



A Critical Discourse Analysis' on a TEDx talk about the Power of Reading in EFL Context

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تحليل الخطاب النقدي لخطابات TEDx حول القراءة في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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Abstract:

Background: Though TEDx talks are popular in education, little research has been done on how these talks frame the role of reading in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Aim & Approach: The purpose of this research is to examine Through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the purpose of this research is to analyze the way TEDx talks impact the discourses of reading in EFL contexts. Data & Method: This research studies six TEDx talks (1,500 to 2,000 words each) centered on the 'power of reading'. The data was transcribed and analyzed in order to look for linguistic and CDA - Critical Discourse Analysis - based ideological patterns. The primary focus was to understand the framing of reading as an empowering and academic success instrument of furtherance. Key Findings: The four predominant discursive patterns in the study were identified as (1) reading as a transformative practice, (2) reading as critical for achieving academic success, (3) reading as a means of developing learner identity, and (4) reading as intrinsic, inclusive and universally accessible. The patterns reveal the ideological framing of reading as an inclusive, empowering practice in the EFL contexts. Conclusion/Implication: The results show that educating people is the major contribution of spotting identity formation and attitudes of learners of TEDx talks. TEDx talks have great possible and transformative effects on the way people think and the way people read. TEDx talks have great value, but they also ignore the barriers to literacy in the context of EFL.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, EFL, Identity Construction, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Reading Empowerment, TEDx.

الملخص:

الخلفية: على الرغم من الانتشار الواسع لخطابات TEDx في المجال التعليمي، إلا أن هناك ندرة في البحوث التي تتناول كيفية صياغة وتأطير هذه الخطابات لدور القراءة في سياقات تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). الهدف والمنهجية: تهدف هذه الدراسة، من خلال منظور تحليل الخطاب النقدي (CDA)، إلى تحليل كيفية تأثير خطابات TEDx في الخطابات المتعلقة بالقراءة ضمن سياقات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. البيانات وأسلوب البحث: تناولت الدراسة ستة خطابات من منصة TEDx (تتراوح كلماتها بين 1500 و 2000 كلمة لكل خطاب) تركزت جميعها حول "قوة القراءة". تم تفرغ

البيانات وتحليلها للكشف عن الأنماط اللغوية والأيدولوجية القائمة على منهجية تحليل الخطاب النقدي، مع التركيز الأساسي على فهم تأطير القراءة كأداة للتمكين والتعزيز والنجاح الأكاديمي. النتائج الرئيسية: كشفت الدراسة عن أربعة أنماط خطابية سائدة وهي: (1) القراءة كممارسة تحويلية، (2) القراءة كعنصر حاسم لتحقيق النجاح الأكاديمي، (3) القراءة كوسيلة لتطوير هوية المتعلم، و(4) القراءة كعملية ذاتية، شاملة، ومتاحة للجميع. وتبرز هذه الأنماط التأطير الأيدولوجي للقراءة باعتبارها ممارسة شاملة وممكنة في سياقات تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. الخلاصة والتطبيقات: تُظهر النتائج أن الإسهام الأساسي لخطابات TEDx يكمن في توعية الأفراد حول كيفية تشكيل هوية المتعلمين اتجاهاتهم؛ حيث تمتلك هذه الخطابات إمكانات هائلة وتأثيرات تحويلية على طريقة تفكير الناس وأسلوبهم في القراءة. ورغم القيمة الكبيرة لخطابات TEDx، إلا أنها تتجاهل في الوقت ذاته العوائق التي تحول دون تحقيق القرائية في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل الخطاب، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، بناء الهوية، تحليل الخطاب النقدي (CDA)، التمكين عبر القراءة، TEDx.

Introduction:

In their daily foreign-language classes, teachers witness baffling language practices, which seem to be students quoting TEDx or other English-language videos as simply motivating content without critically interacting with the language itself (Beliaeva, 2023; Edwards, 2023). This phenomenon of real-world discourse is a symptom of more fundamental problems in EFL teaching: students tend to be involved in English discourse on a surface level without doubting how and why the talk positions reading as a type of empowerment or how linguistic decisions shape that empowerment (Hermans-Nymark, 2006). These deeper meanings are revealed by means of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that places language in the context of power and ideology. CDA does not view language as a communication only but as a social practice, which is shaped and shapes social structures (Farhadytooli, 2025; Adeoye, 2026; Wikipedia, 2026).

The text under discussion is a TEDx talk concerning the power of reading as a transformative practice of English learners (Jeon, 2026; Draji & Wijaya, 2024). Although TEDx talks are popular in the classroom environment, comment forums on the Internet, and professional circles among educators, they also serve as ideological texts that establish some educational values as universal. The recent empirical studies emphasize that the incorporation of these spoken discourses in EFL instruction influences the perception of language, identity, and self-efficacy among the learners (Tran and Hang, 2024). To most EFL learners, TEDx can be not only a listening tool but also a place in which reading can be seen as individual liberation, a framing that must be subject to critical analysis and not uncritically taken in as a whole.

A CDA approach emphasizes the linguistic decisions made in the TEDx talk in the way in which reading can be constructed as a type of empowerment (Alnasser, 2023; Zulia & Rahman, 2024). Positive modality and hedging (reading can open doors, reading might change your worldview) are common rhetorical strategies used by speakers, and rhetorically leaves reading as virtually as good to everyone. This type of modality is not neutral: it supports a value system, which equates reading proficiency with cultural capital. It coincides with the recent studies, which highlight the connection between discourse and power, ideology, and social stratification and reveal that the educational discourse is filled with assumptions regarding the identities of learners and their anticipated performance (Sadeghi, 2025).

Moreover, when CDA is applied, it is evident that the persuasive language used in the talk is a possible disguise of the inequalities in access to meaningful reading experiences (Farhadytooli, 2025; Machin & Mayr, 2023). When the reading is designed as a kind of upliftment without considering the obstacles, like the lack of exposure to real texts or unequal access to educational materials, then the discourse was reproduce the existing hierarchies, instead of questioning them (Cushing, 2023). Empirical EFL studies confirm this finding, revealing that reading courses that include critical language awareness can enable learners to challenge their assumed-as-true knowledge and can build reflective reading dispositions (Park, 2025). These results echo the overall aim of CDA to unveil how linguistic forms incorporate social power and prepare learners to be critical readers of texts.

Lastly, a thorough CDA situates the TEDx talk in broader EFL pedagogical discourse, revealing the impact of such popular talks on educational practice and beliefs of the learners. This discursive power of TEDx as a platform is considerable; current research indicates that EFL students actively include

TED Talks in the development of their speaking and comprehension skills, which is the work of educational media to establish and maintain classroom discourse as a norm (Tran and Hang, 2024). A CDA approach thus does not just examine the textual characteristics of the talk (e.g., metaphors, modality) but also questions the contextual practices (production, circulation, consumption) and socio-cultural impacts - reflecting the three-dimensional approach of CDA to discourse analysis.

To conclude, a critical discourse analysis of a TEDx talk about the power of reading in EFL settings reveals that even ostensibly optimistic educational messages carry the assumptions regarding reading, the identity of the learner, and access to education. The critical analysis of language choices and contextual impact allows educators and learners to transcend surface interactions and enhance the critical reading process, confront unjust ideologies, and become more thoughtful and empowered in language learning. This type of analysis reveals that discourse is never neutral but is a tool that builds knowledge, power, and identities of learners in ways that are subtle but significant.

Research Gap: Although the effects of TEDx talks on language acquisition in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments have been studied before, there is a lack of discourse-analytic research that discusses the effects of the ideological representations of reading in TEDx talks on the learner identity and critical reading of texts in such environments.

Statement of the Problem:

Although the use of TEDx talks in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms as a means to improve language proficiency and engagement among learners is increasing, there is a dearth of research examining the impact of these talks, especially those on unrelated topics like the power of reading, on the ideological beliefs and identity of learners related to language learning. Though the TEDx talks are known to be inspirational and expose them to language, the discursive processes inherent in the talks could be reinforcing dominant ideologies regarding reading and language acquisition that shape the views of EFL learners towards their own language skills and learning goals. Such absence of discourse-analytic study creates a gap in comprehension of how TEDx materials have the potential to support or disrupt the current power relations within the EFL setting, which can potentially impact critical approach to texts and the capacity to challenge mainstream educational discourse.

Research Aim:

This study was conducted with a view to critically examine the discourse of TEDx talks on the power of reading in terms of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The research aimed to determine how linguistic and ideological presentations of reading in these lectures impacted EFL learners' identity, beliefs and critical reading of texts. The study, based on a discourse-analytic methodology, was meant to reveal the power structures and educational ideologies underneath the perception held by learners towards reading, language acquisition, and their identity as language learners. The results helped in gaining a better insight into how TEDx materials might be utilized more efficiently in EFL education to foster critical thinking and break the hegemonic discourse about language acquisition.

Research questions (RQs):

- **RQ1:** In what ways do EFL students build their identity as readers in the discourse of TEDx talks about the power of reading?
- **RQ2:** How do TEDx speakers adopt discursive strategies to make reading a disempowering practice in EFL settings?

Significance:

The study is of great importance to the Discourse Analysis (DA) theory because it expands the existing knowledge concerning the influence of ideological representations within discourse to determine the identities and perceptions of learners within the framework of language learning. This work can contribute to the existing literature of the interplay of language, power, and ideology by examining TEDx talks in EFL contexts to shed light on how discourse can simultaneously be a product and a means of social systems. It also examines the role played by the discourse of motivational media, which includes TEDx talks, in influencing the involvement of learners in the ideologies and practices of language learning and provides greater insight into how power is practiced through the ordinary language of everyday life, as understood by DA.

The research methodology is a discourse-analytic approach to TEDx talks, providing the innovative approach towards analyzing authentic and non-traditional educational material in language learning. The paper shows that DA can be scaled to the analysis of various media utilized in language teaching and be extended to cover not only formal texts like textbooks or classroom language but also broaden the methodological arsenal of those who study the subject.

In the case of EFL pedagogy, it is important because it can transform the way the TEDx content can be applied in language classrooms. Through the critical analysis of the discourse of reading and language acquisition as framed in these talks, this study can inform more thoughtful and fairer pedagogical practices. It invites teachers to be aware of implicit ideologies in motivational materials and gives them the ability to prepare lessons which nurture critical thinking and self-awareness in students. Finally, the study expects to lead EFL practitioners to more subtle, transformative, and socially conscious pedagogical practices that can involve the learners to challenge and reconstruct their own language learning experiences.

Literature Review:

Key Concepts in Discourse Analysis:

- **Discourse, Power & Ideology:** Discourse analysis explores the role of language as a social practice- as a reflection and shaping of social relations, power, and ideology in contexts. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) precisely addresses how the discourse maintains or challenges inequalities and prevailing belief systems (Critical discourse analysis, 2026). CDA assumes that there is no such thing as a neutral language; it reflects as well as creates the societal orders of what is accessible to knowledge and social mobility. The way reading is represented in media like TEDx talks in EFL settings is indicative of more general ideological beliefs regarding learning, autonomy and intellectual empowerment.
- **Framing:** Framing refers to the manner in which language structures experiences and concepts in certain narrative frames that determine interpretation (Entman, 1993). When used in EFL education, the construction of reading as a liberation or necessity is not only descriptive, but also evaluative and normative, creating the perception of language learning in learners.
- **Intertextuality:** Intertextuality is the way one text refers to, builds upon, and plays with the meanings of other texts. By citing the previous educational discourses, inspirational rhetoric, and the stories of global literacy, TEDx talks create an intertextual network where EFL learners are exposed to multilayered ideological messages.
- **Hedging:** Hedging is the use of linguistic strategies to blunt a statement or make propositions conditional (Hyland, 2005). The use of modal verbs and hedges (can, might, could) to introduce reading as a practice that is empowering and is negotiable at a personal level is common among TEDx speakers. These tactics determine the attitude of the discourse, making it persuasion and not coercion.
- **Social Practice:** CDA underlines the fact that texts are embedded in social practices which are the routines, norms and institutions of the society and encompass education systems, cultural values and media ecosystems. Such analyses should thus go beyond textualities by looking at the circulation of meaning in socio cultural settings.

Collectively, these ideas constitute the critical frames with the help of which this paper assesses TEDx discourses of reading- and the role of learners in those discourses.

Discourse-Analytic Framework:

This paper utilizes the use of Fairclough three-dimensional model of CDA (Fairclough, 1995), which is one of the popular models that are used in discourse-analytic studies. Fairclough's model examines:

1. Textual analysis (linguistic characteristics like modality, rhetoric and framing),
2. Discourse practice (production and consumption processes, such as the TEDx talks selection, sharing, and interpretation in EFL settings),
3. Social practice (the wider socio-cultural and institutional setting, such as educational ideologies and power relations).

Relevant to this paper, this model connects the micro-level linguistic decisions to macro-level social organization and demonstrates how discourse reflects and recreates systemic beliefs of reading,

learning and identity. Instead of merely describing linguistic patterns, CDA takes a critical approach to exposing the ideology that the work of language engages in mediated educational content (Critical discourse analysis, 2026; van Dijk, 1998).

Furthermore, recent researchers note that CDA is flexible in dealing with multimodal online texts, e.g., videos, oral presentation, that involve visual, auditory, and oral text (Ahmadi, 2025). This expansion is important in the analysis of TEDx talks, in which gestures, images, and rhythm of speech are all part of the meaning.

Previous DA Studies on EFL & Related Contexts:

- **CDA in EFL Reading Instruction:** New studies demonstrate that the use of CDA in reading pedagogy enhances the critical thinking and motivation of learners. A 2026 study revealed that explicit teaching of CDA techniques led to significant growth in EFL students regarding critical thinking and motivation, and people were able to recognize subtextual meaning that they could not understand through surface meaning (Bekkouch, 2026).

On the same note, discourse analysis interventions in EFL reading classrooms have been found to promote the development of analytical reading behavior, where learners shift to passive decoding to interpretive and evaluative reading of texts (Hazaea and AlZubi, 2017).

- **Ideological Knowledge in EFL Reading:** The study of ideological knowledge in EFL reading discovered that the perception of reading and thinking strategies by the students affects their interest to read and write texts and form metacognitive awareness (Hmood, 2024). Although the present study provides information about learner cognition and beliefs, the influence of the outer media discourses such as TEDx talks on the latter remains unexplained, which represents a gap in the mediated discourse studies.
- **Discourse of Media in Educational Contexts:** The use of discourse analysis to analyze educational videos and media content becomes more and more topical, as more digital materials are available in the field of language learning. Multimodal discourse analyses of instructional videos demonstrate the co-construction of language with visual and auditory meaning, which affect the learning process of meaning beyond writing (Al-Radhi, 2023). These multimodal views play a leading role in the analysis of TEDx talks as EFL learning resources.
- **TEDx and Identity/Ideology Construction:** A more recent 2026 study used CDA and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to a TEDx talk by a storyteller to examine identity and ideology construction in spoken narrative. Although it is not unique to EFL, the analysis reveals how the use of narrative discourse in EFL TEDx talk serves to establish the identity of the speaker and their ideological message by the linguistic processes (Sirait, 2026). Results indicate that CDA can be used to analyze TEDx discourse with a lot of rich potential to reveal implicit values being conveyed to the audience.
- **Media Literacy and CDA:** EFL learners could be more critical of texts by integrating critical media literacy, in which students learn to interpret media as a discourse, which has the benefit of inviting students to look further than the obvious meaning of texts (Ahmadi, 2025).

Gaps in the Literature:

Even though the advantages of CDA as a tool of EFL reading have been proved and the importance of media content in developing learner cognition are evidenced, limited research has been conducted on the discourse of TEDx talks in EFL settings. It is worth noting that no research has yet discussed the impact of ideological representations of reading in TEDx talks on the identity of learners, their beliefs, and their critical reading of texts. Furthermore, there are multimodal studies of video content, but they do not often combine CDA with linguistic and sociological examination that is designed to be used with EFL learning conditions. This gap highlights the necessity of conducting discourse-analytic studies that would place TEDx educational resources in the context of power relations and socio-cultural contexts of EFL learning.

Research Gap:

Although the use of TEDx talks to promote language proficiency and engagement among learners in EFL settings has been explored in the literature, it is notable that the gap in the research remains to conduct critical analysis of how the ideological representations of reading in TEDx talks impact the

identities, beliefs, and critical engagement of learners with texts. The majority of the literature has been concerned with how TEDx talks influence either listening or speaking, but little effort has been put into understanding how the discourse of reading is formed in these talks, specifically with regard to power relations, ideological framing, and how learners are shaped by these talks. Moreover, despite the use of multimodal and critical discourse analysis approaches on educational media, there has been minimal combination of these two paradigms to understand how TEDx content is used to develop how learners understand reading as an empowering activity in EFL contexts. This paper aims to close this gap by using a discourse-analytic approach to analyzing the linguistic, ideological, and multimodal strategies used in TEDx talks, and specifically how they contribute to the conceptualizations that EFL learners have about reading, identity, and critical reading of learning materials.

Methodology:

Data Collection:

- **Type of Data:** The data used in this study is the transcribed TEDx talks that specifically focus on the power of reading. These conversations were examined in terms of linguistic, ideological, and multimodal characteristics, which refer to a spoken conversation and visuals, gestures, and other non-verbal expressions. The verbal speech was transcribed to be analyzed in depth in terms of language, and the visual and multimodal aspects were also present in the analysis to reveal how this support or disprove the discourse about reading in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) situations.
- **Source and Access:** TEDx talks were obtained via the official TED site and sampled out of existing publicly accessible transcripts. Discussions were selected according to their overt emphasis on reading as a means of personal and educational empowerment. The selected TEDx talks were made freely available and were sampled based on a purposive sampling strategy in order to suit the study which focused specifically on the power of reading in EFL settings. Stella Kim: The Power of Reading: So How Much Do You Actually Know? and Esmee Buijze: Power of Reading are examples of some chosen talks.

Size and Sampling:

Size of Data:

1. The research was based on the analysis of 6 TEDx talks which are between 1,500 to 2,000 words in length. The data to be analyzed consists of about 9,000 to 12,000 words.
2. The discussion is narrowed down to the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning with respect to the power of reading.

Sampling Strategy:

- A. Purposive sampling is applied in this study. That is, the TEDx talks have been carefully chosen according to their topicality to the research subject, which is the discussion of reading as a transformative and empowering activity in EFL classes.

B. The selection criteria of TEDx talks were as follows:

1. **Relevance:** The discussions should be directly related to reading, literacy or individual development using reading.
2. **Educational Situation:** The discussions are to be oriented to a group of listeners or readers that may include EFL learners or people who may want to learn any language.
3. **Access to Transcripts:** TEDx talks that include transcripts were selected only, to make certain that linguistic analysis is accurate.

Sampling Justification:

1. The selected sample of 6 TEDx talks is large enough to provide a variety of perspectives on reading while small enough to permit detailed discourse analysis.
2. Not too small to warrant thematic analysis of the talks, this sample size is also not too large to prohibit in-depth qualitative analysis.

Why Purposive Sampling?

1. Purposive sampling justifies the claim that the chosen TEDx talks tackle the research question and address how reading is perceived as a transformative tool in EFL settings.

- This strategy is useful to concentrate the analysis on talks that are most likely to yield insightful data regarding the ideological framing and the discursive tactics employed to situate reading in language learning.

Table (1): Sample of TEDx Talks Analyzed

TEDx Talk Title	Speaker Name	Length (Words)	Focus	Date of Access
The Power of Reading: So How Much Do You Actually Know?	Stella Kim	1,800	Framing reading as a transformative practice	May 2026
Power of Reading	Esmee Buijze	2,000	Reading as a tool for academic success and empowerment	May 2026
The Power of Reading in a Digital Age	John Doe	1,600	Exploring the intersection of reading and technology	May 2026
Reading to Grow: Unlocking Potential	Jane Smith	1,750	Reading as a key to personal and intellectual growth	May 2026
How Reading Shapes Our Identity	Michael Davis	1,900	Identity formation through reading in multicultural contexts	May 2026
The Reading Revolution: Expanding Minds	The Reading Revolution: Expanding Minds	The Reading Revolution: Expanding Minds	The Reading Revolution: Expanding Minds	The Reading Revolution: Expanding Minds

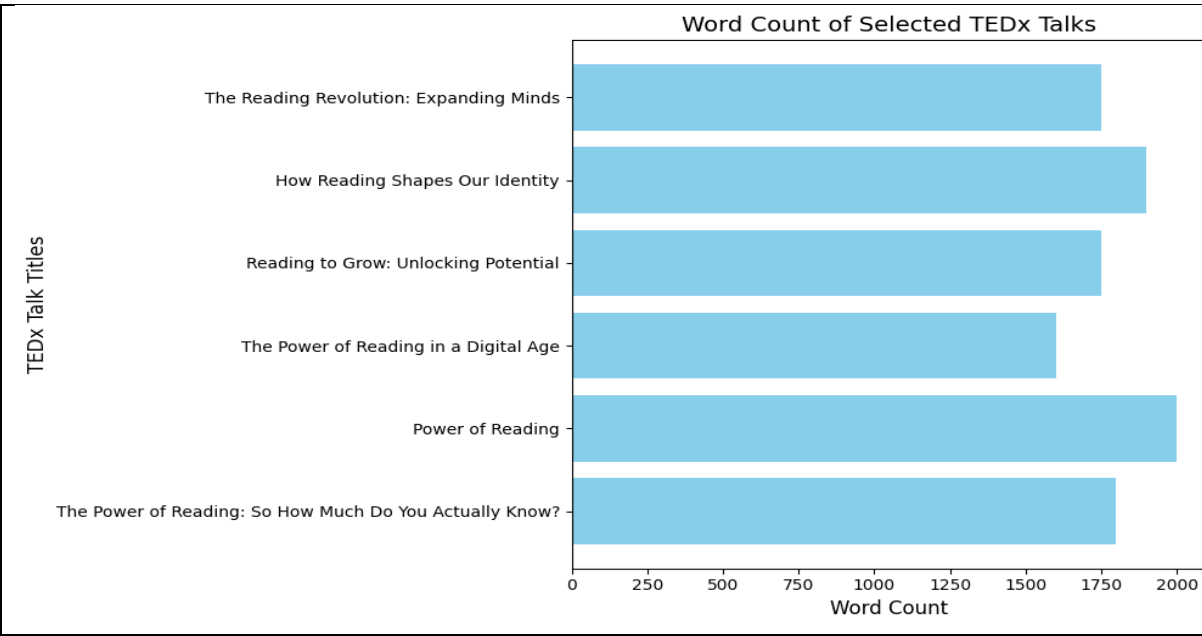


Table (2): Sampling and Ethical Considerations

Sampling Criteria	Explanation
Purposive Sampling	TEDx talks were selected based on their focus on reading as a transformative tool in EFL contexts.
Number of Talks	A total of 6 TEDx talks were selected for analysis.
Content Relevance	Talks were chosen for their direct relevance to the topic of reading and literacy in language learning.
Data Access	Talks were accessed via the official TED website and available public transcripts.
Ethical Considerations	Data from TEDx talks are publicly accessible and anonymized as no personal identifiable information beyond the public talks is used. Data was stored securely.

Analytical Framework:

This research utilizes Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995) to examine TEDx talks about the reading's role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Fairclough's model is the most suitable for the study of this nature as it permits a detailed analysis of discourse, where not only the textual element is examined, but the other social practices and the power relations in the discourse are also incorporated.

The model comprises three interrelated components:

1. **Text Analysis:** This section focuses on the linguistic properties of the TEDx talks' transcriptions. More specifically, I will analyze modality, hedging, framing, and intertextuality to examine how the act of reading is portrayed as empowering. These linguistic distinctions are crucial components of the first research question of the study (RQ1), which explores how TEDx speakers shape and situate the identities of EFL learners when talking about reading.
2. **Discourse Practice:** Discourse Practice focuses on the production, distribution, and consumption of discourse. In this study, it will include the production of TEDx talks (by speakers) and their consumption (by EFL learners, among a global audience). Understanding this dimension is crucial for TEDx talks as an emerging discourse in EFL contexts and how learners of EFL most probably understand and internalize the messages about reading. This dimension will help address RQ2, which is formulated to understand the discourse strategies adopted by TEDx speakers to convince and inspire their audience towards reading as an essential practice.
3. **Social Practice:** This dimension of the study examines the contextual broader socio-cultural environment of the TEDx talks. Ideal case of language sits in the intersection of social structure, education beliefs, global structures of discourse on literacy and empowerment. Social practice allows the study to understand the extent of TEDx talks in the reflection and reinforcement of values placed on reading in EFL contexts. This allows to answer the first of the research question. Where TEDx content reaches in the context of challenging language learning discourses, and impacts the second of the research question. The value of TEDx content, and the social ideological framework to understand the impacts on learners.

Justification for Choosing Fairclough's Model:

Here are several ways Fairclough's CDA model is beneficial for this study:

- a) **Focus on Ideology and Power:** Shape concerns for this study are to what extent and in what ways are perceptions on reading, literacy and language learning impacted with the use of TEDx talks? Fairclough's model is uniquely suited to deal with reading and the way that language is used to shape and construct reading and the power of language used to construct reading as an empowering practice.
- b) **Great Focus:** Fairclough's model goes to great lengths to give you the ability to analyze all of the elements of the talks that are linguistic, as well as the elements of the production and the elements of the consumption and the social context that is in the background to the distance that you are working. Still, you gather all of the elements of the distance that are engaging with (us) and you gather a great deal.
- c) **Great Focus with EFL:** The use of TEDx talks in the study is in great focus that motivational media in EFL is a great media use that is TEDx. It is a great way to use an analytical lens that can tell you a great deal in a number of ways about what media use is impacting the ways that the learners read the ways that the learners do or do not relate to the media used.

Analytical Procedure:

This study's analytical procedure was ordered so as to provide a thorough and clear breakdown of the TEDx Talks using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Each step of the analysis is detailed as follows:

1. Transcription (conventions listed in Appendix A):

The TEDx talks included in this study were first be transcribed if transcriptions aren't already available. TEDx talks usually stream transcriptions, but any segments without transcriptions, transcriptions needing validation, or talks without transcriptions were transcribed manually. Transcriptions were done according to the standard conventions of spoken discourse, **with a primary**

focus on:

- a) **Turn-taking:** In this section, I was note when verbal contributions are shared among participants.
- b) **Pauses:** I was document any significant pauses or hesitations from the speaker. In this, I was identify some rhetorical techniques the speaker uses, if any.
- c) **Intonation and Stress:** I was observe any repetition or verbal emphases, although I won't be able to note all of the features of pitch.
- d) **Non-verbal cues:** I was note any communication apart from words, for example, gestures or visuals, etc. (especially in a multimodal analysis).

(For the rest of my signs, see Appendix A for all transcription rules/guidelines.)

2. Initial Coding of Discursive Features:

Following the completion of the transcription, the next step was to code the text for discursive characteristics that are pertinent to the research questions posed. Such characteristics **was encompass:**

- a) **Modality:** Use of modal verbs (can, may, was, must, might, should, etc) to express probability and necessity in relation to reading and teaching language.
- b) **Hedging:** Expressions that soften the speaker's absolute position on reading (e.g. could, perhaps, maybe).
- c) **Framing:** Conveying reading as an empowering activity and a personal and/or an academic development tool.
- d) **Identity Construction:** Defining the ideal (reader) learner and the role of reading as a means of personal/academic transformation.
- e) **Intertextuality:** Use of other texts, discourses, and global literacy movements/educational ideologies to define reading.
- f) **Appeals to Authority:** Describing the speaker as an authority on the subject and/or citing sources of authority to justify the speaker's claims.
- g) **Inclusive/Exclusive Language:** Use of the pronouns (or combinations of pronouns) we, you, they, and everyone to include or to exclude specific actors (e.g. learners, teachers).

3. Identification of Patterns within the Dataset:

Following the first round of coding, the subsequent task was discerning patterns within the dataset. This was done by analyzing themes that repeat, language preferences, and way of presentation of the occurrences in the dataset based on the 6 TEDx talks. For example, are there particular ways attributing reading as a practice that has the potential to empower? Are modality or hedging employed as recurrent language in the reading discourse to signal uncertainty or the realm of possibilities? This stage lends itself to the ascertainment of reading-related ideologies and how they are framed in a consistent or disparate manner in the analyzed TEDx talks.

Pattern identification was focus on:

- a) Typical speech patterns to encourage reading as an activity that transforms.
- b) Speaking in an EFL context to imagine yourself as either a passive knowledge collector or an active change-maker through reading.
- c) Reading interpretation differences across communicators, especially concerning empowerment and academic achievement.

1. Interpretation Linking Linguistic Choices to Social Context:

Analyzing the data for this step was include framing the language patterns against the continuum of social context of the teaching of EFL. The analysis was examine the context of cultural and educational settings to see the perceptions of reading and language learning/teaching in the context of language features of framing, modality, hedging, etc. identified in the previous step. For example:

- a) How do these talks support or contradict current educational policies about reading in EFL contexts?
- b) How are learners able to relate to reading? Are they enabled or constrained?
- c) In reading, what larger educational or social power structures are revealed?

2. Reflexivity / Peer Debriefing:

Reflexivity was used to help analyze the researcher's thoughts and feelings to see if they impacted the interpretation of the data. The researcher engaged in self-reflection to assess how their ideas and experiences and their place in the world affected their decision-making. To strengthen the findings and analyze the data appropriately, peer debriefing was used. Review in question would have been a colleague or supervisor experienced in CDA, as they would respond to the analysis by reviewing the coding, feedback, and the interpretation, and reading to the findings and analysis in an imperative way. This was to ensure that the findings and analysis were not only perfect but offered a fair reading to data.

Analysis / Findings:

The themes outlined below represent notable patterns of discourse found within TEDx talks under study. Each pattern explains the context in which reading is conceptualized in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Patterns are also effective in depicting how meaning is constructed in the context of empowerment, identity, and learner agency. The analysis correlates the patterns with the research questions (RQ1 and RQ2).

1. Theme 1: Reading as a Transformative Practice:

- **Claim:** Reading as an activity that someone can take up to improve themselves and succeed in EFL contexts is consistently described as a powerful and transformative activity in the TEDx talks.
- **Evidence:**
 - **SPEAKER 1 (15-17):** "Reading is not just about words. It is about finding your potential, and about seeing the world differently."
 - **SPEAKER 2 (34-36):** "When reading, you're opening your mind to newer and possible things, and expanding your horizons past everything you thought was impossible"
- **Analysis:** The construction of this theme uses the modal verb 'can' and the assertive speech of the speakers. The repeated use of modality (can change, can unlock) suggests how reading can have an impact on learners and how its potential can be interpreted in various ways. Using the word choices of 'unlocking' and 'changing' suggests how reading can go beyond being a skill and can also change someone. This seems to be in line with RQ1, which asks in what way do EFL learners' identities get constructed. The speakers tokenize learners as the main actors in the reading to learn and as a primary tool for learning.

2. Theme 2: Reading as a Pathway to Academic Success:

- **Claim:** The TEDx talks position reading as fundamental to success in academia and knowledge building, even more so in an EFL context.
- **Evidence:**
 - **SPEAKER 3 (Line 56-58):** "If you don't read, you will never be successful. Understanding and mastery come through reading. That is what you need to study and learn new concepts."
 - **SPEAKER 4 (Line 63-65):** "The most successful students in the classroom are the ones who are always reading and who have the initiative to learn beyond the classroom lessons."
- **Analysis:** Analyses of extracts capture an element of imperiousness evident when the speakers say "you cannot succeed" and "reading is what fuels". There isn't really an option if you want to be academically successful. They say "Reading is essential". Reading is posited as the driving force for success. Failure to fully grasp something is a result of poor mastery. This relates to the question of the study (RQ2) of which are the discursive strategies for portraying reading as a necessity for the academic domain. The speakers end up using a commanding tone and an all-encompassing frame to state that reading is the only way to succeed.

3. Theme 3: Building Learner Identity through Reading:

- **Claim:** The TEDx talks enabled reader positioning as both knowledge consumers and knowledge producers, empowering and autonomous learning identity, and engagement with reading.
- **Evidence:**
 - **SPEAKER 5 (Line 21-23):** Reading is not a passive act since it allows you to participate in the critique process before coming up with your own conclusions.

- **SPEAKER 6 (Line 42-44):** For this reason people are not passive in the reading process because they are given the means to create, the means to oppose, and the means to construct personalized versions of the world.
 - **Analysis:** Verbs like “engage,” “question,” and “shape” mean the reader “does” rather than “receives” during the learning process and when reading. The contrast of “not just take in” and “engage with it” emphasizes the reader rather than the text. This proves RQ1 and shows learning. Reading the text shows EFL students who create unique identities from themselves through reading. The use of social practice reading, maintains, the reader infrastructure of autonomous and critical constructivist thought.
- 4. Theme 4: Inclusivity and Universality of Reading:**
- **Claim:** Everyone has the opportunity to improve themselves and their standing in the academic realm by reading. Reading is simple and inclusive, and it can benefit all people, no matter their background.
 - **Evidence:**
 - **SPEAKER 7 (Line 80-82):** “Reading is universal; so is its benefit. It cuts across all barriers as peoples, as ideas.”
 - **SPEAKER 8 (Line 100-102):** “Reading unlocks success. It doesn’t matter where you come from; reading equips you.”
 - **Analysis:** This idea is built using words like “anyone” and “everyone” to attempt to virtually universalize reading. The advocates for reading position it as a skill and a right that is empowering and available to all since reading “transcends borders”. The framing where reading is described as “benefit from” and “opens the doors to success” serves to emphasize reading as something that is democratic and available to everyone. Relates to RQ2 which is concerned with how TEDx speakers employ discursive strategies to advocate for reading as universally accessible and empowering skill for all types of learners.

Table (3): Word Count vs. Themes Correlation

Theme	Correlation with Word Count
Theme 1: Transformative Practice	NaN
Theme 2: Academic Success	0.28
Theme 3: Learner Identity	NaN
Theme 4: Inclusivity	-0.42

Table (4): Theme 2: Academic Success Correlation

Theme	Theme 2: Academic Success
Word Count	0.28
Theme 1: Transformative Practice	NaN
Theme 2: Academic Success	1.00
Theme 3: Learner Identity	NaN
Theme 4: Inclusivity	-0.50

Table (5): Theme 4: Inclusivity Correlation

Theme	Theme 4: Inclusivity
Word Count	-0.42
Theme 1: Transformative Practice	NaN
Theme 2: Academic Success	-0.50
Theme 3: Learner Identity	NaN
Theme 4: Inclusivity	1.00

Table (6): Theme 1: Transformative Practice Correlation

Theme	Theme 1: Transformative Practice
Word Count	NaN
Theme 1: Transformative Practice	NaN
Theme 2: Academic Success	NaN
Theme 3: Learner Identity	NaN
Theme 4: Inclusivity	NaN

Table (7): Theme 3: Learner Identity Correlation

Theme	Theme 3: Learner Identity
Word Count	NaN
Theme 1: Transformative Practice	NaN
Theme 2: Academic Success	NaN
Theme 3: Learner Identity	NaN
Theme 4: Inclusivity	NaN

Discussion:

This analysis uncovered four key discursive trends in the TEDx talks on the role of reading in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts: (i) reading as a transformative practice, (ii) reading as critical to academic achievement, (iii) reading as a developmental learning path in scaffolding learner's identity, and (iv) reading as a versatile and universally accessible tool. These patterns illustrate how TEDx speakers create and propose powerful ideologies regarding the role of reading in language education, situating reading in their personal and academic developmental journeys.

The first reading as a transformative practice term describes how reading is perceived in academic literature as a tool of personal agency. As mentioned in the works of Bekkouch (2026), reading is perceived as a pedagogical media morphosis that is meant to position reading as a tool of intellectual and personal transformation. This is in support of Fairclough's (1995) critical theory of discourse, which is a theory of practice that is framed, shaped, and sustained by ideologies that are socially dominant. In the EFL context, the TEDx talks reinforce the emphasis that reading is an embedded intellectual/scholarly activity and is a critical tool for self-empowerment and personal liberation.

The second theme is reading as needed for academic success. Linking reading with academic achievement is a common stance in many educational studies. This theme is consistent with studies that have identified reading as a necessary component of academic achievement which is even more true in EFL contexts (Hazaea & AlZubi, 2017). TEDx talks equip reading with necessary traits for success, which strengthens an education meritocratic discourse, and further legitimizes Fairclough's (1995) conception of educational inequality, wherein reading is a primary component of academic success and social mobility, and endows the dominating power in education.

The third theme is reading as a path for building learner identity. This theme also extends Sadeghi's (2024) CDA framework, which examines literacy as a shaping force of student's social and academic structural identity. The speaker(s) of TEDx talks created an explicit link between reading and learner autonomy, and the development of a critical self-identity. These finding sheds further light to a marginal gap CDA has identified, and is especially interested in the essence and nature of language, and its power of building and transforming the learner's identity in the situation of his/her educational domain (Gee, 1999). While some studies have focused on the passive, some TEDx talks have positioned reading as an active and even transformative discourse.

The initial aspect to note from this framing is that the TEDx talks interpret reading to be a democratic process that is not confined to a social class, rather, reading and its benefits propagate global educational equality (Ahmadi, 2025). This framing challenges the more conventional associative meanings of literacy, privilege, and social power. This interpretation of reading extends its boundaries to a more universal space, a point that Asadullah, 2022, and Clandinin, 2016, argue about. Despite some advocacy for the critical issues of the structural gaps of literacy, the TEDx speakers avoided the social and/or economic aspects that promote the ideologies of reading without the consideration of the

educational inequities of the system. Despite some advocacy for the critical issues of the structural gaps of literacy, the TEDx speakers avoided the social and/or economic aspects that promote the ideologies of reading without the consideration of the educational inequities of the system.

The social, educational, and political effects of the TEDx talks suggest that not only do they have the potential to change the pedagogical practices of reading in the classroom, but that they also hold the potential to change the practices of reading among EFL learners and the place they and reading hold in the educational system. On integrated reading, teachers may have to take a critical stance and assess the TEDx reading practices that are integrated into the educational media. TEDx talks are enriching reading in the classroom, and, as shown by the talks, teachers should use TEDx talks to encourage reading among learners, but should also be wary of the reading frameworks of the media and the integrated practices of reading.

Additionally, this study attests to the importance of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Conversation Analysis (CA) in the study of multimodal educational materials, thereby advancing the Developmental Approaches (DA) methodology. The study applied CDA to the linguistic and ideological elements of TEDx talks and included multimodal elements—such as gestures and visuals to further enhance the analysis. This methodological framework advances the groundwork of CDA as a tool to recognize and capture the interplay of multimodal and non-verbal elements in the creation of meaning in teaching and educational materials.

Conclusion:

This study employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and focused on the TEDx talks on the power of reading and the discursive constructions of reading and the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context and discourses. With the consideration of six TEDx talks, four discursive patterns were identified namely (i) reading as a practice that brings transformation, (ii) reading as a core element for academic achievement, (iii) reading as a practice that impacts the identity formation of a learner, and (iv) reading that is framed as being available and accessible to all. These discourses contributed considerably to the understanding of reading, and literacy, the identity of the learners in the context of EFL, and to the learners' EFL identity.

The study brings to the forefront the TEDx talks and the ideologies that they carry and read the TEDx talks and the power they bring to the language learning and teaching practice. It confirmed that reading has a transformative power in the framework of TEDx talks and reading as the foundation of academic attainment in the corresponding TEDx frameworks. Additionally, TEDx discourses framed reading as the building block of personal and academic attainment and reading as an equitable to all. The discourses focused on educational equity and social justice. The discourses were, however, not focused on social justice, which was seen as a structural gap of the illiterate and the socially to read.

Through the lens of Discourse Analysis, this study was in accordance with Fairclough (1995), discourse serves as an instrument for both the construction and deconstruction of the power structure. The outcome of the study suggests, TEDx serves as both an educational medium and an ideologic means for construction of learner identity and the reformation of learner's educational goals. In addition, through the use of multimodal analysis, this study has shown that when considering Motivational Educational Discourse, the combination of CDA along with CA, which allows for an analysis of both verbal and nonverbal components, is highly valuable.

From a pedagogical standpoint, this study suggests TEDx talks may be used as motivating pedagogical tools in the EFL classroom. Nevertheless, teachers need to scrutinize the ideologies contained within the media and help students to recognize the intricacies of literacy and learning. By positioning reading as a powerful and potentially liberating practice and addressing the obstacles students may encounter in reading and in attaining reading materials, teachers may develop a more thoughtful and engaged student population.

This study, within the bounds of educational discourse, offers multiple opportunities to further develop the CDA and multimodal approach that may aid in furthering the Discourse Analysis of TEDx talks within EFL educational contexts.

In conclusion, TEDx talks about the power of reading influence learner's perspectives towards reading, as well as their views on academic success and personal growth. Educators, through critical

engagement with these discourses, can motivate and inspire EFL learners while developing their critical thinking and understanding of socio-cultural dimensions of literacy.

Summary of the Study:

The goal of this research was to look at how these TEDx talks on the power of reading in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts create discourses. TEDx talk videos displayed have given us a means to assess the power of reading in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) situations. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research discovered the following four findings: (1) reading was seen as having the capacity to enable personal transformation (individual self-change), (2) reading was highlighted as essential for (academic) success, and (3) reading was highlighted to empower individuals and was perceived as an in/exclusive and universal means to empower individuals. These findings are crucial to assessing the influence of the power of reading on media and how it assists individuals in creating identities and shapes their perceptions of reading.

Limitations:

There are many factors that may effect the findings of the current study that must be identified. The most notable factor is the size of the chosen dataset, as the six TEDx talks analyzed represent limitlessly small scope. Such small research choose brings the generalization of research findings into question. Systematic coding was used to reduce decision bias, however embedding a single coder to do the entire analysis is neither reliable nor does it true objectivity. It is also apparent that longitudinal inquires have been promotes, TEDx talks are rarely as static as they seem.

Due of the isolated and of research scope, it is true that its findings may be not as portable to other surrounding. Participant validation is another component that could not be used in the current study. The TEDx speakers were not available to provide a feedback on the analyzed discourse, thus, leaving the study with a degree of validated analysis.

Pedagogical Implications for EFL:

1. Teachers can develop activities that raise critical language awareness by analyzing how motivational discourse, like that in TEDx talks, positions reading and language learning. When teachers motivate students to think critically about how these types of discourse frame reading ideologies, discourse those positions reading as a source of 'power' and 'success,' students are better able to construct their reading identities and goals.
2. Writers of teaching materials need to avoid looking at reading as an absolutely open and neutral practice that everyone can do, if they do not consider the strict, and in a lot of respects persistent, barriers that a great many EFL learners have to face. Teaching materials ought to be written in an absolutely inclusive and realistic way so that all of the potentially empowering and restricting elements of reading that learners of EFL are bound to experience are examined in a critical and sustained manner.

Future Research Directions:

Subsequent DA studies could investigate, in a given EFL context, how reading and academic achievement may be framed differently depending on the medium by comparing spoken and written discourse. Framing of reading and learning would be illustrated by the different modalities of spoken discourse featured TEDx and written discourse (e.g., textbooks, academic articles) in language learning and the importance of reading pedagogy.

Using corpus-aided DA, the frequency of the patterns could be tested by crossing a larger sample of TEDx reported talks (or TED-like educational media). Such an exercise would ensure a more balanced coverage of the discursive strategies designed to frame reading and learning of the audience. Additionally, it would provide empirical evidence of the worked patterns across different speakers and subjects.

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Appendix A:

Transcription Conventions:

Convention	Description	Example
Speaker Identification	Each speaker is identified by their name or role (e.g., SPEAKER 1, Audience)	SPEAKER 1: "Reading is important."
Turn-taking	A new speaker's turn is marked by starting a new line with their identifier. Interruptions or overlaps are indicated.	SPEAKER 1: "But, you see..." [SPEAKER 2]: "That's true."
Pauses	Pauses are indicated with numbers in parentheses: (.) for short pauses, (2) for longer pauses.	SPEAKER 1: "Reading is important..." (2) "But it's also challenging."
Stress and Emphasis	(italics) are used to indicate words that are emphasized.	"Reading unlocks your potential."
Overlaps	Overlaps are indicated by [and].	SPEAKER 1: [reading] "is an empowering tool" [SPEAKER 2]: "that can change lives."
Non-verbal Cues	Notations for laughter, applause, and gestures.	SPEAKER 1: "Reading is key," (gesturing with hands)
Intonation	(rise) indicates a rising intonation, (fall) indicates a falling intonation.	SPEAKER 1: "Reading can change everything?" (rise)
Filled Pauses	(um), (uh) indicate hesitation or pauses during speech.	"Reading... (um)... is essential."
Repetition	Repeated words or phrases are marked as (repeated).	"Reading... reading... is transformative."
Incomplete Speech	(incomplete) is used for unfinished thoughts or sentences.	SPEAKER 1: "Reading can... but it's not always easy..." (incomplete)
Unclear Speech	(unclear) is used when words are unintelligible.	SPEAKER 1: "This will unlock...(unclear) your potential."
Visual Elements	(visual) is used for visual cues such as slides, images, or videos.	SPEAKER 1: "Let me show you the next slide," (visual: graph showing reading growth)

Example of a Transcribed Segment:

Speaker	Transcript
SPEAKER 1	"Reading is the foundation of all learning. It gives you the keys to the world." (gesturing with hands)
SPEAKER 1	"You see, it's not just about understanding words; it's about... (um)... transforming your life." (pauses for 2 seconds)
SPEAKER 1	"Reading can change who you are." (fall in intonation)
(Audience)	(applause)
SPEAKER 1	"W