the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) model of meanings (Halliday, 1994) to analyze media discourse and examine subjectivity and ideological positioning. In particular, the transitivity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and appraisal (Martin & White, 2005) tools are employed to explore the analytical categories of social actor representation and evaluative language. The former is proposed as a tool for ideological analysis to identify the representation of actors or processes. Social actors, defined as active participants in social practices (Van Leeuwen, 2008), possess considerable causal impact on events, and their portrayal in media texts can offer valuable insights into the discourses espoused, the media outlet’s interpretation of a given phenomenon (Hardt-Mautner, 1995), and the strategies employed for legitimization or the attribution of responsibility and blame. The representation of social actors in media texts encompasses visibility, roles and functions, relationships, stereotyping, and emphasis. Van Dijk (2008) showed how ideologies are constructed, maintained, and reinforced through language and social practices by investigating the cognitive

processes underlying discourse production of news actors. Fowler (1991) has focused on the representation of marginalized groups in the British press by applying SFG to identify socially significant patterns. Wodak (2015) showed how media texts were utilized by political elites to legitimize their actions, establish identities, and disseminate ideologies. Secondly, the investigation of evaluative language plays a vital role in unraveling subjectivity and ideological positioning within news discourse. It functions as a tool for interpreting the world, encompassing elements such as 'stance-taking and attitudinal positioning' (Bednarek, 2006 p. 21). Extending the concept of transitivity, the appraisal framework offers valuable insights into investigating evaluative meanings and the subjectivity of the authorial voice within news discourse. Appraisal encompasses language features navigating emotions, judgments, and valuations, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the evaluative dimension.

In this study, meanings are scrutinized across three strata: ideational, interpersonal, and textual, with a particular focus on the portrayal of social actors and evaluative language. According to Halliday (1994), these metafunctions play distinct roles in discourse analysis. The ideational and interpersonal metafunctions are especially relevant in this context, where they help decode underlying ideologies and attribute power or responsibility in news content. The ideational function examines verb phrases to spot types of semantic processes and active or passive roles assigned to participants. In contrast, the interpersonal metafunction addresses the subjective presence of the writer or speaker within texts, including their stances, evaluations, and their influence on readers (Thompson & Hunston, 2000).

## Methodology

This section outlines the recommended framework for the initial integration of CDA into the classroom environment. The framework incorporates a blend of online and face-to-face activities, with facilitated access to authentic material such as news articles. The implementation of online collaborative learning practices, such as virtual group projects and discussions can enhance student participation and peer interaction in virtual language courses (Godwin-Jones, 2020). Hence student-led CDA analyses and collective discussions form integral components, allowing for the examination and interpretation of findings. Technology-enhanced activities, including revision quizzes, participatory learning activities, peer analysis, and collaborative interpretation of meanings, are incorporated into the framework. Instructors are provided with a set of critical questions (see Table 1) to guide them throughout the process.

Steps	Indicative Critical Questions and Deliverables
<b>1 (in person)</b> – Explain the significance of CDA in modern communication – Introduce CDA's basic principles, with a focus on the analytical categories of social actor representation and evaluative language	– What is the topic? Who is the author? Who is the audience? – What is the source of the information? Investigate the credibility and reputation of the source. Is it known for accuracy and reliability, or does it have a particular bias or agenda? – How is discourse structured? – What is the purpose of the text or media content? Consider the author's or producer's intentions. Are they informing, persuading, entertaining, or advocating for a particular viewpoint?

(Continued)

Steps	Indicative Critical Questions and Deliverables
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What is the tone and language used? Pay attention to the tone of the text or media content. Is it objective and impartial, or does it exhibit emotional language, loaded terms, or sensationalism?</li> <li>– How are identities negotiated and how are ideologies constructed in discourse?</li> <li>– How do the lexicogrammar choices of the editor/speaker reinforce or challenge societal norms or reflect power, inequity, or stereotyping of people/groups?</li> <li>– Are there any logical fallacies or flawed reasoning? Look for inconsistencies, contradictions, or logical leaps in the argument presented. Are conclusions supported by valid reasoning and evidence?</li> <li>– How is language used to demonstrate ideology?</li> <li>– Who has the constructed power? Who is being dominated?</li> <li>– What perspectives are included or omitted? Evaluate whether the text or media content presents a balanced view by including multiple perspectives and voices. Are alternative viewpoints considered, or is there a one-sided presentation of information?</li> <li>– Are there any implicit biases or assumptions? Scrutinize the underlying assumptions and biases that may influence the content. Consider the cultural, political, or ideological perspectives that may shape the narrative.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> (in person)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explain and apply the SFG and appraisal model in texts</li> <li>– Provide guided analysis of media texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Who is the actor, and who is the goal of action/ victim? What is the process of action? When are active and passive constructions used? Are there any nominalisations, and how are they used?</li> <li>– What linguistic phenomena are observed in headlines?</li> </ul>

*(Continued)*



Steps	Indicative Critical Questions and Deliverables
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Is there use of evaluative or emotional language?</li> <li>– What is the positioning of the author (engagement) or the values expressed?</li> <li>– How is modality used to show the speaker's judgement?</li> <li>– Are words/phrases repeated throughout the text? Which ones and how often?</li> <li>– What is the societal and historical context of the text?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 (online)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Follow up – revise theory through Moodle Quiz (types of multiple choice and short answer) on linguistic phenomena taught in class</li> <li>– Facilitate meta-analysis, and encourage students to share their reasoning</li> </ul>	<p>(Design questions that prompt critical thinking and allocate time for students to reflect on the quiz answers)</p>
<p><b>4 (in person / online in Zoom breakout rooms)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Divide students into small groups of 2–3 persons and assign them for analysis different news articles according to their interests</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5 (online through Zoom platform or Teams)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Brainstorm per group on the analysis of the text assigned</li> </ul>	

*(Continued)*

Steps	Indicative Critical Questions and Deliverables
<b>6 (in person)</b> – Online presentations by student groups – Peer analysis	– Exemplification of their analysis per group – Sharing of observations and insights – Provision of students' collective comments to their colleagues regarding the critical analysis of their texts
<b>7 (in person)</b> Rewrite/reconstruct texts applying CDA to improve their content and structure	– How can I incorporate more inclusive / anti-oppressive language to the texts assigned? – How can I incite action through linguistic codes?
<b>8 Evaluation</b>	– Monitoring throughout and assessing students' progress in using CDA

**Table 1:** Proposed Instructor's Guide for Introducing CDA.

### Exploring Agency and Responsibility: Social Actors and Their Semantic Roles

This section underscores the significance of exploring ideational meaning by closely examining how linguistic representations of agency shape the portrayal of key participants in various processes and events. Practical examples are provided to illustrate the analysis of agency through the lens of transitivity in authentic media texts. The concept of agency and its linguistic manifestations are pivotal in CDA and SFL, as they illuminate actors, power dynamics, responsibility, and accountability (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Van Leeuwen, 2008). Different modes of representing agency can accentuate or diminish an action, highlight or obscure accountability, portray agents as culpable or innocent, and attribute blame or credit for their actions.

In scrutinizing the representation of agency and responsibility, the analysis facilitates identifying the process types where the

actors participate within authentic articles. Table 2 presents the classification utilized for this purpose, and several illustrative examples are provided to identify processes and roles.

<b>P=Process</b>	<b>Action/ Category of Meaning</b>	<b>Critical function</b>	<b>Participant role</b>
P-BEHAVIORAL = behavioural	behavioral actions	identifying the behavior of actors	Behavior
P-MATERIAL = material	doing physical actions in the real world	attributing respon- sibility to actors	Actor Goal Beneficiary Range Agent
P-VERBAL = verbal	Saying	attributing respon- sibility to actors	Sayer Receiver Verbiage
P-MENTAL = mental	sensing (feeling, wanting, thinking, and perceiving)	identifying mental state/positioning of actors	Senser Pheno- menon
P-EXISTENTIAL = existential	Exist		Existent
P-RELATIONAL = relational	being or becoming	identifying traits/ attributes of actors	Carrier Attribute Token Value
Circumstantial – adverbial elements		identifying contextual factors (circumstance, accompaniment, cause, location, manner, role, matter)	

**Table 2:** Process Types and Roles in SFG (Halliday, 1994).

Material processes entail deliberate physical actions that impact other entities, emphasizing the active role of the agent in causing the action and achieving the desired outcome. These processes typically involve an actor or agent initiating the activity and a goal being affected by them, highlighting the individual's capacity to exert authority, exercise agency, and interact with the world. The assignment of the role of Actor can uncover the representation of the assignment of power, blaming, responsibility, and victimization. Verbal processes, revolve around communicative activities, underscoring the individual's ability to articulate thoughts and intentions through language. When attributed the role of Sayer, analysis can spot traces of discourses circulated or challenged by the participant and possible discursive inconsistencies. Both material and verbal processes empower participants with a significant degree of agency, allowing them to assert their will and influence the world around them.

An (invented) example of news piece might state:

Ex.1: "The government [**ACTOR**] implemented [**P-MATERIAL**] [strict lockdown measures **GOAL/ACTION**] to curb the spread of COVID-19."

This sentence attributes responsibility to the government, highlighting its active role in taking measures against the pandemic. The use of the material process "implemented" emphasizes the government's authority and decision-making power. The beneficiary implied is public health.

Below, an authentic excerpt (*Le Monde*, 06.03.2013):

Ex.2: (translation) Admittedly, the austerity package imposed [**P-VERBAL**] by Angela Merkel [**SAYER**], in exchange for unprecedented solidarity with failed states, **has put** [**P-MATERIAL transitive**] **European growth** [**GOAL**] on the ground.

In ex.2, material and verbal processes offer insights into Merkels' level of responsibility. In particular, the editor asserts that the Chancellor (Sayer) imposed austerity measures (verbal process), which adversely affected EU economic growth (goal of the process). Merkel is held accountable for hindering European growth (material process). The use of the adverb 'admittedly' serves to reinforce the attribution of responsibility. Upon examining the entire text, it became evident that Sayer's role was predominant. The author employed a distancing strategy by indirectly attributing statements and actions to Merkel, rather than using direct quotation. This approach creates a sense of detachment from Merkel's discourse and placed responsibility on the Chancellor for her words and actions.

Ex.3 (*The Times*, 30.03.2010) below shows how relational processes delineate characteristics and construct a comprehensive profile of an individual. The assignment of the role of Identifier enables to identify attributions, characteristics, analogies, and metaphorical representations. The excerpt below underscores Merkel's significant role during the EU summit relating the Greek crisis, as indicated by the use of relational processes:

Ex.3: This week has confirmed that Angela Merkel [IDENTIFIED] is [P-RELATIONAL] the towering figure of European politics.

The category of mental processes encompasses the expression of cognitive operations and psychological states, including perception, cognitive processes, motivation, affective states, and evaluative decision-making. The following analysis delineates the shift in the positioning of the IMF due to political pressures:

Ex.4: It appears that **the IMF [SENDER] succumbed [P-MENTAL]** too easily to political pressures during both the boom and the bust.

*(The Guardian, 18.05.2012)*

### Comparing Patterns of Transitivity in News Headlines

Below is a new story summary and examples of newspaper headlines about the aforementioned story.

**News story:** On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was murdered in Minnesota by police officer Derek Chauvin. Floyd was detained for allegedly using counterfeit currency, and Chauvin restrained him for over nine minutes by kneeling on his neck. J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane assisted Chauvin in restraining Floyd, with Lane also pointing a pistol at Floyd's head. fourth officer, Tou Thao, prevented bystanders from interfering.

Ex. 5: **Chauvin: Jail for just 22yrs ...but out in 15: Cop who killed George Floyd is sentenced** [The Daily Mirror, UK, 26 June 2021]

Ex.6: **Hundreds demand justice in Minneapolis after the police killing of George Floyd** [J., Minneapolis, The Guardian, 27 May 2020]

Ex. 7: **George Floyd case: Protests erupt across the country after Minnesota man's death** [H. McKay, Fox News, 28 May 2020]

Ex.8: **Joe Biden takes a firm stand against the police murder of George Floyd**. [Brown, S.M., Tennessee Tribune, 18 June, 2020]

The aforementioned narrative exhibits distinct variations in the portrayal of actors, reflecting different focal points. Headline

1 places emphasis on the accountable agent (i.e., policeman) involved in the act of killing (i.e., action process) of George Floyd (i.e., goal of action). Notably, the headline employs a derogatory tone through the inclusion of the adverb “just” and the phrase “but out in 15,” intensifying the sense of culpability. In contrast, Headline 2 utilizes nominalization (“killing”) to report the process of action, with the agent referenced within a circumstantial phrase. Headline 3 presents a vaguer account of the action, utilizing circumstantial phrases and nominalization, with the term “death” employed instead of more precise lexical choices such as “killing” or “murdering.” Furthermore, the agent is vaguely identified as the “Minnesota man,” omitting specific naming, and the sentence structure assumes an agentless passive voice. Of notable significance is the absence of any reference to police brutality in Headline 3, as the act of killing is situated within the framework of civil unrest, disorder, casualties, and the destruction resulting from the violent behavior of the demonstrators. In contrast, Headline 4 explicitly identifies the actor and employs a nominalization circumstantial prepositional phrase to describe the action. The term ‘murder’ is deliberately selected, indicating a negative evaluation of the action by the editor. Moreover, the voice of Biden assumes a firm stance against the action, implicitly reflecting the perspective of the editor. Comparatively, the transitivity patterns employed by the editors reveal their respective perspectives concerning the actor and its impact on the goal. Headlines 1, 2, and 4 assign culpability to police officers for the act of homicide, whereas headline 3 suggests a lack of accountability on the part of the police. Furthermore, the term “death” is characterized by vagueness within the context of civil unrest. The ideological orientation of Fox News is evident in its presentation, which tends to align with conservative perspectives.

## Analysing Evaluative Language and Author's Positioning

To analyze the text's interpersonal meanings embedded within the language and better understand the speaker's orientation to discourse or the stance of actors mentioned, the instructor and students can apply the appraisal categories (Table 3).

Category	Description
<b>Affect</b>	– How participants and processes are assessed by reference to emotional responses/evaluation of things/processes/ states, explicit/implicit statements of (dis)likes, (dis) approval, (dis)agreement, and other subjective responses. Directly relates to mood.
<b>Judgement</b>	– Moral evaluation of human behavior through words/ phrases expressing positive or negative judgments/opinions/assessments. The categories of judgment—capacity/ tenacity/ propriety—refer to the ability, determination, and appropriateness of actions or behavior.
<b>Appreciation</b>	– Positive or negative aesthetic or functional evaluation of things/processes/states of affairs.
<b>Engagement</b>	– The voice of the author/speaker, including monogloss (facts/author's interpretations/presuppositions), dialogic contraction (disclaim/proclaim), and dialogic expansion (entertain/attribute). It describes the level of commitment/involvement/alignment with the topic and involves expressing certainty/doubt/likelihood/duty.
<b>Modality</b>	– Language used to indicate the speaker's/writer's attitude towards the truth value of a statement, including modal verbs and adverbs expressing different degrees of possibility/necessity/certainty. Modality and engagement work together to convey evaluation and attitude.

*(Continued)*



Category	Description
<b>Graduation</b>	– Comprises force (intensity/quantity in terms of amount/time/space), enhancement/focus (sharpening/softening), and fulfillment (qualification of processes).

**Table 3:** Appraisal categories (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

To illustrate the application of the appraisal categories above, here is an (invented) editorial example:

Ex.9: “The [delayed response JUDGMENT: negative judgment of capability and propriety] by health authorities [exacerbated the crisis APPRECIATION: negative evaluation of the situation] causing [unnecessary suffering AFFECT: negative emotional response].”

The sentence above evaluates the actions of health authorities, attributing blame and emphasizing the negative consequences of their delayed response. The language used conveys strong disapproval and highlights the perceived failure in managing the crisis effectively.

Below, an appraisal analysis of a specific section from a leader article is presented.

**Text 1:** Armageddon [negative APPRECIATION, negative GRADUATION: force] **Ready**

Eurozone authorities are preparing for a Greek exit after Sunday’s elections. *But* [ENGAGEMENT:contract:disclaim:counter] concessions look more *likely* [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability].

The European Commission has denied that it is working on contingency plans for a Greek exit from the single currency. The Commission “is not a disaster movie screenwriter” [negative JUDGEMENT for

Commission:propriety], it *says* [ENGAGEMENT:attribution:acknowledgement].

This is implausible [negative JUDGEMENT for EC not working on contingency plans] or, *if true* [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability], alarming [negative JUDGEMENT for EC]. There is a **real** [positive GRADUATION:FOCUS] chance that the result of Sunday's Greek elections could [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability] precipitate the country's swift exit from the euro. In which case, there should be [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability] contingency plans to limit the damage to the rest of the Eurozone financial system.

But it still *seems* [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability] more *likely* [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability] that immediate crisis will [Evidential modality:prediction, inferring from results/reasoning] be averted and that a way will be found for Greece to stagger on within the currency bloc, *even if* [ENGAGEMENT:contract disclaim:counter] this merely postpones its eventual departure. It may [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability] be **less** [negative GRADUATION:FORCE:intensification:quality] Apocalypse Now [negative APPRECIATION for Grexit, negative GRADUATION: force: intensification: process/vigour] and **more** [positive GRADUATION:FORCE:intensification:quality] The Day After Tomorrow [negative APPRECIATION for Grexit, negative GRADUATION: force:intensification:process/vigour]. It is **highly** [GRADUATION:FORCE:intensification:degree] *likely* [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability] that Sunday's poll will [Evidential modality:prediction, inferring from results/reasoning] be inconclusive [negative APPRECIATION for elections] as last month's elections, after which it proved [ENGAGEMENT:contract:proclaim:en

dorse] *impossible* [ENGAGEMENT:disclaim] [negative APPRECIATION for Greek elections] for any combination of parties to form a government.

But opinion polls suggest that Syriza, the far-left [negative JUDGEMENT for Syriza: normality] grouping led by Alexis Tsipras, could do well [positive JUDGEMENT for Tsipras:capacity], **enough** to form a government and carry out its pledge to abandon the austerity measures agreed as part of Greece's bailout. Mr. Tsipras says that he is committed [positive JUDGEMENT for Tsipras:veracity] to keeping Greece in the Eurozone. Since a big [negative GRADUATION: quantification] majority of the Greek people want [positive AFFECT:desire] to stay in, he is **hardly** [negative GRADUATION:FORCE] going to say anything else [negative implicit JUDGEMENT for Tsipras:veracity]. But he is threatening to push Greece towards a disorderly exit [negative JUDGEMENT for Tsipras:propriety] as a way of putting pressure on Germany to loosen the terms of the bailout. [...]

The Eurozone Carry On could [ENGAGEMENT: expand: entertain: probability] run for a while yet [ENGAGEMENT:contract: disclaim:counter]. But [ENGAGEMENT:contract:disclaim:counter], after a long prevarication, things at the last *May* [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability] will move **very** [pre-modification adverb GRADUATION:force degree up-scale for process] quickly [positive APPRECIATION:reaction] *indeed* [ENGAGEMENT:PROCLAIM:affirm:modals of expectation]. With Greece facing its six-straight year of recession, it gets ever more *likely* [ENGAGEMENT:expand:entertain:probability] that both sides will *eventually* [ENGAGEMENT:PROCLAIM:affirm:modal of expectation]: modals of expectation] opt for **Independence Day**.

(*The Times*, June 14, 2012)

The leader article above presents the Greek exit from the EU as a cosmological scenario, negatively appraised (category of appreciation), using strategic lexical choices (“Armageddon”) to frame the situation with a sense of drama. The author encourages readers to associate the crisis with catastrophic events through cultural references and metaphorical language. This effect is further intensified (graduation: scale up) with semantic repetition and overlexicalization through synonyms of disaster scenarios (“Apocalypse Now”, “The Day After Tomorrow”, “Independence Day”), preparing the reader for the Grexit possibilities and its impact. The frequent use of engagement (category entertain, possibility) and modals foster hypothetical scenarios (e.g. epis-temic stance adverbials such as “likely”, modal adjectives such as “unclear”), modal auxiliaries with low possibility value (“should be,” “seems,” “it may,” “appears,” “could”), and nouns (“likelihood”). Greek’s positive emotions towards staying in the euro are identified through affect, category desire.

The author (through engagement) disclaims the Grexit scenario, presenting an alternative (concessions) as a positive outcome (engagement: affirm and proclaim). Also, the negative judgements towards the EC, show negative appraisal and critique of the EC for not working on contingency plans. The author is also positioned towards Tsipras through negative judgements of veracity, capacity, and propriety. Official sources are quoted, but the author negatively evaluates their responses, suggesting a lack of action and poor management. Political leaders’ statements are reported indirectly, creating distance and allowing for different perspectives. The reported speech is framed and interpreted by the writer, who withholds authority and legitimacy from the leaders’ statements.

## Discussion and Conclusions

### *Discussion*

CLA and media literacy are crucial in today's digital landscape, especially post-pandemic, where misinformation has surged. In the contemporary post-pandemic context, students must develop soft skills such as analyzing, assessing, and effectively communicating information, which are essential for fostering critical reading and media literacy. Media literacy education plays a crucial role in evaluating media content, critically navigating the complexities of the digital media ecosystem, and mitigating the spread of misinformation.

A hybrid educational paradigm, combining technology with critical pedagogy, can address the evolving demands of the post-pandemic era. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools enhance interactive learning, allowing students to apply analytical categories and critical skills in a dynamic environment (Gillen & Barton, 2010).

The integration of CDA and SFG principles into language teaching curriculum has demonstrated significant benefits, beyond enhancing language proficiency, comprehension of language-related concepts, and communication sensitivity. CDA techniques are particularly valuable for English as a foreign language learners, aiding in the acquisition of linguistic competencies and critical analytical skills. By scrutinizing meanings across ideational, interpersonal, and textual strata, students gain a deeper understanding of how language shapes social realities and power dynamics in today's interconnected world. Integrating CDA into the curriculum cultivates critical awareness of socio-political dimensions in media texts, and critical thinking. Such a

multifaceted approach equips students with analytical skills essential for identifying and challenging underlying ideologies and power structures in media discourse. In this way, they are prepared to become informed consumers and active participants in the global media landscape.

Challenges include limited accessibility to CDA proficiency and varying difficulty levels. Proficiency in CDA is typically associated with advanced linguistic training, limiting its accessibility for language teachers. Additionally, the difficulty of analysis varies depending on students' levels. However, despite these challenges, further research and application of CDA, combined with other analytical tools, can enhance its effectiveness, empowering students to thrive in an interconnected society.

### *Conclusions*

The focus of this paper has been to address the educational challenges presented by the post-pandemic landscape by promoting media critical literacy through the enhancement of CLA alongside effective technology use. To this end, a synergetic framework is proposed to practically foster the development of media critical literacy skills among higher education undergraduate students by exposing them to diverse media texts and guiding them through analysis activities.

This framework offers a concrete pathway for instructors and curriculum specialists to incorporate CDA into language teaching, including an indicative course plan for implementation and examples of analysis. By applying process transitivity and appraisal analysis, students can critically assess how language is used to assign blame and responsibility, as well as to express evaluative stances in media texts, thereby gaining a nuanced understanding

of the socio-political implications of language use in discourse. Through this process, students learn to deconstruct texts and interrogate the discursive strategies used by media producers to construct meaning and shape public discourse. They hence employ interpretation strategies, question dominant narratives, discern hegemonic or marginalized discourses, and uncover concealed ideologies present in various media forms. Furthermore, case studies for the analysis of crises phenomena in media have been presented, offering a critical approach for crisis communication analysis in the future.

The target demographic is primarily fourth-year English Language Teaching (ELT) university students proficient in either their first or second language and enrolled in language or media and communication courses. While university cohorts constitute the primary focus, initiating media critical literacy engagement at earlier educational stages can ensure a more comprehensive development of these critical skills, thereby better equipping individuals to evaluate media content critically from a young age (Hobbs, 2010).

Language centers must include in their mission to function as hubs for fostering critical thinking skills, dissecting media texts, and navigating the intricate landscape of language and digital media. Language educators can act as facilitators in this process, fostering critical thinking skills, guiding students through the analysis of media texts. By transcending the view of language as merely a neutral tool for communication, instructors can assist students in identifying linguistic features, discourse strategies, and rhetorical devices employed in media representations. Ultimately, incorporating critical language awareness and media literacy into school curricula is essential to prepare students for informed decision-making and active participation in a media-saturated society (Livingstone & Bulger, 2013).

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