

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY: ANALYZING SOCIAL POWER AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN MOROCCAN EFL HIGH SCHOOL GATEWAY TO ENGLISH 2 TEXTBOOK

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Abstract

This article aims to examine social power and cultural identity in four units of Gateway to English 2 textbook in Morocco, it is a textbook for teaching English as a foreign language for second baccalaureate. Besides, the variety of languages along with regional Moroccan dialects entail different cultural perspectives and political guidelines to project students' orientations and national red lines to respect, since school is regarded as an area for national identities by using pedagogical implementations. In addition, the curriculum mustn't be a vehicle to convey social inequality or bias, but rather a suitable vehicle to promote social democracy and justice for all cultural identities, and in doing so, critical pedagogy can be an effective strategy for all students to see themselves in the curriculum and reshape future guidelines for themselves and their society. The data of this study was analysed through three stages of Fairclough's (Fairclough, 2017) approach to critical discourse analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation. The findings revealed that Gateway to English 2 textbook misrepresented Moroccan women in terms of literacy, knowledge and social position in Moroccan society and conveyed social and political guidelines.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a powerful means that is used first by people for the purpose of communication, understanding, and discovering new cultures and participate in the socioeconomic and political

dimensions worldwide. It enables people to shape their thoughts and uphold their identity especially in the critical period of adolescence (Erikson, 1994). Moreover, it is also used to propagate ideologies of the state, enslave and marginalize some groups in society by media or curriculum syllabi either implicitly or explicitly creating social exclusion (Park, 1928). Importantly, Robert (1926) used the marginal man to describe an individual who is paused or suspended in two or more cultures causing a dilemma to set up and uphold his or her identity (Bankovskaya, 2014). In this field, the curriculum can be a vehicle that people in power use to address and convey political, religious and ideological ideas that serve their agenda, and this is the ideology of curriculum in the teaching and learning process (Apple, 2018). On the contrary, the textbook should be a mirror of society that represents the whole society including their ethnic, religious and cultural identity. It is important to note that when a student sees himself or herself in a curriculum they feel valued and then get the self-belonging (inclusion) since early childhood (Allen & Cowdery, 2014), regardless their color, race or gender. The democracy and equality students find in the curriculum is a small image of the desired democratic society and equal rights, moreover, the ideology of language and the language of ideology exhibit the social and functional objectives of education and schooling, according to (Tajima, 2011) “schooling is never neutral; it promotes and protects the orientations of those in power since they supervise (big brother is watching you) and control what is being taught”, in this regard, (Canagarajah, 1999) claimed that “textbooks are often used to dominate and orient students’ thoughts since they are the future youth.” Accordingly, the content of Gateway to English textbook reflects the perspectives of a minority in society and doesn’t mirror all society, it contains a lot of images of gender inequality and embedded guided aims. However, the curriculum designers should take teachers’ and students’ attitudes into consideration to decide which suitable textbook content to implement, to learn the culture of its natives rather than learning about some aspects of Moroccan culture, identity and women in power, this theme was repeated redundantly apart from unit 4 in gateway textbook (*Gateway_To_English_SB.Pdf*, 2018). So, to what extent are social power and cultural identity misrepresented in Moroccan EFL high school textbook in teaching English as a foreign language?

2. Literature review

Curriculum designers should consider effective criteria to design the five skills of teaching and learning, they should relate the target language to students’ real life and experiences by stressing more emphasis on sociological imagination (MILLS, 1959) and the implementation of critical pedagogy (Freire, P., & Macedo, 1987). In this regard, Dr Hiba Ibrahim stated that: “In the Moroccan context, education is rarely used as an act of empowerment. The prevalent model of education in most Moroccan high schools and universities is the banking model of education” (Hiba, 2020). In this regard, a lot of research has been conducted about critical pedagogy and textbooks (Nelsen, 2021) (Nelsen, 2021) (Vu & Pham, 2022) (Gee Hickman, 2022) (Ouahani & Hiba, 2023) (Said, 2023). Furthermore, a lot of research has been conducted in Moroccan context about textbooks, ideology of language and the banking model and teaching English from a social perspective (Hiba, 2016), in addition, a study was conducted by professor Sakale Sana on “Students’ Perceptions of Textbooks in Moroccan High

Schools” (Sakale, 2020) , in her study findings she said that : “ students revealed their need to use non-textbook focused material, and to be given a chance to select topics of their own choice and that are of interest to them instead of being imposed classroom material. Correspondingly, students overtly express a need to use more extra-curriculum activities and authentic material too. The perceptions here are indicative of learners’ readiness to actively engage in and be responsible of their own learning by either choosing the topics and/or contributing to providing the material that can be used in class” (Sakale, 2020).Thus, this study will examine how social power and cultural identity are misrepresented in Moroccan textbooks using four units in Gateway to English 2 textbook as a sample.

3. Research methodology

This research was investigated through Fairclough’s (2003) model, Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse the data including written and visual texts and pictures of Gateway to English 2, as a sample which is an EFL textbook for second baccalaureate students, which was approved by the Moroccan ministry of education and has been used since 2007- 2008. The textbook focuses on Standards based approach. This study will focus on four major units:unit 1: (Formal, informal and non-formal education) unit 2: (cultural issues and values) unit 3: (Gifts of youth) unit 4: (Women and power). The data will be analysed through different disciplines as critical literacy, critical pedagogy, critical race theory studies highlighted by the three stages of Fairclough’s (1989 & 2013) approach to critical discourse analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation.

4. Results and discussion

The findings were divided into three stages or subsections drawn on Fairclough (1989-2013), the three stages are : Description – interpretation - explanation.

Description: Misrepresentation of Moroccan women in Gateway to English textbook

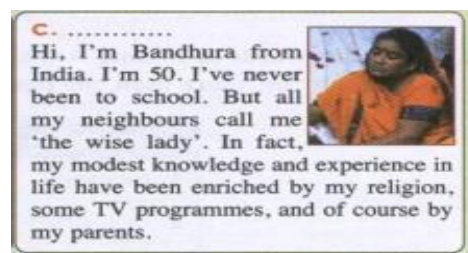
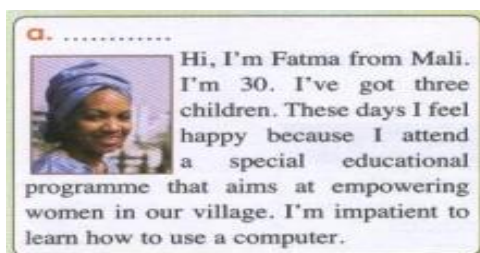
Women literacy: In unit 2, Moroccan women were misrepresented in visual images and also in written texts, which show the abundance of aspects of cultural identity and bias embedded in the textbook that present male characters differently. The following images revealed some of these aspects:



The image includes literacy classes for women only with no good conditions of learning. It shows a misrepresentation of many literate women in Morocco, who achieved high positions in education, politics, economy....

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In this image we can see six Moroccan women wearing cheap clothes, and reading in books to fight illiteracy, and a woman maybe their teacher who stood up to guide and teach them. Accordingly, The absence of a similar image that includes male characters learning under these conditions and having literacy classes make the syllabus designers unjust and present a picture of bias in social culture and social identity in terms of gender. However, male characters were presented as a symbol of hope, future horizons and stability. The four units contain many other aspects and forms of illiteracy facts related to female characters, as it is revealed in the following extract when two women present themselves, first woman from Mali and other one from India:



The two women have never attended school in their past, Fatma from Mali is 30 and she has never been to school, but she is motivated to learn,” I’m impatient to learn how to use a computer”. Bandhura from India said she is illiterate.

In this regard, the issue of illiteracy was connected to women, which is a misrepresentation of many educated and cultivated women in society in the past and present. Women were and are now doctors, teachers, policy makers, pilots, educators... they are one of the most important pillars of society, who must be as equal as men and vanish any kind of women’s subordination and male domination in society because the voices of women’s rights are heard as part of human rights.

In addition, I counted the frequency of presence for male characters and female characters in both visual image and written texts to show how social power and social identity were discursively represented in in units 1,2,3,4, the masculine names and pronouns were counted one time in each passage. The analysis show that visual images in the four units have 136 males out of 228, while 92 were images of females. The analysis revealed also that masculine names and pronouns were mentioned 57 times, but females were 40 times.

In addition, the analysis related to aspects of political inclusion and exclusion revealed that male characters were consistently represented in politics related images, while females were excluded from political aspects and participation in voting, and this is clearly shown on page 41 in unit 3.



The image reflects lack of women's participation in politics and decision making because of many social, religious and cultural reasons.

Interpretation- explanation

In this section, the researcher examined the implementation of political power and social identity in Gateway to English2 along with political and cultural messages embedded, this is clearly seen in a text that talks about young people engagement in politics (unit 3 page 40), which urges students to vote and take part in politics. Thus, there is a need for teachers to teach students social and educational values related to their daily contexts, and enhance their consciousness of social realities by personalizing their learning, and this can be done by the implementation of critical literacy and critical sociological thinking through dialogues and debates in the classroom.

A textbook should be excluded from all aspects of racism, sexism, dominance and gender inequality. However, the social power that serves critical feminism, western imperialism and capitalism was present abundantly in the four units. The designers conveyed many messages in the overt and hidden curriculum to promote and make students vote in local and national elections "especially that students are aged between 17 and 18 years old", but on the contrary, disassociating them from critical literacy participation : " The restoration and reconstruction of the rightist politics of official knowledge in school curriculum are powerful mechanisms to produce their dominance"(Apple, 1993)

5. Conclusion

The analysis and findings answered the research question that guided it (To what extent are social power and cultural identity misrepresented in Moroccan high school textbook in teaching English as a foreign language?). The findings revealed that Gateway to English 2 textbook conveyed social and political guidelines to reshape future orientations, in addition, it misrepresented Moroccan women in terms of literacy, knowledge and social position in Moroccan society. Thus, Morocco has witnessed a huge development in promoting and defending women's rights since most of women are no longer illiterate, they participate in the political, economic, religious, social and occupational roles. For the limitations of the research, the study relied on some units of a one textbook as a sample, however analyzing other textbooks in ELF in high or middle school as a sample will be effective to generalize the data.

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