

Ideology in Text Books

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an effort to probe ideological effects of textbooks on the minds of the young generation. It aims at exploring how textbooks are used in the propagation of various types of implicit and explicit ideologies to the readers and how their mindsets are shaped accordingly. The discourse of textbooks is always ideologically charged and reflects a certain type of worldview of a nation. The issues related to power, hegemony, identity, political ideology, gender and class differences are very effectively presented through discourse of the textbooks. The twofold function of textbooks is manifested in our educational institutions. First, they help authenticate and sustain the existing cultural, economic and political power; second, they disseminate ideological values and knowledge. Textbooks are considered to be the most powerful tools of disseminating different ideologies. The present study concentrates on the presence of religious ideology depicted in English Textbooks (Book I & Book III) published by Punjab Textbook Board taught at Intermediate level. Their effects on the minds of learners have been tried to explore by analysing data collected from these two textbooks.

Key words: Implicit, explicit, world view, ideological values.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language and ideology are interconnected and language is one of the strongest means of propagating ideologies. The study of any foreign language like English does not mean only the study of language alone rather it is a means of giving various types of ideologies and cultural norms. It brings with it hegemonic beliefs, values, norms and culture, and a certain conception of life as well as a certain world-view. This “Social conditioning through schooling or colleges is the most important way of changing worldview whether taken by business organization or by the state.” (Galbraith, 1984: 131-4). Ideological values are disseminated through various agencies like textbooks, culture, society, newspapers, media and religious seminaries.

Ideology becomes a vital critical concept in Marxism. Karl Marx (1818-83) was not steady in his statements about ideology. We can find the simplest statement about

ideology in his *The German Ideology* (1846). Ideology for him is the representation of 'ideas, conceptions and consciousness' and all that which 'men say, imagine and conceive' related to 'politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc' (cited in Felluga, 2002).

The present study aims at exploring how textbooks are used in the propagation of various types of implicit and explicit ideologies to the readers and how their mindsets are shaped accordingly. The discourse of textbooks is always ideologically charged and reflects a certain type of worldview of a nation. The issues related to power, hegemony, identity, political ideology, gender and class differences are very effectively presented through discourse of the textbooks. The twofold function of textbooks is manifested in our educational institutions.

The present research where deals with how ideology and worldview are connected with language teaching, also supplies answers into the way language teaching is related to ideology, worldview and power. In order to have a better understanding of this relatedness, we must first find out the interrelationship between ideology and power.

Defining simply, power is the ability to control people or the domination of one (minority) over another (majority) and ideology helps maintain this very ability or domination (Rahman, 2002). Hence, anything that serves the interests of a particular powerful minority over majority is ideology. In any society, the powerful minority or the ruling class uses different tactics to maintain its dominance. Among them, the most effective one may be the teaching of a particular language like English in educational institutions. English is enjoying the status of being an official language in Pakistan being enjoyed only by the very few i.e. by the elite class only who study the books written about western culture. The teaching of a foreign language (English) right from the beginning shapes their mindsets in such a way which seems to be affecting them negatively (Rahman, 2004).

And the present study aims at exploring all these religiously laden ideological messages that the textbooks disseminate to the learners of English.

The aim of the present research is not confined only to explore the religious ideological biases present in the English textbooks but also to familiarize the readers with what is ideology, how it can work and who can benefit from it. The purpose is to make them realize that education is a universal right of every individual, be it male or female.

Pakistani language texts appear to be using two strategies; Value-laden diction and ideology-laden and emotive words. The government uses this weapon of textbooks to shape the understanding and perception of the people in a particular way. This is how textbooks are very useful in making certain types of ideologies and worldviews.

It is generally observed that pedagogical choices about curriculum development, materials, content, classroom processes, and language use appear ideological in nature. Therefore, the researcher also expects that teaching methodology or other day to day decisions that teachers make inside the classroom, both shape and are shaped by the social order outside the classroom. To put it simply, '... meanings are produced through interpretations of texts and texts are open to diverse interpretations ...' (Fairclough 1995: 71).

1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present research is vital in the sense that it will be carried out in a city like Multan in the Punjab Province, Pakistan where there are no separate English medium colleges for some particular class. In almost all the colleges you can find students belonging to different social classes. This research is unique in the manner as previously no attempt has been made in exploring religious ideology in these two textbooks.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Textbooks are one of the strongest weapons to shape public opinion and reflect ideology and worldview of a nation. As Galtung (1980:107) points out that language is an important tool of imperialism. “Language transmits norms and behaviour”, opines (Phillipson, 1992:54). Research has been and is being carried out regarding the issue of language and ideology in textbooks.

Gould says, “A pattern of beliefs and concepts, both factual and normative, which purport to explain complex social phenomena with a view to simplifying socio, political choices facing individual and groups”. (1964: 315-16)

De Tracy (cited in Hawkes, 2003) defines the term ‘ideology’ as a set of false or distorted beliefs. He reveals the attachment of this term with aristocracy and ruling group from its very inception in late 18th century. This term suggests that ideologies did exist in ancient human civilizations. Ideologies and civilizations are not only interwoven into an unbreakable bond but complement each other. A civilization prospers and grows only when it has some strong and unique ideals, beliefs, values, perception and views (ideology) in its very roots.

Karl Marx (1818-83) remarks, “Ideology determines outlook of people, their beliefs and values of dominant class in society”. Another perception of ideology is vivid in David Hawkes’ book “Ideology” (1996) where he pronounces, “Ideology refers to distortion of relationship between ideas, matter and representation”.

It has been quite debatable whether the term ideology has negative connotations or is altogether neutral. Ideology, generally, under the influence of Marx and Hagel is regarded as a pejorative term. It is generally associated with the reflections of the human minds about the world around him/her:

What is known as ideologies is nothing but a multiform reflection in the minds of men of this single and indivisible history (Pleklinov, 1940 (cited in Hawkes, 2003: 106)

To understand the way the elite and the ruling class maintain their hegemony and consolidate their rule with popularizing the ideologies, Althusser’s concept of ‘Ideological State Apparatuses’ is very insightful. The ‘ISAs’ give the concept of hegemony a better precision and understanding.

Althusser (1971) in his seminal essay “Ideology and State” says, “Ideology reproduces ‘subjects’ who are willing workers in capitalist system. According to him, capitalism requires not only hands of labour but also willingness of workers to subject them to the system. He further says that the ruling class makes the people labour for their interest on ideological grounds.

Hegemony does not seem to neglect the economic factor related to the concept of ideology. It rather makes it clear that economy plays an important role in the process of hegemony (Gramsci, 1980).

Ideological discourses may carry implied meaning which are hidden from the sight of the subject and are revealed only when examined critically Fairclough, (1992).

Philipson (1992:365) points out that ‘Men acquire consciousness of structural conflict on the level of ideologies’. Ideologically loaded text assigns roles to the readers. Ideology tends to be used more widely to refer to a set of beliefs which to the people who hold them appears to be logical and natural (Eagleton 1991:72). Philipson (1992:52) further comments in the same book – Linguistic Imperialism that ideologies are historically necessary. They have psychological validity.

Althusser (1969) remarks, “Ideologies are not pure illusion, but representation existing in institutions and practices. They figure in the sub-structures and are rooted in class struggle”. Hegel (1977) says that the method we use to criticize ideology can easily turn into an ideology itself.

Foucault (1972) admitted that both ideologies and discourses are one and the same thing. He also refuted Althusser’s thesis that these ideologies are inevitable.

In Pakistan, Rahman (2002 & 1999), touches upon the issue of language and its politics. He has discussed thoroughly about various policies of teaching language at different levels and how language is used to exercise power. Rahman (2004) mentions that language helps in disseminating various ideologies (political, religious etc). His findings are helpful in understanding the ideological investment in the textbooks.

THE PURPOSE STATEMENT

The present study was designed to explore religious ideologies being propagated through the textbooks taught at Intermediate Level published by Punjab Textbook Board, Pakistan. An effort has been made to bring forth the impact of this ideology to the mindsets of the readers and how it affects them.

METHODOLOGY

The present research presents an analysis of English Textbooks taught at Intermediate level in the colleges of Pakistan. This research deals with religious ideology produced in these two English Books (Book I & Book III). The research conducted for this work is qualitative in nature. Text analysis was the main source of data collection for my research. I applied Fairclough’s (2003) model, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse the data.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Intermediate English Textbooks 1 & 3 published by Punjab Textbook Board were analyzed thoroughly to explore different types of ideologies in them generally and religiously ideology in particular.

I chose Fairclough's (2003) model CDA as it deals with the location of various themes out of a text discourse.

Different themes like moral values, religious exploitation, Americanism, gender and terrorism were found in these two textbooks but I focused mainly on religious ideology. Such passages or sentences carrying this theme were then analyzed thoroughly. Religious ideology in detail was brought to light in this manner that is being propagated through these textbooks.

3.1 ANALYSIS OF DATA OBTAINED FROM INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH BOOK I

The relevant material has been extracted from the lessons of Intermediate English Textbook 1. This book consists of fifteen lessons. It has been analysed under different themes. The themes with analysis are given as under:

RELIGIOUS PERSUASION THROUGH RELIGIOUS PERSONALITIES

Discourse of textbooks is very convenient in propagating various types of ideas. Textbooks are designed keeping in mind the readership and with obvious implicit or explicit aims to be met. Althusser (1971) holds that ideologically invested discourses have distant place within the power structure of modern state system.

Similarly the inclusion of various religious personalities in the book is ideologically charged and the details regarding these personalities in the books are there with a particular meaning to be conveyed to the reader through the use of textbook discourses. We can have such example from **Lesson No. 8, "The Gulistan of Sadi" by Sh. Sadi, Page, 84**. The underlying message is if we do well to others, we are ultimately rewarded by God. Such type of example has been mentioned at page no. 86 in the mentioned lesson that when the king spared the boy's life, he also recovered. We can have another lesson from the following lines that we should always do our best to do well to others:-

"It is better for me to die than to shed the blood of an innocent boy."

This lesson can also be explained in another way that the morals and virtues of a king affect the people a lot. The prosperity of the people depends upon the good virtues of the ruler.

Similarly, we have still another example of religious tolerance and compensation in the **Lesson No. 13, "God Be Praised" by Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, Page, 131**. Here the ideology being conveyed is that one should give top most importance to religion and should be ready to suffer for the sake of religion as God is superior to all and we will be compensated in the end.

There is also a stereo type representation of religious person named Maulvi Abul:-

“He always carried a walking stick, a sort of sceptre with decorative bands and gilt. For his hair he used he used fragrant oil.” (Lesson No. 13, Page, 131).

The given lines indicate a special type of getup associated with religious persons. The word scepter has also religious connotation. The Prophet Moses also used to have a sceptre in his hand that is also mentioned in the Holy Quran. The use of fragrant oil is also a reinforcement of a holy practice.

.”Please do not bless me. What has He not blessed me with? Health, peace of mind, freedom from care. I have everything one can desire. I don’t need more from His unlimited treasure of divine blessings.” (Lesson No. 13, Page, 131).

The underlying message being imparted here is that people and especially the religious people should be contented with what they have rather than hankering after material pursuits. The people are being consoled with religious teachings that rather than putting efforts for more and more they should be satisfied with what they have and hope for a reward from God. The following lines from the said lesson supplement the same idea;-

“I don’t need anything more from His unlimited treasure of divine blessings.” (Lesson No. 13, Page, 131).

This lesson can be interpreted at another level that the religious persons are rigid and stick to fundamentals. It is obvious from the example of Maulvi Abul’s not allowing for the music on the marriage of his daughter. In a way it seems that the writer wants to deconstruct the existing norms regarding the rigidity in religion and wants that it should be modified if necessary rather than being ever rigid.

3.2 ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Similarity between Islam and Christianity can be found through many lessons of the books and this inclusion of Christian teaching similar to Islamic ones is also ideological. Such lessons have been included with a particular purpose. The writers of such lessons seem inclined in bridging the existing gulf between Islam and Christianity (East and West). It can also be said that it is a style of making Christian festivals and teachings universalized and accepted through the discourse of textbook. **Lesson No. 2, “Clearing in the Sky” by Jesse Stuart** represents the teachings of Bible:-

“I have cheated death many times! Now I have reached the years the Good Book allows to man in his life time upon this earth.” (Lesson No. 2, Page, 21).

Another example on the same page can be quoted from the book regarding the teachings of Bible:-

“After these years (70) your time is borrowed.” (Lesson No. 2, Page, 21).

Here use of Good Book is metaphorical and stands for Bible. There are similarities between Islam and Christianity because fundamental teachings of both the religions are the same and the moral values preached by Sheikh Sadi in his book “The Gulistan of Sadi” are up to great extent similar to that of the teachings of Bible. It can be proved from the following lines where implicitly the authenticity of Bible is being stressed:-

“He thought of the Gulistan as one of the Bibles of the world.” (Lesson No. 8, Page, 84).

Christianity is portrayed positively showing no clash with other faiths. The following lines depict the same:

“You see at Christmas time, all we men and women become generous.”

Lesson No. 15, “The Angel and the Author – And Others” by Jerome K. Jerome, Page, 154.

Again on page no. 155 in the same lesson there is another example of self praise:

“Noble deeds are always a great joy to me.”

Religious exploitation showing the snobbish nature of people is obvious in the same lesson. Whatever good deed they do, they try to make it known to others by any means:

“I love to think of all the good deeds I myself have done. I have often thought of keeping a diary – jotting them down each day. It would be so nice for one’s children.” (Lesson No. 15, Page, 155).

Hence we have different elements of religious representations like similarity between Islam and Christianity, stereotype construction of religion, representation of various events and festivals and religious exploitation.

3.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA OBTAINED FROM INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH BOOK III

This section contains the data obtained from Intermediate English Book 3 consisting of twenty poems and three plays. It deals with the analysis regarding the above mentioned theme i.e. religious ideology.

REPRESENTATION OF RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGIES

It is a fact that when a nation progresses materialistically, it tries to propagate its norms, values and even religious beliefs to the other nations. Efforts are made to universalize and legalize its religious teachings and festivals at linguistic levels. The representation of such festivals is meant to give these universal acceptance. Same is the case with the book under analysis. We see that the worldly progress or advancement of the Christians is playing an important role in giving their festivals universal appeal and acceptance. The following lines are a proof in this regard:-

And stands about the woodland ride

Wearing white for Easter tide.

Poem No. 3, “Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now” by A.E. Housman, Page, 86

The implication of these lines may be that the festivals of the Christians preach peace. In a way the poet seems to be stressing the hidden message that Christianity is a religion of peace like other revealed religions including Islam. The wearing of white dress may also mean that on the one hand this event gives the lesson of peace to the Christians and on the other by acting upon the teachings of their religion, the Christians try to show the world how truly they follow the teachings of Christianity.

We have another example in this regard explained through the following lines:-

And take from seventy springs a score,

It only leaves me fifty more.

Poem No. 3, “Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now” by A.E. Housman, Page, 86

Here we find a biblical reference as well about the length of human life which is usually considered of seventy years (mentioned in Bible, the book of Psalms). Once again we can see that Christian or biblical beliefs are propagated.

There is remarkable similarity between the fundamental teachings of Islam and Christianity regarding the transitory nature of human life on this earth. Both the religions while preaching the lessons of humility and humbleness stress upon the fact that one should not be proud of one's achievements here in this world. This world is short-lived. Very soon everything of this world would come to an end. The following lines clearly convey the same message:-

Nothing beside remains round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Poem No. 8, "Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley, Page, 101

The above mentioned lines clearly indicate that everything of the world is on decline. Time is a great destroyer. One should not be proud of one's achievements because ultimately the time comes when everything meets its end in the form of death or decay. Same is the case with the king "Ozymandias" mentioned in the poem who once was proud and cruel to his ruled when he was having power and authority but ultimately was forced to suffer. Now the statue of that great king was in declined shape and broken. One part of it was buried almost in the sand. The underlying message being propagated is obvious that very soon everything of this world will come to an end. Hence we find a striking similarity between the two religions that they convey the same message or have the same concept. This is also an advice given in The Holy Quran that the Muslims and the followers of other religions should come closer and agree on such things that are similar between them. Hence message of universal brotherhood is conveyed here. Another justification may also be inferred that the Christians are trying to say that they or their policies are not against any specific religion especially Islam. They have too many similarities with the Muslims.

4. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research is my humble effort with all its limitations. More research can be carried out in this field. Many areas are left behind. For example research can be carried out to find different types of ideologies in the textbooks taught at secondary and graduation level as well. I have focused only on English textbooks. Other subjects also carry many ideologies. I chose Intermediate English Textbooks 1 & 3 published by Punjab Textbook board. Other researchers can choose other boards like Federal Board or they can select books taught to O' Level and A' Level students. Similarly work can be done on some other type of ideology instead of religious ideology. Hence all these and many more areas are still there to be explored by some other researchers in future.

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude the entire study in a nut shell, we observe that college textbooks may rightly be regarded as one of the most powerful tools either as agents of change or means of ideology investment, therefore, the deconstruction of their discourse(s) is useful in laying bare the underlying ideological assumptions behind seemingly innocuous texts and the politics being played in the name of education. This research highlights the issues related to ideology in the English textbooks of intermediate (first year) to locate the propagation of various types of ideologies either implicitly or explicitly. And it is interesting to note the inclusion of many lessons carries implied ideologies and play a role in making the target readers subjects qualitatively and quantitatively.

This may be admissible that the intention of this research is not to reject or criticize the English textbooks on being ideological whether lightly or heavily but to emphasize the need of including such material that can make Pakistan moderate, modern and democratic in today's global village. I am not against the inclusion and exclusion of any lesson rather I am of the opinion that the textbooks should be designed keeping in mind learners' needs and the challenges we are facing at present and what roles text books can play in this regard.

It is hoped that the findings of this research will be used by the policy makers, textbook authors and ELT practitioners.

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