“EVERYONE LOVES BRAZIL”: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL

JANETE TERESINHA ARNT/Universidade Federal de Santa Maria

ABSTRACT

The article presents a critical discourse analysis of an article about Brazil, through a set of questions proposed by Fairclough (2003), with a focus on the representation of social events. The analysis reveals that the text brings a stereotyped view of the country. From the results, we propose a critical reading/literacy activity for English language teaching.

KEYWORDS: Critical discourse analysis; stereotypes; critical reading/literacy.

RESUMO

O artigo apresenta uma análise crítica do discurso de uma reportagem sobre o Brasil. A análise, a partir de perguntas apresentadas em Fairclough (2003) com foco na representação de eventos sociais, revelou que o texto apresenta uma visão estereotipada do país. A partir disso, apresentamos uma proposta de leitura/letramento crítica/o de língua inglesa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Análise crítica do discurso; estereótipos; leitura/letramento crítica/o.

Introduction
Additional language teaching is a complex matter for teachers in Brazil, this is also true for the teaching of English (BOHN, 2003). Especially in schools, there is a great concern (GIMENEZ; JORDÃO; ANDREOTTI, 2005) about what skills to teach, what knowledge to develop, what genres to choose, what literacies to promote, etc. In this context, reading is one of the most commonly taught abilities in schools and universities, since in these contexts it is the most immediate necessity students have to use English. This need was reaffirmed by the Brazilian Official Documents on the teaching of English (BRAZIL, 2006) and is also is the skill explored by the National High School Exam (ENEM), which is, since 2009, a widely spread national university entrance test.

In this sense, the reading ability, or, as we may call it, critical literacy, includes much more than just decoding linguistic elements, but also, being able to appropriate the practices of reading to achieve practical objectives and to transform reality. This includes analyzing the ideologies that are portrayed in a text, and to choose if one wants to accept them or not. This can be done by reading and analyzing a text critically, in terms of linguistic choices and the social effects of these choices.

The objective of this paper is to critically analyze a text that presents a view of the Brazilian culture from a Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA) perspective, proposed by Fairclough (FAIRCLOUGH, 1989, 1995, 2003, 2010). More specifically, I intend to analyze the author’s lexical and image choices to represent the Brazilian culture in order to assess to what extent he tries to establish things as unquestionable truths and as common sense. I also aim at proposing a critical reading/literacy activity which tries to recontextualize the principles of CDA and critical reading as well as the concept of language as social practice, which underpins these principles. These concepts and principles will be recontextualized in the form of a pedagogical activity for English language teaching.

Review of the literature

The teaching of reading in schools has been the focus of many works in Brazil and internationally (WALLACE, 1992, 2003; MOTTA-ROTH, 2008; MEURER, 2000, 2005; FREIRE, 1989). This focus on the importance
of reading teaching in linguistic education has brought the studies to the concept of literacy (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001; SCHLATTER, 2009; SOARES, 1998, 2003, 2009, KALANTZIS; COPE, 2012; ROJO; MOURA, 2012), which is seen as a new perspective on the studies on reading, for this reason, in this article I will use the term reading/literacy.

The National Curriculum Guidelines, proposed in 2006, reaffirm the importance of developing the reading skill, conceiving it as literacy:

With regard to reading, we reaffirm the necessity of the work on this language practice, but indicate some theoretical changes that will influence on the practice of this development. It is the adoption of the theories of literacies and multiliteracies (...). These theories serve as educational and epistemological basis. That is, they can contribute to broaden the world view of the students, to work their sense of citizenship, to develop the critical skills, to build knowledge in a contemporary epistemological conception. We refer to the epistemological conception that knowledge should not be learnt in a fragmented or compartmentalized way - by separation and reduction (MORIN, 2000). We refer to a conception that defends that knowledge must be integrative, to recognize languages and multidimensional phenomena, to be understood from the parts to the whole and from the whole to the parts, to recognize reality as confrontational, antagonistic, ambiguous, which requires the ability to construct and reconstruct senses; to recognize the diversity and to reinterpret uniqueness (BRASIL, 2006: 112-113 – my translation)

From this perspective, critical reading/literacy includes decoding linguistic elements, but it goes beyond, as it comprises the development of a critical capacity. This involves, for example, questioning lexical choices and
associating them with the social structures, questioning ways of representing things, because critical reading/literacy “challenges the common sense by pointing out that something could have been represented some other way, with a very different significance” (FOWLER, 1996: 7).

In practical pedagogical terms, teachers can, for example, expose students to texts about Brazil, which are particularly amenable to a critical analysis, because they allow students to develop intercultural awareness. Motta-Roth (2006) explains that when we analyze such texts and provide critical reading activities we promote students to see their own culture (here understood according to Holliday (1999) as knowledge shared by a group from the perspective of an ethnic group or nationality) filtered by the optic of the other’s culture. By discussing the view that others have of our culture we can determine whether we accept or reject this view (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006).

In order to perform such activities, one has to be a good reader, but, what is to actually be a good reader? From the perspective of CDA “the reader (...) is not a passive recipient of fixed meanings: “the reader (...) is discursively equipped prior to encounter with the text, and reconstructs the text as a system of meanings which may be more or less congruent with the ideology which informs the text” (FOWLER, 1996: 7).

Thus, the process of reading/literacy should be critical and the role of teachers would be to give the necessary tools so that students may learn how to read a text with suspicious eyes, critically and as a whole. This process should consider all elements in a text, the verbal and the non-verbal ones, and associate these elements to the social meanings they construe, as argued by Motta-Roth (1998):

we should seek to develop, in the students, skills that enable 'to see the text as a whole, that is, the graphic marks on paper, the explicit and implicit meanings of these linguistic marks and the social significance of these meanings in the whole that unites language and meaning (p. 25).

Heberle (2000: 121) considers critical reading as involving “the analysis of language forms and the socio-historical-political context”. It means that it is not sufficient to examine the form of a text per se, without
considering its context, the situation in which the text takes place. This context is what Fairclough (1989) presents as the “social conditions of production” and “interpretation” of texts. Such conditions are indispensable when analyzing a text and involve some levels: “the level of social situation, or the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs; the level of the social institution which constitutes a wider matrix for the discourse and the level of the society as a whole” (p. 25). In this sense, the language teacher should carry out activities that promote the analysis of the circumstances in which a text is produced, distributed and consumed.

We affiliate our study on CDA, developed by Fairclough (1989), which “analyses social interactions in a way which focuses upon their linguistic elements, and which sets out to show up their generally hidden determinants in the system of social relationships, as well as hidden effects they may have upon that system” (FAIRCLOUGH, 1989: 05).

In this perspective, language is conceived by Fairclough (1989: 17) as a “social practice determined by social structures”, that is, “sets of conventions” which are “ideologically shaped by power relations in social institutions and in society as a whole”. As a tool for analysis, this perspective on language means that the analysis tries to explicit power relations that are established in and by language.

According to CDA, the meanings produced in a text are ideologically constructed, that means that they are constructed from a specific view of reality (MEURER, 2005: 87). This view may aim at benefiting some groups over others (MEURER, 2005), that is, may aim at exerting power over another group. Ideology is sometimes implicit in texts and may only be perceived with a deep analysis. In this sense, CDA tries to develop theory and method to demonstrate that ‘realities’ represented through discursive actions are creations and not absolute truths (MEURER, 2005: 89). Thus, the objective of CDA is

to help increase consciousness of language and power, and particularly of how language contributes to the domination of some by others (…) helping people to see the extent to which their language does rest upon common sense assumptions, and the ways in which these
assumptions can be ideologically shaped by relations of power (FAIRCLOUGH, 1989: 04).

Language teachers, in this perspective, should have the same objective, that is, to help students become aware of what a text means, sometimes implicitly, and help them deconstruct these meanings by perceiving the traces and clues that reflect the discourses and social structures (MEURER, 2005: 91) which underpin a text. This way, teachers are helping students to investigate the institutionalized ways of seeing and analyzing the world, that is, the ideologies upon which a text is constructed (MEURER, 2005: 91).

The ideology of a text can be perceived in all semiotic codes that constitute it. As texts are multimodal, that is, “meanings are realized through more than one semiotic code” (KRESS; VAN LEUWEEN, 1996: 183), all elements must be analyzed. As Fairclough puts it, “semiosis includes all forms of meaning making – visual images, body language, as well as language” (2003: 122), so, all modes are integral parts of the construction of social practices. For example, in written texts, the choice of one specific picture, angle, type, color or size of letter, as well as the choice of one specific word instead of another, portrays some meaning. Analyzing both modalities (verbal and non-verbal) we will probably perceive the same ideology, either reaffirming or complementing each other.

But how is meaning produced? According to Hall (1997: 28), “meaning is produced within language (…), by the practice, the ‘work’ of representation” language (verbal and non-verbal) does not reflect a truth about the world, “it produces meaning about the world through representing it” (HALL, 1997: 07). This means that in order to analyze a specific discourse we have to analyze the choices the author of that discourse did to represent the specific world he/she is talking about and what these choices mean.

CDA proposes a method to analyze texts in order to understand the representation made by the author; it uses the tools of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). This grammar contributes to discourse analysis by the “understanding of a text: the linguistic analysis enables one to show how, and why the text means what it does” and by the “evaluation of the text: the linguistic analysis may enable one to say why text is, or is not, an effective text for its own purposes” (HALLIDAY, 1994: xiv). More specifically, in
In this paper, we will analyze text in terms of the ideational metafunction, which refers to the capacity language has to represent the world: “Language enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of what goes on around them and inside them” (Halliday, 1994: 106). Through this metafunction, one can analyze the choices made by the author of a text in terms of participants that are represented, processes that occur and circumstances in which the events occur.

There are many aspects to analyze a text from the perspective of CDA. One category is to analyze the representation of social events, that is, how an event is represented, what is the representation one makes of the other, for example, one can analyze a text in terms of “which elements of events are included in the representation of those events and which are excluded, and which of the elements that are included are given greatest prominence or salience” (Fairclough, 2003: 136). To carry out such an analysis, we have to take into account that “representation of events, activities, processes, entails choices amongst the process types” (Fairclough, 2003: 144), thus we have to analyze these choices.

Another point to analyze in order to find out the representation of a social event is to take into account that “social events can be represented at different levels of abstraction and generalization” (Fairclough, 2003: 137). Fairclough categorizes these levels in three, from most concrete to most abstract, in which most concrete events are the “representation of specific social events”, a mean term is a level called more abstract/generalized, that is, “abstraction over series and sets of social events” (Fairclough, 2003: 137), and the third level is the most abstract, that is, “representation at the level of social practices and social structures” (Fairclough, 2003: 137). Analyzing the level of abstractness or concreteness, one can say to what extent a representation tries to generalize, thus stereotype a social practice.

Moreover, another aspect to be considered when analyzing a text is space and time. According to Harvey (1996), “space and time are social constructs, (which) are closely interconnected, and it is difficult to separate them” (1996, apud Fairclough, 2003: 151). The more located in space and time an event is, the less susceptible it is to create generalizations.

Through this analysis we may perceive the representation that creates stereotypes, which “get hold of the few ‘simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characteristics’” (Hall, 1997: 258) of
any entity and make generalizations, reduce it to some categories, “stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes ‘differences’” (HALL, 1997: 258), it is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order” (HALL, 1997: 258).

Methodology

The corpus is composed of an article published in the magazine Newsweek, in August 2004. The article is entitled “Everyone loves Brazil” and points out why Brazil is considered interesting and popular around the world. Although the text can be considered “old”, since this analysis was carried out 11 years after the publication, it is still appropriate and can still be considered up-to-date because Brazil has been having a great economic growth and has been a stage for many international events such as World Youth Day (2013), World Cup (2014), Olympic Games (2016) which have put a spotlight on the country.

In this corpus, we carried out an analysis departing from a set of questions proposed by Fairclough to be asked in order to find out how an event is represented. Four questions have been selected from Fairclough (2003: 193), as follows: 1. What elements of represented social events are included or excluded, and which included elements are most salient?; 2. How abstractly or concretely are social events represented?; 3. Are there instances of grammatical metaphor in the representation of processes?; 4. How are time, space, and the relation between ‘space-times’ represented?.

To answer these questions, the tools of SFG are used, specifically, the ideational metafunction in order to find out participants, processes and circumstances. As we intend to find the representation of Brazil, we pay special attention to the participants that refer to aspects of what is considered as Brazilian culture.

By means of this analysis, we intend to achieve a twofold objective. First, we hope to find out the ideologies that are portrayed in the author’s discourse in order to see if he constructs, deconstructs, reinforces or maintains the stereotypes related to Brazil. Secondly, we develop an activity on the text trying to recontextualize the theoretical principles of critical reading/literacy.
Results and discussion

We start this section presenting a brief description of the analyzed text. Following, we describe our findings answering the four questions presented in the methodology which have to do with the ideational aspect of the text, that is, what the text is about. To end up, we present a possibility of critical reading/literacy activity based on the text, pursuing to promote social emancipation.

The four-page-text is entitled “Everyone loves Brazil”, with the lead “The world has fallen hard for the boisterous culture that gave us caipirinhas and capoeira”. Two pages are full of images of carnival in Japan, and the last two pages are half covered by non-verbal text which shows people practicing capoeira, an image of Rio de Janeiro, the top model Gisele Bundchen, Pelé in a photo with some Chinese fans, and a photo of the designers Campana brothers.

Question 1. What elements of represented social events are included or excluded, and which included elements are most salient?

In our analysis, we noticed that the elements of the Brazilian culture that are included, both in the verbal and in the non-verbal texts, are capoeira, football, fashion, caipirinhas, carnival, samba, barbecue, bikinis, Ipanema, biennales, street children, foreign debt. These are aspects of our culture for some groups, but there are elements that are excluded, for example, tourism, landscapes, environment, hospitality, science, technology, films, music (other than samba), religious and ethnical diversity, education, Amazonia (and all other states besides Rio de Janeiro), economy, cost of life, among others. All of these aspects are considered excluded because they are also part of the Brazilian culture but are not mentioned.

These choices may mean that the article has the specific purpose of showing why Brazil is in vogue in the international scenario, but it reproduces a stereotypical view of Brazil, a view in which Brazil is recognized for some restricted aspects of leisure and fun. In this sense, we can say that the discourse of the Newsweek magazine is ideological in the sense that “it contributes to sustaining particular relations of power and...
domination” (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003: 126), in this case, it maintains a hegemonic view over Brazil.

In the same sense, the visual text reinforces a stereotyped view of Brazilian culture, choosing elements that show aspects of leisure and fun such as carnival, football, fashion and capoeira, which are also mentioned in the verbal text, creating the relation of overlapping, that is, when the verbal and the non-verbal text reinforce each other.

The included elements are the ones shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Brazilian culture</th>
<th>Verbal occurrence (number of times mentioned)</th>
<th>Non-verbal text occurrence</th>
<th>Verbal text</th>
<th>Non-verbal text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caipirinha</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capoeira</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samba</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – Verbal and non-verbal choices in the text “Everyone loves Brazil”

As shown in Table 1, the aspect of Brazilian culture that is mentioned more times is “fashion”, which is mentioned five times in the verbal text, in the sentences “The Brazilian contagion goes beyond the familiar enclaves of fashion and football”, “In May, Selfridges (...) turned over its entire building to Brazilian food, fashion, music and art”, “Brazilian fashion models are the workhorses of today’s Asian fashion industry”, “One day (...) the über-model Gisele will kick off her heels and pass the fashion crown to some lithe young thing from Croatia or Kenya”. Besides direct mentioning such as the word “fashion”, there are also indirect references, such as “model”, etc. This salience can also be perceived in the non-verbal text, as the image of Gisele Bündchen occupies a great part of a page. This salience shows a view of Brazil as overtly worried about beauty, appearance and being fashionable, instead of valuing aspects of intelligence and intellectual work.
Another salient aspect is “caipirinhas” and “capoeira”, mentioned, for example, in the lead “The world has fallen hard for the boisterous culture that gave us caipirinhas and capoeira”. In this example, we can notice that the author considers that Brazilian culture is famous and recognized for these aspects, which surely are part of our culture, but which are not the only aspects that summarize our culture.

Moreover, the aspect of the typical carioca dance, samba, mentioned, for example as one of the aspects adopted in other countries, can be mentioned as one of our dances, but not the only one. Since we have a great ethnical diversity and territory, many other dancing styles could have been mentioned, such as forró, chula, quadrilha, frevo, axé, gafieira, pagode among others. Choosing to mention only one style contributes for maintaining a stereotype for which Brazil is already known, instead of showing the great diversity that exists here.

Question 2. How abstractly or concretely are social events represented?

According to the classification proposed by Fairclough and discussed in section 2, we can classify this text as being at an intermediate level of abstraction, as the author makes generalizations based on social events. In this level of abstractness, the author talks about concrete events (for example, carnival), but in an abstract way, without specifying where in Brazil people like and commemorate carnival, or when it happens (only in February), creating an idea that it is commemorated everywhere in Brazil, by everybody and throughout the year. This generalization can also be noticed related to other aspects of Brazilian culture, especially in the use of expressions such as “whenever”, “everywhere” “anywhere” in “the merry scandal of bearhugs and babble that breaks out whenever two or more Brazilians happen to be in the same room”; “almost anywhere you turn, there’s a bit of Brazil in the air”.

We can question these generalizations because they contribute to maintaining a stereotype highly cultivated by the international media. Making generalizations about a country with a large extension as Brazil is risky. There is a varied cultural diversity here, not all people like carnival, or samba, or caipirinhas. In Rio Grande do Sul, for example, which is one of the 26 states of Brazil, we cannot talk about ‘a’ specific culture, especially because of the ethnical diversity descending from Italian, German, African,
Polish people and consequent diversity in terms of religious beliefs, traditions, food, music, dancing, etc.

Question 3. “Are there instances of grammatical metaphor in the representation of processes?”

The grammatical metaphors, that is, processes represented as entities, create an idea of common sense about the Brazilian culture, for example, with the use of the expressions “the Brazilian contagion” “Brazilian culture”, “the boisterous culture”, which are nominalized. In these examples, we can notice that Brazilian culture is treated as one singular entity and not as varied.

Moreover, we can notice a sense of negativity about Brazil, in the author’s choice of some lexical elements, such as the ones about fashion models (workhorses, kick off her heels, some lithe young thing) in the next sentences: “Brazilian fashion models are the workhorses of today’s Asian fashion industry”, “über-model Gisele will kick off her heels and pass the fashion crown to some lithe young thing from Croatia or Kenya”, and also, to talk about football and our habits (fuss, scandal, boisterous) in the sentences “One day, of course, Ronaldo’s knees will give out and also in “Why all this fuss? Maybe it’s the merry scandal of bearhugs and babble that breaks out whenever two or more Brazilians happen to be in the same room”, as well as in “the boisterous culture”. In all these sentences we can notice a sense of power over Brazil, since negative aspects prevail in the description, instead of mentioning, for example, other Brazilian top models who have also represented the country, or the players who have won prizes, or the affection involved in Brazilian relations, among other positive aspects that could have been emphasized.

Question 4. “How are time, space, and the relation between ‘space-times’ represented?”

In general, there is no specific location of events in space or time, for example, when referring to carnival in Brazil, the author does not mention Rio de Janeiro or the month of February. This reference would provide the reader with the information that carnival does not happen all year over, neither in all the country. There is reference to space and time when talking about other countries that have been adopting some aspects of Brazilian culture.

In terms of verb tenses, the author changes from past, to present and to future tense. He starts telling why Brazil was known (or not known) some
time ago, mostly for negative aspects such as foreign debt, street children, etc. Thus, from line 1 to 41 the tense of the processes is simple past (arrived, confessed, changed, began, came, conjured, knew, was, seemed, told, took, read).

With the expression “no longer”, the author changes the verb tense to simple present and present perfect when mentioning what Brazilian culture is becoming nowadays. We could expect that the author would present the solutions Brazil has found for the problems mentioned (increasing education, improving economy, etc), but instead of that, he refers to the fame (“fuss”) Brazil has achieved around the world and the possible motivation for that prominence. For us, the popularity, in the terms presented by the author, can be seen as a problem, as the aspects mentioned can create an idea that in Brazil we only have fun (carnival, caipirinhas, capoeira, football, etc) and do not work.

The last paragraph of the text is written in the future aspect, when the author explains that Brazilian popularity will not last forever, as Gisele will retire (“kick off her heels”) and Ronaldo will get hurt (“knees will give out”), but that it “is going to be fun while it lasts”. This last paragraph summarizes the restrictive way in which Brazilian culture is represented, as it is ignores that Brazil is not only about beauty and soccer, but there are many achievements in other areas, such as, science, environment, education, other models, other players, or something else that could have been mentioned.

The critical discourse analysis of the article “Everyone loves Brazil” showed how the author creates and maintains a stereotype about Brazilian culture, considering only aspects of fun and leisure. This view is produced by specific lexical choices, including and stressing some aspects of Brazilian culture and excluding others, generalizing aspects of our culture that are specific of some places and people, and through general time and space representations.

In the next section, we try to apply the analysis carried out in the form of a critical reading/literacy activity. We consider that to teach a foreign language presupposes to educate teachers and students to analyze cultural stereotypes so as to denaturalize and problematize (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006: 191) the view others have about us. Besides that, we shall try to empower students to know their own identity so that they can be open to others in a more equal and conscious way (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006: 198).
Critical reading/literacy activity

Predicting/Pre-reading activity:
To start the class, before presenting the text to students, the teacher would contextualize the topic of the class: Brazilian cultural diversity. Teacher and students would build a semantic map about the topic. Here the teacher would probably already perceive how much the stereotypes attributed to Brazil are incorporated and naturalized in students’ discourse. It would be relevant to problematize some of the words they suggest, for example, if they mention samba and carnival, to question if he/she and his friends and family use to dance samba or wear carnival costumes.

Questions to guide the discussion:

1. What do you think about our country? Is it a good place to live?
2. What do you think our culture is about?
3. Do you think Brazilian culture is famous outside our country? Why or why not?
4. What words would you associate to the expression “Brazilian culture”?
5. Who do you think could properly write a text about Brazilian culture, or who could provide information to write a text about Brazil?

Reading activity:
After that, students would start gradually to deal with the text, starting with peripheral questions related to the non-verbal text, title and subtitles.

1. Take a look at the cover of the magazine, images, title and lead of the article to answer the questions:
   a) What is the text about?
   b) Can you see a justification for the title “Everyone loves Brazil” in the images and the lead? Which is it?
The next exercise is to lead students to reflect about the context of production and distribution of the text, so that they start getting used to paying attention to the context of production of texts.

2. Locate the following information about the text:
   a) Who is the author of the text?
   b) Where and when was it published?
   c) What do you know about the source? Where is it from?
   d) Who took the photographs on pages 44 and 45?
   e) Where are the people who helped the author to write the text from?
   f) Where do you think people could or should be from?

3. In the first paragraph, the author tells the story of a Brazilian travel agent who is in contact with people all around the world. He says he was always welcome everywhere he went to. What happened when he went to Paris?
   (a) He was welcome by everyone and well treated.
   (b) He was only attended when he said he was Brazilian.
   (c) People were afraid of him because he was Brazilian.

4. What is the idea about Brazil around the world that we can perceive from the story of the travel agent? Why was this story told at the beginning of the text?

5. People in the images of the first two pages of the text do not seem to be Brazilian. Where are they from? Find out in the text an explanation for that.

The next activity has the objective of showing the relation between grammar and function.

6. The second paragraph of the text is written mainly in the simple past tense. Justify the use of this tense in this part of the text.

Activity 7 explores the relation between verbal and non-verbal text and how one semiotic mode can complement the other.
7. The author of the article affirms that “Brazilians – or Brazilian culture now reach nearly every corner of the world”. How does he justify this statement with elements of the verbal and non-verbal text?

*Activity 8 proposes the analysis of the author’s statement that “Brazilian contagion goes beyond (...) fashion and football”, according to which we can think that different aspects of our culture will be mentioned. Here we try to promote critical thinking by comparison of what students consider to be our culture and what is actually mentioned in the text.*

8. In the third and fourth paragraph of the article, the author affirms that Brazilian culture is much more than fashion and football. What do you expect him to mention next? And what does he actually mention?

*Question 9 helps students to understand the end of the text, when the author says this popularity will not last forever, but will pass.*

9. Does the author seem to believe that Brazilian culture will be famous and popular forever? Justify with elements of the text.

*The next six questions (10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 15) try to promote a denaturalization of the elements mentioned in the text so that students reflect about what elements the author could have mentioned besides the one he did. Moreover, the intention is to encourage students to question why the author chose to represent Brazil in that way, what were his hidden intentions and ideologies. The questions also aim at making students question truths that are mentioned as unquestionable reality and to see that we ourselves sometimes reaffirm these stereotypes unconsciously.*

10. From the following list, check (√) the elements of Brazilian culture mentioned in the text:

- caipirinhas
- education
- favelas
- landscapes
- Amazonia
- fashion
- capoeira
- ethnic diversity
- beach
- samba
- football
- gastronomy
- cultural diversity
- religious diversity
- scientific research
- life cost
- carnival
- street children
11. Considering the extension of our country and the reality that you live, do you think the elements mentioned by the author portray all what Brazil is about? What aspects are highlighted? Justify.

12. What may be the reason why the author chose to talk about these aspects?

13. Do you agree with the author about the reason why Brazil is so popular? Why or why not?

14. Who creates the stereotypes about Brazil?

15. What can we do to change or reaffirm these stereotypes?

**Post-reading activity**

Activity 16 is a consequence of the previous questions, it is a chance students have of positioning themselves about the text. Moreover, it is a way of empowering them to struggle against a represented reality that tries to generalize our culture. For the development of this activity, there should also be a study of the genre “letter to the editor”. This genre study and production could be done using the pedagogical proposal of “the Wheel” by Martin (1999) through the steps of deconstruction, joint construction and independent construction.

16. Write a letter to the editor pointing out your opinion about the text and about Brazilian culture.

**Final remarks**

In the analysis of language carried out in this article, we could identify the representation attributed to Brazilian culture. We took the
perspective of Fairclough’s CDA, which considers Halliday’s view that language is a system of ‘options’ amongst which we make “selections according to social circumstances, assuming that formal options have contrasting meanings, and that choices of forms are always meaningful” (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992: 24). We found that by including and stressing some elements and excluding others, the text creates a restricted view of Brazilian culture, as the language choices made by the author do not represent the variety that our culture encompasses.

Considering the great coverage and recognition that the Newsweek magazine has, in the USA and around the world, we can say it helps to perpetuate stereotypes of Brazil as a country of fun and leisure, but little work, education and science.

It is necessary that teachers and students become critical analysts and readers, and, as we have seen through the analysis and reading/literacy activity, it is possible to work with CDA at school. Teachers must encourage students to become discourse critically literate, becoming aware of implicit meanings, ideologies that try to exert power over them. As Meurer (2005: 94), following Fairclough, rightly argues, once someone becomes aware of the ideological value of a specific discourse, he/she can resist it; consequently, the ideological aspect may lose or diminish its effects. The comprehension of the role of language as a social practice can cooperate to the emancipation and empowerment of powerless groups.

Language teachers have the essential role of helping students deconstruct hidden intentions and struggle against negative stereotypes, not only of their country, but also about their own identity. As stated by Bohn (2003: 169) “language classrooms are good places to explore alternative meanings, develop the capacity to ask questions, cultivate uncertainty, dialogue, and discover what others mean and how they mean”.

In sum, with the insights from CDA, students have the potential to become critically literate in relation to the ideology that underpins a text, in this sense, we hope to promote citizenship, reading what is in between the lines, recognizing that any text represents a point of view and that author and reader take positions in relation to what they write/read (SCHLATTER, 2009: 13). In this context, to promote citizenship means that students get empowered to act through language, using the genres that they can learn to produce to transform a given reality. More specifically, with the reading/literacy activity we have proposed, we hope that students recognize
that there are many ways to represent Brazil and also hope to enlarge their views of the world and encourage them to act upon the world not as passive recipients of texts, but as citizens empowered by the power of language so that they can decide what representations they will accept or which they will deny.

References


Appendix
of day, not even the exceptionists,” he con-

tended. “True the French travel agencies to sell pack-
gages to Brazil. So, on his friend’s advice, he

changed his mind. “I am not sorry I don’t speak

French,” he began again, in his most diff-
dent English. “I’m not from Brazil.” And sud-
denly the walls came tumbling down. “Ah,

Brazil!” Bré-cial!’’ bubbled the solicitous voice on the

other end. “I’ll put you right through.”

Talk about opening doors. Not long ago,

mentioning Brazil conjured images of

street children or mountains of foreign debt.

or, at best, a lady in a tuta-frutta hat. For all

the world knew, or cared, Brazil was just

a country where Latin-American—Mexico—
on steroids—tucked away somewhere be-

low the equator. Even some heads of state

seemed clueless. “It’s nice to be in Bolivia,”

Ronald Reagan told an audience on his first

state visit to Brazil in 1985. His hosts took it

as a personal triumph. “The people of Bolivia welcome

the president of Canada,” read the next

day’s newspaper. But beyond the guffaws and

guffaws was a major hole in the mappamundi

del of the Western mind.

No longer. Though the number of for-

eign tourists to Brazil has increased only

modestly in the past several years, Brazil-

sands—or Brazilian culture—now reach near-

ly every corner of the world. Forget Gisele or

Ronaldo, who are well on their way to be-

coming universal properties. Whether it’s

the conspicuous flying off the bar at Sushí

Samba in lower Manhattan, samba diva Elza

Soares bringing down the house at London’s

Jazz Café, or opera classes at Toronto or the

sun-kissed sylphs dominating catwalks from Mil-

an to Guangzhou—all over the world you turn, there’s a bit of

Brazil in the air. And it seems the Brazilian con-

testation is beyond the familiar slogans of fashion

and football. New York and Boston are

crawling with them. Some 280,000 Brazil-

ians of Japanese ancestry make their home in

Japan. Brazilian fashion models are the workhores of to-

day’s Asian fashion industry. But to an un-

precedented degree, Brazilian culture is now rubbing off on the locals. On the last Saturday of every August, the traditional

Tokyo’s tradition of a full-blown Brazilian carnival—and it’s the the
the native Japanese wearing the feathers and"
to the Oxford Dictionary, it’s getting a ‘Brazilian’

But who ever imagined English bobbies dancing with samba queens?

Not everybody is so rapturous about Brazil—starting with the natives. Often Brazil’s best talents, like Bebel Gilberto or Luciana Souza, have had to make their names abroad before anyone notices at home. “In Brazil,” Antonio Carlos Jobim, one of the godfathers of bossa nova, once quipped, “success is a personal offense.”

The self-doubt may now be waning. Having world-music Grammy winner Gilberto Gil as Culture minister certainly helps. Most envos are ponderous almoners; Gil just pulls out his guitar.

If there was a turning point for Brazilian self-esteem, it was 2006, when the coun-

try celebrated its 500th anniversary with a splashy Rediscovery exhibit. São Paulo now hosts one of the world’s top five Bi- 
defes, and Brazilian art is on display every- 
where from the Guggenheim to the Russian State Museum. “It’s like new friends,” says Edemar Cid Ferreira, director of Brazil’s Cultural, a cultural promoter. “The world has started to ask, ‘What country is this?’

In an abject way, credit may go to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the charismatic peas-

ant’s son turned president, who has stood up to protectionism in the rich world by tying up U.S. and European farmers and industrial-

ists in international trade tribunals. Playing Lilliputian to America’s unilateral Gulliver also resonates well in a time of post-Iraq-war sensibilities, where many nations feel caught between fundamentalist fury and muscle diplomacy. “The Brazilian style is about holding one’s own without being a fanatic,” says Roberto DaMattia, Brazil’s most respect-
ed anthropologist. “That could be a balancing factor in international relations.”

Perhaps. But all this could just as well be a passing fad, like the other ethnic crazes that come and go like so many plagues. One day, of course, Ronaldo’s knees will give out and idler-posed Giselle will kick off her heels and pass the fashion crown to some tribesman from Croatia or Kenya. No one is predicting that the Brazilian invasion is here to stay. But it’s going to be fun while it lasts.

With Rana Foroohar in London. AZIZA DASILVA in Tokyo.