

A THREE-DIMENSIONAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH, "I HAVE A DREAM" FROM STBB CLASS XII ENGLISH TEXTBOOK (2025): A FREIREAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Textbooks serve as primary ideological vehicles in developing educational contexts, deeply mediating student epistemologies and socio-political worldviews. However, traditional curricular architectures frequently default to rote-centric paradigms that suppress critical student agency. Drawing upon Paulo Freire's critique of the institutional "banking model" of education (Freire, 1972), this study evaluates the newly implemented Sindh Textbook Board (STBB) Class XII English textbook (2025 edition). Specifically, it examines Chapter 2, which features Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s seminal speech, "I Have a Dream," to determine whether the curricular framing fosters critical consciousness (Freire & Macedo, 2017) or reproduces status quo compliance. Employing Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework (Fairclough, N., 1995) alongside a systemic pedagogical audit of post-reading exercises, the study uncovers a profound structural contradiction. While the primary text offers rich emancipatory discourse regarding social hierarchy, systemic racism and institutional power, the post-reading exercises systematically downsize the potential spirit of critical pedagogy. Out of six exercises, five reduce the text to lower-order cognitive tasks (lexical decoding, literal recall and formalistic grammar drills). Hence, they neutralize the revolutionary impulse of the speech and its message. The study concludes that the textbook introduces an emancipatory discourse but imprisons it within a conservative curricular architecture. Consequently, systemic teacher intervention and a fundamental restructuring of STBB assessment designs are required to actualize problem-posing and problem solving education.

Introduction

In postcolonial educational landscapes, textbooks function as contested sites of ideological reproduction rather than value-neutral instructional tools. For the vast majority of students enrolled in public sector colleges across Sindh Pakistan, the English textbooks commissioned by the Sindh Textbook Board (STBB) constitute the definitive lens through which linguistic competence and socio-political subjectivities are formed. Historically, English Language Teaching (ELT) in Pakistani public institutions has remained wedded to structuralist paradigms: grammar-translation methodologies, mechanical repetition and uncritical compliance with textual authority. This pedagogical tradition aligns precisely with what Paulo Freire (1970) theorized as the **"banking model" of education**, an oppressive structure wherein passive learners are treated as empty accounts to be filled with state-sanctioned, static knowledge.

Study Statement

By critically analyzing intermediate textbooks, researchers can decode the implicit power dynamics that either domesticate or liberate the minds of young learners. Textbooks possess the dual capacity to either reinforce asymmetrical social norms or stimulate critical inquiries into systemic inequality. The previous studies conducted have either focused the Critical Discourse Analysis of any single text or only fewer others have focused the concept of Critical Thinking Approach of Paulo Friere. There is therefore, a significant research gap to analyze the text through CDA as well as assessing it through the lens of Critical pedagogy of Paulo Friere.

This study aims to investigate the pedagogical and discursive framing of Chapter 2 in the 2025 STBB Class XII English textbook Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 address, "I Have a Dream" as an archetype of counter-hegemonic rhetoric by applying Norman Fairclough's (1995) Three Dimensional Framework to it. Simultaneously, anthologizes, King's speech to investigate whether the textbook leverage this discourse to foster Freirean concept of **Critical Padoagogy and Critical Thinking approach**, or does it reduce a revolutionary manifesto to a sterile, depoliticized reading comprehension drill? Through this lens, the study evaluates the intersection of linguistic choice, cultural synthesis and curricular architecture in regional public education.

Literature Review

Freirean Critical Pedagogy posits that education is never politically neutral; it either functions as an instrument of conformity or becomes "the practice of freedom," enabling learners to deal critically and creatively with reality. The traditional banking model establishes rigid classroom hierarchies that foster a "culture of silence," wherein marginalized students internalize the values of dominant structures and lose their dialectical capacity. Conversely, problem-posing education dismantles these hierarchies through dialogic inquiry, transforming teachers and students into co-investigators who critically decode their socio-political realities. This process animates **critical consciousness**, the cognitive awakening necessary to recognize that oppressive social relations are human constructs susceptible to transformative historical change (**praxis**).

When extended to curricular materials, textbooks cease to be mere pedagogical instruments; they become what Giroux (2011) terms "political documents" that selectively legitimize certain historical narratives while marginalizing others. In postcolonial contexts, this requires a cautious engagement with global texts. Canagarajah (1999) warns against the uncritical imposition of

dominant discourses, suggesting that local classrooms must be trained through appropriate English to serve indigenous emancipatory aims. If radical texts are integrated without structural pedagogical shifts, conservative curricular designs run the risk of sanitizing the message, converting transformative socio-political critiques into superficial literacy exercises.

The empirical landscape of CDA and Critical Pedagogy in Pakistani education reveals a persistent structural gap. Over the past decade, scholars have increasingly interrogated the ideological undercurrents of local curricula. Mahmood et al. (2014) demonstrated how public English textbooks structurally reproduce social class stratification. Similarly, Magsi (2023) exposed the pervasive state-sanctioned nationalistic discourses embedded within intermediate texts. More recently, Lohar et al. (2026) applied a qualitative CDA framework to secondary textbooks in Sindh, identifying a heavy saturation of moralizing, monological narratives that leave minimal room for multicultural synthesis or critical dialogue. In a parallel corpus-based CDA study, Dad and Zafar (2025) uncovered rigid gender and class hierarchies within primary textbooks published by the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board.

While the ideological content of these texts is well-documented, the pedagogical mechanisms through which students process them remain under-researched. Bhatti and Bashir (2025) executed a quality mapping of exercises in Punjab's intermediate textbooks, concluding that the curriculum design focused almost exclusively on the lower-order cognitive skills of Bloom's Taxonomy, effectively de-politicizing the material. Furthermore, where Critical Pedagogy has been explored in Pakistan, it has been examined primarily as a tertiary classroom methodology. Anjum (2021) detailed the systemic institutional resistance and rigid examination constraints faced by ELT university teachers attempting to implement critical pedagogy. Asghar et al. (2021) similarly argued for introducing critical consciousness in university ELT classrooms to counteract the uncritical habits formed during secondary schooling.

This study addresses a significant gap in the literature: no prior research has synthesized Fairclough's Three-Dimensional CDA with Freirean Critical Pedagogy to evaluate the structural architecture of the intermediate textbook in Sindh. By investigating the intersection between King's radical rhetoric and the mechanical exercises that frame it, this study uncovers the subtle institutional mechanisms that govern public sector language education.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, critical text-analytical design, integrating Norman Fairclough's (1995) Three-Dimensional Model of Discourse Analysis with the pedagogical constructs of Paulo Freire. The target artifact is Chapter 2 ("I Have a Dream") of the newly enforced STBB Class XII English textbook (2025).

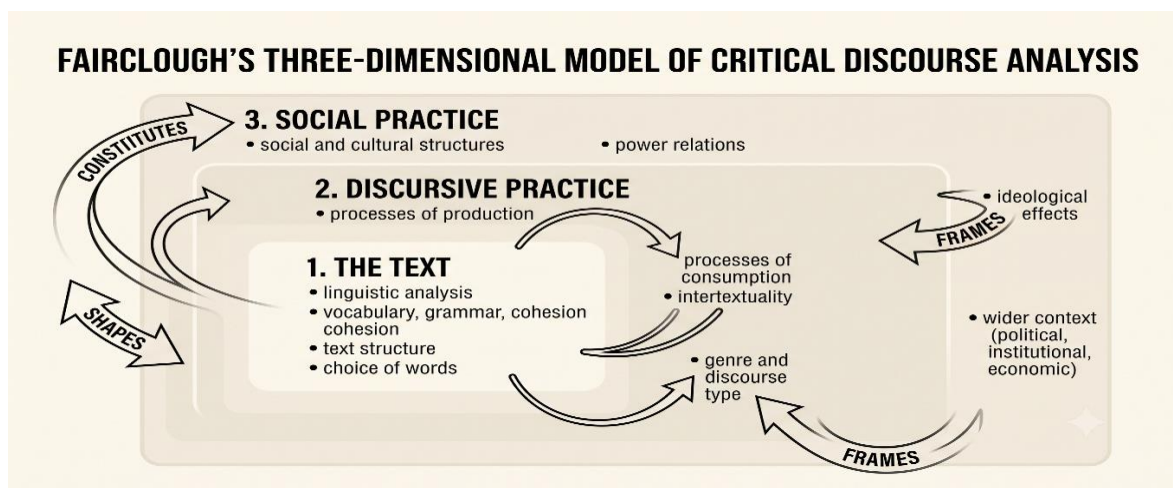


Figure 1.1: Three Dimensional Model of Critical discourse Analysis by Norman Fairclough

Figure 1 illustrates Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), mapping out the dialectical relationship between language, institutional processes, and broader socioeconomic structures. The framework is conceptualized as three nested, concentric boxes, emphasizing that text does not exist in a vacuum but is deeply embedded within layers of sociocultural practices.

1. The Core Level: The Text (Micro-level)

At the innermost level lies **The Text**, which constitutes the raw data of communicative events. The diagram outlines the key components of linguistic analysis at this stage, focusing on the formal properties of language. This includes vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, text structure, and specific choices of words. Analysis at this level is descriptive, focusing on how linguistic features manifest in the spoken or written word.

2. The Intermediary Level: Discursive Practice (Meso-level)

Surrounding the text is the **Discursive Practice** dimension, which acts as the mediating link between text and society. This dimension shifts focus from the product (the text) to the processes of its creation and reception. It incorporates the **processes of production** (how a text is constructed) and the **processes of consumption** (how it is interpreted by an audience). Key concepts visualized here include *intertextuality*—how texts draw upon other existing texts—as well as the specific *genre and discourse type* deployed.

3. The Outer Level: Social Practice (Macro-level)

The outermost dimension, **Social Practice**, situates the discursive event within its wider context, encompassing political, institutional, and economic landscapes. This level concerns the broader social and cultural structures, as well as the overarching **power relations** inherent in society. The analysis here is explanatory, aiming to uncover how discourse maintains or challenges societal power dynamics.

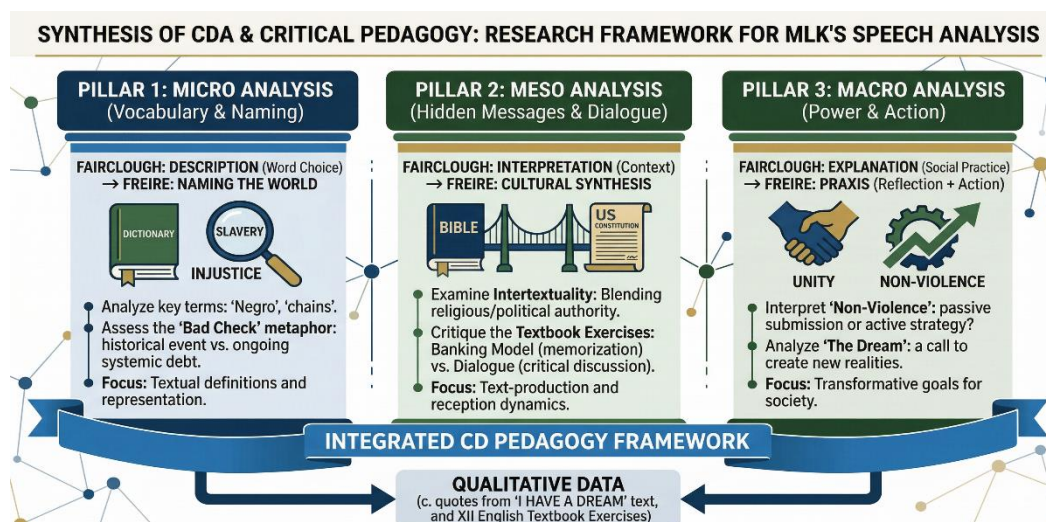


Figure 1.2: Synthesis of CDA and Critical Pedagogy

In the Figure 1.2, an integrated model has been represented which shows that the three pillars of CDA Framework by Norman Fairclough have been merged with the three stages of the Critical Pedagogical Framework by Paulo Friere.

The Textual Dimension (Micro-Analysis) Focuses on lexical selection, metaphorical choices, and linguistic structures. This dimension maps onto the Freirean concept of "**Naming the World**"—evaluating whether the linguistic choices expose or obscure underlying socio-historical injustices. **The Discursive Practice Dimension (Meso-Analysis):** Examines the processes of textual production, transformation, and consumption. This layer evaluates the presence of "**Cultural Synthesis**" (Freire & Macedo, 2017), analyzing how dominant legal or spiritual discourses are appropriated to advance the liberation of marginalized groups. **The Social Practice Dimension (Macro-Analysis):** Situates the discourse within broader institutional and socio-political frameworks. This phase features a systemic **Pedagogical Audit** of the six post-reading comprehension and writing tasks to determine if the textbook design functions on a domesticating "Banking Model" or opens a "Window of Dialogue."

Results and Discussion

1. Micro-Analysis: Naming the World and Lexical Choices

A linguistic evaluation of the textbook's presentation of King's speech reveals a dense concentration of highly charged socio-political terminology. Key historical signifiers such as "Slavery," "Segregation," and "Discrimination" are preserved, forcing learners to engage with the vocabulary of systemic oppression. King's central metaphor of "*The Bad Check*" serves as an explicit textual marker of institutional betrayal, illustrating how the American state defaulted on its democratic obligations to citizens of color. From a Freirean perspective, this represents a primeval instance of "**Naming the World.**" The language does not obscure reality behind euphemisms; rather, it decodes institutional failure with analytical precision.

Furthermore, the preservation of historical terms like *"The Negro"* provides an uncompromised look at the linguistic mechanics of historical dehumanization. The systemic repetition of the anaphoric phrase *"One hundred years later"* reinforces the agonizingly slow trajectory of structural reform, creating a rhetorical rhythm that undercuts narratives of automatic historical progress. The micro-linguistic dimension of the primary text, therefore, remains highly emancipatory, providing Pakistani students with the semantic tools required to decode structures of marginalization.

2. Meso-Analysis: Hidden Messages and Cultural Synthesis

At the level of discursive practice, the text exemplifies **Cultural Synthesis**—a strategy wherein the oppressed appropriate the communicative tools of the dominant structure to strip that structure of its moral legitimacy. King masterfully fuses two disparate discourses: a deeply prophetic, Judeo-Christian theological discourse (*"let justice roll down like waters"*) and a secular, Western liberal legal discourse (referencing the US Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation). Rather than executing a totalizing rejection of the oppressor's cultural artifacts, King seizes the state's foundational documents to demand structural rights, subverting them from within.

For intermediate learners in Sindh, this synthesis offers a critical pedagogical model. It demonstrates that subversion does not necessitate isolation; rather, dominant institutional frameworks can be discursively occupied to expose their internal contradictions. This applies equally to King's articulation of *"Peaceful Struggle."* Far from advocating passivity or capitulation, non-violent resistance is framed as a strategic **"Soul Force"** (Satyagraha) designed to force the oppressor to confront their own moral degradation before a global audience.

3. Macro-Analysis: Power, Praxis, and the Textbook Audit

The structural utility of this radical discourse, however, is heavily mediated by the curriculum architecture enclosing it. To evaluate how this text is operationalized within the institutional constraints of public colleges, a comprehensive pedagogical audit was conducted on the six exercises placed immediately after the text.

Table 1: Pedagogical Audit and Structural Classification of Exercises of the STBB Class XII Uni 2

Exercise No.	Core Task / Question Type	Cognitive Model Focus	Freirean Pedagogical Classification	Curricular Implication & Limitations
Exercise 1	Literal comprehension (Close-ended 'Who', 'What', 'Where' questions targeting explicit facts).	Lower-Order Thinking Skills (Recall & Memory)	The Banking Model (Passive reception)	Restricts engagement to rote memorization; isolates text from current social realities.

Exercise No.	Core Task / Question Type	Cognitive Model Focus	Freirean Pedagogical Classification	Curricular Implication & Limitations
Exercise 2	True / False or Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) evaluating specific details of the 1963 March.	Lower-Order Thinking Skills (Recognition)	The Banking Model (Mechanical selection)	De-politicizes the speech; reduces a revolutionary manifesto to fragmented data points.
Exercise 3	Vocabulary matching and synonym identification of historical terms (e.g., 'seared', 'segregation').	Literal Linguistic Processing (Lexical Decoding)	The Banking Model (De-contextualized lexicon)	Fails to link lexical 'naming' with structural critique; treats language as an isolated, neutral skill.
Exercise 4	Analytical inquiry into the 'How' and 'Why' of King's rhetorical strategies and non-violent philosophy.	Higher-Order Thinking Skills (Analysis & Evaluation)	The Window of Dialogue (Problem-posing engagement)	Highly progressive, but relies exclusively on the teacher's active ideological intervention.
Exercise 5	Précis writing or linear summarization of the speech's main paragraphs.	Reproductive Synthesis (Structural Reduction)	The Banking Model (Monological replication)	Forces students to replicate the text's flow rather than challenging or contextualizing its assumptions.
Exercise 6	Grammar reinforcement and syntactic transformation based on sentences	Mechanical Skill Drill (Formalistic Competence)	The Banking Model (Technical domestication)	Completely neutralizes the revolutionary 'Soul Force' of the discourse by treating it as a

Exercise No.	Core Task / Question Type	Cognitive Model Focus	Freirean Pedagogical Classification	Curricular Implication & Limitations
	extracted from the text.			basic grammar drill.

The empirical audit compiled in Table 1 reveals a severe pedagogical contradiction within the STBB curriculum design. Out of the six designated tasks, five (Exercises 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6) operate strictly within the domesticating paradigm of the **Banking Model**. They actively fragment King’s explosive critique, transforming it into a passive historical artifact. By filtering a revolutionary manifesto through lower-order cognitive tasks, the curriculum de-politicizes the discourse, ensuring it poses no threat to contemporary local power structures.

The sole pedagogical saving grace is found in **Exercise 4**, which introduces open-ended analytical inquiries. While this single exercise provides a genuine **Window of Dialogue**, its position within an otherwise conservative assessment design means its success is not systemic. Instead, the cultivation of critical consciousness remains entirely dependent upon the individual teacher's willingness to resist the textbook's dominant reproductive design.

Conclusion

This study illuminates a stark disparity between text selection and curriculum execution within Chapter 2 of the new 2025 STBB Class XII English textbook. The primary text offers an uncompromised, emancipatory exposure to systemic injustice, providing significant opportunities for intercultural synthesis and critical reflection among Sindhi students. However, the institutional macro-analysis reveals that the textbook’s structural architecture remains anchored in a domesticating, traditional paradigm. By framing King's rhetoric within mechanical grammar drills, factual recall, and reproductive summary tasks, the curriculum systematically neutralizes its radical edge. The textbook introduces an emancipatory discourse but imprisons it within a conservative pedagogical architecture that favors passive compliance over transformative praxis.

Recommendations

- 1. Transition to a Problem-Posing Assessment Architecture:** The Sindh Textbook Board must fundamentally redesign the post-reading frameworks of socio-historically significant chapters. The current reliance on literal, close-ended tasks should be replaced with dialectical, problem-posing questions that compel students to analyze underlying institutional power dynamics and methods of non-violent resistance.
- 2. Institutionalization of Critical Pedagogy in Teacher Training:** To bridge the gap between text and execution, professional development initiatives for public sector educators in Sindh must integrate Critical Pedagogy frameworks. Training programs must equip teachers with dialogic methodologies, enabling them to move beyond rote instruction and guide students in connecting global struggles for justice to their immediate local contexts.

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