



Research Article

Ideology and Power in an Iranian High School English Textbook: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Shideh Khazaeli , Masoud Asadi* , Shaban Barimani Varandi

Department of Foreign Language, Sar.C., Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran

*Corresponding author: masoud.asadi@iausari.ac.ir

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Abstract

The present study aims to examine the representation of ideology and power in the texts of the English language book for the secondary school (Prospect 1). The theoretical framework is based on Van Dyck's sociological approach which emphasizes the role of language in the reproduction of social and ideological structures. The data includes seventh-grade textbook, which has been analyzed with a descriptive-analytical method at three levels: micro, macro, and linguistic. Data were collected through direct observation and selection of relevant texts and images from English textbooks. The findings show that the textbook reflects an ideological discourse with the aim of promoting national, cultural and religious values, representing the Islamic system and the lifestyle of people in an Islamic society. Based on the results, the texts of Prospect 1 contain themes that reflect the cultural, moral, and religious values of Iranian society, and avoid direct representation of Western culture. In linguistic analysis, the high frequency of words such as "family," "respect," "duty," and "God," as well as the widespread presence of the plural pronouns "we" and the modal verbs "must," "obligate," indicate a moral-oriented and identity-oriented discourse. The findings reveal that English language teaching in the Iranian educational system has been redesigned not to transmit global culture but to strengthen local and religious identity. This research can take steps towards advancing future community studies and improving textbook writing. Moreover, educational administrators, curriculum designers, content authors, and teachers can convey desirable ideologies to students through knowledge of critical analysis methods.

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Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Gender; Ideology; Power; Prospect; Textbook; Van Dijk Model

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1. Introduction

Humans are considered distinct and superior to animals due to their gift of language. The use of language is an integral part of human life and is so woven into the fabric of human life that imagining the world and humans without language seems impossible or far-fetched (Asadi,

2012). Based on Soltani (2008, p.13), "Language refers to what has shaped our past, creates our present, and our future is under its control". Thus, it can be said that language, its role, and its place have always been one of the concerns of mankind. Since thought influences speech and speech influences behavior, the study of language (speech) as one of the unique characteristics of humans

has gained particular importance and plays an important role in society.

In some educational systems, students are not given the chance to acquire language skills or to use language effectively (Fatehi Rad & Jalali, 2021). Today, with the expansion and progress of societies, the need for communication has increased and language has gained a more prominent position as a means of communication in human societies. For this reason, examining and analyzing texts (both written & spoken) as one of the types of communication can lead to the description, interpretation, and explanation of the process of linguistic communication and ultimately to a more complete understanding and description of language. On the other hand, a set of economic, political, social and cultural needs determine the need for second language teaching, and following this need, improving second language teaching methods has become a vital need. To meet this need, there is no better support than the science of linguistics and speech analysis, which has always provided solutions for second language teaching methods.

Language is a very complex phenomenon whose study cannot be limited to a specific domain. Language and linguistic patterns are so intertwined with our thoughts and feelings that it is often difficult to separate them. Nevertheless, linguistics analyzes various linguistic materials in various contexts (Bagheri et al., 2023). Linguistics, particularly in areas such as applied linguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis, has long been interested in the study and analysis of texts that are influenced by linguistic mechanisms. This field has grown significantly especially with the development of the critical discourse analysis approach, reflects the overt and covert ideologies of those in power. Essentially, "discourse" in modern theories is a social and communicative act. Discourse analysis is in fact the analysis of text in context. Text can also be used in its broadest sense by the discourse analyst. In Van Dijk's (1996) view, discourse is a particular form of social interaction, not a manufactured or abstract product; that is, members of a community participate in discourse as they do in other types of social interaction.

The study of language use is based on the social and psychological factors that influence communication (Yule, 1996). Discourse analysis is the analysis of language in its use. In this case, it cannot be limited to describing linguistic forms, independent of the purposes and functions that these forms have been created to address in human affairs. In fact, critical discourse analysis is a new trend in the field of discourse analysis in linguistic studies that examines the relationship between the real image and the symbolic image of statements in texts (Kazemian, 2011). In this field of discourse analysis, it is believed that texts are not ideologically neutral, but rather report events and incidents from a specific

perspective. The hidden layers of language that are related to social behaviors and perspectives, in other words, ideologies are discovered and explained with this approach.

Today, critical discourse analysis is a new approach to discourse analysis that has spread its shadow over linguistics, sociology, philosophy, literary criticism, and psychology. In critical discourse analysis, the analysis of all discourses is considered, and analysts go to analyze all types of texts and discourses. Classroom discourse and second language teaching books are among the main subjects of study in this approach, as the second language teaching classroom is itself the arena of a discourse called "classroom discourse". By critically analyzing this discourse, we can understand the function of ideology in language and take a scientific and practical look at classroom techniques and discourse. In fact, "what makes a text and enables understanding of texts is not only the description of linguistic codes and linguistic meanings, but also ideological factors and the attitude or insight of individuals (authors) and the owners of hidden thoughts beyond the text, which are effective factors in the production and understanding of techniques" (Aghagolzadeh, 2007, p. 197).

According to Van Dijk (1996), "discourse does ideological work". Language can be even more effective in society than force, and this is when ideological structures are indirectly presented to the speakers through language. To achieve this, language and discourse must have levels and layers. Language and discourse contain ideology and power and domination relations at the lower levels and discourse-oriented structures at the higher levels. Critical discourse analysis emerged with the aim of understanding the different aspects and dimensions of language and also discovering its underlying and hidden layers. The latent layers of language are closely related to social behaviors and perspectives. In other words, ideologies and the text analyst's job are to identify the discourse-oriented components in the text, relate them to ideological components, and decipher the latent messages.

Most aspects of our life are affected by the way we think, and education is included. Recent movements in the educational system underline the remarkable of critical thinking skills for academic studies and life (Bagheri Masoudzade, 2022). Recent developments in this field further analyze the critical discourse in building and strengthening the language of social power and ideology in different fields. Critical discourse analysis is still widely used to examine hidden ideological structures in various forms of discourse beyond media and politics, including online comments and educational texts, using Van Dijk's social cognitive framework to examine macro and micro levels of meaning and knowledge structures in discourse (Tussa'diah & Yuni Kartika, 2022).

In this research, the researchers seek to analyze the texts of English book for the first year of secondary school (seventh grade) by using an appropriate model, Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach. Moreover, the researchers try to uncover the ideologies hidden in the underlying layers of the texts by extracting the structures and components of the discourse. Because the aim of critical linguistics is to disambiguate and clarify those processes of production and comprehension that give analysts the power to see the functioning of ideology in language and introduce it to others (Kress, 1985). The new textbook for teaching English in the first year of secondary school (seventh grade), which were introduced into the educational system with the name PROSPECT in 2013-2014 academic years, were examined and analyzed to identify the ideologies hidden in the texts. That is to say, this study examined the texts of the mentioned book based on a critical approach and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, attempted to reveal power relations and hidden ideologies in linguistic structures. In order to meet the research objectives, the following questions were formed:

What types of ideologies are presented in English language teaching texts for the first year of secondary school (seventh grade)?

Are the ideologies embedded in English language teaching texts aligned with the ideologies accepted in society?

Which linguistic components have been used to convey ideology in the texts under study?

Are the texts and content of the textbook present an appropriate representation of the culture of the English-speaking community?

2. Review of the Relate Literature

McDonald (2003) explored the media discourse and stated that ideology is essential to understanding media behavior, because media analysis would be incomplete without considering the politics implicit in the discourse. By emphasizing the diversity of discourses, he indicated how different semantic regimes can reproduce or distort reality. In another study, Matheson (2013) addressed the issue of the media institutions power, which is established through the way they use language. In his view, the discourse of the present book seeks to introduce a range of perspectives. The responses of a discourse analyst to the media are both personal responses, attempting to see patterns and systems beyond personal response and interest, and the responses of someone who lives in the same culture and relies on the same linguistic resources.

In Iranian context, Esmaili (2010) in his critical discourse analysis of Iranian English textbooks and "American Headway" reported that books and materials related to English language teaching play an important role in many classrooms. This research compared two

groups of books in terms of gender, and for this purpose, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model has been used. The results indicated that both groups of books have a discriminatory approach to gender and shows that "Iranian books" are based on a cultural ideology and "American Headway" books are based on the ideology of capitalism or the capitalist system. In another study, Yazdani, Amerian, and Elhami (2011) examined the roles of women and men in two sets of English textbooks in the form of critical discourse analysis and also revealed the ideological principles related to the roles of women and men in these books. The two sets of books were English textbooks for the second and third years of high school in Iran (old system) and Top Notch 2A and 2B textbooks. To this end, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model has been used. The results indicated that in both sets of textbooks, a discriminatory perspective towards women and in favor of men has been adopted, but this discriminatory perspective has not been applied to the same extent in both sets of textbooks.

Aghagolzadeh, Kheirabadi, and Golfam (2013) compared the representation of Iranian and Western activists in the Iranian nuclear case in the international media based on van Leeuwen model. They stated that one of the goals of critical discourse analysis is to examine the unequal and domineering relations that govern the media and to create awareness, insight and a critical perspective in the media audience, and the socio-semantic notion of how social actors are represented. The model provides linguists and discourse analysts with a suitable theoretical framework for research in this area. Fifty news and articles published in reputable international media outlets in the last two months of 2010 regarding the nuclear issue of the Islamic Republic of Iran were examined within the framework of the aforementioned concept. Then the way in which social activists on both sides of the conflict (Iran-West) are represented was analyzed to reveal the degree of neutrality or bias of these media in representing the actors in this international conflict. The results of the study showed that despite the claim of neutral representation of events by major international news agencies and press, a purposeful flow of linguistic and social mechanisms is seen in the materials published by them about the Iranian nuclear issue. In the next year, Ashraf Sadeghi and Moradkhani (2014) analyzed the identity discourse in elementary school textbooks that the main objective of the research is to study the discursive construction of identity in elementary school Persian textbooks. The results obtained in the discourse analysis of the studied texts revealed that the sources of identity construction in these books are language, Persian culture and literature, Islam, Islamic Revolution, national history, environment, family, individual and social ethics, and health. In sum, it can be said that the sources of identity construction in the texts are diverse, but the dominant

discourse is religious discourse. Religious identity was highlighted, and other discourses acted almost as its sub-discourses. Ashrafi and Ajideh (2016) reviewed three advanced English language teaching books from the Iranian Language Center. The critical discourse analysis was done based on Fairclough's theory and multimodal discourse analysis based on Kress's theory. The results indicated that the three advanced English language teaching books focused on dialogue as the core of English language learning. Therefore, most of the sections of the mentioned books are designed based on dialogue in the target language. The results of the research also showed that the authors used various strategies to express their intended concepts. In fact, repetition of words was the most common strategy used. In the same vein, Pahlavan Nejad (2018) attempted to reveal the power relations and ideology hidden in Sote Delan Movie by denaturalizing the text and examining the structures and discourse-oriented components of the texts. Despite the numerous studies that have examined the Prospect series from a linguistic or educational perspective, the present study differs from previous research in both scope and analytical framework. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on content, skills, or cultural elements at the surface level, this research uses Van Dick's socio-cognitive model to systematically analyze ideology and power relations at the micro, macro, and socio-cognitive levels. By integrating discourse structures with underlying mental models and social cognition, this study provides a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how ideological meanings are constructed and reproduced in the Perspective 1 textbook. This socio-cognitive focus represents a new contribution to the existing literature in Iranian English language textbooks. Accordingly, in this study an attempt has been made to denaturalize and represent the role of linguistic and non-linguistic factors in the production and perception of film discourses, using the aforementioned analytical tools. It also explained in detail how religious discourse, gender discourse, and the confrontation between rational and emotional discourses emerge, and to determine the relationships between them.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The research method of this study is descriptive-analytical. The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Initially, qualitative analysis was carried out. The researchers employed Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model. In Van Dijk's (1998) model, critical analysis is carried out around the axis of ideology. For analyzing the samples, ideological analysis was considered. These analyses included contextual analysis and textual analysis (microanalysis, macroanalysis, & linguistic analysis).

3.2. Theoretical Framework

Van Dijk (1998) succeeded in forming a triangle by establishing a link between the three concepts of discourse, cognition and society, which became the basis of his distinctive approach to the critical analysis of discourse, that is, the socio-cognitive approach. Therefore, according to Van Dick, critical discourse analysis includes three levels of discourse work, cognitive function and social function.

3.2.1. Discourse level

The meaning of discourse here is the general meaning of a communication event, including conversational interaction, written text, body and hand movements, page layout, images and semiotic and multi-media aspects of semantic meaning (Van Dijk, 2001, p.98). Therefore, the meaning of discourse here is the language in the situational and social context.

3.2.2. Society level

The discursive aspect of ideologies explains how ideologies influence our daily speech and writing, how we understand ideological discourse and how discourse plays a role in the reproduction of ideology in society. Therefore, the use of language, text, speech and interactions and verbal communication are investigated under the general title of discourse. The cognitive definition of ideology is presented in the form of social knowledge that is common among the members of a group (Van Dijk, 2001). Van Dijk emphasizes the social nature of ideologies. Even in discussing the cognitive aspect of ideologies, he constantly talks about social cognition, social memory and social representation of group members. This means that ideologies are learned in a social way and are collectively represented like a language. According to Van Dijk, ideologies can only be known by combining cognitive and social aspects.

3.2.3. Cognition level

Despite all the differences that exist in the different definitions of ideology, all existing definitions have one thing in common, and that is that ideology is considered to be the fundamental beliefs of a group of people. To explain the nature of ideologies and their relationship with discourse, first the mental or cognitive aspect of ideologies must be understood, and for this, the different types must be recognized (Van Dijk, 2003). Cognitive psychology distinguishes between different types of beliefs: beliefs can be personal or social, specific or general, concrete or abstract, simple or complex, stable or

unstable about us or about others, etc. Cognition is related to individual and social cognition, beliefs, goals as well as evaluations and feelings and all structures, representations and processes related to mind and memory that are related to discourse and interaction.

3.3. Materials

Data were selected and analyzed from seventh grade language textbook (PROSPECT 1). Each lesson is organized around a theme of one or more communicative actions. Data were collected purposefully, meaning that the selection would not be random and discourse-oriented texts would be selected. All information related to the mentioned textbook, including the titles and texts of the lessons, the number of words used in each lesson, were analyzed. The research data were collected through direct observation, selecting the text of interest in the research, taking notes of the texts, and images of interest in the textbook.

3.4. Procedure

The lessons were analyzed separately at three levels of analysis (microanalysis, macroanalysis, and linguistic analysis). The data were collected purposefully, and discourse-oriented texts were selected. All information including the titles and texts of the lessons, the number of words, images and figures were analyzed. Since the dialogues contain more discursive concepts, they were used more in selecting data. In the current study, qualitative and quantitative methods were used to explain and analyze the texts. The researchers made an attempt to examine the relationship between ideological structures and discourse-oriented structures based on Van Dijk's model. For this purpose, each text is analyzed in detail, sentence by sentence, and according to the topic and message, discourse-oriented sentences were identified and analyzed. Some sentences of a paragraph generally had the same message and it was not possible to analyze sentence by sentence, so a paragraph was analyzed to reveal the ideology hidden in the texts. Then, contextual and textual analysis (micro-analysis, macro-analysis, and linguistic analysis) was conducted. The number of nouns, pronouns, male and female images was also examined in descriptive statistics to determine the extent of inequalities and gender ideology in the context of the text.

3.4.1. Contextual Analysis

Critical discourse studies deal with the critical study of discourse, including the study of texts and their structures. These studies not only address the structure of texts, but also have something to say about the structures that exist in society, including the formation of power, inequality,

oppression, isolation, discrimination, and other abuses of power that are carried out through the use of language and discourse. In fact, the goal of critical discourse analysis is not only to help understand and comprehend texts and speech, but also to examine social and political issues. In other words, the emphasis of critical discourse analysis is to examine and analyze the context of the text. Gender, class, age, social status and other aspects of social structure are contextual factors that can be used in discourse analysis.

3.4.2. Textual Analysis

This section presents the methods used to analyze texts, including microanalysis, macroanalysis, and linguistic analysis.

3.4.3. Micro-analysis

In the first stage of textual analysis, the words of each selected lesson were counted. Then by obtaining the message of each text, it can be concluded what purpose each lesson pursues and what useful information the readers gain from reading these texts. From the analysis of the texts and the results, a general picture of the textbook is obtained. The ratios of thematic content and semantic content of the lesson are obtained by dividing the words used in each text by the total words used in the selected texts of the book. To obtain the ideologies present in the selected texts, each text must first be read critically, focusing on each word, group, phrase, and sentence of the text individually, as well as the sentences before and after it. Once the ideologies present in sentences and paragraphs (positive or negative) identified, they were used to determine the ideology of the entire text.

3.4.4. Macro-analysis

In this section, the thematic, semantic, message, and ideological content of the text are obtained, and by putting together the results, an overall picture of the ideologies present in the relevant book is presented. One of the interesting features in the analysis of any text is finding the macrostructures of the text. Semantic macrostructures are higher-level semantic structures that are derived from the propositional chains of the text by a number of macrorules.

Macrostructures define the intuitive concept, the overall meaning, the message, and the theme of a text or part of a text. Such semantic structures cannot be simply defined by a specific sentence or chain of meanings.

They require the use of macro rules to indicate the most important, salient, and relevant parts of a discourse, and these rules eliminate irrelevant parts and unnecessary information.

3.4.5. Linguistic analysis

There are many ways to reveal the linguistic elements used in a text. Many linguists, including Van Dijk (2003), have focused on the role of narrative structure in presenting specific social relations as legal and legitimate rights. They have pointed out the role of grammatical structures such as the present tense, nominalization, and passive voice in complicating the effects of responsibility, and the role of specific vocabulary in expressing experiences, communication between participants, and characterizing specific groups and individuals that are used to instill the superiority of these specific groups over other groups.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1. Micro-analysis of texts

The topic of the first lesson is self-introduction in the form of stating one's first and last name. The setting depicts the classroom environment and the conversations between the teacher and the students. The context illustrated in this dialogue, considering the image and the names shown in it, represents a fully Iranian-Islamic atmosphere. The second text is designed and compiled to teach sounds and letters, and its goal is to teach the ability to spell one's first name and last name. The atmosphere depicted in this section, based on its image, is a completely Iranian-Islamic atmosphere. The topic of the second lesson is my classmates. The names used in this text are Iranian names. The phrase "Nice to meet you" reflects the culture of the librarian wearing Chador (A full-body cloak worn by some Iranian women), which is considered the superior hijab in the dominant Islamic culture of the society. As a result, the atmosphere depicted in this section, according to its image, is an Islamic atmosphere that promotes religious attitudes. The purpose of the third lesson is to teach how to express the age. The names used in this text are Iranian names, which reflects Iranian culture and does not reflect the culture of the main language of this book, which is English. The images used all have Islamic coverings, and the classroom atmosphere shown in this photo is a completely Iranian and Islamic.

The topic of the fourth lesson is "My Family". The first student asked the second students about his father's age, his job, and his mother's job. These elements also indicate the promotion of Iranian cultural patterns in learning English. The fourth lesson also deals with teaching letters and sounds in words and people's names. The hidden or omitted ideology in this section is the absence of English-speaking context or model in the process of teaching English to Persian-speaking learners. The topic of the fifth lesson is "My Appearance." The

conversation setting in the image in this lesson shows Iranian-style clothing and a picture of two men shaking hands. The goal of this lesson is to teach English within an Iranian cultural context, atmosphere, and dress code. In fact, the image depicts men's formal clothing in a school setting and two men shaking hands. Also, new words are in syllables using their sounds and letters. The presence of the word "chador" in this lesson, as well as the image of the female teacher wearing a chador and the students wearing school uniform and headscarf, indicates that English language teaching is conducted in the atmosphere, dress, and culture prevailing in Iran, and there is no information available about the customs, traditions, and dress of English speakers.

Lesson six depicts an Iranian family of three members waiting for their father to eat lunch. In one sentence, the speaker asks where his family is from in order to have lunch with them. According to the speaker's intention, this sentence contains a positive ideology and expresses the presence of family members to eat together. According to Iranian culture, the mother asks her son to wash his hands and come to the table for lunch, and calls his father. The mother is shown as the housewife and responsible for household chores, and the father is shown as the breadwinner, which again reflects the culture of the society.

The topic of the seventh lesson is "My Address." The image seen in this lesson is of two boys named "Omid" and "Hossein." This shows the promotion of Iranian and Islamic culture in English language teaching. Another example of the presence of Iranian culture in this image, in addition to the names of people and their photos, is the topic of visiting a sick person. In our culture, visiting the sick person is very common. There is no sign of any visual or cultural representations of the English language in this text. The topic of the eighth lesson is "My Favorite Food." The image in this lesson shows an Iranian atmosphere and context in which two female students are studying and then decide to eat cake and milk because they are hungry. The image in this lesson is very consistent and in tune with Iranian culture.

4.2. Macro-course Analysis

In the first lesson, the ideology present in the two listening exercises is positive ideology. In fact, this lesson reproduces the author's positive attitude and ideology for Iranian-Islamic culture as a whole. The hidden ideology, or in other words, the omitted ideology in this lesson, is the absence of English-speaking culture and society in the content of this lesson. There is no indication of the culture the student is learning in any part of this lesson. In the second lesson, there is English language culture, where the expressions used reflect English culture, customs, and speech patterns. On the other hand, visual representations

are also evidence of the claim that the compilation of the book is based on the model of preserving the culture that dominates society, and efforts have been made to preserve this model and culture and for students to acquire a second language within the atmosphere of this culture.

In the third lesson, there is no sign of language culture, and in all sections, Iranian and Islamic culture and clothing are displayed. The absence of this means the ideology has been eliminated. In this lesson, the compilation of the book is based on the model of preserving the culture of the mother tongue, so that this model and culture are preserved and students learn their second language within the atmosphere of their own culture, which of course can have a positive ideology in terms of preserving the values and culture of the mother tongue. However, since the English language model is not even shown in this lesson, it has a negative ideology because to learn a language, one must use the words and sentences used by native speakers. In the fourth lesson, the hidden ideology or the omitted ideology includes the absence of English-speaking culture and society in the content of this lesson. The culture, coverage, image, and pattern of the English-speaking community are absent in this lesson, and a completely Iranian-Islamic atmosphere is used to transmit the target language.

The fifth lesson has a hidden ideology or eliminated. That is, the absence of the culture, cover, pattern, and image of the English-speaking community. The prevailing atmosphere in this lesson is completely Iranian and Islamic. The absence of this means that the ideology has been eliminated. In the sixth lesson, the absence of English patterns and culture, as well as the failure to show the clothing style of English-speaking communities through the available images, indicates a hidden and suppressed ideology.

Examples of Iranian cultural etiquette was observed in the seventh lesson, including visiting the sick person according to the traditional pattern in Iranian culture. This lesson also contains removed ideology. This means that the existence of patterns that indicate the culture, customs and traditions of English-speaking people has been removed in this lesson. The eighth lesson also contains removed ideology.

That is, patterns which reflect the culture and customs and traditions of English-speaking people have been hidden or removed in this lesson, but the Iranian pattern has been promoted and depicted. Also, all the images and names are Iranian and Islamic.

This is considered a positive ideology that implements the Persian language model in English language teaching, but in some ways, it also has a negative ideology because it does not reflect the life of the English-speaking community.

4.3. Quantitative Tables in Microanalysis

In this section, **Table 1** discusses the frequency distribution of words in the eight lessons of the Prospect book (1):

Table 1. Distribution of word frequency based on micro-analyses (thematic and semantic) for each lesson

Lesson Title	Subject	Message (meaning)	Number of words in the text	Frequency
1-My name	Social	Introducing yourself	123	50.8
2-My classmates	Social	Introducing your classmate	86	35.1
3- My age	Social	How to state your age	51	22.5
4- My family	Social	Talking about family members	75	25.8
5- My appearance	Educational	Learning to describe appearance	79	25.3
6- My house	Educational	Learning to know the rooms in the house	75	31.3
7- My address	Educational	Learning to give addresses and phone numbers	77	19.4
8- My favorite food	Educational	Learning to know different types of food	88	34.3
Total			654	244.5

Table 2. Frequency distribution of words based on micro-analyses (topical)

Lesson Title	Subject	Number of words in the text	Frequency
1- My name	Social	123	50.8
2- My classmates	Social	86	35.1
3- My age	Social	51	22.5
4- My family	Social	75	25.8
5- My appearance	Educational	79	25.3
6- My house	Educational	75	31.3
7- My address	Educational	77	19.4
8- My favorite food	Educational	88	34.3
Total		654	244.5

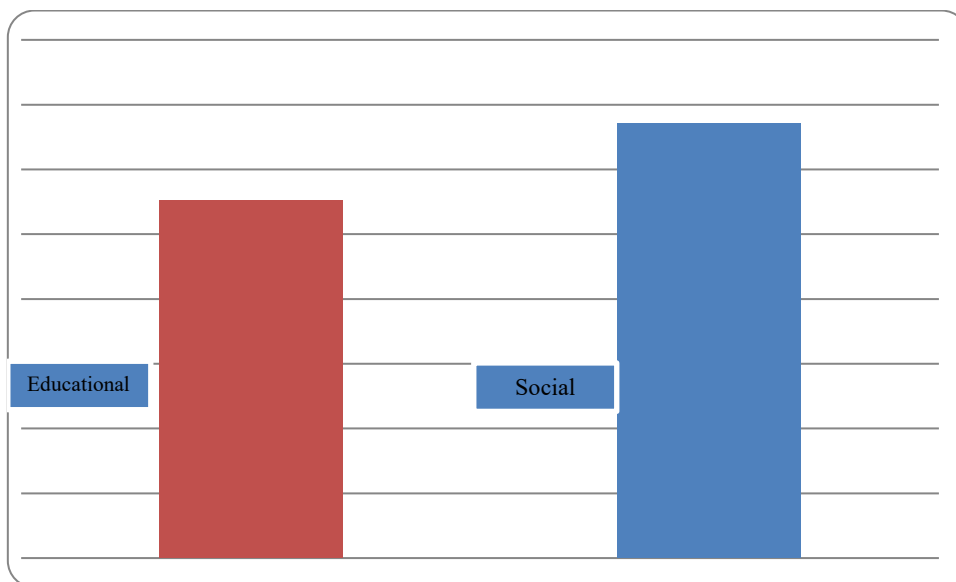


Figure 1. Thematic analysis

Table 3. Frequency distribution of words based on micro-analysis (message)

Lesson Title	Message	Number of words in the text	Frequency
1- My name	Introducing yourself	123	50.8
2- My classmates	Introducing your classmate	86	35.1
3- My age	How to state your age	51	22.5
4- My family	Talking about family members	75	25.8
5- My appearance	Learning to describe appearance	79	25.3
6- My house	Learning to know the rooms in the house	75	31.3
7- My address	Learning to give addresses and phone numbers	77	19.4
8- My favorite food	Learning to know different types of food	88	34.3
Total		654	244.5

Table 4. Frequency distribution of types of ideology based on macro-analyses

Lessons	Ideological content	Negative ideology	Positive ideology
Lesson 1	14	1	+
Lesson 2	12	1	+
Lesson 3	1	1	-
Lesson 4	4	1	+
Lesson 5	8	1	+
Lesson 6	7	3	+
Lesson 7	10	3	+
Lesson 8	7	1	+
Total	60	12	

4.4. Quantitative Tables in Macro Analysis (Prospect 1)

In this section, Table (4) discusses the frequency distribution of ideology types in the eight lessons of Prospect (1): A notable point in this quantitative analysis is the absence of ideology in lesson three. In total, the number of positive ideologies is five times the number of negative ideologies, which is a significant statistic. This table presents statistical data related to gender analysis. The number of male images is 1.5 times the number of female images, and the number of masculine pronouns and nouns is 17 and feminine 6. It can be said that the book is male-centric.

4.5. Linguistic Analyses of Lessons

The first lesson is about introducing yourself. It is mandatory to mention your first and last name in this introduction. In the conversation part of this lesson, the teacher introduces himself to the students and then asks them to introduce themselves to him and the other students. In this section, the student sees how to introduce themselves using the teacher's introduction pattern. The propositional structure of this lesson includes the verbs to be (am, is, are) which are used to introduce a person in this lesson. Their positive form, if it contains a positive description, carries a positive ideology. In this text, all sentences have a regular syntactic structure, meaning that the sentence order in English is observed throughout this text. The text of this lesson, considering that it is designed for seventh grade education, does not have any rhetorical structure. The second lesson is about teaching how to introduce your classmates to each other. In this text, using the structure of introduction, these people are introduced by one of the classmates to the other classmates.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of nouns and pronouns based on gender macro-analyses

Lessons	Number of masculine images	Number of feminine images	Number of masculine nouns and pronouns in the conversation section	Number of feminine nouns and pronouns in the conversation section
Lesson 1	1	1	2	0
Lesson 2	1	1	2	0
Lesson 3	1	1	0	1
Lesson 4	7	3	4	2
Lesson 5	2	1	3	0
Lesson 6	0	2	3	1
Lesson 7	2	0	3	0
Lesson 8	1	1	0	2
Total	15	10	17	6

Also, the existence of phrases such as "nice to meet you" is taught in this lesson. The propositional structure in this text includes introductory news sentences as well as interrogative phrases with 'Wh', which are used to ask for the names of people. In this text, all sentences have a regular syntactic structure, meaning that the sentence order in English is observed throughout this text. The text of this lesson, considering that it is designed for seventh grade education, does not have any rhetorical structure.

The third lesson is about stating age and year. In this lesson, students learn how to express their age using numbers and how to use the correct number. In the lesson, students also learn to express their date of birth in the month they were born. The propositional structure of this lesson is about interrogative sentences related to asking about age and date of birth. These structures are for educational purposes only and are ideologically neutral. In this text, all sentences have a regular syntactic structure, meaning that the sentence order in English is observed throughout the text. The text of this lesson, since it is designed for seventh grade, does not have any rhetorical structure.

The fourth lesson is about my family. In this lesson, students learn how to introduce their family members to others and, during this introduction, mention information such as their age, their occupation, and their name. The spelling of names is also covered in this lesson. The propositional structure of this lesson is about interrogative sentences related to asking about the age, occupation, and date of birth of family members. These structures are for educational purposes only and are ideologically neutral. In this text, all sentences have a regular syntactic structure, meaning that the sentence order in English is observed throughout this text. The text of this lesson, considering that it is designed for seventh grade education, does not have any rhetorical structure.

The fifth lesson is about teaching people to talk about their appearance, in terms of whether they are tall or short and what kind of clothes they wear. These expressions are descriptive, and if we have a positive description, the

ideology in it will be positive, and conversely, if we have a negative description, the ideology in it will be negative. This lesson also teaches the English equivalent of new words such as 'chador' and 'gloves'. The propositional structure of this lesson is about asking questions with who about asking about people's appearance, as well as teaching vocabulary related to appearance and age. The present continuous structure is used to describe people's clothing. In this text, all sentences have a regular syntactic structure, meaning that the sentence order in English is observed throughout this text. The text of this lesson, considering that it is designed for seventh grade education, does not have any rhetorical structure.

The sixth lesson is about getting to know the house, its rooms, the kitchen, and the parking lot. In this lesson, students are taught to be able to talk about the presence of each family member in different places in the house. The teacher also teaches the students the correct pronunciation of some words in this lesson. The propositional structure of this lesson is about asking questions about where someone is and what they are doing. The ideology contained in these sentences depends on the positive or negative semantic load they carry. In this text, all sentences have a regular syntactic structure, meaning that the sentence order in English is observed throughout this text. The text of this lesson, considering that it is designed for seventh grade education, does not have any rhetorical structure.

The seventh lesson includes teaching students about addresses. This address is used to express various purposes, such as visiting a friend. This lesson also teaches how to give a phone number and email address, and students learn it using the model given by the teacher. These structures have a positive ideology if they carry a positive meaning and a negative ideology if they do not. The propositional structure of this lesson on asking questions related to asking for addresses, asking for phone numbers, and asking for time using interrogative sentences with 'Wh' is the same as the structures in previous lessons. In this text, all sentences have a regular

syntactic structure, meaning that the sentence order in English is observed throughout this text. The text of this lesson, given that it is designed for seventh grade education, does not have any rhetorical structure.

Lesson eight is about teaching children to talk about different types of food, as well as their favorite food. The sentences in this lesson also teach words related to different types of food, such as "bread, rice, kebab, chicken, salad, fruit, dates, cake, milk, and tea." The desire to eat these foods contains a positive ideology, and the lack of desire to eat such foods shows a negative ideology. Also, phrases such as "I am hungry" or "I am thirsty" are taught in this lesson. The propositional structure of this lesson is about asking questions of favorite food, or favorite drink, and other favorite food items using Wh-interrogative sentences, as in the structures below. In this text, all sentences have a regular syntactic structure, meaning that the sentence order in English is observed throughout this text. The text of this lesson, considering that it is designed for seventh grade education, does not have any rhetorical structure.

5. Discussion

Schools are one of the elementary places where different patterns of children's behavior and future educational fulfillment are shaped (Bagheri & Fatehi Rad, 2020). The discourse of English textbook for the first year of secondary school (seventh grade) is an ideological discourse that encompasses the authors' goals, which include providing national, cultural, and religious knowledge. Also, the representation of the Islamic system and religious attitude in this book can be explained in such a way that the lifestyle, individual and social culture of individuals in an Islamic society, and their cultural patterns are represented in this book. By examining a textbook and determining the discourse-oriented structures, one can gain insight into its underlying ideology. It is obvious that by using these structures positively, the ideology needed by students can be expressed.

The text of the book is derived from the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle and is gently transferring Islamic culture to different layers of society. On the other hand, in interactions that take place between different cultures, the existence of a culture in which the learner learns the language seems necessary and it is very unfortunate that there is no trace of this culture and the learner acquires a second language in his/her own culture. Another point worth considering is the culture that dominates this action and reaction, and in the minds of the audience, it makes Iran and Iranian-Islamic culture the most superior. Also, the analysis of book reveals gender inequality by citing tables in the texts. In all aspects examined in this research, the dominant view is male-centered. These include the

superiority of men in their social status and the frequency of use of masculine pronouns. The texts and images chosen implicitly instill superiority and importance for men and make the emphasis on gender boundaries more obvious.

In response to research question 1 "What types of ideologies are presented in English language teaching texts for the first year of secondary school (seventh grade)?", it should be said that positive and negative ideological burdens, including power and gender, are seen in the texts, which indicates that the ideology prevailing in the minds of the authors is reflected in the texts.

The results of the analysis show that the ideologies embedded in the texts of the English book are completely in line with the ideologies accepted in society. Therefore, in response to research question 2 "Are the ideologies embedded in English language teaching texts aligned with the ideologies accepted in society?", it must be acknowledged that language learning takes place in a completely Iranian-Islamic environment and is in line with the ideology of the society, and as a result, the audience's mind is encouraged towards Iranian-Islamic culture.

In response to research question 3 "Which linguistic components have been used to convey ideology in the texts under study", it can be said that, as mentioned in the previous sections of this study, linguistic components, including linguistic structures such as "semantic, formal, and propositional structures," have been used to transmit ideology, but "rhetorical structure" has not been used. Because the English textbook is designed for seventh-grade students and should be devoid of any rhetorical structure as learning the texts is simpler and easier.

In response to research question 4 "Are the texts and content of the textbook present an appropriate representation of the culture of the English-speaking community?", it must be said that there are no signs of the English-speaking culture and community in the texts of this book, but rather the atmosphere is completely Iranian-Islamic, which is very unfortunate. Because it is very important for language learners to learn the language in the context and culture of the target language and this is evidence of the existence of a hidden and suppressed ideology which shows that the author is trying to preserve the Iranian-Islamic model and culture. Students acquire a second language within the atmosphere of this same culture, which, although it causes a lack of familiarity with the culture of the English-speaking community, can have a positive ideology in terms of preserving Iranian-Islamic values and culture.

Although gender inequality in Prospect 1 is initially identified through quantitative indicators such as the frequency of masculine pronouns and the dominance of male characters, a deeper critical discourse interpretation reveals that these patterns are not merely numerical

imbalances but reflect underlying ideological assumptions. From Van Dijk's socio-cognitive perspective, such linguistic choices contribute to the construction of mental models in learners' minds, in which men are positioned as socially dominant, active, and central, while women are rendered less visible or peripheral. The repeated foregrounding of male social roles and the marginalization of female presence function discursively to normalize gender hierarchy and reproduce patriarchal ideology. Additionally, gender bias in the textbook operates at both micro and macro levels of discourse. At the micro level, lexical selection and pronoun usage privilege masculinity, while at the macro level, thematic structures and role allocation reinforce male-centered social norms. These discursive strategies align with broader ideological frameworks prevalent in society, where gender relations are often constructed through traditional and unequal power relations. Therefore, gender inequality in the textbook should be understood not simply as a matter of representation frequency, but as a discursive mechanism through which social power and ideological dominance are legitimized and internalized by learners.

The findings of the present study are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the ideological nature of texts and the role of language in reproducing power relations. Similar to McDonald (2003) and Matheson (2013), this study confirms that discourse is not neutral and that ideology is embedded in linguistic choices, serving specific political, cultural, and social purposes. While those studies focused on media discourse, the present research extends their insights to the educational domain, demonstrating that school textbooks, like media texts, function as ideological tools that shape learners' perceptions of reality. In line with Iranian studies such as Esmaili (2010) and Yazdani et al. (2011), the findings reveal clear gender bias and male-centered discourse in English textbooks. However, unlike these studies, which mainly relied on Fairclough's model and focused on surface-level gender representation, the present research adopts Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to explain how such biases are cognitively and discursively constructed through semantic, formal, and propositional structures. This provides a deeper explanation of how ideology operates beyond mere textual representation.

The results also support Aghagolzadeh et al. (2013) and Ashraf Sadeghi and Moradkhani (2014), who highlighted the dominance of religious and national discourse in Iranian texts. Likewise, the current study shows that Prospect 1 prioritizes Iranian-Islamic ideology and marginalizes alternative cultural perspectives. However, this study uniquely highlights the complete absence of English-speaking cultural representation in an English language textbook, which distinguishes it from previous research that reported limited or partial inclusion

of target-language culture. However, unlike studies such as Ashrafi and Ajideh (2016), which emphasized pedagogical strategies and dialogue-based learning, the present study foregrounds ideology and power relations as central organizing principles of textbook content. By employing Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, this research contributes to the literature by offering a more comprehensive and cognitively grounded account of how ideology, power, and identity are systematically reproduced in Iranian EFL textbooks.

6. Conclusion

The results of the analyses conducted in this study also show that the texts under study revealed the intellectual underpinnings and ideologies that govern the texts and showed that no text is free from ideological burden. People believe that texts are a reflection of pure facts, and the job of a critical discourse analyst is to strengthen people's curious, creative, and critical gaze in order to raise their level of awareness so that they can react to biased discourse and become aware that texts are not neutral but are full of ideological implications. The motivation for the present study was to raise awareness and strengthen critical thinking.

In addition, this study emphasizes that critical analysis of textbooks is not only an academic exercise, but also a tool for social cognition and transformation. With implicit ideas and power relations, educators and students can shape how language thinks, identity, and social norms. Such awareness can help design more inclusive and culturally balanced materials, encourage the promotion of gender equality, and strengthen learners' ability to critically engage with texts beyond the classroom. Therefore, the insights gained from this research have the potential to influence educational policies and classroom practices and contribute to the development of a more reflective and equitable learning environment.

This research can take steps towards advancing future community studies and improving textbook writing, and educational administrators, curriculum designers, content authors, and teachers can convey desirable ideologies to students by being aware of critical analysis methods. The resulting research can be used to identify and distinguish facts from opinions, as well as in the translation and interpretation of texts. This research can be effective in changing the approach of authors and educational practitioners and take steps towards eliminating gender discrimination through positive changes in books and educational programs by depicting the effective role of women.

Teachers can present the material better based on this research. By considering the results of this research and by changing the context and location of the learning atmosphere, it is possible to facilitate language learning

by students. Because critical discourse analysis patterns reveal hidden and ambiguous aspects of discourses, the results of this research can be used by historians, politicians, and writers. While confirming the effectiveness of Van Dike's socio-cognitive model, it is necessary to analyze different texts with other diverse topics in different fields with the same model. Among them, second year English textbooks, teaching aid books, and other English language textbooks that are taught in different institutions can be analyzed and reviewed to improve writing.

Authors Contribution

All the authors have participated sufficiently in the intellectual content, conception, and design of this work or the analysis and interpretation of the data (when applicable), as well as the writing of the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of interest

The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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