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## Discourse of culture and ideology in two African novels: Evolving a proto-literacy model

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#### Abstract

This sociolinguistic study focuses on the discourse of culture and ideology in developing a proto-model of literacy development. The language-literature interface approach was used to analyze the ideological discourse in two African novels, *The Texture of Dreams* by Yitbarek and *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* by Mengestu. The study targets non-participant college freshmen in Benguet, Philippines, using a proactive approach to language curriculum renewal based on reflective practice. The study adopted both a priori and a posteriori principles of language curriculum renewal, identifying and re-classifying literacy skills from baseline data and professional practice. The study emphasizes the importance of critical reading in analyzing the discourse of ideology and culture, as well as noting cultural load in literary language. The study recommends using CDA of transitivity processes among college students to examine the discourse of culture and ideology, promoting effective reading comprehension. Language curriculum enhancement can also benefit from a sociolinguistic case study anchored on reflective practice of the language-literature interface.

**Keywords:** Discourse of culture and ideology, proto-literacy model, critical discourse analysis or CDA, processes of transitivity, language-literature interface, African novel



### Public Interest Statement

The research was an innovative and bold trail-blazing attempt to offer a sociolinguistic and CDA framework in language curriculum design that could benefit college freshmen situated in an ideological and cultural-conflicted geographic as well as ESL/EFL learners situated similarly. Moreover, to challenge school administrators, language planners and curriculum developers to develop a more open culture of curriculum design. Not the least, to support and encourage language practitioners to use reflective language teaching so as to create and recreate critical perspectives for assessment and review of approaches, methodology, and techniques and the design of relevant and appropriate instructional materials.

### Introduction

At this time of a convulsion of global circumstances, language programs and pedagogy are consequently and conversely situated in problematic frameworks and likewise, demanding contexts. Educational institutions cannot afford to ignore the prevailing and emergent dynamics of change and henceforth, the imperatives of overhauling curricula (Brown, 2006). Since language cuts through and across the academic landscape, it assumes the crucial pivotal role for innovation to address the challenge. With learners' demographics radically evolving into a multicultural issue, mainstream ESL language programs should consider more culturally and linguistically sensitive communities and relevant models of language diversity instruction (Chapman and Froese).

This sociolinguistic and cultural literacy critical discourse study sought to determine the factors and elements that constitute for an effective and innovative language curriculum. Guided by the global language and literacy perspectives of Chapman and Anderson (1995) and Richards' (2001) curriculum-based approach to language teaching, and Machin and Mayr's (2012) critical discourse analysis of transitivity processes in terms of ideology in language and literature, the research proceeded with the baseline data obtained from the general observations and feedbacks of English educators and tertiary level students in a state university in the Cordillera, Philippines as well as the researcher's critical reflections from his personal ESL teaching experience spanning a decade including his portfolio of critical literary reads and knowledge of local and international language, literature and cultural literacy forums, conferences, and lectures. The common sentiment among teachers is the lack of a language program that offers an integrative and interactive approach to language education as well as the lack or absence of linguistically and culturally sensitive and appropriate instructional materials. On the part of students, they expressed frustration and disappointment on how their identities, home and community backgrounds are set aside in the mainstream language classrooms, where dominant ideologies and language groups are favored and given more attention leaving them with feelings of inferiority, alienation, exclusion, disenfranchisement, fear and anxiety. The echoing of similar observations and perceptions is likewise made in the scholarly and professional local and international dialogues, not to disregard the recurring themes of ideological and cultural repression in the literary genres.

In light of all these articulated dilemmas and misgivings to existing language curriculum and educational experience, this investigation undertook the initiative to address the concerns and gaps with ideology, culture, and literacy as kernel features in the grand design of a proto-model for language curricular renewal. Taking it from the interactive principles to language pedagogy by Brown (2006) and Richards (2001), the research situated literacy development in the context of a critical discourse of culture where

language skills are promoted side by side cultural identity in a continuum of tasks aided by relevant and appropriate instructional and learning materials. Since the goal is a global language education for today's learners, two African novels were chosen as the sample reading texts from which to determine an integrative and interactive language program as model for curriculum renewal.

Fontanilla's (2018) study found that linguistic proficiency and learner identity are fostered by ideology and culture-sensitive environs and attitudes. Similarly, Dablo's study (2018) revealed that learners' reading proficiency is developed and promoted by culture-rich and authentic instructional materials. Moreover, Jacobe's (2019) study identified learner's identity as a factor in effective reading comprehension and literary appreciation. Richards (2001) claims that adapting to students' needs, understanding teaching and learning contexts, careful planning of course materials, and monitoring learning are crucial factors and elements in ELT pedagogy.

Thus, this seminal study towards designing a proto-literacy model within the framework of a sociolinguistic and critical discourse of culture was carried out anchored on transitivity processes of ideology in literature where linguistic and cultural demographics of learners matter. Krashen (1986), as cited in Brown (2006), posits that for language learning to take place, the formula should be  $i + 1$  which he sums up in his input hypothesis where instruction should consider the current language ability of the learner plus the reasonable calibrated new lesson. In the research, the target literacy skills for the freshmen college students were reading comprehension, critical thinking, creative language, transcoding skills, and metadiscourse. Since Filipino learners in general exhibit a culture of a strong sense of group-identification (Fontanilla, 2018), two African novels *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* and *The Texture of Dreams* authored respectively by Mengestu (2007) and Yitbarek (2005) were selected as both novels speak of a favorite topic of sentimental Asian youth, love, adventure, and dreams. Both novels are mainly situated in Ethiopia and the USA (a colonizer of the Philippines). The critical discourse approach on how to teach these novels to the class pivoted on the centrality of theme in the overall understanding and appreciation of the literary text.

Theme is the central idea of a literary or artistic production which is not just the subject or subject matter but what is said about the subject. One of the major parallel themes in the two novels is lust for love. The lust for love as one thematic parallel between the two novels was identified and compared in the CDA discussions as proto-model for instruction. As a conservative learning environ wherein Igorot young adults are not yet as liberal as their more cosmopolitan counterparts, the researcher was careful in navigating the CDA to the concept of lust as both sentient and subliminal composites of human love. Culture-sensitive language pedagogy should begin from an adequate orientation of learners to the learning context which includes values affirmation, clarification, valuation, and critical assessment vis-à-vis idiolectal nuances of learner's language and ideology, home and community backgrounds, without prejudice to majority and universal cultures (Chapman and Anderson, 1995).

Henceforth, the lexical dimension of the text was a discourse of linguistic symbols from the objective conceptual to the dominant perceptual-philosophical, then to the more specific socio-cultural-ideological. The choice of African novels for the CDA was deemed appropriate as the English language historicity of the texts is parallel to the colonial historiography of Philippine ESL, and of course, the societal diaspora in both countries with their peoples' penchant for adventures and migration to the land of milk and honey. While African English is dominantly an offshoot of British English and Philippine English is an influence of Standard American variety, both are situated in outer circle world Englishes (Kachru, 1988, as cited by Brown, 2006). For the matrix of literacy skills as target abilities in the proto-model of instruction, a

continuum of integrated and interactive language tasks was laid down both a priori and a posteriori which included pre-reading phase of background research for the author, heuristics or listing of previewing-the-text questions for first reading, brainstorming and quick-write ups with small group discussions or SGD's, dyads or pairing up, listening to recorded interviews of authors, journaling of expectations and perceived difficulties, the actual reading phase with reciprocal and scaffolded reading activities using interactive reading of combining the bottom-up and top-down approaches for critical reading and discussions, post-reading with metacognitive and transcoding activities both oral and written culminating with a creative portfolio of reflection essays and literary graffiti and sounding-off, taking favorite or interesting characters from the texts, giving them life transplanted in the learner's world complete with idiolectal and speech community ideological artifacts.

The Cordillera region in the Philippines is largely a melting pot of the indigenous and the thriving emergent new generations which demands some degree of linguistic convergence and creative divergence to effectively harness the sociolinguistic heritage and potentialities. With the end goal of evolving a culture-sensitive language literacy proto-model, the research capped its analysis into a final eclectic matrix of factors and elements crucial in the program. The researcher expected to offer an innovative and brave trail-blazing benchmark for language curriculum renewal for ESL learners that jumpstarted from a critical discourse analysis of transitivity processes evident in two African novels where global language abilities and literacy are outcome benefits for college freshmen in a state university situated in a geographic socio-cultural-complex, the Cordillera Region in the Philippines.

### **Problem Statement**

This study aimed to determine the factors and elements that constitute a proto-literacy model for ideology and culture-sensitive language curriculum. Specifically, it sought to address the following questions:

1. What are the sociolinguistic factors evident in the discourse of the two African novels?
2. How does a discourse of culture develop and promote learner's identity as exemplified in the two African novels?
3. How are transitivity processes of ideology used in the two African novels?
4. Is the process of language curriculum renewal a dynamic of classroom-based perspective and pedagogy?

### **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

Since the investigation was a seminal study with the end goal of evolving a proto-literacy model for language curriculum renewal, it adopted a critical discourse analysis or CDA of transitivity processes of ideology. CDA was limited to the ideological and cultural overtones and undertones of two contemporary African novels, and did not include the other transitivity processes of power games and manipulation in political language. The corpora were sampled extracts from the two novels. The target stakeholders and beneficiaries were indirect non-participant college freshmen of a state university in the Cordillera Region, Philippines. Design of the proto-literacy model for language curriculum renewal was confined to sociolinguistic descriptors primarily targeted for the college freshmen of the identified region in the Philippines.

### Theoretical Framework of the Study

Richards (2001, 2007) claims that CLT or communicative language teaching was a response to changes in the field of linguistics in the 1970s as well as for the need of new approaches to language teaching which impacted significantly on language curriculum from a heavy grammar-syllabus to notional syllabuses then to the more communicative language programs where tasks are more dominant concerns to target macro and micro language skills. Richards says that a curriculum approach in language teaching must involve all stakeholders. Further, he identifies stages in language curriculum development as curriculum planning, specification of ends and means, a programme implementation, down to classroom implementation. Richards (2001, 2007) identifies decision making roles as policy makers, needs analyst, methodologists, materials writers, teacher trainers, teacher, and learner. For curriculum products, Richards enumerates policy documents, syllabus, teaching materials, teacher-training program, teaching acts, and learning acts. Chapman and Anderson (1995) advocate for language curriculum that gives importance to learning context and sociocultural phenomena as shared by Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1992, as cited by Capman and Anderson, 1995). This type of language curriculum looks at learning a language and becoming literate as socialization processes leading to global education.

Written genres are seen in this perspective as social by-products of social actors to suit particular purposes in specific contexts within the framework of continuing sociocultural conversations or dialogues. Brown (2006) espouses for principled and interactive approaches to language curriculum development and design where learners are led to second language acquisition with the integration of the five macro communication skills in pedagogy and learning, facilitated by direct strategy training and instruction. Trends in discourse analysis have drawn inspiration from CLTA principles where socio-cultural factors are taken into consideration in language education. Wodak & Meyer (2009), as cited by Machin and Mayrs (2012), point that the critical interrelatedness of language and society has led linguists such as Van Dijk, Fairclough, Kress, and Leeuwen into studying how language manifests social issues, problems, and inequalities, resulting to the development of the discipline of critical discourse analysis in the field of sociolinguistics. Such developments in ELT have given rise to new sets of challenges for language curriculum development and renewal, where traditional practices take the backseat to give way to more innovations in the teaching and learning of a second and foreign language including instructional materials development.

### Conceptual Framework of the Study

Machin and Mayr's (2012) CDA of transitivity processes in ideology where language is manipulated to articulate ideological orientation and socio-cultural critique served as the methodological approach in the analysis of the two African novels in the attempt to evolve a proto-model of literacy development among the target non-participant college freshmen situated in the Cordillera, Philippines. A language-literature interface as pedagogical orientation for the reflective practice was chosen to accommodate the integrative and interactive principles of communicative language teaching approach or CLTA, specifically for the use of interactive reading (Carrell et al. 1992). The corpora were the sample extracts of the two African novels, *The Texture of Dreams* by Yitbarek, and *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* by Mengestu. Richards (2001) fundamental stages of curriculum development were modified for the purposes of the innovative study where baseline data were used for the a priori identification of literacy skills after which the results of CDA were used to re-evaluate the matrix of literacy skills adopting the a posteriori approach to language curriculum renewal.

## Methodology

This research adopted a sociolinguistic critical discourse study with the end goal of evolving a proto-literacy model for language curriculum renewal. The use of the language-literature interface as framework in the conduct of the CDA study was inspired by the interactive principles and integrative approaches to SLA by Brown (2006), the considerations of curriculum development in language teaching by Richards (2001), and Machin and Mayr's (2012) transitivity processes of ideology.

The corpora for CDA or critical discourse analysis of transitivity processes in ideology were two African novels. Extracts from each novel were used as representative of the whole text. These two African novels were *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (2007) by Dinaw Mengestu which is about the sufferings of a terror victim in the USA and *The Texture of Dreams* (2005) by Fasil Yitbarek that speaks of an Ethiopian immigrant's life in New York. These novels were chosen for the purposes of this CDA study as they have been widely recognized as excellent literary achievements in their host country and they have won literary awards in the USA and Canada, becoming subjects of many literary articles and book reviews in those countries.

Since this sociolinguistic and CDA investigation purported to evolve a proto-model of literacy development among college freshmen in the Cordillera known for its ideological and cultural issues, a matrix of target literacy skills was identified and eclectically re-evaluated within the protocols of a priori and a posteriori curriculum renewal. The matrix is presented below:

### Target Literacy Skills for College Freshmen

Previewing Skills: Research skills for background information of text and author, brainstorming and brain-write ups in journal logs, browsing by skimming and scanning, outlining text in terms of content and theme development, accurate reading the lines by noting details of story development, use of heuristics to probe into ideological overtones and undertones, lexical analysis in context, noting salient features of character, identifying sociocultural load in the elements of a novel. Actual or During Reading Skills: Making inferences or reading between the lines by context clues, critical reading by probing into author's motives embedded in the text discourse, critical analysis of theme by reflective thinking skills of identity, ideology, speech and discourse communities. Post-Reading Skills: Transcoding or viewing skills in terms of verbal cues or discourse markers, metacognitive strategies for monitoring of reading progress, critical thinking skills for confronting ideological oppression, repression, and imperialism in language, application-to-real-life skills by creative discourse and outputs.

### Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of CDA of transitivity processes in ideology of the two African novels.

#### Synopsis of "The Texture of Dreams"

A young Ethiopian, Yosef, with a B.A. degree in English migrates to the USA in order to escape the economic and political problems in Ethiopia just after the fall of the Dergue regime. After stress filled months of joblessness and despair in the new land Yosef luckily gets a job to teach English to Russian refugees. He then upgrades himself by getting an MA in TESL and falls in love with Helen who was his classmate in his TESL class. Despite the fact that she has a boyfriend and doesn't want to be in a relationship based on love except sexual partnership, Yosef couldn't stop loving her. Loneliness, boredom, emptiness and memories of

his motherland and the loved ones become his constant companions. Yosef spends hours thinking about his predicament. Nostalgic memories of his childhood in Dessie, his boyhood adventures, his love for music, his 30 miserable campus life haunt his days and nights in New York. His landlady becomes a good listener of his woes and comforts him. But the sudden death of this landlady with whom he developed an intimate mother-son relationship coupled with his ever-growing homesickness and emptiness become too heavy a burden to live with. He decides to go back to Ethiopia for a two-month vacation. And just as he is a few days away from his flight to Addis, Helen calls him out of the blue. She tells him she is ready for true love. Yosef hopes the new romance will pull him out of the tragedy of his predicament.

### **CDA of Transitivity Processes in Ideology as Applied in “The Texture of Dreams”**

Yitbarek used language to embed his ideological critique, reflection, and discernment between the African (Ethiopian) ideology and culture and the American counterpart from the lens of a migrant bringing with him his personal aspirations, woes, struggles, and inner conflicts. Evident in these given streams of consciousness and dialogues are the effective manipulation of language as critical discourses of ideology and culture.

### **Thematic Discourse of Ideology and Culture Embedded in “The Texture of Dreams”**

Yoseph's inner thoughts are reflective of his allegiance to his country, his love for the traditions and cultural norms that he grew up in which causes him so much homesickness and nostalgia as he lives a migrant in America. His interior monologues of childhood, happy boyhood, adventures, and love for music evidence the ideological and cultural identification and pride but interrogated by displacement and alienation. Music is an integral element in the colorful culture of the African people as they are a very expressive and artistic race given the beautiful natural panorama and abundance of the region. Likewise, music is ideological symbol of dreams, hope for a better life, and faith in some unseen power which the African psyche and social milieu are characteristic of. The rhetorics of attraction, desire, and love are universal articulations for the human need for belonging, acceptance, companionship, and blissful partnership yet the unique flavor of the African ideal for sublimating love is within a fabric of the cruel and the glorious, the conflict and the boldness to triumph over the odds. Yosef's language is an ideology of the endemic African spirit put to the test within a whole gamut of a migrant's ordeals, struggles, and realities. Caballero (2015) reported that language and society are interrelated as both shape each other, drawing theoretical enlightenment from the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis of the inevitable symbiosis of these factors. Machin and Mayr (2012) posit that language is a useful tool to regulate society, making it an effective machinery to create or recreate modes of thinking and patterns of behavior. Yitbarek's creative manipulation of language in the stream of consciousness of Yosef, his exchanges with his love interest, Helen, his intimidating discourse with his landlady and his grief for her death, his frustration and disillusionment in his own country and the gripping misery brought about by the difficulties to find a job in a foreign land, his jealousy for Mark, the live-in partner of Helen, all these are but clear linguistic artifacts of a discourse of culture within another culture, an identity trying to sustain itself within the rubric of a dominant identity, a set of values confronted by a new template of virtues and ideals. The indigenous soul of an African bears the upsetting conditions of being a migrant, and Yitbarek succeeds in sewing the native ideology in the tapestry of a seemingly hostile foreign culture but eventually reconciles the two cultures employing the rhetoric of love begets love, patience is a virtue, and taking risks to fulfill one's dreams and wishes. Yitbarek's ulterior ideological inclinations become his artistic edge in the manipulation of language as embodied in the linguistic behavior of his protagonist and the supporting characters. The

very title of his novel, *The Texture of Dreams* is a glaring voice of the African in pursuit of his ideals while uprooted in his native land, the denotation of a powerful syntax serving as lead to the connotation of a resplendent spirit of the African warrior. Transitivity processes in ideology are dynamic effects of phonology, lexis, grammar, and cultural load which Yitbarek was able to manage in his masterpiece. The fascination for music of the sullen Yosef brings into the harmony of discourse the features of fine phonology and the cadence of African culture. His disgust for the lover of Helen and the couple's flirtation in his presence depict an African's inner ethnologue when confronted by a superior voice but which does not quit or give up. The discourse of resilience and endurance in the African psyche becomes the overarching theme of the novel taking off from the universal experience of love, despair, and triumph. Yitbarek's manipulation of language in the novel reveals a non-native English speaker who discovers his strengths in another language, this serving as illustrious evidence of the phenomenon of bilingualism, multilingualism, and multi-culturalism. Yitbarek is a master of transitivity processes in the literary world.

### **Synopsis of "The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears"**

Stephanos, an Ethiopian immigrant who lost his father in a horrific manner in the hands of the Dergue militia, migrates to the USA running away from the red and white terror of the late 1970's. Haunted by the traumatic memories of home Stephanos secludes himself in the guise of a storekeeper in a ramshackle Black-American neighborhood and in the comfort of two African immigrant friends i.e. Joseph (Congo) and Kenneth (Kenya). The three try to forget the woes of their lives drinking together, chatting about Africa and playing games of memorizing African coups and dictators. Poverty, disappointment with America and the loss of home and all that's dear to it are their constant woes. Then Judith, a white woman, and her daughter slip into Stephanos's life. Stephanos sees the chance of deliverance from his hollow sallow life in their friendship. But his ambitions of love and family fail due to the socio-economic status differences between him and Judith. Stephanos's long on hold emotional instability breaks loose as bankruptcy is added to this. He then walks to his uncle's house symbolically re-waking and renarrating his life in the process and coming to terms with his father's death and his half – hearted presence in the USA and resolving to pluck himself out of his in – between existence.

### **CDA Transitivity Processes in "The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears"**

Mengestus manipulated the transitivity processes in ideology where the protagonist, Stephano exhibits his discourses of a native African who suffers from societal, family, and personal tragedies with unyielding spirit especially as he is transplanted in another land, America. Mengestus tries to create a realistic discourse of human life in a string of pleasant and unpleasant circumstances, and shows how ideological and cultural factors enrich as well as demystify the romance of survival within the plot of seduction, hope, ambition, and disillusionment. The character of Judith is a discourse of ideological critique of imperialism, dominance, race, gender, and role whereas Naomi is a language of givens, norms, responsibility, and unpredictability or uncertainty.

### **Thematic Discourses of Ideology and Culture Embedded in "The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears"**

Mengestu is a master of transitivity processes in ideology very much like his fellow African literary exemplar, Yitbarek. However, his language is more strongly defined as a voice of protest ideology quite marked in his poignant and realistic depiction of two opposing cultures, one super-imposed by colonial history, the other the victim of history. The protagonist, Stephano is first portrayed in a language of



harrowing tragedy by the societal atrocity of his own native milieu, his father murdered under a despot and his regime. Stephano then articulates a language of finding sanctuary in a foreign land, a new world, America. He finds hope in the American woman, Judith and her daughter, Naomi, as well as support system in his fellow immigrant-Africans, Joseph and Kenny. Mengestu as a novelist communicates what many authors are hesitant to say—defeat amid the immensity of faith in human goodness.

The ulterior motive of Mengestus is undeniably to blame colonial mentality and behavior as culprit of inflicting more miseries and burrowing the pangs of bitterness into many lives long after the periods of colonization. Mengestu uses the discourse of seduction in the characters of Stephano, a black African, and Judith, a white woman to imply how two opposing ideologies may struggle for some common ground, one an imperialist voice, the other, a subjugated minority in a territory of the strong and powerful. The Western ideology is a culture of opulence, materialism, and power games, and Mengestu's works on this frame by a skillful manipulation of narration, description, stylistics, and persuasive drama. How Stephano imagines a perfect life with Judith and Naomi is a language of African adventure in the wilds, a discourse of unrelenting spirit to conquer. His naïve inhibitions in the presence of Judith are articulations of the colonial victim's consequent culture of slavery by the oppressor. Judith's language is typical discourse of a dominant culture often perceived as hostile, discriminating, and abusive. The artifacts of opulence as in the leather couch, the gold-trimmed porcelain, the spacious flat are features of a discourse of disgust over the Western ideology of a culture of excess. Stephano studying himself before the mirror trying to find the youth in him is a discourse of diminished cultures and identities over time as an aftermath of colonization, the naturally endowed and beautiful Africa exploited by the conqueror. Naomi's character embodies the ideology of family, a common feature in the cultures of the world though the family structure varies between the colonizer's and the colonized. While it is clear that the colonizer in the persona of Judith is domineering, overconfident, inconsiderate, and self-centered made more than concrete in her exchanges with Stephano like in her comment on gifts and Stephano's mistake, the fact that she is divorced and so, a single parent to Naomi, bespeaks of a critique of the dysfunctional Western society with its values in a flux of deterioration and destruction given the obsession for capitalism and economic superiority. The two friends of Stephano, his fellow Africans and migrants, represent the culture of tribal spirit in the native African as they spend good times in America talking of their homeland and their childhood days. Moreover, the discourse of caution, doubt, and skepticism to foreign interests as in Joseph and Kenny reminding Stephano of how American women are different, not knowing what is in their hearts. The inclusion of the prostitute in the novel is a discourse of irony where the culture of exploitation becomes a cycle in which even the exploited as in the case of Stephano (colonized Africa) becomes also an exploiter of the much weaker members of society (the flesh market). Superficially, the prostitute is a way out for Stephano to redeem himself from his misery and failure to win Judith and spend a lifetime of family bliss together with her daughter, Naomi. Underlying this episode is the language of confrontation of the ideologies, both the dominant and the non-dominant, how each can be flawed and how each persists to regulate societal behavior and patterns of thought. Mengestu shows in his work how an African can take full command of the language of colonizers, owning it to create a masterpiece of art and ideological critique.

### **Pedagogical Reflection on What to Teach and How to Teach the Two African Novels**

Looking into the results of the CDA on the transitivity processes in ideology of the two African novels, the researcher identified the following as target literacy skills and approaches in the development of these

skills: Pre-reading Tasks of information check on the authors and their works, the sociological perspective in the writing and reading of a novel, cultural load in language, consultation checks with reliable resources, noting discourse markers like transitions, politeness strategies and saving face, skimming and scanning to get a feel of the text, use of heuristics for character analysis, and mind maps for summary reading; Actual or During Reading Tasks of making inferences by the use of context clues, critical analysis of propositions, suppositions, and implicatures in monologues and dialogues, narrative and descriptive styles of storytelling, critical and open discussions of cultural issues; Post Reading Tasks of reflective reading, transcoding tasks for thematic development and critique, metacognitive activities for feeding back and learning, application-to-real-life practical and creative outputs.

Teaching approaches for the two novels should be integrative and interactive where the five macro communication skills are used to scaffold effective reading comprehension in the three phases of reading and in the continuum of language tasks. Bottom-up and Top-down reading skills must be combined for an interactive reading where learners get at a text by decoding linguistic elements and activating schema or prior knowledge. It is very important to provide orientation to the learners in terms of identity in language and literature, cultural literacy development, and the critique of ideology with the direct instruction of learning and reading strategies especially on how to handle the cultural load in language as used in the novels. Values clarification should be made and respect for learner's aesthetic and socio-cultural space must be given due attention and recognition. An open climate of ideological debates must be fostered to get the students into a continuing discourse of culture, diversity, and societal development while they improve on reading comprehension and fall in love with literature, in this case, the novel.

Language curriculum renewal should follow the principles of a priori and a posteriori reflective assessment and evaluation of existing programs, proceeding from gathering baseline data especially from classroom practice then moving on to critical perspective from the practice involving all stakeholders, a review of instructional materials that include assessment tasks, a sustained network of efforts to monitor and identify strengths and weaknesses, continued research on innovative approaches to language practice and curriculum design and renewal. A proto-model of language literacy can be successfully initiated by taking bold stance to experiment on how the pedagogy can be improved with a profiling of target learners, their language needs, their socio-cultural domains, available resources, and knowledge portfolios from reflective professional experience as encouraged by Richards (2001), Brown (2006), Chapman and Anderson (1995). A case study as approach proves viable and trail-blazing as seminal effort to improving both learning and instruction. Such an effort serves as the right ground for more extensive and empirical inquiries as contributions in the field of English Language Teaching.

#### Synthesis and Implications of the Study

Both the novels of Yitbarek and Mengestu are artistic creations of a discourse of culture and ideology. The highly acclaimed African novels both locally and in the international scene are appropriate reads for the teaching of cultural literacy without undermining language skills. A language-literature interface serves as an effective approach to an integrative and interactive pedagogy that targets a broad range of literacy skills and socio-cultural awareness. Critical discourse analysis for transitivity processes can be taught as learning strategy for the development of high levels of reading comprehension, cultural literacy development, and literary appreciation. Making inferences or reading between the lines is a basic crucial skill to develop among learners to enable them to navigate within critical discourse frameworks of identity, ideology, and culture as texts, in particular, literary materials are replete with the socio-cultural overtones and undertones

notwithstanding their artistic quality.

Language and society are inevitably interrelated and therefore, any literary piece is a by-product of this interdependence which in turn shapes the reader's mind and impacts on his behavior without setting aside the subliminal creative inspiration. Evolving a proto-model of literacy development from a discourse of culture using the novel is a refreshing innovation in language curriculum renewal.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The discourse of culture in novels can serve as a basis for identifying target literacy skills in language curriculum renewal. The discourse of ideology in a novel facilitates reading comprehension. Two African novels demonstrate a density of ideological and cultural issues in language use. The language-literature interface is an innovative benchmark for evolving a proto-model of literacy development in language curriculum renewal.

In view of the results and discussions, this research has come to the conclusion that a proto-model of literacy development for language curriculum renewal can be designed from a reflective pedagogy of the language and literature interface where the discourse of culture and ideology serves as the framework in identifying target literacy skills. CDA is a helpful methodology to look into the manipulation of language with respect to ideology and culture in literature. Language curriculum renewal must break the barriers of traditional practice and venture into innovative and trail-blazing approaches considering the radical change of today's language learners' demographic and needs upon the dictates of a global village.

Recommendations include encouraging the language-literature interface, carefully selecting instructional materials, adopting innovative design of evolving proto-models of literacy development from reflective practice, involving all stakeholders in the design of an effective language curriculum, and conducting both qualitative and quantitative investigations to explore varied learning environments and different groups of learners.

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