

WINDS OF CHANGE OR EDUCATIONAL HEGEMONY IN IRANIAN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS: A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON PROSPECT

Ahmad Sabouri Kashani and Mohammad Reza Raeisi*

Tonekabon open University

Accepted 09 August, 2016

In the modern society, English education and educational debate are so important that language learning and teaching as well as its cultural norms have long been challenged since learning a second language was not only the mastery of its forms but also a process of cultural identity and its legacy in the second language. A review of recent studies shows that the cultural effects of learning English in the nationally distributed textbooks of English learning (Prospect) has been the main research interest while the distribution of new political identities through these book series has not been sufficiently taken for granted. The present study aimed to investigate the legacy of cultural identities in learners through dialogues presented in the nationally distributed English learning textbooks in Iran without close autopsy. Only paying attention to the variety of conversation in these books has caused the researchers, and readers to ignore some primary LAD aspects embedded in these books which try to politically marginalize one country through their content and impose political hegemony as well as cultural hegemony on pre-intermediate learners and ignore the amount of exposure for learning.

Keywords: Educational needs, English learning textbooks, cultural hegemony, and legacy.

INTRODUCTION

A significant number of high school education classes in Iran are formed to teach students regardless of deficiencies resulting from the cultural and educational systems and sociocultural impacts on learners' awareness. In order to achieve a relative success, the English Iranian teacher must realize the reasons why the educational system-in fact-, the high school system- does not meet students' needs adequately. For approximately three and half decades Iran has experienced significant difficulties at its schools, as Gramsci (1935) suggests that cultural hegemony compel people to more worldview. He also proposes that the prevailing cultural norms of a society, which are imposed by the ruling class (bourgeois cultural hegemony), must not be perceived as natural and inevitable.

Likewise Lears (1985) believed that the maintenance of hegemony did not require active commitment by subordinate to the legitimacy of the elite rule. Less powerful people may not be completely satisfied. There are different hegemony relations (such as political, economic, cultural, etc.; however, educational ones are the most common types in learners' textbook needs. According to the research article by Kim (2012) on social and cultural issues in selected EFL textbooks in Korea, gender bias, racial and ethnical discrimination, nationality, minority status and social class are the prevalent cultural and social biases in ELT textbooks.

According to Faruk (2015), Saudi learners prefer reading and studying textbooks, in order to trace the ways in which culture was dealt with in the English curriculum in the past 33 years. To this end, the three textbooks which were published one after another for the third-grade secondary school students in the past three decades were analyzed. The paper finds that in the first book published in 1982, the writer introduced only those cultural elements from outside Saudi Arabia, which could be subordinated to the self-enclosed cohesive Saudi national culture that rested and was shaped on and around the faith of Islam.

The same cultural pattern is maintained in the second book published in 1998, but in the third book published in 2013, a huge number of western and multicultural elements were accommodated without any attempt to assimilate them to

Saudi national culture discussions, ignoring the teacher's talk. In line with Gramsci's ideas around the cultural hegemony under the power of capitalism, the researcher sees the impact of hegemony on our culture and economy much stronger than we suppose. There are boundaries of discourse that discourage every learner from social shift. This paper discusses an obstacle preventing learners own self-identity program and cultural mismatching which may lead to the failure of large numbers of students and encouraging other countries or private sectors to further study to care for their needs.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Can educational hegemony affect Iranian high school English textbooks and their needs?
2. To what extent does the hegemony of the school relate to children's academic progress, especially cultural needs, during their education?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was an attempt to examine the already existing data in three domestic ELT textbooks employing a critical discourse analysis approach. Hence, this study involved both quantitative and qualitative analyses, while the overall design of this investigation was qualitative. The following sheds light on the methodology in details. Corpus English language is one of the compulsory subjects that have been taught in Iranian high schools as well as in junior high schools. In Iran, all textbooks, among them High School English Textbooks are produced solely by the Ministry of Education. Three English textbooks taught at high schools in Iran, entitled as English Book (1), English Book (2), and English Book (3), were chosen as the corpus of this study, because these materials are exposed to millions of learners across the country. In fact, different parts of these three ELT textbooks were analyzed in terms of gender representation in order to extract the ideology behind their constructions. These textbooks suffer from a major deficiency in terms of the range of social roles ascribed to each gender. It is worth mentioning that both genders were presented with a limited range of social roles in Iranian High School English Textbooks. The table indicates that 62% of the social roles presented in Iranian High School English Textbooks as male-monopolized; whereas this percentage was 10% for female-monopolized social roles. In terms of dominated roles there was equality between women and men—each with 14%.

Hence, there was no equal sharing on the social roles between females and males. Table 1: Female and male's social roles in Iranian High School English Textbooks

| Social Roles | Frequency |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Male-monopolized social roles | 62% |
| Male-dominated social roles | 14% |
| Female-monopolized social roles | 10% |
| Female-dominated social roles | 14% |
| Gender shared social roles | 0% |

The third issue undertaken by the study was investigation on the semantic roles played by both genders in reading parts. In effect, the semantic roles were investigated based on Holliday's systemic Functional Linguistics on the concept of transitivity that was represented by Furlough (2001) on text analysis. In achieving this aim, five semantic roles were recognized, namely actor, patient, recipient, experience and beneficiary. Investigating this issue as the previous ones showed that male characters got the supremacy in terms of semantic roles. In other words, men outnumbered women in terms of semantic roles. Maybe one reason for this situation is related to the higher frequency of men to women in these textbooks. In effect, the results of investigating social roles revealed that 84% of the cases were related to males and 16% to females in which men enjoys from 39% as actor roles, 7% patient roles, 38% experience roles and 1% beneficiary roles. Furthermore, women's share of the social roles composed of 57% for actor roles, 14% for patient roles, 21% for experience roles, and 7% for beneficiary roles. Theoretical Model Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model was adapted to the present study in order to expose the ideology behind the presentation of gender. Fairclough (2001) emphasizes that power is exercised and enacted in discourse; hence, there are relations of power behind discourse. In fact "power is won, held and lost in social struggles" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 61). Education is an important tool that government has a very powerful tool on it.

Gramsci (1891-1937) believes that the consent mourners might be the clarification of very varied beliefs, which can be split into three divisions: first, one may admit because of the danger of the resolving powers of opposition, which may generate penal destitution, including the loss of pride or personality. Second, one consents because in response to external provocation, one may naturally expect for certain objects in certain methods. Conformity in this state is a matter of silent attendance in an organized kind of activity. The third event is attached to the term of legitimacy, with notion that the demands for consensus are more or less explained and even out. Regarding the ancient time the term cultural hegemony is originally derived from ancient Greek. More to the point, Italian critic Antonio Gramsci bounded the theory of cultural hegemony, and he defines it as, "domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class, who manipulate the culture of society, beliefs, explanations, perceptions, and values that the ruling class behaviors become the world view that is imposed and accepted as the cultural norms" (1985: 26). Michel Foucault's discourse theory has been an important ground on which educational debates, policies, and scholarship have focused. Much of Foucault's thinking drew on elements in French anthropological thought from Durkheim and Mauss to Callois and Bataille about sacred

collective representations as structural preconditions of cultural reproduction (Harrington 2006: p. 39).

He continues to stand as an intellectual giant in the field of social and cultural inquiry—his works have far-reaching influence. Interestingly, Foucault's theory of discourse occupies a place of comparative stability, especially when compared with the work of other (more controversial) post-modern icons such as Jacques Derrida's theories of "deconstruction". Freire believes that most of approaches used in the education system under colonialism are put in place to prevent serious thinking, like verbalistic reading, the criteria for evaluating knowledge, the distance between the teacher and the student (p. 69) also in another study conducted by Gramsci "(1971) sees the constitution of common people through political and cultural instruments, as though they are under control or pressure of hegemonic forces, whether by coercion or consensus. Many scholars studied this colonization in relation to culture and society.

Likewise, Frey (1993) believed that most public school system failed to adequately instruct students. He also refers to victims of public education—students of color, women, the poor and students of linguistic minorities—are enrolled in programs which are constructed in a way that excludes their cultural perspectives and fails to consider linguistic and socioeconomic differences. (p.34). The researcher tries to investigate the legacy of power of government on education and student in every aspect in system so that it colonized and harmonized in an epidemic way.

The challenge for strengthening School education system

There is widespread concern about the outcomes of education systems and its heir at schools. For example, the representatives of departments say that they need more powerful economy, top level persons, and people support if Iran is to compete successfully in world market of education

Consequently, three types of constraints, based on Fairclough (2001), may be exercised by powerful participants, here the elite, over the contributions of non-powerful participants, here the learner. These three types of constraints are: "constraints on contents, relations and subjects" (p.61). Fairclough (2001) clarifies the point that these constraints are either in "relatively immediate and concrete terms, (a matter of power in discourse), or in a relatively structural and long term way, (a matter of power behind the discourse). The second one, the power behind the discourse, has "long term structural effects of a more general sort" (Fairclough, 2001, p.61).

This kind of constraints is the focus of this study. "The knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities of an institution or society" and here of the learner may be long-term affected if they are exposed to the "systematic constraints on the contents of discourse, and on the social relationships enacted in it and the social identities enacting them (Fairclough, 2001, pp.61-62), the one related to the issue of gender representation depicted in the textbooks.

Fairclough (2001) assumes that any society enjoys a mechanism in "achieving coordination and commonality of practice in respect of knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities" (p. 62). He classifies these mechanisms in three main types: universally followed practices and discourse types, "inculcation" and "communication" (p.62). It is worth mentioning that this study follows the second one, which is the coordination "imposed in the exercise of power in a largely hidden fashion" (p.62).

In this regard, based on Fairclough (2001), three dimensions of description, interpretation and explanation were investigated in this study. In the first dimension the formal features of the text were taken into consideration. In simpler terms, the representation of gender, namely, female and male characters, female and male's social roles, female and male's domestic roles, female and male's semantic roles, female and male's titles, , masculine generic constructions, activities females and males engaged in, and finally the pictorial representation of both genders were described and interpreted.

According to Fairclough (2001) in interpreting any social phenomenon, member resources (MR) plays a crucial role by which the situational context and intertextual context are clarified (MR refers to "the shape of words, the grammatical forms of sentences, the typical structure of a narrative, the properties of types of objects and person, the expected sequence of events in a particular situation type, etc." Fairclough, 2001, p.9).

The third and last stage deals with the aspects of MR which was drawn upon as interpretive procedures as means for text's producing. On the whole, the aforementioned issues were examined to see whether or not they follow any specific ideological pattern of manipulation in presenting gender. Hence, the series of textbooks were critically analyzed to see whether or not the roles played by females and males present any gender inequality shedding light on the ideology behind their constructions.

Varzande (2015) developed new curricula and teaching materials including textbooks with less nationalistic, religious and political biases. In this regard, policy makers in all parts of the world should be aware of the policies in the internationally distributed English textbooks and manage the educational materials for their own learners so that they are prevented from being influenced by the cultural and political hegemonies of English.

In this part, the achieved results are presented through description, interpretation and explanation based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model. In addition, the results were followed by some discussion in order to expose the perspectives and ideologies behind the construction of gender roles in the textbooks. One of the issues that were investigated in this paper in order to demystify sexism or sex bias was the issue of omission which refers to exclusion of one gender.

Meanwhile, Coutour in an article points out the "concepts of hegemony, historical bloc, and civil and political society were developed by Antonio Gramsci to explore the ways in which political power is grasped and maintained . His ideas

also cover the ways in which force/coercion and fraud/corruption enter the political process. This study first examines Grimace's concepts and then uses them as an interpretive framework to explore the exercise of political power in early colonial Queensland. It identifies several groups which were involved in the political process and who comprised those groups; it examines some of the issues that were important to them ideologically; and then demonstrates how those issues became areas of contention in the search for political power. Gramsci's ideas are seen to be useful in the characterization of the colonial political process". (2000, p.25).Based on the review of literature the exclusion of each gender, whether female or male, affects the suppressed sex negatively. In other words, when one of the genders does not appear as the other sex; it may be implied that the suppressed sex and their accomplishments are not worth noticing. Moreover, presenting sex bias in textbooks influences the potentialities of learners in a negative way so that both the suppressed as well as the dominated sexes are not able to bring their potentialities into reality. Investigating Iranian High School English Textbooks showed the supremacy of males over females. Generally, 1832 cases presented gender, out of which 1363 cases were related to males in forms of proper nouns, pronouns, or other representations; while, females occupied 469 cases. Put it differently, 74% and 26% constituted the frequency of males and females in these three textbooks, respectively. It means that males occupied nearly threefold of representation of gender compared to females; and this issue seems to be critical since it may influence the learning potentialities of female learners. The ratio of females to males is nearly 1 to 3. Sexist attitudes are perpetuating not only by imbalanced distribution of females and males in the textbooks, but also by prevailing sex stereotypes. Sex stereotype refers to the generalized ideas regarding female as well as male and the kind of roles they are ascribed as appropriate. Following the review of literature, we also dealt with social roles in five main categories: male-monopolized (performed by men only), male-dominated (largely performed by men), female-monopolized (performed by women only), female-dominated (largely performed by women) and gender shared (performed by both gender equally). Frey (1993) suggests also that social reproduction is one tool used by sociologists to grapple with the combined effects of cultural, linguistic, and social class stereotyping in the educational system.

METHODOLOGY

All the respondents were chosen Iranian teachers of *The Multiple Provinces* taken from randomly schools, previously cooperated at *the quarterly conglomeration*. (2001-20015): in education seminars. Prospect (3) at junior school be taken into account.

Instrument

All the respondents read a Serbian translation of *The Riddle of the Buddhist Monk* taken from *The Literary Mind* (Truner, 1996: 72), previously presented in Arthur Koestler's *The Act of Creation* (1964):

The empirical procedure

Was designed to measure the impact which blended or non-blended animated visual stimuli have on the process of riddle solving in terms of overall success of the process and the time needed to complete the task.

Respondents (Research population)

The study involved a total of 90 first and second year students enrolled in the English Department, Faculty of Philosophy, and University of Niš. Prior to testing, these students had not had any courses related to conceptual blending and cognitive linguistics in general. The experiment was conducted individually in 90 sessions of 4–10 minutes over two weeks. We made sure that none of the respondents was acquainted with the riddle.

Research sample

90 first and second year students enrolled in the English Department, Faculty of Philosophy, and University of Niš

Sampling formula

Prior to testing, these students had not had any courses related to conceptual blending and cognitive linguistics in general. The experiment was conducted individually in 90 sessions of 4–10 minutes over two weeks. We made sure that none of the respondents was acquainted with the riddle

Validation

The respondents were divided into three groups: (1) Group A was read the riddle having no visual stimulus at all; (2) Group B was read the riddle accompanied by Animation 1

The correlation

At $p = .01$ level. A vicariate correlation and Chi-Square test

Pilot study

No, But responses were coded as either “Correct” or “Incorrect”

This section specifies and describes the participants, the instruments for data collection, and the applied procedures based on qualitative method.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- Are there any differences between the roles played by gender in Iranian High School English Textbooks 1, 2, and 3?
- Are there any particular patterns in presenting gender in Iranian High School English Textbooks 1, 2, and 3? If so, what are they?

The paper investigates the ideas, assumptions or ideologies trying to sustain the inequality and bias between the elites and non-elites and campaign against these ideas and assumptions bases on Widowson ideas. (widowson, 2007)

Participants

For the purpose of this study, 232 Iranian female and male students will be selected in high school and English Language Institutes with the age range of 16- 37. The students are on intermediate and upper-intermediate levels of English courses (two and four credits) at Alborz Institute in Noor and state schools in Northern Iran. They are given questionnaire set data with a Likert scale. They are grouped into 9 groups ranging from 12 to 31 members. Teacher's power as a tool for social reproduction and domination in an instructions classroom setting and discourse as an instrument of effecting power were used in the study.

Data Collection Procedure

During 42 hours of teaching at high school and university, which consisted of 12 classes of 90 minute sessions per week, students in the experimental group were taught different English subjects including: methods of speech delivery, Global warming, Education, and so on, while in the control group teacher power and domination were not applied.

Findings and Discussions

These textbooks suffer from a major deficiency in terms of the range of social roles ascribed to each gender. It is worth mentioning that both genders were presented with a limited range of social roles in Iranian High School English Textbooks. The table indicates that 62% of the social roles presented in Iranian High School English Textbooks as male-monopolized; whereas this percentage was 10% for female-monopolized social roles. In terms of dominated roles there was equality between women and men—each with 14%. Hence, there was no equal sharing on the social roles between females and males. Table 1: Female and male's social roles in Iranian High School English Textbooks Social Roles Iranian High School English textbooks types of social roles frequency Male-monopolized social roles 62% Male-dominated social roles 14% Female-monopolized social roles 10% Female-dominated social roles 14% Gender shared social roles 0% The third issue undertaken by the study was investigation on the semantic roles played by both genders in reading parts. In effect, the semantic roles were investigated based on Holliday's systemic Functional Linguistics on the concept of transitivity that was represented by Furlough (2001) on text analysis. In achieving this aim, five semantic roles were recognized, namely actor, patient, recipient, experience and beneficiary. Investigating this issue as the previous ones showed that male characters got the supremacy in terms of semantic roles. In other words, men outnumbered women in terms of semantic roles. Maybe one reason for this situation is related to the higher frequency of men to women in these textbooks. In effect, the results of investigating social roles revealed that 84% of the cases were related to males and 16% to females in which men enjoys from 39% as actor roles, 7% patient roles, 38% experience roles and 1% beneficiary roles. Furthermore, women's share of the social roles composed of 57% for actor roles, 14% for patient roles, 21% for experience roles, and 7% for beneficiary roles.

Limitations of the Study

- **Access** – The study depends on having access to people, organizations, or documents of just one province and, for whatever reason, access limited in some way, the reasons for this need to be monetary problems of restricted time.

- **Longitudinal effects** -- Unlike my professor, who can literally devote years [even a lifetime] to studying a specific topic, the time available to investigate a research problem and to measure research project over time is pretty much constrained by the due date of my assignment. I am sure to choose a research problem that does not require an excessive amount of time to complete the literature review, apply the methodology, and gather and interpret the results.
- **Cultural and other type of bias** -- We all have biases, whether we are conscience of them or not. Bias is when a person, place, or thing is viewed or shown in a consistently inaccurate way. Bias is usually negative; though I could have a positive bias as well, especially if that bias reflects my reliance on research that only support for my hypothesis. When proof-reading my paper, be especially critical in reviewing how I have stated a problem, selected the data to be studied, what may have been omitted, the manner in which I have ordered events, people, or finding teachers to interview, how I have chosen to represent a person, place, or thing, to name a phenomenon, or to use possible words with a positive or negative connotation regarding winds of change occurred after 30 years.

CONCLUSION

The main findings of the present study can be summarized as follows:

1. Focus of the first question in this study is not statistically significant so that female and male's social roles in Iranian High School English textbooks is not regarded their needs but based on the cultural norms in that hegemony has been affected sporadically.
2. The lack of significant difference among the learners across the different groups indicates that hegemony process taken for granted in the textbook. In effect, the results of investigating social roles revealed that 84% of the cases were related to males and 16% to females in which men enjoys from 39% as actor roles, 7% patient roles, 38% experience roles and 1% beneficiary roles whereas the significant results proved this trend.
3. Of Speaking skills and interviews, their existing schematic knowledge can significantly influence their performance in learning through while study and paid attention in a specific domain. In spite of studies made by the researcher, the study showed that the difference between the impact of prospect instruction and explicit explanations of traditional method in the process of other skills is not significant.
4. The present study aimed at investigating the legacy of cultural identities in learners through dialogues presented the nationally distributed English learning textbooks in Iran without close autopsy. The study revealed that conversation skill of learners improved better but other skilled ignored.

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