



RESEARCH PAPER

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Multicultural Content in English Text Books of Secondary School Level Sindh Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

National curricula and textbooks vigorously develop and shape the values, ideologies, identities, attitudes, and behaviors. Textbooks develop abilities to maintain social justice, equality, respect for diversity, tolerance, and harmony. The study has been carried out to analyze the multicultural contents in the 9th and 10th Class English textbooks of the Sindh textbook board. Critical discourse analyses have been used using a qualitative approach by analyzing 46 lessons of both grades. By analyzing the content, it has been found that though there are subjects such as Islamic studies/ Islamiyat and Social Studies/Pakistan studies, English textbooks are more influenced by Islam and post-independence war heroes. The textbooks focus less on diversity exceptionally multicultural content. The content is more biased with the narrower view. It is recommended that English textbooks be revised, keeping in mind global trends in education and standards defined by the federal government of Pakistan.

KEYWORDS Contents, Critical Discourse Analysis, English Language, Learners, Textbooks

Introduction

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is essential in understanding the diverse views of written or spoken discourse. CDA can help to understand the hidden meaning and read between the lines of written texts or spoken discourse. It can also offer valuable information to language learners, teachers, and the media industry for analysis. Critical Discourse analysis has great significance in almost all disciplines. Critical discourse analysis has developed a new paradigm shift in social research, which analyses social norms, issues, ideologies, politics, and language power (Gee & Handford, 2012). It is an emerging discipline to analyze the different dimensions of texts for a better understanding of ideologies and the relatedness of the discourse. Fairclough (1989) argued that CDA has a significant role in defining the ideological character of the discourse. Discourse analysis gives excellent insight regarding the text and answers questions like what is in the text. Besides this, sociocultural analysis helps discover what is absent in the text (Fairclough, 1995).

Critical discourse analysis helps to analyze the multifunctional view of the text. The text serves different functions besides meaning; it represents the world, cognition, and social world (Halliday, 1978). Diversity of focus is always needed in the text's analysis concerning the function (Fairclough, 1995). Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) argued that some linguists believe that the study of the text is beyond the sentence level, but the analysis of the text is how it works in sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 1995). It requires a higher level of analysis of textual analysis, structural and organizational analysis, phonological, lexical, syntactical, and argumentation structures.

Textbooks are the sources of teaching in the right direction for attaining the desired outcomes in pedagogies. In ELT programs, textbooks are significant because they are designed to develop skills regarding English language, fluency, and competency. The study

has been designed to critically analyze the discourse, part of the textbooks, to better the students' abilities. This study is a novel kind of study because it critically examines the texts, the bias in the texts, partial statements, and lessons that need to be revised, and textbooks should be remodeled and redesigned to develop a broader sense among the learners. This study also analyzes the influential role of English textbooks in developing language competencies among learners (Samejo, Lashari & Mahar, 2023). Very few studies have been done to analyze the textbooks using the critical discourse analyses approach (Umrani, 2016). English language has been an important subject taught as a compulsory subject since pre-primary level, but it has failed to develop such skills and abilities among learners. The textbooks are on different state-based narratives focusing on Islam and post-independence heroes rather than language learning abilities and skills. The study helps to critically analyze the contents of English language textbooks of IXth and Xth classes.

Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis and its Significance

The paper will focus on the multicultural content used in classes 9 and 10 English textbooks for universal peace and brotherhood messages. Multicultural education plays an essential role in internationalization and the global education system. Levinson (2000) believes that "any word, phrase, or structure has a general range of possible meanings, what we might call its meaning range. It has been noted that cultural context has been ignored and less addressed to develop the historical significance of culture in the teaching content of contemporary social science (Smart, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Hollinger, 1994). Critical Discourse analysis is one of the primary disciplines that helps analyze and discover the new meaning of spoken or written discourse (Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 2013; Fairclough, 1997).

It has long been recognized that human discourses are not unified or universal; they consist of a diversity of language games, voices, intertextualities, and so on (Bakhtin, 1981; Kristeva, quoted in Moi, 1986; Wittgenstein, 1968).

The Significance of Textbooks

Textbooks are designed to achieve higher aims in developing intellectual, psychological, philosophical and cultural competencies to live a healthy life in the future (Samjeo, Mahar & Lashari, 2023; Ahmed, Lashari & Golo, 2023). These books are courses of a plan for carrying out certain aspects and achieving those objectives in a specific time (Lashari et al., 2023a). According to Fayaz et al. (2023), teachers are essential in applying cultural, psychological, philosophical, and historical knowledge in all domains. These textbooks accurately represent societies, history, and philosophy that contribute to the learners' cognitive, moral and sociocultural development (Ahmed, Lashari & Golo, 2023). Fairclough (2003) argued that textbooks are the best sources through which ideologies and value education are taught, which develops the attitudes among learners toward the social world around them.

Textbooks have vital impacts on the overall shaping of the behavior and attitudes of learners. The textbook designers, though not physically present, profoundly influence the instruction. Teachers' role remains facilitators or guides because textbooks convey the nation's narratives (Armstrong, 2003). Books are filled with all kinds of teaching and guiding material to facilitate the teaching and learning process in a better way. Besides contents, textbooks guide the teachers and learners in learning within a specific time. The textbooks have activities designed at the end of every unit to keep students engaged and achieve those objectives in a planned way. Contents, activities, and questions are designed to engage students and guide the teachers. Textbooks have played an essential role in teaching and learning. "values and beliefs of the culture and historical period of which they are a part" are represented in the textbooks (Provenzo, Shaver, & Bello, 2011, p. 2). Foster and Crawford (2006) argued that changes over time recorded in textbooks influence over the minds of young learners in their personality development and attitude formation about the diverse communities in the region.

English Textbooks of Sindh

Textbooks designed 35 years ago are extensively used in classes without any change, keeping in view the local and global needs (Mahboob, 2017). The readers are designed by following the Islamization concept of conservative Muslim military leader Zia-ul-Haq. He directed to align the textbooks with the interpretation of Islam (Rahman, 1997). These textbooks are used extensively, particularly from class I to class X (Amur, Bukhari & Lashari, 2023). The textbooks' contents are based on such contents, which incite the ideology of jihad and Shahadat as well as more inclination towards the military. The contents are more focused on the arousal of discrimination in the textbooks towards religious minorities and religious groups. Public education should be based on education that focuses on ethics, rights, civics, and humanities (Siddiqui, Lashari & Soomro, 2023). Public education is not inclined towards self-analysis, critical thinking, or human rights education.

Besides this, it has been made compulsory in all schools and colleges to teach these textbooks in the public and private sectors. In an inaugural speech at the national educational conference, General Zia ul Haq said, "Our curriculum must ensure that our children are brought up educated as good Pakistani and good Muslims. They must imbibe the lofty ideals and principles of Islam" (Nayyar & Salim, 2002). The curriculum and textbooks are heavily loaded with the ideology of Pakistan. The doctrine has been devised to please the post-independence political regime. Not only this, but the provincial governments failed to redesign and remodify the curriculum and contents after Zia's administration to meet the challenges of the modern age. English Textbooks focus more on the biographies of religious or military heroes (Mahboob, 2017). The selection of biographies based on military or religious heroes indicates the importance of the issues by national interest. It demonstrates that even English textbooks are overloaded with content on the theme of religion and war heroes. English language textbooks are designed to implement ideologies rather than develop language skills or competencies.

The Significance of Multiculturalism Contents in Textbooks

Internationalization and globalization have brought a significant shift worldwide; new themes have compelled educationists and policy makers to change the curriculum to meet local and global needs (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). These themes are based on human rights education, gender equality, ICT, and content that is not biased based on gender (Saemee & Nomian, 2021; Lashari et al., 2023c), religion, sex, and culture (Parker, 2019). Multicultural education deals with filling the gap developed by globalization and internationalization (Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh, 2020). The new shift in the education system at the university level has been recognized and implemented very well, but at primary and secondary levels, it has been ignored in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh (Samejo, Lashari & Mahar, 2023). There is a considerable gap in addressing these issues in research, highlighting, analyzing, and suggesting ways to develop awareness for multicultural education so that the learners can develop intercultural competencies and contribute collectively to sustainable society development (Umrani & Lashari, 2023, Lashari et al., 2023a). Knowledge seeking through culturally diverse ways helps to identify meanings, remove biases, develop tolerance, and maintain peace within the community (Lashari et al., 2023b). There is a need to add such content to the textbooks to see the upcoming generation more peaceful; otherwise, we would be unable to see the friendly and harmonized people of the state.

Adding multiculturalism in textbooks helps to critically analyze other cultures to develop respect and values for cultures and know more about cultural heritage, and honor to the diversity in the classrooms because classrooms are the best places to teach lots of intellectual approaches where students spend most of the time. Multiculturalism education develops abilities to be reflexive and critical about one's own culture as well as other's cultures. This forms a sense of interculturalism among the individuals and a shared system of knowledge (Young, 2001; Said, 1978, 1973; Habermas, 1972; Foucault, 1980;).

Multiculturalism education helps to eradicate cultural bias and differences. It is also important to know intercultural similarities and cohesion between different cultures.

Globalization has brought a new shift in almost all walks of life. Cultures have become diverse, complex, interdependent, and interconnected.

Banks (2010) defined multiculturalism in educational programs: "All students—regardless of gender, social class, racial, ethnic, or cultural characteristics—should have an equal opportunity to learn in school" (p.211). Multiculturalism promotes respect for others' cultures and being different, whether they are in the majority or minority. It fosters a sense of human dignity regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, and religion (Samejo, Lashari & Mahar, 2023). Multicultural education also develops a sense of justice for the identity, representation, and rights among learners.

Undoubtedly, textbooks do not fully reflect the diverse realities of modern nation-states. But many more textbooks now recognize the historical experiences of marginalized groups and the rights they possess than they did mere decades ago and in countries far away from the centers of multicultural discourse (Ahmed, Lashari & Golo, 2023).

While analyzing the text, it is essential to refrain from a one-sided view of the text or repetitive and creative tendencies. Bakhtin (1981, 1986) argued that texts are the places of rigidity(tension) between centrifugal and centripetal pressures. If the texts are not justified neutrally, the contents will develop a different and intolerant generation. The tensions will generate more tension differently. In this regard, it is time to revisit the textbooks to add diverse content for the multicultural community in the region.

Material and Methods

The study has been designed to analyze the English language textbooks at the secondary level. The study gives a reflection on my background in English language teaching. I have observed the student's willingness towards the textbooks, interest in self-learning, and slower language learning improvement at school levels. Learners cannot be fluent in the English language because of the low standards of the quality of the textbooks and the lack of student-centered approach-based modeling of textbooks. The textbooks are not student-friendly, and the contents are repeated from other subjects. There is a dire need to do research studies on textbooks and give robust research-based findings and recommendations for improving textbooks.

The study is based on the critical discourse analysis of the secondary level IXth and Xth English Books of Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro. The study focuses on using multicultural content in textbooks to develop a sense of social justice, peace, tolerance, and equality in a diverse community of Pakistan, particularly Sindh. This study will surely pave the way for future researchers and policymakers to revisit the textbooks to improve the changing world.

This study uses a qualitative approach, particularly Critical Discourse Analysis. This study analyses the multicultural process in the text or based on diversity to develop a sense of equality, social justice, and respect for diversity. Textbooks are essential in developing attitudes, beliefs, values, and ideas about the main topics from diverse domains. Textbooks develop values, knowledge, and abilities to critically analyze situations and make decisions according to the learned experiences and observations from the textbooks and educational environment. This study will help determine how English language textbooks are modeled to develop language skills among learners and what other aspects impact them.

The study is based on a qualitative analysis of the text. The study sample is Secondary Stage English Books for IXth and Xth Class published by Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro. The text has been analyzed using the critical discourse analysis approach. Twenty lessons from the English IXth class Secondary Stage book have been taken, and 26 lessons from the Xth class have been taken for the study sample. The study is based on content

analysis, considering the multiculturalism approach in the textbooks. The contents have been selected and analyzed objectively to analyze innovative strategies in the textbooks.

Analysis

Pakistan is a multicultural and multilingual country. The population comprises the majority of Muslims and a minority of Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and other communities contributing to the country's economy and stability. For the prosperity and peace of the state, it is the responsibility of the state to respect and give equal rights to every citizen regardless of race, color, and religion. Taking care of their rights and values, cultural and religious textbooks should be designed so that there is no religious language or cultural bias in the contents to develop morally, ethically, and tolerant societies in the upcoming generations. Respect for diversity and respect for every religion, culture, and ethnicity should be the prime objective of educational textbooks and policies. If educational institutions fail to develop such kind of abilities, then there will be no other institute that can fill that gap in the true sense. This gap will generate thousands of other problems in the societies. Its education system and curriculum standards are the foundation of any organization and its strong civilization and historical identity. The state's curriculum develops values, knowledge, and skills to develop a civic sense with high moral values and high esteem for diversity and diversity. The curriculum of Sindh textbooks remained a hotly debated phenomenon, and changes in the curriculum need decades to come. This has brought a significant shift in educational setup in that most private sector schools prefer affiliation with The Agha Khan Board, Cambridge, and Oxford-based curriculum in the school system and do not prefer the Sindh Textbook boards published textbooks.

Insensitivity towards religions is predominant in even the textbooks of Pakistan, particularly Sindh. English textbooks are filled with religious content even though Islamiyat is being taught from the beginning. Pakistani studies are also introduced to the children, but war heroes' content has influenced it in language-based subjects such as Urdu, Sindhi, Pakistan Studies, and Islamiyat. Not only this, but even English subject textbooks are given huge space to religious content, and there is no place for diversity. The spiritual teaching-based scope is narrowly defined, and the readers have also falsified history. Not only this but there isn't any subject that should give the historical overview of South Asian history and this region's rich culture and language. Aziz's (1993) book has raised a great debate and inspired research studies to analyze textbooks. Mahboob's (2017) contribution to the analysis of English textbooks is also a good insight for the researchers.

English Secondary Book for the 9th class comprises 20 lessons. Among these lessons, seven are based on biographies of independence heroes, war heroes, and religious people, and one is based on Philanthropist Hellen Keller. The first two paragraphs of the second lesson in the 9th-class English book Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (p.7) comprise the Islam theme rather than his universal message for humanity or respect for humans regardless of race, color, or religion.

The introductory paragraph of the Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai lesson is based on the sentence, "Islam is the religion of peace." the article indicates only the particularity of Islam, the religion of peace. Language in this biased way leaves an impression of less acknowledgment of other religions and diversity. It should be reviewed and rewritten while keeping the central theme of the lesson in view. The lesson's introduction to Shah Abdul Latif is based on his Shah Jo Risalo and his contribution to music through his invented instrument Tamboro, which is considered less critical given to the poet. The poetry of Shah Latif should be translated to teach language through literature. Literature plays an essential role in developing aesthetic sense and language skills. Besides this, his message of peace and love has been shared well in the lesson. Only two lines are dedicated to a general statement:

"Latif's message is the message of love. He believed in the brotherhood and equality of men and pleasing God by good deeds. According to him, this is the goal of life" (p.10). In these lines, the writer has mentioned the equality of men, which represents Latif's universal message in the right way for developing brotherhood and equality.

Lesson 5 is based on the biography of Hellen Keller (p.28). She is represented as a philanthropist in the book. The introductory paragraph is initially based on the statement, which is again biased. The account begins with "How fortunate people are those with two eyes who can see the world's beauty. Those who can't see are considered misfortunate. It has been mentioned that it is a greater misfortunate or worst fate for those who can see once and then can't see or hear for the rest of life. The sentence has been addressed like, "What a misfortunate! They cannot see the lovely flowers blooming in the gardens and hear the birds singing sweet songs. They indeed feel very sad, for their fate is so hard. Worse is the fate of those who can see and hear once and then no more" (p.28). This discourse is developing a difference between those who are complete and those who have physical or psychological deficiencies. The impression developed from this kind of content is disappointing to those who are special, and those who have deficiencies are humiliated by this kind of content. There is an antithesis in the lesson. In the first part of the lesson, those who are special children are humiliated in the text. The next Hellen Keller is unquestioningly shown as a great philanthropist, and her actual words are quoted: "How wonderful it is to be with you, my dear sons and daughters! Always be happy and cheerful. Never curse your fate. You can do everything in the world" (p.30). In the beginning the two paragraphs and last two paragraphs are the antithesis.

In lesson 10, "What the Quaid Said," a liberal approach has been used to address the multicultural approach in the textbook: "To him all Pakistanis were equal. He believed that religion or caste do not separate one Pakistani from another. "You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste ... we are all citizens and equal citizens of the stated" (p.24). In these lines, the writer has rightly defined multiculturalism in the textbook. These lines advocate diversity in the textual lines. The author has shared the significance of equality and freedom to Christians, Muslims, and any other community who want to go to any place for their worship.

This indicates that the dominant themes in the textbook are the war heroes. War heroes symbolize this in the readers, constituting 35% of all lessons in the book. There are five poems, which include 25% of the total classes in the textbooks. Three studies are based on a general reading contributing to children's moral values development. The rest of the lessons are based on historical and demographic information about the Sindh province at the local level.

16th unit in the IXth English book "Responsibilities of a Good Citizen" gives a general introduction to the responsibilities of citizens. The lesson's content is focused on only Muslim citizens of the state. This lesson does not address all state citizens born here and growing up here regardless of their color, ethnicity, religion, and affiliations. This lesson has given a narrower view of the citizens of Pakistan, which is based on religious aspects as well. It is stated in the lesson as "in short, we cannot be good Muslims without being good and dutiful citizens" (p.32), focusing they can't be good Muslims until or unless they fulfill their responsibilities and being dutiful. It highlights only this aspect that only Muslims can be good citizens, nor any other nation or community member who has the identity of Pakistani can be considered a citizen of Pakistan. This lesson in the English textbook is also biased by nature.

In Secondary Stage Book Two for English for Xth class, there are 26 lessons. Among these 26 lessons. There is only one lesson in the book, "The Customs of Various Regions of Pakistan," in which people from tribal areas, Pathans, Punjabi, and Sindhi nations are mentioned. The traditions of only Muslim countries have been mentioned, but it has not been noted that people from other religions live there, which is also respectable. They can be Sindhi Hindus, Christians, Punjabi Sikhs, or Christians. In one of the paragraphs, it is mentioned that the birth of a son is considered a sign of blessing for tribal areas people because it is necessary to increase the power of menfolk for the safety and security of their tribes. The paragraph indicates gender biases as well. It shows there is inequality of women in the dominant society in the state of Pakistan. The textbook is almost filled with religious

preferences or gender bias, which is not ethical according to the government's education standards. These types of biased content should be addressed and revised to remove the textbooks from any biases and racial or religious differences.

Findings

The study's findings are shared after analyzing the contents of the textbooks. The study is based on exciting results. They are keeping the analysis of the text in view. It is found that Islamization and military doctrine influence English textbooks for the secondary stage. English books for secondary classes are heavily loaded with such insensitivity towards religion. Though there is an Islamic subject for religious teaching, language-based issues are influenced more. English textbook for the IXth class is based on autobiographies and post-independence war heroes. Autobiographies contribute to 37% of the total lessons in the book. Hellen Keller also suggests an immoderate approach to defining philanthropists. The text is more religious biased rather than objective or neutral. Islamization and military heroes' exaggerated content have given more focus to the content.

Besides this, students are taught Islamiyat as well as Pakistan Studies. English textbooks have a tiny part allocated to multicultural education. Only two paragraphs are mentioned for multicultural education in the IXth and Xth Secondary stage textbooks. One is in Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's lesson, and the other is in the speech of the Quaid e Azam. In the Xth secondary stage book for English, only one lesson is dedicated to this, which is insufficient to address and acknowledge other communities of the state. Religious bias has been found in the textbook, which has been mentioned in the discussion in detail. There is also found gender bias in the ELT books.

Conclusion

English is a compulsory subject from the primary level to the tertiary level. English textbooks play an important role in language learning and skills development among learners. English textbooks are poorly designed and less focused on student-centered approaches, and the physical appearance of the textbooks is not attractive, which can motivate students to learn by themselves. These textbooks favor religious teaching rather than language-based education and methods or activities. Post-independence war heroes have been given more importance in textbooks. Biographies of religious people have been mentioned repeatedly, and the content is also more religious insensitive. The textbooks place less importance on social equality, justice, peace, tolerance, and particularly diversity or multiculturalism. Two paragraphs have been dedicated to multiculturalism in the textbooks, which is an injustice to the diverse communities of the state. The textbooks should be revised, such content advocating ethnic, gender, and religious biases should be removed, and student-centered models for curriculum design should be used while keeping students' self-learning approaches in view.

Recommendations

The discussion in the paper and findings suggest a need to fundamentally reform the course contents of the English language.

English language textbooks should be based on literature and stories-based content for language learning.

ELT textbooks should be free from religious content, which should be discussed in Islamic studies.

ELT textbooks should be free from military or post-independence war heroes, and these heroes should be mentioned in Pakistan studies textbooks.

ELT textbooks should be based on student-centered activities that should develop learners' language skills.

All stakeholders should revisit the policies and curriculum content to ensure textbooks are free from cultural, religious, and gender biases.

Every subject has a different nature, and contents should be redesigned according to the heart of the matter and the demands of students and the community.

The contents that justify one dominant culture, one dominant religion, or gender should be removed with neutral, positive, and universal brotherhood with social equality, respect, peace, justice, and mutual responsibilities.

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