

An Analysis of the Ideological Content of Internationally-Developed British and American ELT Textbooks

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Abstract

This study examines the ideological content of six internationally-used ELT textbooks, three British and three American. Applying the theory and procedures of critical discourse analysis (CDA), three aspects of the conversations in the textbooks, i.e. content, relations, and positions were examined. Results suggest that in terms of content, British textbooks tend to entertain the students while American textbooks include more occupational and business-related issues. Regarding relations, characters in the conversations were placed in socially equal roles. Moreover, inequalities were rarely addressed in the interactions and there was little attempt to make learners aware of issues such as dialogue management strategies. Finally, characters in the conversations took mostly societal positions.

Keywords: 1. Critical Discourse Analysis 2. ELT 3. Ideology 4. Linguistic Imperialism 5. Textbook.

1. Introduction

The spread of English throughout the world, over the past sixty years or so, has become one of the undeniable facts of education (Giaschi,

2000). English in today's world has become so important that no educated person on the face of the globe would, in a very real sense, academically survive if s/he is not able to communicate in English. According to Crystal (2003), 85% of international organizations in the world make official use of English, at least 85% of world's film market is in English and some 90% of published academic articles in most academic fields are written in English.

Many, however, have been critical of this widespread use of English and are concerned about it (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2002; Phillipson 1992, 1997, 2000, 2003; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). These scholars have consistently argued that it is not fortuitous that English has risen to be the world's most important language and there have been some hidden hands operating behind the scene. Phillipson (1992, 1997, 2000, 2003), for example, observes that the diffusion of English has been, and still is, substantially orchestrated, facilitated and led by what he refers to as the Centre, that is, USA and Britain, whose commercial and political interests such diffusion serves. Pennycook (1994), similarly, argues that the myth of the global spread of English as natural (having evolved into a global language without overt political action), neutral (as disconnected to social, economic and political concerns) and beneficial (as being inherently beneficial to all that learn and use it) is untenable. He has also argued that the many myths about English as a "marvelous tongue" need to be seen as "cultural construct of colonialism" with a long history of colonial promotion and contemporary production (Pennycook, 1998).

Phillipson (1992) in the same vein, has talked of what he calls "English linguistic imperialism", which he defines in the following way: "The dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (47). In this definition, *structural* refers to material properties like institutions and financial allocations, and *cultural* applies to immaterial or ideological properties like attitudes and pedagogic principles.

1.1 Critical discourse analysis and english language teaching

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the uncovering of implicit ideologies embedded in the texts (Widdowson, 2000). It explores the underlying ideological bias and therefore the exercise of power in texts. In other words, critical discourse analysis and critical language education are concerned with the interests and ideologies underlying the construction and interpretation of textbooks. Blommaert (2005) in his discussion of ideology argues that power, especially institutionally produced power, is central to CDA. The purpose of CDA is to analyze “opaque as well as transparent structural relationship of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak 1995: 204).

Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) have applied critical language studies to English language teaching (ELT). They have adopted the view that language is not a politically neutral tool of communication. Their works give a broad overview, with a historical and political perspective, of the emergence of English as a global language. Both scholars stress that it is no accident that English has risen to prominence in the world. This end was the goal of British and US government projects to spread English along with military and economic power.

Phillipson (1992) demonstrates the limitations of the arguments which suggest that the current position of English in the world is an accidental or natural result of world forces. Rather, through his analysis of the British Council and other organizations, Phillipson makes it clear that it has been a deliberate government policy in English speaking countries to promote the worldwide use of English for economic and political purposes.

A very important aspect of the politics and economics of English today is ELT (Bourne, 1996; Phillipson, 1990). ELT has become a global activity and to a large extent a business and industry, which can be dated to the 1950s (Dua, 1994; Pennycook, 1994). English, and ELT within this context, has become a valuable commodity for export and a profit-making multinational industry in the hands of the West (Al-Issa, 2002).

According to Phillipson (1992), the high status of English perpetuates the dependency of the Periphery countries on the powerful Centre countries and interests. The less developed countries are the consumers of the expertise, methodology and materials dispensed by the West, which, according to Canagarajah (1999), promote Western ideologies and contribute to its domination more subtly.

The global spread of English, as well as its causes and consequences, has long been a focus of critical discussions (Rubdy and Saraceni, 2006). A number of research studies have been conducted to find out whether or not the spread of English follows an ideological path. Since ELT stands in the forefront when the spread of English and its ideological effects are addressed, some researchers have tried to spearhead their analysis on ELT textbooks to see if any type of ideology is inspired through them.

Giaschi (2000) has applied a critical analysis to images contained in contemporary textbooks to find out if any sort of ideology is incorporated into them. He asserts his purpose is to investigate what “cultural propaganda” is disseminated today, through ESL materials originating from UK. He argues that the images have become an integral component of presentation of language as well as culture and that ESL students may find it difficult or even impossible to challenge the hidden positioning in the materials provided to them for learning English. Moreover, he maintains that it seems opportune to make it clear to ESL teachers how ideologies are being packaged and presented to them.

Taki (2008) has also applied critical discourse analysis on internationally-developed and locally-produced ELT textbooks widely used in Iran and found that internationally-distributed textbooks tend to represent a particular discourse type, i.e. the discourse of western economy and consumerism.

To date, none of the previous studies, however, has made an attempt to investigate the ideological differences between British and American ELT textbooks. This study, therefore, was carried out to fill this void in the related literature. To this end, the following research questions were formed:

- 1) Do English textbook writers adopt an equal or unequal subject relations in their textbooks?
- 2) Do English textbook writers make EFL learners aware of or equip them with strategies to deal with different forms of infringement of their wishes in the real interactions?
- 3) Are EFL learners placed in a societal position or are they placed in occupational and commercial positions?
- 4) Which categories of content are most emphasized and de-emphasized by ELT textbook writers?
- 5) How do British and American textbooks differ in terms of their ideological content?

2. Method

This part of the paper introduces the corpus of the study as well as the theoretical framework based on which the results were extracted. It is important to note that the findings of the present study should be interpreted only in terms of the given corpus and naturally cannot be generalized across all American and British textbooks.

2.1 Corpus

The upper-intermediate student's book of six series of internationally-well-known ELT textbooks, including both American and British English, were selected and examined. The selected textbooks were:

2.2 American corporate:

Spectrum 6

New Interchange 3

American Cutting-edge4

2.3 British corporate:

True to Life: Upper-intermediate

New Headway: Upper- intermediate

*Look Ahead: Upper-intermediate***2.4 Theoretical framework**

The framework used is an adaptation of Fairclough's (1989) model of critical discourse analysis, which itself is a practical application of Halliday's (1985) systemic-functional grammar (SFG) to the analysis of the text. As explained by Halliday, SFG incorporates the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions into analysis of texts and sentence constituents. Based on this theory, when this model of analysis is applied to a text, it examines *content*, *social relations* and *subject positions* and reveals ideology and power relations exercised in the texts.

Content refers to the text producer's knowledge and beliefs or as Fairclough (1989) puts it, one's experience of the social or natural world like cultural contrasts, festivals or entertainment. *Relations* refers to the social relationships enacted via the text like husband-wife or teacher-student or friends. *Subject positions* refers to the social identity of interactant like employee or employer or customer. Put simply, *content* is what is said or done in a dialogue, *relations* refers to the social relations people assume in the discourse, and *subject positions*, refers to the positions that people occupy in discourse. Table 1 shows how linguistic features relate to dimension of meaning and structural effect.

Table 1: Formal features: Experiential, relational, and expressive values (Fairclough, 1989)

| Dimensions of meaning | value of features | structural effect |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Content | Experiential | Knowledge and belief |
| Relations | Relational | Social relationship |
| Subjects | Expressive | Social identities |

2.5 Procedure

A broad statistical survey of all dialogues in the selected textbooks was conducted to classify the dimensions of meaning into comprehensible sets of data. In other words, the number of occurrences

of each aspect of meaning, i.e. content, relations and subject positions was counted in each textbook and the data obtained was tabulated to get a clear picture of the dominant pattern of occurrences of these dimensions of meaning. The rationale for examining these dimensions was to see which aspects of the meaning were emphasized or de-emphasized, since these choices reflect the ideological stance on the part of the textbook writer.

Moreover, in order to make sure about the reliability of the findings, all the data were categorized by two raters. The Cronbach's alpha as a measure of inter-rater reliability was calculated for each category. In all cases the alpha was found to be higher than .70, which indicates an acceptable degree of inter-rater consistency.

2.5.1 Classification of content

Five major categories for analysis of content used in Taki (2008) were adopted. They include: a) cultural contrast, festivals and customs, b) entertainment, human interest stories, discussion starters ranging from trivial matters to social issues, c) occupational, d) consumer-oriented, and e) Interpersonal, introspective, interactional regarding individuals and institutions. Further analysis of the textbooks revealed that there were four other content areas (law enforcement, advertisement, politics, and education) that existed as well.

2.5.2 Classification of relations

The most prevalent categories were represented either in two-word items divided by a hyphen like *customer-service* or in single word plurals like *friends*.

2.5.3 Classification of subject positions

Following Taki (2008), the researchers used the following three categories: a) societal, b) occupational, and c) commercial. The cases where an interactant appeared to function in more than one subject position, the one which seemed more prominent was chosen. For example, if an airline passenger was travelling on business, the position that appeared to be the most salient position was chosen.

3. Results

3.1 Content as a whole

Table 2 shows the patterns of content in all the textbooks as a whole. Categories 1 and 2 with 43.1% and 28.1% of occurrences, respectively make up the most frequently occurring content in the textbooks. They show that most characters tend to talk about themselves and their personal experiences. Next there are categories 3 and 4 with 17.5% and 5.3% of occurrences, respectively. It illustrates that the books have a propensity to position the learner within occupational and consumer domains. There is a heavy emphasis on market economy and putting the learners in economic positions to talk about market related contents. This is followed by the fifth category with 1.9% of occurrences. The number of occurrences of this category suggests that the textbooks have allocated little amount of their content to the issue of cultural contrasts. This is rather odd inasmuch as these textbooks are studied by a large number of students from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Next there is category 6, advertisement, through which ELT textbooks show the western way of advertising and product promotion. Finally, there are minor categories like law enforcement, politics and education. These categories did not play any considerable roles in the general trend that the textbooks were following. They were mostly about the legal, political and educational systems of the western country where the textbook was published.

Table 2: Content in the textbooks as a whole

| Category | No. of occurrences | % of Total |
|--|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Interpersonal, introspective | 201 | 43.1 |
| 2. Entertainment, human interest stories, discussion starter | 131 | 28.1 |
| 3. Occupational | 82 | 17.5 |
| 4. Consumer-oriented | 25 | 5.3 |
| 5. Cultural contrasts, festivals and customs | 9 | 1.9 |

| | | |
|--------------------|-----|------|
| 6. advertisement | 7 | 1.5 |
| 7. Law enforcement | 4 | 0.8 |
| 8. Politics | 4 | 0.8 |
| 9. Education | 3 | 0.6 |
| Total | 466 | 99.6 |

3.2 Relations as a whole

Table 3 shows the pattern of relations in all the textbooks as a whole. It is clear that *friends* is the most common relation portrayed with 141 occurrences, which makes up 45% percent of the relations in the textbooks, almost half of the relations. This rather large percentage can be indicative of the emphasis that dialogues put on conversations between social equals, which appear to “describe discourse as it might be in a better world rather than discourse as it is” (Fairclough 1989: 10). The second most common relation is *speaker-audience* with 13.7% of occurrences which appear in the form of monologues in the books. Someone describes an event, his/her life story, describes his/her feeling or attitudes toward something or tells a story. The *interviewer-interviewee* relation, with 10.8% of occurrences, is the third frequent relation. This relation would appear to have little basis at all as in reality interviews are held for the sake of taking a job or a position, no instance of which was observed in the textbooks. There is also a great deal of exercise of power in the interviews conducted in the real life, but again no instances of this behavior was found in the interviews depicted in the given textbooks. This type of relation simulates common interviews on TV and radio news. This demonstrates the point that the individual is positioned to accept certain relations by the fact that they are presented as normal occurrences. In this case the individual accepts the premise that one willingly offers frank opinions on almost any subject to anyone who asks for them, another instance of depicting world in a distorted fashion.

Colleagues, with 7.6% is the fourth frequently occurring relation. In this relation again the emphasis is placed on the social equal characters, describing a very friendly relationship between workers. *Consumer-*

service provider is the fifth category with 5.7% of occurrences. This relation highlights the importance placed upon the service industry and social skills training. As with *friends*, this relation is idealized to be free of conflicts and disagreements. With *customer-service provider*, one is also being positioned as playing a productive role in the economy. *Reporter-audience*, with 5.1% of occurrences, resembles what can be seen on TV, someone reporting an event to the audience. The seventh category, *family members*, with 3.5% of occurrences and the eighth, *wife-husband*, with 2.8% of occurrences again are examples of interactions between social equals. The ninth category, *consumer-seller*, with 1.5% of occurrences is similar to *customer-service provider*, but it is interesting to consider how less frequently it occurs. The tenth relation, *employer-employee*, with 0.9% of occurrences adds a spice of inequality to the relations in the textbooks, but the relations were so friendly that no instance of exercise of power by more powerful person could be detected in the conversations. Finally, there are *citizen-police officer*, *citizen-inspector*, *supervisor-subordinate*, *student-teacher*, *recruiter-job applicant*, and *plane crew-passengers*, which are unequal encounters, but again no exercise of power was observed. Being friendly was depicted as a natural process, which is not necessarily the same in real life.

Considering all analyzed relations, inequality is rarely addressed in these interactions, and this supports the claim regarding the tendency to conceal inequality in discourse. Fairclough's (1989) studies of actual micro-discourses between doctors and interns, police and citizens, and so on, reveal how powerful participants exercise power through the conventions of discourse. Once relations, subjects and contents are established, there are observable constraints on such things as turn taking, who can ask questions, who can interrupt, and forms of address, among many other possibilities. However, in ELT textbooks apparently little attempt is made to make learners aware of such issues as dialogue management strategies like turn taking or to even equip them with the verbal self-defense skills needed to deal with various forms of infringement of their wishes. What seems to be lacking is an explicit

teaching of such skills rather than simply exposing them to certain forms of language.

Table 3: Relations in the textbooks as a whole

| Category | No. of occurrences | % of total |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Friends | 141 | 45% |
| 2. Speaker-audience | 43 | 13.7% |
| 3. Interviewer-interviewee | 34 | 10.8 |
| 4. Colleagues | 24 | 7.6% |
| 5. Consumer-service provider | 18 | 5.7% |
| 6. Reporter-audience | 16 | 5.1% |
| 7. Family-members | 11 | 3.5% |
| 8. Husband-wife | 9 | 2.8% |
| 9. Consumer-seller | 5 | 1.5% |
| 10. Employer-employee | 3 | 0.9% |
| 11. Citizen-police officer | 2 | 0.6% |
| 12. Strangers | 1 | 0.3% |
| 13. Citizen-inspector | 1 | 0.3% |
| 14. Supervisor-subordinate | 1 | 0.3% |
| 15. Student-teacher | 1 | 0.3% |
| 16. Recruiter-job applicant | 1 | 0.3% |
| 17. Relatives | 1 | 0.3% |
| 18. Plane crew-passengers | 1 | 0.3% |
| Total | 313 | 99.3% |

3.3 Positions as a whole

Table 4 shows the pattern of positions in all the textbooks as a whole. As can be seen, *societal* aspect with 75.2% of occurrences dominates the positions in all the textbooks. Throughout the textbooks, most characters were placed in a position to talk about themselves, to have a friendly chat with friends, to tell an interesting story and positions like these. The characters throughout the textbooks were positioned in a way that people take in a very idealized and friendly situation. The second most important position is the *occupational* position with 19.6% of occurrences. This

position with the third category *commercial* position that has 5.1 of occurrences in the analyzed textbooks engages learners in business and economic activities.

Table 4: Positions in the textbooks as a whole

| Category | No. of occurrences | % of total |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Societal | 265 | 75.2% |
| 2. Occupational | 69 | 19.6% |
| 3. Commercial | 18 | 5.1% |
| Total | 352 | 99.9% |

3.4 Relation, position and content in American and British textbooks

This part of the paper reports a contrastive analysis of the ideological content of American and British textbooks.

Table 5 shows relations in American and Table 6 shows relations in British textbooks.

Table 5: Relations in American textbooks

| Category | No. of occurrences | % of total |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Friends | 85 | 51.2% |
| 2. Colleagues | 17 | 10.2% |
| 3. Interviewer-interviewee | 17 | 10.2% |
| 4. Consumer-service provider | 15 | 9% |
| 5. Speaker-audience | 8 | 4.8% |
| 6. Family-members | 7 | 4.2% |
| 7. Husband-wife | 4 | 2.4% |
| 8. Consumer-seller | 4 | 2.4% |
| 9. Reporter-audience | 2 | 1.2% |
| 10. Employer-employee | 2 | 1.2% |
| 11. Citizen-police officer | 2 | 1.2% |
| 12. Supervisor-subordinate | 1 | 0.6% |
| 13. Student-teacher | 1 | 0.6% |
| 14. Recruiter-job applicant | 1 | 0.6% |
| Total | 166 | 99.8% |

Table 6: Relations in British textbooks

| Category | No. of occurrences | % of total |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Friends | 56 | 38% |
| 2. Speaker-audience | 35 | 23.8% |
| 3. Interviewer-interviewee | 17 | 11.5% |
| 4. Reporter-audience | 14 | 9.5% |
| 5. Colleagues | 7 | 4.7% |
| 6. Husband-wife | 5 | 3.4% |
| 7. Family-members | 4 | 2.7% |
| 8. Consumer-service provider | 3 | 2% |
| 9. Consumer-seller | 1 | 0.6% |
| 10. Employer-employee | 1 | 0.6% |
| 11. Strangers | 1 | 0.6% |
| 12. Citizen-inspector | 1 | 0.6% |
| 13. Relatives | 1 | 0.6% |
| 14. Plane crew-passengers | 1 | 0.6% |
| Total | 147 | 99.2 |

In both British and American textbooks, *friends* with 51.2% and 38% of occurrences, respectively, is the most frequently occurring relation, which shows that the textbook writers in both sets tend to put the characters in equal social roles and show a utopia full of friendship to the learners, a phenomenon that rarely occurs in real world. Next, there is *interviewer-interviewee* relation with 17 occurrences in both sets. This type of relation depicted here has little basis in reality. As mentioned before, interviews in the real life are conducted for getting a job or a position, but in both sets of textbooks the interviews are conducted to entertain the learners, while no power is exercised and the interviewee freely expresses his/her ideas.

The biggest difference observed between these two groups is that the American textbooks lay a lot more emphasis on economy and place learners in more market economy relations. As illustrated in Tables 5 and 6, there are more instances of *colleagues*, *consumer-service provider*, *consumer-seller*, and *employer-employee* relations in the American

textbooks than their British counterparts, which shows that the American textbooks put a lot more emphasis on economy and economic activities. It might stand to reason that since the United States has a relatively more powerful economy than Britain, the Americans are engaged in more economic activities than the British and this mentality is reflected in their textbooks. On the other hand, the British textbooks have more instances of monologues, *reporter-audience* relation with 9.5% and *speaker-audience* relation with 23.8% of occurrences. In these relations the speaker tends to talk about interesting issues, most of which are intended to entertain the learners. The other relations did not make many changes in the general trend of the textbooks or between the two sets of textbooks.

Tables 7 and 8 show positions in American and British textbooks.

Table 7: Positions in American textbooks

| Category | New Interchange ³ | | Spectrum 6 | | Am. Cutting Edge 4 | | Total | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------|------------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1. Societal | 50 | 73.5% | 58 | 71.6% | 30 | 71.4% | 138 | 72% |
| 2. Occupational | 14 | 20.5% | 20 | 24.6% | 7 | 16.6% | 41 | 21.4% |
| 3. Commercial | 4 | 5.8% | 3 | 3.7% | 5 | 11.9% | 12 | 6.2% |
| Total | 68 | 99.8% | 81 | 99.9% | 42 | 99.9% | 191 | 99.8% |

Table 8: Positions in British textbooks

| Category | Headway U.I. | | Look Ahead | | True to Life | | Total | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------|------------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1. Societal | 65 | 82.2% | 31 | 65.9% | 31 | 88.5% | 127 | 78.8% |
| 2. Occupational | 9 | 11.3% | 16 | 34% | 3 | 8.5% | 28 | 17.3% |
| 3. Commercial | 5 | 6.3% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 2.8% | 6 | 3.7% |
| Total | 79 | 99.8% | 47 | 99.9% | 35 | 99.8% | 161 | 99.8% |

In both series, the *societal* position is the most frequently occurring position with 72% and 78.8% of occurrences, respectively. The reason is that they mostly introduce the characters in social contexts and most characters tend to talk about themselves or have a friendly chat with a friend about social matters around them. However, in *occupational* and *commercial* positions, the American textbooks tend to exceed their

British counterparts. There are 21.4% of *occupational* and 6.2% instances of *commercial* positions in American, while there are 17.3% of *occupational* and 3.7% instances of *commercial* positions in the British textbooks, which indicates that the American textbooks are more inclined to situate learners in economic and business-related positions.

Tables 9 and 10 show content in American and British textbooks.

Table 9: Content in American corporate textbooks

| Category | New interchange 3 | | Spectrum 6 | | Am. Cutting Edge 4 | | Total | |
|--|-------------------|-------|------------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1.Cultural contrast, festivals and customs | 5 | 6.5% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 5 | 2.2% |
| 2. Entertainment, human interest stories | 14 | 18.4% | 24 | 25.5% | 15 | 27.2% | 53 | 23.5% |
| 3. occupational | 17 | 22.3% | 18 | 19.1% | 10 | 18.1% | 45 | 20% |
| 4.Consumer-oriented | 7 | 9.2% | 3 | 3.1% | 5 | 9% | 15 | 6.6% |
| 5. Interpersonal, introspective | 33 | 43.4% | 46 | 48.9% | 24 | 43.6% | 103 | 45% |
| 6.Law enforcement | — | — | 3 | 3.1% | 1 | 1.8% | 4 | 1.7% |
| Total | 76 | 99.8% | 94 | 99.7% | 55 | 99.7% | 225 | 99.7% |

Table 10: Content in British corporate textbooks

| Category | Headway U.I. | | Look Ahead | | True to Life | | Total | |
|--|--------------|-------|------------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1.Cultural contrast, festivals and customs | 0 | 0% | 4 | 6.3% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 1.6% |
| 2. Entertainment, human interest stories | 35 | 28.9% | 20 | 31.7% | 23 | 40.3% | 78 | 32.3% |
| 3. occupational | 15 | 12.3% | 18 | 28.5% | 4 | 7% | 37 | 15.3% |
| 4.Consumer-oriented | 8 | 6.6% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 3.5% | 10 | 4.1% |
| 5. Interpersonal, introspective | 56 | 46.2% | 14 | 22.2% | 28 | 49.1% | 98 | 40.6% |
| 6. Advertisement | 7 | 5.7% | — | — | — | — | 7 | 2.9% |
| 7. Politics | — | — | 4 | 6.3% | — | — | 4 | 1.6% |
| 8. Education | — | — | 3 | 4.7% | — | — | 3 | 1.2% |
| Total | 121 | 99.7% | 63 | 99.7% | 57 | 99.9% | 241 | 99.6% |

As shown in Tables 9 and 10, the American textbooks have more cultural contrasts, festivals and customs content than the British textbooks. Therefore, it reveals that the American textbooks have included more cultural points. Overall, the American textbooks tend to depict the American way of life, culture, social events and the way people should behave in the United States, but on the other hand, the British textbooks mostly show the British way of life, British social events, British formality and how people should behave in each situation. As for entertainment, the British textbooks exceed their American counterparts, which may suggest that the British textbooks are more inclined to entertain the learners with appealing and entertaining content. Regarding occupational and consumer-oriented categories, the American textbooks surpass the British ones. This illustrates that the American textbooks place a heavier emphasis on market economy and engage learners in business and economic-related contents more frequently. In the fifth category both groups have somehow the same number of occurrences, 103 versus 98, which illustrates that characters in both series tend to speak about their personal affairs. Meanwhile, the British textbooks include categories like advertisement, politics, and education, which are absent in the American textbooks.

4. Discussion

By looking at the social relations in internationally-distributed ELT textbooks, one can figure out that there is a heavy emphasis on interaction between social equals. By examining the data on subject positions, one can easily see the heavy emphasis placed on societal positions and then on commercial and occupational ones. When the data on contents are examined, one can see a heavy emphasis on non-controversial topics, entertaining contents, and individual preferences and choice.

Regarding the first research question, i.e. whether English textbook writers adopt an equal or unequal subject relations in their textbooks, the results show that *friends* relation is the most frequently occurring relation

which is an equal relation between the interactants. This is followed by relations like *speaker-audience*, *interviewer-interviewee*, *colleagues* and other relations, which were mostly of equal social relations. Inasmuch as the researchers could not observe any unequal encounters among the interactants, it could be concluded that equal subject relations are adopted in the given ELT textbooks. Fairclough (1989) contends that ELT textbooks take a pragmatic approach in forming relations in the conversations and individuals taking part in these conversations are generally involved in cooperative interactions in which they have equal control over interactions and are able to contribute equally. He goes on to say that cooperative interaction between social equals is elevated into a prototype for social interaction in general, rather than being seen as a form of interaction that is socially conditioned and constrained. He then concludes that this would lead us into believing in an idealized and utopian image of verbal interaction. Fairclough (1989) has analyzed the relations between police-citizen, doctor-intern, and interviewer-interviewee and has detected obvious exercise of power by the participant in a more powerful position. But in the textbooks, although some unequal encounters were observed, there was not any exercise of power by any of the participants in the conversations. Even in the conversations that the relations were expected to be unequal, like interviewer-interviewee, no trace of exercise of power or even unequal encounters were detected. Therefore, there is a heavy emphasis on interaction between social equals and inequalities are not addressed in the textbooks.

To answer the second research question, i.e. whether English textbook writers make EFL learners aware of or equip them with strategies to deal with different forms of infringement of their wishes in the real interactions, the researchers examined all analyzed relations and found out that inequality is rarely addressed in these interactions, and this signals to the point regarding the tendency to conceal inequality in discourse. Since most of the relations in the textbooks are equal encounters, in ELT textbooks apparently little attempt is made to make

learners aware of such issues as dialogue management strategies like turn taking or to even equip them with the verbal self-defense skills needed to deal with various forms of infringement of their wishes. What seems to be lacking is an explicit teaching of such skills rather than simply exposing them to certain forms of language.

Regarding the third research question, i.e. whether EFL learners are placed in a societal, occupational or commercial position, the results indicate that *societal* position with 75.2% of occurrences is the most frequently occurring position in the textbooks. Characters throughout the textbooks were mostly inclined to talk about social issues and doing social services in an idealized social position in a very friendly manner. Then there is a heavy emphasis on *occupational* position with 21.4% of occurrences and *commercial* position with 6.2% of occurrences. This shows that there is a depiction of interactants in the market subject position which, as Taki (2008) believes, is in line with the principal tenets of neo-liberalism. Moreover, having the market place as the touchstone against which subject positions and social relations have been shaped in these textbooks is in line with the fact that the English language, as Kress (1995: 23) asserts, is the carrier of a “particularly virulent streak of fast capitalism.” Likewise, Holborrow (1999: 191) makes the assertion that “world English is not separable from the historical legacy of colonialism and from the internationalization of capitalism, both economically and politically.” The point that language can be so influential is implied by Eagleton’s (1996: 73) observation that “language is a rather weightless way of carrying the world around with us.” What this means is that we should be cautious not to fall into the trap of dealing simply with questions of language as if it were nothing but a neutral medium for the conveyance of knowledge and culture (Pennycook, 2000).

Thus, despite the fact that in much of the literature on ELT there is talk of the need to compromise and to adopt a sanctioned view of language appropriate for international use (McKay, 2002: 2006), and even though actual place names, historical figures, and settings are

avoided, the discourse of these ELT textbooks seems to be reflective of the discourses of the developed free-market western economies (Taki, 2008). One may expect such a trend since the ideological nature of the text implies that teaching English does not simply involve the neutral transfer of skills, knowledge, and competencies. Particular assumptions, values, and beliefs-implicitly or explicitly-are inextricably packaged in with the language (Auerbach, 1995).

As for the fourth research question, i.e. which categories of content are most emphasized and de-emphasized by ELT textbook writers, categories 5 and 2 - entertainment, human interest story, and interpersonal, introspective interactions - make up the most frequently occurring content in the textbooks. They show that most characters tend to talk about themselves about their personal affairs that are also entertaining, and the characters are inclined to entertain the students with the intriguing and interesting stories. It can be concluded that the bulky contents of the textbooks are to entertain the students. This is followed by categories 3 and 4 – occupational and consumer-oriented- which have higher occurrences than other categories. It illustrates that the textbooks have a propensity to position the learner within occupational and consumer domains. There is a heavy emphasis on market economy and putting the learners in economic positions to talk about market related contents. Next, there is category 1, i.e. cultural contrasts, festivals and customs. Comparing the number of occurrences of this category with other categories, the textbooks have allocated little amount of their content to it. Since the textbooks are studied by a large number of students from different countries and cultural background, surprisingly enough little attention has been given to this issue.

Considering the fifth research question, i.e. how British and American textbooks differ in terms of their ideological content, the results show that in terms of subject relations both American and British textbooks have *friends* relation as the most frequently occurring relation, which shows that textbooks in both groups tend to put the learners in an equal subject relation. The biggest difference between these two groups

was that the American textbooks put a lot more emphasis on economy and place learners in more market economy relations. As illustrated in results, there are more instances of *colleagues*, *consumer-service provider*, *consumer-seller* and *employer-employee* relations in the American textbooks than their British counterparts. This shows that the American textbooks put a lot more emphasis on economy and economic activities. As indicated earlier, this might be due to the fact that the United States has a more powerful economy than Britain, so the Americans are engaged in more economic activities and this mentality is reflected in their textbooks. On the other hand, the British textbooks have more instances of monologues, *reporter-audience* and *speaker-audience* relations in which the speakers talk about entertaining topics.

In terms of positions, in both American and British textbooks the *societal* position is the most frequently occurring position. The reason is that they mostly put the characters in socially-related content and most characters tend to talk about themselves or have a friendly chat with a friend about social matters around them. However, in *occupational* and *commercial* positions the American textbooks tend to exceed the British ones. This shows that the American textbooks are more inclined to situate learners in economic and business-related positions.

In terms of content, as shown in the results, the American textbooks have more cultural contrasts, festivals and customs content than their British equivalents, which suggests that the American textbook writers have a stronger tendency to talk about cultural issues. In entertainment and human interest stories, British textbooks exceeded the American ones, indicating that the British textbooks are more inclined to entertain learners with appealing and entertaining content. In terms of occupational and consumer-oriented categories, the American textbooks were more colorful than the British ones. This illustrates that the American textbooks put more accent on market economy and involve learners in business-related contents more frequently. In interpersonal, introspective and interactional talks both groups have somehow the same number of occurrences. This illustrates that characters in both series, more often

than not, tend to speak about their personal affairs. The British textbooks also have categories like advertisement, politics and education which are absent in the American textbooks.

The fact that ELT textbooks contain certain types of ideologies signals a need to make the learners aware of these ideologies and their effects. This is the point where the need for critical thinking and critical pedagogy and making students aware of the political and sociocultural effects of the English language surfaces. In recent years, several language scholars (Auerbach, 1991; Judd, 1987; Peirce, 1989; Pennycook, 1994, 1995; Phillipson, 1992) have tried to intensify the discussion of the political and sociocultural implications that permeate English language teaching. Their major concern is with the dominant discourse in ELT that considers the expansion and internationalization of English as natural, neutral, and beneficial (Pennycook, 1994). According to Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) the absence of a critical view towards teaching and the role of English internationally seem to be a result of English teachers' submission to applied linguistics, which has emphasized principally formal and methodological issues. Therefore, these scholars see a political role for the teachers of English and see a dire need for critical pedagogy and critical thinking inspired in the students. Pennycook (1994) believes that the teachers should be cognizant of political aspect of ELT and mistrust the idea that English as a global language is neutral. There comes critical pedagogy, which seeks to create racial, ethnic, gender, class, cultural and linguistic equality in our society based on morality and ethics (Kubota, 1998). Kubota holds that we should develop communicative skills in English and to appropriate English for expressing cultural identity and advocating global cultural/linguistic equality. That is, we should raise our students' critical awareness about the power of English and at the same time we should develop our students' communicative skill in such a way that they can use English to express their own linguistic and cultural identity. In the same vein Pennycook argues that teachers who teach English must:

- 1) Doubt and be critical of the idea that the internationalization of

English is good and can lead people to a better world.

2) Think about the relation their work has with the spread of English and critically evaluate how their practice can produce social inequality.

3) Question whether they are helping to spread and domination of English.

All in all, while trying to develop students' communicative skills in English, there should be an attempt to raise their cognizance about the link that English has with the global powers and social inequalities it brings about. And at the same time students should receive help to articulate counter discourse, that is, to use English to express their own identities and values in their own ways to counter the dominant discourse of the west.

5. Conclusion

Most people agree that today English is a global lingua franca and English has achieved this status not because of a growth in the number of native speakers, but rather because of an increase in the number of individuals in the world today who are acquiring English as an additional language (Mckay, 2006). As Mckay argues learners, today, have their own reasons for learning English like learning English for specific purposes, which is so limited in gamut, learning English to communicate with other L2 speakers or learning English to share information about their own country's culture. Learning English for such purposes undermines the traditional cultural basis of English, in which the teaching involves learning about concerns and the culture of native countries. She further adds that the ultimate goal of learning English is assumed to have native like competence, yet more and more users of English come to learn English alongside of one or more other languages, and their use of English is significantly far from that of native speakers of English. Thus, as Richards (2001) argues, language curriculum development must address the needs of the learners and ELT curriculum development must recognize that many bilingual speakers of English do not desire native-

like competence in English. Sridhar and Sridhar (1994) argue that because of the growing number of L2 users, the learning needs and goals of bilingual speakers of English in multilingual context is a subject that warrants a good deal of more research so that appropriate curriculum development for such learners can be designed. Thus, we need to think of teaching English as an international language (EIL) and curriculum developers need to thoroughly examine individuals' specific uses of English within their particular speech community as a basis for determining learning goals, and set aside native speakers competence model.

As Mckay (2006) argues, culture is an area of ELT curriculum development that often reflects native speaker model and needs to be reassessed. She believes that cultural contents often make up the topics in language materials and classroom discussions. Drawing on Cortazzi and Jin (1999), she distinguishes three types of cultural information that can be used in the materials:

- *Source culture materials* that draw on the learners' own culture as content.
- *Target culture materials* which use the culture of a country where English is spoken as a first language.
- *International target culture materials* that use a great variety of cultures in English- and non-English-speaking countries around the world.

McKay (2002) argues that traditionally many English textbooks have addressed the target culture because they were mostly published in the inner circle countries and because it was assumed that such information would be motivating for the students. While it is possible that target culture content is motivating, it is also quite possible that such content be irrelevant, uninteresting or even confusing for some students. Furthermore, some students learn English to provide information to others about their own community and culture, so they see little reason in learning to promote target culture in English language classes.

McKay (2006) argues that Cortazzi and Jin's model is advantageous

in that it uses “source culture” which puts the learners in a position to learn more about their own culture and to learn the language needed to explain these cultural elements in English. Furthermore, it uses ‘international target culture’ which imagines bilingual speakers of English interacting with each other in cross-cultural encounters for variety of purposes. Hence, she concludes that the growing number of bilingual users of English suggests that a productive theory of English as international language teaching (EIL) and learning must recognize the various ways in which English is used within multilingual societies. They often use English to access the vast amount of information currently available in English. Thus, there are several assumptions that need to inform EIL curriculum development. First, it should recognize the various ways in which bilingual speakers make use of English to fulfill their specific purposes. Second, many bilingual users of English do not need or want to acquire native-like competence. Therefore, the goal of English learning to develop native-speaker grammatical standards, phonological patterns, and discourse competence is ruled out. Finally, EIL curriculum developers should recognize the fact that English no longer belongs to any one culture, and hence there is a need to be culturally sensitive to the diversity of contexts in which English is taught and used.

Given the shift in the nature of English, it is time to recognize the multilingual context of English use and put aside a native-speaker model of curriculum development. Only then can an appropriate EIL curriculum be developed in which local educators could also have a share of ownership of English and English language teaching.

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