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A Critical Discourses Analysis of National Identity in Textbooks: A Case Study of Iraqi Curriculum for Sixth Preparatory

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Abstract

Textbooks are by no means ideological. This means that they present their dominant values and culture in the foreign-language education. In other words; textbooks can change thoughts of learners of the target language. The study is limited to the Iraqi ESL textbooks (English for Iraq) for sixth preparatory stage. This paper tries to examine the discourse of these textbooks critically. The aim of the current paper is to investigate the national identity of the publishing house in the Iraqi textbooks. In order to reveal the national identity embedded in them, the study draws on a corpus-based analysis. This study found the frequency of referring to nation identity of England more than other countries throughout the whole books. The study concluded that the English publishing house uses the national identity of England in the investigated data for ideological purposes.

Keywords: Ideology, Critical discourse analysis, national identity, educational discourse

1-Introduction

Smith (1991) defined a nation as a group of people with common legal rights and obligations for all members, as well as a shared historic territory, common myths and historical memories, mass public culture, and economy. According to Blank and Schmidt (2003), a national identity is, in essence, the current state of affairs when it comes to people's identification with a country. The discourse of national identity is continuously upheld and dismantled throughout the course of a person's life and recreated via objects, materials, theatrical performances, text presentation, and symbolism (Sautman, 1997). The importance of a shared history which is always connected to memory and remembrance is the foundation upon which native citizens build their sense of national identity.

This paper is about critical discourses analysis of national identity. How the phenomenon of " identity " is linguistically expressed or framed in discourse tactics and patterns is a topic of interest in critical stylistics, critical linguistics, and, of course, critical discourse analysis. Written or spoken discourse is regarded as the most prevalent type of social structure that is closely associated with ideology. Although language and ideology are closely related, few studies have focused on language and ideology in educational contexts, especially in academic textbooks (Beard 2002). So, the focus of this article is on how language is implemented for the sake of national identity. The current study uses critical

discourse analysis to illuminate how the notion of identity in the textbooks. It seeks to examine the linguistic devices employed in the selected data.

2-Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) looks on the ways that language conveys social meanings. According to Norgaard et al (2010), critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis serve as both inspiration for and sources of information for critical stylistics (CDA). Research in critical linguistics show that prejudice may permeate discourse and that it frequently goes unrecognized outside of its intended audience. The most crucial role of CDA, according to Meriel and Thomas Bloor (2007), is to expose this type of disingenuous mindset. Because "different" is ambivalent, CDA is interested in how it is presented discursively. On the one hand, "difference" is essential for creating meaning, language, culture, social identities, and a sense of self. It is, however, a place of negativity, animosity, and aggression towards the "Other." A critical discourse analysis examines the unequal Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000).

Accordingly, a subfield of discourse analysis study known as critical discourse analysis (CDA) studies the ways in which social power abuse, dominance, and inequality appear in the political and social domains (Van Dijk, 1995). McKenna (2004) claims that CDA is a method of evaluating any content, spoken or written, and that, as its name implies, it is an essential tool. "Relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes," According to Fairclough (1995), Discourse consists of three parts: text, discursive practice, and social practice. All three of these elements must be considered while analyzing a text, as well as their relationships with one another. So discourse is about two types of cognitive memories—social memory and episodic memory—this means that the two memories shape and reshape discourse as a sociocognitive process. The term "episodic memory" describes the recall of daily occurrences, including the why information is stated, the things (what), the people, the context, and the emotions (Ali 2021) .

1-Language textbooks as ideological discourse

Ideology is defined by Woolard (1998) as "ideas, discourse, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire or maintain power". Ideologies in language education are frequently created by elevating particular discourses, cultures, and linguistic beliefs to a dominant position in the classroom, while other discourses and cultural perspectives are marginalized or left out entirely. In a foreign language lesson, the selection of books to be carefully studied is seldom impartial. Fairclough (1992) made the observation that texts have an ideological function when they name or describe the social and natural worlds, molding them to fit specific objectives and the needs of select privileged demographics.

According to Bakhtin (1981), the process of idealistic becoming is a necessary step towards becoming a proficient language user. Learners of foreign languages are, in a sense, going through the process of creating an identity through the study of the ideologically embedded discourse, speaking,

Act as though you are a native speaker. Additionally, Apple (1999) contended that because centralized textbooks represent official versions of dominant cultural knowledge and specific social world constructions, they have an identity-shaping discourse. As a result, language textbooks are approved and officially chosen to help foreign language learners from other nations get along. Through the analysis of these texts, foreign students acquire the ability to identify and articulate the facets of a specific national identity.

1- Method

4.1. Data Collection

The current study has taken the data from the 6th preparatory English course books in Iraq that are presented by the Ministry of Education in Iraq in 2014. These books have two sides "student book" and "activity book".

Research Question

The current research tries to answer the following question:

Is the publishing house presenting its English national identity in the Iraqi ESL textbook for sixth preparatory ?

The Analytical Approach

For the purpose of analyzing the data, the researcher adopts as a model of analysis. For the purpose of analyzing the data, the study adopts an analytical approach for the analysis of the national identity in the discourse of the selected data. Danping Wang's (2016) aspects of national identities as an analytical approach is adopted in the present study.

This adopted analytical approach contains the following parameters:

Places of self-identity description

Marketing Statistics of the country to learners

Love and sacrifice for the country

Commitment to maintain traditional values

Confidence to face economic reforms

Responsibility to make a lawful country

Proud of the beautiful and vast land

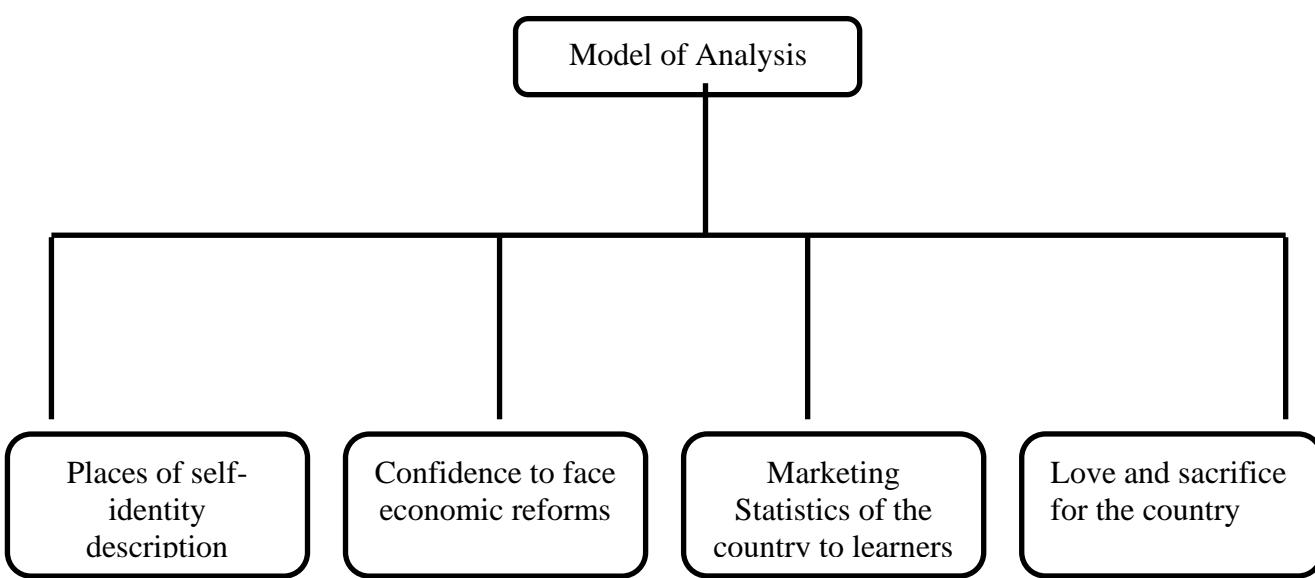


Figure (1): Model of Analysis

1. Data Analysis

5.1. Places of self-identity description

The analysis of the data shows all the lexical and visual items that are associated to national identity in the whole selected textbook. The researcher finds seven categories of national identity that refer to Britain at the national level. The analysis reveals that Britain was the most frequently used country. This means that the publisher of the textbook use a strong identification of what is called “who we are”. If we make a comparison between Britain with other countries, it will be clear that Britain is used more than other countries. In addition to that all learners of that textbook are Iraqis, but only a few times Iraq appeared in the textbook corpus. The analysis of the selected data shows that there are so many aspects of the places of self-identity description of national identities.

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Figure (2): Places of self-identity description

In the figure above, it can be seen that the publisher tries to present the description of the English learning system focusing on the most important and the positive aspects of the English system. In fact, the Iraqi learning system and the positive aspects of that educational system should be focused.

1.2. Confidence to face economic reforms

Some texts under the umbrella of the aspect of economy attempts to characterize the confidence of the Iraqi people in the British economy. Furthermore, there are many stories stated in the investigated data concerning the positives of the British banks and British economy.



The big day

- Read the e-mail and do Exercise A in the Activity Book. Then use the context to help you match the words in bold with these pictures.



COUNTRY	CURRENCY	RATE
IRAQ	IPN	EUR
IRAQ	IPN	SWE
IRAQ	IPN	CYP
IRAQ	IPN	JAP
IRAQ	IPN	SWI



Dear Mazen,

Guess what? Tomorrow is the big day! My plane leaves for London at 3:00, and soon I'll be able to see all the sights we read about in the guidebook.

I've already packed my suitcase. I bought some new clothes and a couple more guidebooks. I tried not to pack too much but it's pretty heavy. Once I get to England, I'll have to take a taxi. There's no way I can carry it all on the Underground! I wonder how much you tip taxi drivers in England?

Last Monday I went to the bank and got some traveller's cheques for my trip. They're great because they're safer than cash. I signed the cheques in one place at the bank, and when I want to buy something in London, I have to sign the cheque again in front of the cashier. That way, nobody else can use them.

My banker told me I should also get some local currency, because not all places take traveller's cheques. I'll take my credit card too. That's accepted internationally, but I can't really use it to tip the taxi driver or travel round by bus or Underground! So I will definitely need some cash in my pocket. As you probably know, many countries in Europe use the Euro, but in the UK people use pounds. Do you know the exchange rate between Iraqi dinars and pounds? 1,000 Iraqi dinars is almost 0.57 pounds. My father told me everything in London is expensive, so I'll have to be careful what I spend.

I'll bring you back a souvenir. Let me know if there's anything particular you'd like me to get you. And keep in touch. There's an Internet café next to my hotel, so I can check my e-mail whenever I want.

See you in ten days,
Hazem

Figure(3): Confidence to face economic reforms

According to the text above, the publisher presents paragraphs about banks and economy of England and gives it a title the big day. This is from one hand, on another hand the text talks about the English pound and how much it equals in Iraq rather than the other currencies of other countries. This means that the publisher tries to present his national identity to the Iraqi learners.

Marketing Statistics of the country to learners

The data analysis shows that the publishing house presents some statistics concerning the country of the publishing house. This means that some lexical and visual items associated to national identity in terms of making learners learn some social and common considerations of specific country.

The researcher finds eleven categories of national identity that refer to Britain at the national level concerning **Marketing Statistics of the country to learners**. The analysis reveals that Britain was the most frequently used country. This means that the publisher of the textbook use a strong identification of what is called "**Marketing Statistics of the country to learners**". If we make a comparison between Britain with other countries, it will be clear that Britain is used more than other countries. In addition to that all learners of that textbook are Iraqis, but only a few times Iraq appeared in the textbook corpus. For example:

- Every year, around 114,000 smokers in the United Kingdom die from their habit. That's about ① _____ people every day.
- Smoking in Britain is highest in the 20-② _____ age group.
- It is illegal to sell cigarettes to children under the age of 16. Yet 20% of Britain's ③ _____ -year-olds are regular smokers.
- More than ④ _____ of smokers take up the habit when they are teenagers.
- People who smoke a packet of cigarettes a day die on average ⑤ _____ years earlier than people who have never smoked.
- Every day in the United Kingdom, approximately 450 young people under the age of 25 die from smoking.
- The British Government currently spends around £1 billion a year on anti-smoking education campaigns. A further £100 million is spent on measures to help people give up smoking.
- More people in Britain die from smoking than from road accidents, house fires, or from poisoning and AIDS.

Figure (4): Marketing Statistics of the country to learners

1.3. Love and sacrifice for the country

According to the investigated data and the example below, the textbooks try to present Britain as a land of love and a land of hope. They portrayed the country as goodwill and provided charity and social relief. On another hand the text also tries to give a clear view of the educational system and enrich the Iraqi learners with some rules and the shine points of the educational English high schools. It would be much better to use some Iraqi high schools instead of the English ones, because the students are from Iraq. From the lines above, it can be conducted that the authors of the investigated data impeded their English national identity the Iraqi textbooks.

BIRCHWOOD INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE	
Information for new students	
Accommodation	
1	You _____ share a room with other students, but the price of accommodation is lower than you do.
2	Breakfast is from 7 to 9 a.m. You _____ eat it but the price is included.
3	All students _____ be out of their rooms by 9.30 a.m. so that the cleaners can get in and clean them.
4	You can eat snacks and have drinks in your rooms but you _____ cook.
5	You can play your CD and DVD players in your rooms, but you _____ make noise after 1 a.m.
Courses	
1	Classes start at 9.30 a.m. every day. Students _____ be late.
2	If you are late, you _____ go to the office and sign the late book before joining your class.
3	We provide all the books for our courses. You _____ bring any books besides a dictionary.
4	You _____ take the special computer course, but we think all our students will find it useful.
5	There are social activities, sports and excursions after class every day. You _____ do any of these, but if you want to, you _____ sign the list by 11 a.m.

Figure (5): Love and sacrifice for the country

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the data, it can be concluded that the language of the chosen data (to the Iraqi ESL textbooks "English for Iraq" for sixth preparatory stage) uses the notion of the national identity for several times. In other words, they have been ideologically employed to express love and sacrifice for the country, marketing Statistics of the country to learners, confidence to face economic reforms and places of self-identity description. Furthermore, the investigated data use these four different parameters or strategies to show the notion of national identities but with different percentages.

The investigated textbook serves as an example of how ideology and identity formation permeate British language for foreign students. The analysis came to the conclusion that the textbooks were written with the British government's objectives in mind in order to demonstrate soft ideology, but not with the students' best interests in mind, to aid in their comprehension of the various aspects of modern. The standardized textbooks provide learning materials about particular facets of British society, which acts as a means of promoting national British identity and patriotism.

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