



An Intercultural Approach to Textbook Analysis: The Case of English Result

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ABSTRACT

Highlighting the pivotal role of textbooks and materials in promoting intercultural communicative competence which gains prominence in the modern globalized world, the present study adopted a descriptive approach to English Result series. In doing so, this qualitative study analyzed the English Result (2009) series from an intercultural perspective.

Thus, the representation of sociocultural identities was examined using Ting-Toomey's (1988) identity negotiation theory. Identity representations were analyzed in terms of the four primary elements of cultural, ethnic, gender, and personal identities. Content analysis of visuals, reading passages, and audio tracks in the English Result series indicated that although the books have managed to represent gender, ethnic, and personal identity representations in the series, they have underrepresented cultural identity manifestations. Notwithstanding, this drawback – i.e., lack of cultural identity depiction, could – be overcome by the teacher, realia, or DVDs which include a variety of cultural topics. The study ends with discussion and suggestions for further exploration of the textbooks from an intercultural, discursive, content-analytical perspective.

Keywords: Materials analysis, Intercultural competence, Culture, Identity, English Result

Introduction

Language has always been a primary means of communication part of which is affiliated with culture. In fact, as Risager (2007) points out, language and culture are inextricably connected and culture shapes an integral part of English language teaching (ELT). In the last few decades, (inter)-cultural awareness has emerged as fundamental to the cultural dimension of ELT curricula (Baker, 2011). However, in this age of globalization, it is

difficult to link English language with one culture only. In the English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, textbooks provide a rich source of input for language learners and shape the heart of ELT programs (see Sheldon, 1988). Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) caution that language textbooks should not be considered as a neutral repertoire of lexicogrammatical patterns per se. Rather, as these scholars note, language teaching textbooks include a variety of genres that promote particular ideological and cultural choices within the context of classroom (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004). Consequently, the more a textbook includes the sociocultural dimension, the better it would foster cultural communicative competence in language learners (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004).

Moreover, it is a truism that in the contemporary world, there is no limit to the exchange of information and people can easily interact with each other in all parts of the globe. English language as a means of communication has not been an exception to this trend. As Cook (2002) posits, non-native speakers of the English language outnumber its native speakers. Accordingly, in order to communicate effectively with different interlocutors from different cultures, language users need to be interculturally competent since intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has become the ultimate goal of learning English as a second or foreign language (Byram, 1997).

This trend has encouraged some scholars to reconsider the role of culture-related issues represented in EFL textbooks. In fact, Feng and Byram (2002) have suggested that language textbooks provide an authentic manifestation of both native and nonnative cultures. However, an issue which has received little attention in the literature is whether or not current EFL textbooks reflect authentic cultural values. In order to address this rather underexplored issue, the present study aims at evaluating the English Result (2009) series from an intercultural communication perspective.

Review of the Related Literature

Intercultural competence

According to Merriam-Webster's (2004) dictionary, the origin of the word culture dates back to the 15th century. It is originated from the Latin word 'cultura' or 'cultus' meaning cultivation of the land. As cited in the Oxford dictionary of word histories (2002), the meaning of culture was extended to "cultivation of the mind, faculties or manners" (p. 287) in the 16th century.

To date, many scholars have attempted to provide definitions for the concept of culture but there is still scant consensus about its precise meaning and definition in the literature. Culture has been such an opaque concept that researchers indicate their "apprehension" about using this

terminology by either enclosing it in quotation marks or by employing "lexical avoidance

behavior" that puts in its place terms such as "discourse", "praxis", or "habitus" (Heath, 1997, p. 113, as cited in Atkinson & Sohn, 2013, p. 1).

The connection between language and culture in Applied linguistics has emerged as an issue of concern in the 1990s as the advancements in identity politics and second language (L2) acquisition research burgeoned (Kramsch & Hua, 2016). Such a connection became more complex due to developments in multilingualism and human communication (Kramsch

A Hua, 2016). Culture receives even more attention in the process of language learning and teaching where various personal histories, experiences and outlooks of both teachers and learners are interwoven. It is no surprise that ICC, as a means of facilitating such encounters, gains momentum. ICC, as a field of enquiry was established in the 1950s (Kramsch & Hua, 2016). Central to this field of enquiry is the notion of language as a mediating tool to prepare language learners for meaningful communication outside their own cultural environment (Buttjes & Byram, 1991).

According to Liddicoat (2011), intercultural language teaching and learning deal with the relationship between languages and culture. As Liddicoat (2011) states, there are two major camps centering on teaching culture, each developed based on the way they viewed the nature of the relationship between culture and language. First, a cultural orientation explains that the development of knowledge about culture does not imply that it opposes or alters the

learners' existent identity, practices, worldview, and belief system. Thus, it remains external to the learner (Liddicoat, 2011). According to the proponents of this camp, learning culture is merely the acquisition of a body of knowledge about a given culture (Liddicoat, 2005).

Crozet and Liddicoat (2000) additionally note this approach to culture is loosely related to language since culture is viewed as a separate entity, divorced from the context of language. Second, proponents of an intercultural orientation maintain that through the act of learning, learners undergo specific transformations by adopting oppositional stance (Kramsch

1. Nolden, 1994, as cited in Liddicoat, 2011). As a result of the engagement with another culture, a learner attempts to construct an intercultural identity by decentering from his or own current linguistic and cultural identity (Liddicoat, 2011). In this orientation, language and culture are interrelated and constant exposure to language and culture results in the achievement of desired learning outcomes (Liddicoat, 2011).

As Liddicoat (2011) posits, forming a body of knowledge about a particular culture is not necessarily equivalent to having an intercultural competence developed. That is, language learning is a process of exploring the ways language and culture can be related to the actual realities of both the learner and the target community. In this view, the study of culture has

the advantage of exposing learners to various ways of viewing the world and developing flexibility and independence from a single linguistic and conceptual system (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat, 2005). Hence, intercultural competence refers to an "awareness of the interrelationship between language and culture in the communication and interpretation of meanings" (Liddicoat, 2011, p. 838). An intercultural language learner develops

this awareness through the experience of another culture and language and also through an engagement with “culturally situated text— whether spoken or written, intrapersonal or interpersonal—” (Liddicoat, 2011, p. 839) by which the learner is made aware of diversity within a community and among communities.

In order to establish effective communication, individuals are thus required to be “mindful” (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 16). Ting-Toomey (1999) reasons that individuals need to be made aware of their own behavior and that of others in various situations so they can concentrate on the process of communication and learning (Ting-Toomey, 1999). As Ting-Toomey (1999) holds, to become effective communicators in diverse cultural contexts, individuals need to be mindful of different characteristics constituting the processes of communication.

According to Ting-Toomey (1999, pp. 16-17), intercultural communication refers to the “symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation”. Risager (2009) also states that “intercultural competence is very much the competence of navigating in the world, both at the micro-level of social interaction in culturally complex settings, and at macro-levels through transnational networks like diasporas and media communications” (p. 16). According to Byram (1997), ICC consists of the following components:

Attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own.

Knowledge: of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction.

Skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents of events from one’s own.

Skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

Critical cultural awareness/political education: an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries. (Byram, 1997, pp. 57-63).

Deardorff’s (2006) conceptualization of intercultural communication offers an understanding of and respect for diversity, flexibility, and adaptability in behavior to treat others as they expect to be treated. To Fantini (2012), ICC consists of three domains as follows:

1. The ability to establish and maintain relationships.
2. The ability to communicate with minimal loss or distortion.
3. The ability to collaborate in order to accomplish something of mutual interest or need (p.271).

One of the models which has operationally defined intercultural analysis is the identity negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 1999, 2015). In this theory, identity refers to “an individual’s multifaceted identities of cultural, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, family/relational role, and personal image(s) based on self-reflection and other-categorization social construction processes” (Ting-Toomey, 2015, p. 418). The identity negotiation theory recognizes eight identity domains which can influence an individual’s everyday social interactions. These eight domains fall into two broad categories, with each having its own sub-categories.

According to Ting-Toomey (1999), the two broad categories are ‘primary identities’ and ‘situational identities’. Primary identities include four types of identity; namely cultural, ethnic, gender, and personal identity. Primary identities exert considerable, ongoing influence throughout our lives (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Situational identities are also divided into role identity, relational identity, face-work identity, and symbolic interaction identity. By definition, situational identities are adaptive self-images and are highly situation-dependent (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Compared to the four primary identities, situational identities are less stable, driven by external situational features. These types of identities are thought to be internalized by individuals operating in a particular society (Ting-Toomey, 1999). To conclude, contributing to mindful intercultural communication, these eight domains are considered as a “composite self-conception” (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 30) of the makeup of any cultural community. The following section briefly explains each facet of identity as defined in the identity negotiation theory.

Intercultural competence and EFL textbook development/ evaluation

Discussing ICC in the area of materials development, Feng and Byram (2002) highlight the necessity of the “presence of ‘realist’ cultures, including the target culture and

the learners’ own” (p. 63) in language textbooks. They hold that, essential to this realistic representation is the mutual perception of the addressees or selection not only of materials developed by native speakers, but also textbooks produced by those using English as a lingua franca. This might include discourse from the learners’ own culture. Moreover, the real intention of discourse needs to be recognized by textbook developers through linguistic and non-linguistic elements.

Shin, Eslami and Chen (2011) underscore the inclusion of intercultural content in textbooks and argue that since EFL learners are not exposed to the second culture as intensively and closely as learners of English as a second language, EFL textbooks should provide learners with ample and diverse chunks of racial and cultural backgrounds

so as to help them identify different perspectives. Yet, as Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) maintain, some current EFL textbooks have failed to accomplish this mission and they bear limited capability of establishing intercultural competence among their audience. In fact, as Kobia (2009) point out, if EFL textbooks are inefficient in developing intercultural competence, they may render a biased worldview in learners and may portray discriminatory behavior and ideology. Against this backdrop, analyzing EFL textbooks from the intercultural communication perspective can be beneficial since it aids adapt EFL materials, improve the quality of courses, and foster intercultural awareness among learners.

A cursory look at the available literature points to a good number of studies focusing on the analysis and evaluation of EFL textbooks from various perspectives though not limited to, cultural and intercultural competence. In an attempt to examine the interculturality of ELT textbooks taught in Spain, Méndez García (2005) investigated fourteen first and second course ELT textbooks. Her findings indicated that these textbooks do not possess any cross-cultural approach, thus providing learners with little potentiality for developing intercultural competence.

Lee (2009) also conducted a study to see whether cultural dominancy exists in Korean EFL textbooks. In doing so, eleven high school EFL conversation books were content analyzed. The researcher concluded that the textbooks overlooked culture in failing to teach it. Moreover, the representation of the Anglophone ideology was dominantly observed during the content analysis. In another study done within the context of Korea, Song (2013) analyzed four EFL textbooks developed for the grade ten of the Korean national curriculum. The findings of this content analysis further indicated that Korean and/or American characters, especially white male characters are dominant in the textbooks.

Shin, Eslami, and Chen (2012) studied the presentation of local and intercultural culture in seven series of international ELT textbooks to scrutinize whether they reflect the cultural perspective of the English as an international language (EIL) paradigm. Baleghizadeh and Jamali Motahed (2010) content analyzed and compared six American and British textbooks from an ideological perspective. The researchers concluded that while British textbooks tended to entertain the students, their American counterparts tended to provide the learners with more occupational and business-related cultural issues. Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) also explored the hidden agenda in two international and localized textbooks, i.e., *Top Notch: English for Today's World* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006) and *The ILI English Series: Intermediate* (2004). Their findings showed that the locally developed textbooks (The ILI series) were culturally neutral and that they are more

sociologically oriented. Yet, Top Notch textbooks contain more cultural elements. To reiterate, considering the centrality of developing intercultural competence in an EFL context in light of teaching materials, the current study seeks to investigate the extent to which identity representations in English Result (2009) series, as a coursebook widely used in the context of Iran, have the potentiality to develop learners' intercultural competence. In doing so, the following methodology has been adopted:

Methodology

Materials

In this study, the textbooks investigated for interculturality were the English Result (2009) series developed by Mark Hancock and Annie McDonald for adults and young adults. English Result is a four-level English course. Each textbook contains twelve units. Each unit has five sub-units and each sub-unit contains two pages. While the page on the left aims at dragging the learner into the topic without having any pedagogical content, the right-hand page carries the pedagogical load of the book and is designed to appeal to the students. It shows the whole lesson as a path of acquiring English language. Each page starts with a 'How to...' and ends with an 'I can...' section. The series cover all the four language skills and two sub-skills.

Throughout the orderly design of the book, operational goals have been defined for speaking, listening, reading, writing, pronunciation, and vocabulary. For instance, if "introducing your family" is assumed as the function of a lesson of the Elementary book (pp. 18-19), only the necessary skills that the student would need to fulfill the considered function have been provided. Gradation of the book fits into the Common European Framework of

Reference (CEFR). The book is accompanied with a workbook, teachers' book and some culture-enriched student DVDs.

However, the upper-intermediate book differs organizationally in comparison to other three books in that it has 5 units, each unit having six sub-units, the overall organizational pattern and content of the UI book remains the same as that of the other three. As for the current study, all the four books have been content analyzed for their interculturality. Moreover, where needed, they are abbreviated as E, PI, I, UI, referring to the elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and upper-intermediate books respectively.

Data analysis

The purpose of the current study is to analyze the potential of the English Result series to prepare EFL learners for intercultural communication. Drawing on Ting-Toomey's (1989) framework identity as an analytical lens, the

representation of identities was examined throughout the series. The focus of the analysis is on the reading passages, visuals, and, sound tracks in the books. Due to practicality reasons and in light of the definitions of situational identities being highly situation-dependent driven by external situational features (Ting-Toomey, 1989), only the primary identities of Ting-Toomey's (1989) conceptualization is investigated in the aforementioned books.

In the present study, cultural identity was investigated in terms of individualism and collectivism. Individualist values are identified through themes of frugality (De Mooij, 2010 & Hofstede); appreciation of competition (De Mooij, 2010 & Hofstede), self-direction (Imada, 2010), and material issues and needs. Additionally, collectivism was investigated through the study of family, conformity and group harmony themes (De Mooij, 2010 & Hofstede, 2010; Imada, 2010).

Furthermore, in relation to the audio tracks, ethnic identity was examined through the criteria of nationality, race, and language background. Moreover, the books were content analyzed for illustration of different national values which might contribute to learners' understanding and tolerance of diversity of cultures. In addition, gender identity was investigated linguistically and nonlinguistically based on the roles assigned to males and females. Moreover, audio tracks were carefully listened to analyze the role relationships of male and female interlocutors. Lastly, personal identity of both types was investigated based on how characters refer to an aspect of each other's identity or comment on it. Additionally, whether the books help students support their own personal identity was investigated.

Results and Discussion

Cultural identity analysis

To reiterate an earlier point, cultural identities were investigated in the textbooks in terms of collectivism and individualism. Although the textbook developers have attempted to include both concepts in the series, content analysis of visuals, reading passages, and audio tracks illustrated that representation of the individualist culture outweighed that of the collectivist culture. Possibly, an instance of indicating both collectivist and individualist features could be the following passage, in which almost all types of family (extended, nucleus, single parent, etc.) have been referred to.



Figure 1. Cultural identity depiction in *English Result* (2009), Elementary. p. 20

There are not many other instances of the concept of family and family ties. Characters present in the reading passages are mostly roommates (E, p.32; p.62), co-workers (E, p. 42; p.120), a breaking-up couple (E, p. 36). Additionally, in a number of cases, the relationship between the characters is not made explicit (E, p.22).

In terms of presenting vocabulary items related to family and family relationships, the visuals illustrate this concept simply as labeled words in a way that removing labels would decontextualize the words. Thus, various conjectures can be made about the family relationships among the people in the visual.

This was observed both in the Elementary (p. 78) and Intermediate (p. 6) books. The visual intended to teach family-related vocabulary items is represented in Figure 1, below.

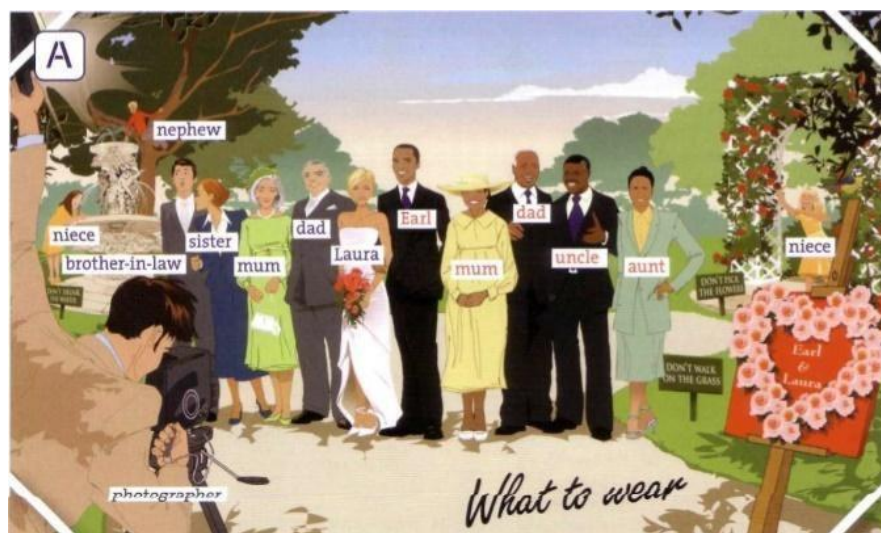


Figure 2. Cultural identity depiction in *English Result* (2009), Elementary. p. 78

Another indicator of the rather individualistic nature of the textbooks was self-direction or tendency towards independence. For instance, there was a reading passage in the pre-intermediate book which challenges the learners' mind about being independent by asking them questions such as whether they have ever bought a house, owned a car key, turned on the cooker, paid for the rent and so one. (PI, p. 42).

Another passage indicating self-direction could be the one observed in the third book (I, p. 32) where an independent life and career path of a typical westerner was visualized in a form of a board game. As for material issues and needs (i.e., a characteristic of individualist cultures), it was noticed that a whole unit in the upper-intermediate book was devoted to this issue. The passages in this unit mainly covered expeditions people have made for various reasons (p. 32) and tips for success by a professional counsellor (p. 34). There was also a test on dilemmas between work-related and personal-life related issues (p. 36). The aforementioned personality test is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

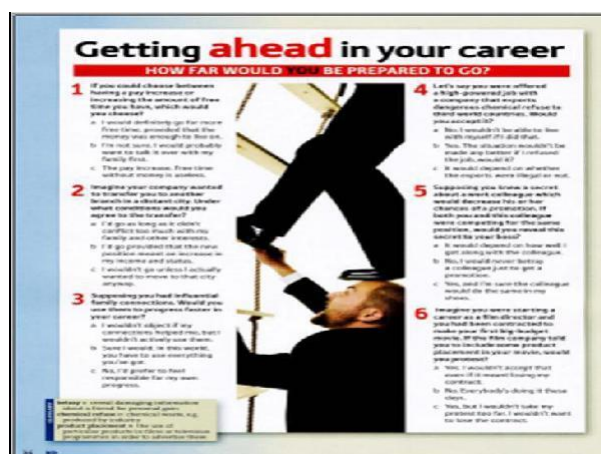


Figure 3. Cultural identity depiction in *English Result* (2009), Upper- intermediate. p. 36

The upper-intermediate book was rich in elaborating on material issues and needs as another whole unit centered on work-related issues, such as the new boss who uses positive psychology (p. 20); how to talk about experiences at work and managing a job interview (pp.23–24); the rules of work (p. 26);

and writing a job application letter (p. 28). An excerpt in which job-related words are presented in the context of a passage about an optimistic boss is presented in Figure 4.

Work words			
conversational		official	
1 <input type="checkbox"/> boss	7 <input type="checkbox"/> dustman	a <input type="checkbox"/> personal assistant	g <input type="checkbox"/> to be on unemployment benefit
2 <input type="checkbox"/> job	8 <input type="checkbox"/> secretary	b <input type="checkbox"/> line manager	h <input type="checkbox"/> to finish work
3 <input type="checkbox"/> to be on the dole	9 <input type="checkbox"/> to be/get sacked	c <input type="checkbox"/> occupation	i <input type="checkbox"/> to have a high income
4 <input type="checkbox"/> to be taken on	10 <input type="checkbox"/> to earn /ɜ:n/ a lot	d <input type="checkbox"/> refuse /rɪfjuːs/ collector	j <input type="checkbox"/> flight attendant
5 <input type="checkbox"/> to go on strike	11 <input type="checkbox"/> to knock off	e <input type="checkbox"/> to be recruited /rɪkrʊːtɪd/	k <input type="checkbox"/> to resign /rɪˈzaɪn/
6 <input type="checkbox"/> to quit	12 <input type="checkbox"/> air hostess	f <input type="checkbox"/> to be/get laid off	l <input type="checkbox"/> to take industrial action

Figure 4. Cultural identity depiction in English Result (2009), Upper- intermediate. p. 20

A further instance of the books' illustrating an individualist culture was evidenced in a sound track accompanying the elementary book, in which a man is living a boring and lonely life and going to work and coming back home (E. p. 83). Instances of individualist cultures definitely outnumbered those of collectivist cultures. As for one of very few instances of the representation of collectivist cultures, a text in the upper-intermediate book narrated the memory of a child who once ate peas in exchange for receiving money from his grandmother, though he hated them and the story of how he had to eat them for the rest of his life since his mother kept saying "you ate them for money, you can eat them for love" (UI, p. 74). At some level, this can denote the concept of family and conformity.

However, developers of the series have taken a neutral stance in some cases. There are two office-workers named Justin and Holly who recur in the first two books several times. Justin, as illustrated in the reading passages is a frivolous character who does not take his job seriously and constantly loiters (E, p. 42; p.120). While this is against features of an individualist society, where men strive for material needs, it is not a feature of collectivist society either. Although people of most countries and races are presented in the book, as will be explained in the next section, it appears that the book has failed to include more instances of collectivist society which is typical of countries such as Japan and Korea.

In conclusion, analysis of the cultural identity of English Result series indicated that the books seem to have exhibited features of individualist cultures more significantly.

Ethnic identity analysis

The investigation of ethnic identity in this study was carried out against the criteria of nationality, race, language background, and representation of different national values. Findings of the content analysis indicated that textbook developers have succeeded in fulfilling ethnic identity depiction. A good number of cultures have their fair share of participation in the book. Except for the page which teaches countries and nationalities, more than thirty other countries have been referred to in some way, including countries such as Trinidad, Mali, Poland, Panama, Tunisia, Senegal, Austria, and so forth. Although the book centers on the British accent of English, other accents were also detected while listening to the audio tracks, including Indian English (E. p.113), and Japanese English (E. p.2, 4, 12).

Moreover, the books have many instances to offer when it comes to familiarizing the learner with customs and traditions of other cultures. It can be cautiously claimed that the books have been successful in fostering consciousness raising about cultural differences. To partially address this issue, the books have covered topics such as daily life of people in Ethiopia (E. p. 44); food facts for visitors to Madrid (E. p. 64); how to be a good guest in Japan (E. p. 114); tips for visitor from abroad (PI, p 54); food and drink guides for visitors (PI, p. 94) and so on.

More specifically, the intermediate book appears to be the most successful in accomplishing the goals of intercultural communication as the analysis of the passages and visuals show the coverage of topics such as different ways of talking about your background including nationality, religion, and ethnic background (pp. 16–17), culture shock (p. 22), intercultural experiences (p. 24), and rules of etiquette on making small talk in different countries (p. 86). Furthermore, the upper-intermediate book provides useful tips for describing customs and habits (p. 7). Thus, it can be concluded that the series have been successful in providing learners with intercultural competence from an ethnic perspective.

Gender identity analysis

Heterogeneity instances were also evident in English Result (2009) series regarding gender representation. It appears that textbook developers have succeeded in their attempts to avoid gender discrimination, since females and males appeared almost equally in the texts, with females making about 45% and males about 55 % of the total visuals in the book. Moreover, this equality seems to be extended to roles assigned to them. As mentioned above, there are not many instances of the concept of family in the books, so one cannot argue that women appeared only as the role of nurturer and supporter for the weak, neither can one claim that they were kind mothers. However, analysis of the jobs assigned to them indicated that the textbook developers have been successful at striking a balance among the assigned roles. What is observed in the book is that both men and women were shown as teachers, doctors, nurses, office workers, and bosses. Moreover, men were assigned different roles including vet, shop assistant, factory worker, farmer, footballer, writer, photographer, sailor, and spy. Women in the visuals were shown as housewife, designer, model, waiter, travel agent, and judge.

Moreover, listening to the relevant audio data and analysis of their content indicated that the sound tracks were either monologs or were conversations mainly appearing between male and female interlocutors. Except for the case of roommates (E, p.32; p.62), no other conversation was witnessed between people of the same sex. Moreover, no pattern of superiority or inferiority was detected between the interlocutors. However, it appears that the third book counteracts this trend observed in the other three books by including a text about a reckless driver who happens to be a woman and offers some alcoholic drinks to the driver of the other car who turns to be her ex-friend (p. 56). The aforementioned visual and passage are represented in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5. A sample of violation of the general trend of the series in terms of gender identity

Personal identity analysis

In this study, indicators of personal identity, both actual and desired, were noticed in terms of how characters referred to an aspect of each other's identity and on the ways that the books taught learners how to express themselves freely and support their voice. Analysis of the visuals, reading passages and sound tracks indicated that the books considerably encourage learners to personalize covered topics, by asking learners how they think or feel toward a topic. For instance, they are asked to talk about their own family, eating habits, their appearance and so on. As mentioned earlier, the English Result developers have claimed to designed a learnercentered, functional-notional syllabus. Accordingly, each lesson starts with a function and ends with an 'I can' ability bar. It appears that this feature of the book is prone to contribute to the personal identity of the learners. Moreover, the book provides learners with a considerable load of vocabulary items and idioms to expose learners towards of expressing themselves in different ways about a multitude of topics.

Conclusion

The present descriptive study examined the intercultural competence dimension of the English Result (2009) series using Ting-Toomey's (1998) identity negotiation theory. Ting-Toomey's theory explores four primary identities and four situational identities. Considering the context-sensitive nature of situational identities, this study focused solely on the four primary identities (i.e., cultural, ethnic, gender and personal) within the aforementioned series. Although the books appear to have inadequately represented cultural identity (i.e. individualism/collectivism dichotomy), there seems to be an attempt to effectively promote gender, ethnic, and personal identity. Thus, this drawback – lack of cultural identity depiction, could be overcome by the teacher, realia, or DVD materials which include a variety of cultural topics. As mentioned earlier, the analysis only included the visuals, reading passages, and audio tracks presented in the student book and the workbook and additional DVDsexcluded from the analysis. Thus, future research can study the discourse of the book for its hidden identities. Future research should further investigate supplementary materials (e.g., the workbook, DVDs, etc.) . Moreover, the scope of this study could be stretched to the analysis of other materials accompanying the series, including the workbook and the DVD, since these materials provide learners with more opportunities to address intercultural communication.

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