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### The Role of English Language Textbooks in the Reproduction of Racism

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#### ABSTRACT

This article reports on a qualitative study which sought to explore how people and cultures are represented in English Language textbooks used in Libyan secondary schools. The study involved the analysis of passages and images used in these textbooks. In this article, the discussion is limited to the analysis of a passage and an image in one of the textbooks – the Social Sciences Year Two textbook. The analysis reflects and draws upon the discourse of racism. The language used in the textbooks was analysed using an adapted framework of Fairclough's (1989) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. The study established, among other things, that the role of the textbooks is not just to support educational processes, but to convey, implicitly and explicitly, the dominant culture in a systematic way. The article revealed that the language structures indicate a positive picture of white people, 'Us'<sup>1</sup>, and those non-whites, 'Them'<sup>1</sup>, are presented in a negative way. Overall, the article argues that altering existing misrepresentations, whether linguistically or visually, has a key role to reducing and eliminating misconceptions, categorisations and essentialisations of non-white subjects, 'the Other'<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> I am aware of such terms, but for the simplicity, the article will be limited to 'non-whites' and 'whites'. For a reference see Said (1978).



## 1. Introduction

Until recently, the study of racism in language, discourse and communication was not a problem because the vast majority of discourse analysts have been white (van Dijk, 1999). Therefore, it is essential for a non-white to study and analyse the materials (textbooks) that are authored by and produced in the white context for non-whites in the latter's educational arena. Based on this, the aim of this paper is to establish, by means of a critical discourse analysis, how English Language Textbooks, perpetuate racism in Libyan society in respect of social relations among South African people.

Textbooks act as part of discursive practices and have a great impact on school children because they manipulate their way of thinking and internalise what is there and share it with others as facts. The discourse of textbooks (like any other discourses such as political rhetoric and advertisements) often follows certain values and conventions when they are constructed and produced. Consequently, the aim of selecting a certain discourse or image is to manipulate the students to accept ideological messages contained and encapsulated in that discourse or image and take them for granted, which then become 'commonsense'.

The intention of this article is to construe to what extent these textbooks have the potential to contribute to an unbiased and balanced image of people regardless of their cultural or ethical backgrounds for Libyan secondary school students despite the value laden nature of the English language. It is stated by Kachru (1992) that "[f]or the first time a natural language has attained the status of international (universal) language, especially for cross-cultural communication" (P.67) when he writes about the English language. However, it is maintained that "English language

teaching beliefs, practices and materials are never neutral, and indeed represent a particular understanding of language ..." (Pennycook, 1994, P.178).

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used in this study. CDA is a practically-oriented form of discourse analysis aimed at revealing and addressing social problems and offers critical linguistic resources to those wishing to resist various forms of power relations, such as racism and other inequalities. CDA is a form of discourse analysis which uses Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to study how linguistic features of a text (vocabulary and grammar) are related to social power and ideological patterns (Fairclough, 1989).

CDA is here understood as a way to reveal the ideological assumptions that are hidden within discourses and according to Fairclough (1995a) reveals the relationship between ideology, discourse, and social actions. In other words, CDA makes the opaque and hidden connections between discourses, their underlying ideologies and their subsequent social practices transparent and visible (Fairclough, 1995a). In this study, textbooks as a discourse and social practice are shaped by social, political, and cultural contexts and they, in turn, shape them. In this context, CDA is employed in order to examine the form, structure and content of discourse in the grammar, verbs, adjectives, nouns, pronouns and wording that are used to create that particular discourse. In the same way that CDA aims "to make ... ideological systems and representations transparent and to show how they are related to the broader social order" (Pennycook, 2001, P.81), I aim to show that these textbooks are motivated by certain ideologies that lead to specific representations and modifications of the social world.



## 2. A General Definition of Racism

Essed (1991) referred to the concept of racism as an “... ideology, structure and process in which inequalities inherent in the wider social structure are related, in a deterministic way, to biological and cultural factors attributed to those who are seen as a different ‘race’ or ‘ethnic group’” (P.43). She also holds the view that “...racism is a ‘process’ because structures and ideologies do not exist outside the everyday practices through which they are created and confirmed. These practices both adapt to and themselves contribute to changing social, economic, and political conditions in society” (Essed, 1991, P.43). Thus, there is a systematic and pre-determined racism which can be attributed to cultural or biological practices that can be found in everyday settings such as in the news or in the textbooks. Such discursive practices reconstruct and reproduce discursively social realities that are digested and internalised within the social agents.

Colonial discourse is portrayed as “... a form of discourse crucial to the binding of a range of differences and discriminations that informs the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchization” (Bhabha, 1994, P.67). Therefore, “... racism as a social construct [,] a social practice, and as an ideology, manifests itself discursively” (Wodak & Reisigl 1999, P.175). Racism is created and recreated by means of discourse and establishes social, economic, power and political inequalities (Wodak & Reisigl, 1999) whether nationally or internationally in a social domain. Race might be observed within the realm of physical, religious, nationality or political traits (Wodak, 1996). In this sense, racism is constructed socially and ideologically and manifests itself discursively.

By looking at the discourse of racism from a Post-colonialism perspective, decolonisation may have helped permanently to discredit what has been called “... overtly racist regimes” (Fredrickson, 2002, P.142). In *Black Skin White Masks* Fanon (1967) has suggested that colonialism has brought about a division between whites and non-whites. From this perspective, he states that the former is superior over the latter in terms of power, knowledge and all aspects of the internal and external life of the colonised country. He further maintains that the history, culture, value, language, and basically everything belonging to the whites are considered universal by the colonised. This sense of inferiority experienced by the non-whites often leads to accepting the norms and the values of the colonisers. In this regard, the colonised people often abandon their own culture, language and even beliefs. Thus, Fanon rejects and criticises the violence of colonialism and imperialism and advocated intellectuals to play a role in revolutionising social change.

## 3. English Language Teaching Textbooks

Teaching materials, such as textbooks, generally present a certain way of looking at the world – through the cultural lens of the author(s). They carry with them particular constructions of reality and particular ways of selecting and organising the world (Apple, 1992; Alptekin, 1993; Risager, 1991) where “... language connects with the social entity through being the primary domain of ideology and through being [the] site of struggles of power” (Fairclough, 1989, PP.14-15). Therefore, any kind of text plays a prominent role in shaping and constructing any society, let alone the school textbook which has a great impact on the learners regardless of their cultural backgrounds.



In line with that, English as Foreign Language (EFL) textbook writers think and compose chiefly through culture-specific schemas (Alptekin, 1993; Hartman & Judd, 1978; Risager, 1991). In this respect, textbooks are seen as an ideology in the sense that they reflect a world view and cultural system which reflect the authors' culture or their surroundings. They may reflect the authors' stances and knowledge about the world. Therefore, such educational materials have the power to control the students through the ability to influence their thought and choices.

National and international research has established the overall educational importance of textbooks as the primary tools that schools use to provide students with access to the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn. Like any other country, in Libya, textbooks are the primary vehicle through which students gain access to knowledge and skills (Mohamed, 2014). Oakes and Saunders (2002, P. 2) indicated that "... textbooks are intensely important to students' education everywhere, and the consequences of not having access to them are particularly harsh in the education system."

Regarding this, Maxwell (1985); Woodward (1993); Williams (1983); Blumberg (2007) and Sheldon (1988) identified the role of the textbooks as the most dominant element in classrooms aside from teachers, students and physical space and, therefore, the selection of the content is an important factor in language learning and teaching. Language textbooks contain a lot of explicit and implicit messages of the writers and their societies (Risager, 1991; Hartman & Judd, 1978). Some researchers (Kramsch, 1998; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Ilieva, 2000; Kubota, 2001 & Risager, 1991) have started to analyse the cultural content

of textbooks. Risager (1991) has observed that:

'... foreign language teaching textbooks no longer just develop concurrently with the development of foreign language pedagogy in a narrow sense, but ... they increasingly participate in the general cultural transmission within the educational system and in the rest of society'. (P.181)

It can be argued that textbooks are cultural and political government documents since they reflect a particular set of views (Oakes & Saunders, 2002). Thus, textbooks participate in creating and producing what a society has recognised as legitimate and facts (Apple, 1992; Risager, 1991). Similarly, Goldstein (1997) and others (de Castell 1990; Luke, de Castell & Luke, 1983) support such argument in which government prescribe and authorise the content of textbooks based on shared experiential and linguistic aspects.

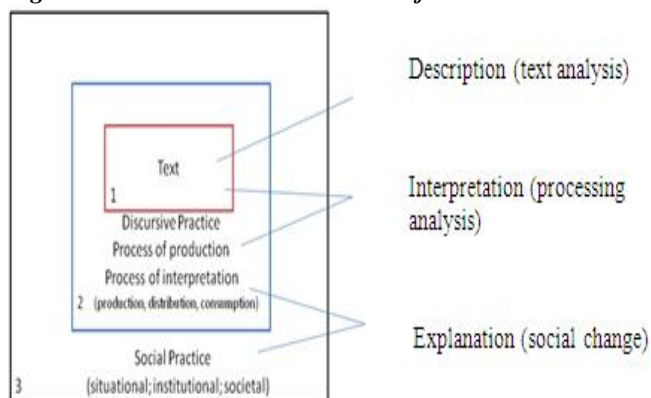
In educational practices, analysing English language textbooks has been carried out by authors such as Mohamed (2014); Keshavarz and Malek (2009); Taki (2008); Giaschi (2000). In this respect, Mohamed (2014) analysed English language textbook used in Libyan secondary schools. He found that the authors used their backdrop knowledge and cultural practices, in the production of such materials, which may not reflect the views of the target learner. In this case, the content of the textbooks distorts and misrepresents the social reality of the Libyan students (Mohamed, 2014). Taki (2008) studied internationally and locally produced English language teaching textbooks in Iran. He found out that the former tended to represent a certain discourse type that resembled the discourse of the western economy and consumerism, whereas the latter focused upon the values and cultural aspects of local lives.



#### 4. Methodology

Fairclough (1989, 1995) provides a three dimensional analytical model – the text, discourse practices and social practices. His model provides a three-way analytical framework for the analysis of text and discourse which are presented as three boxes one inside the other as shown in Figure 1 below. In light of what Fairclough suggests, my own analysis of the textbooks starts from (i) the text analysis (verbal, visual or a combination of these) – description dimension; (ii) the discursive practice (production and consumption) – interpretation dimension; and (iii) the socio-cultural practice (Post-colonialism) – explanation dimension.

**Figure 1: Three dimensional model of discourse**



(Adapted from Fairclough, 1995, P.98)

##### 4.1 Fairclough's Framework

CDA acknowledges the influence of discursive practices in shaping and reshaping social constructions and it allows researchers to consider grammar and semantics within social, cultural and political terms (Gee, 2011, P. ix) since “language is used to *mean* things and to *do* things” (Richardson, 2007, P. 25). It also studies the broader consequences of language use. Fairclough's approach assumes that discourse reproduces and alters knowledge and identities and social relations, while at the same time is shaped

by pre-existing social structures (Richardson, 2007, P.37; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, P.65). To use Fairclough's words: “language ... is socially shaped, but also socially shaping [the social reality]” (1995, P. 55).

As shown in Figure 1 above, each box is as essential as the other because they each provide a different analytical point of entry. In this way, each box could be considered first in the analytical process. Janks (1997, P. 329) argues that Fairclough's framework is useful because “... it provides multiple points of analytic entry. It does not matter which kind of analysis one begins with, as long as they are all included and are shown to be mutually explanatory”.

Moreover, Fairclough's model is vital because it accepts any modifications as he points out,

... the procedure should not be treated as holy writ – it is a guide and not a blueprint. In some cases, readers using it may find that some parts are overly detailed or even irrelevant for their purposes. In other cases, they may find it insufficiently detailed ... (Fairclough, 1989, P. 110).

In addition, Fairclough's model is based on the assumption that language use is a form of social practice rather than an individual activity. Therefore, such a model places the texts where they belong - within a social framework. For instance, English language textbooks are designed to be used within a social context, by teachers in classrooms with students. It can be claimed that the texts of the English language textbooks are considered as expressions of social practice. Hence, this approach is “relevant to detailed analysis of a small number of discourse samples” (Fairclough 1992, P. 230). This feature makes Fairclough's model distinctive when it comes to detailed textual analysis. CDA is



suitable to deal with small samples and investigating the relation between language and culture (Hart, 2007).

#### *4.2 A Description of Fairclough's Model*

My data analysis, to a certain extent, will make use of the questions posed by Fairclough (1989). These questions include vocabulary and grammatical features, word choice and repetition and use of pronouns to name but a few. Based on that, this type of analysis attempts to demonstrate how discourses reproduce and reinforce a social order and how discursive practices may be employed to reflect generally the discourse of Post-colonialism and particularly the discourse of racism.

#### *4.3 Text Analysis: Text Description*

The first box of Fairclough's analytical model is the description stage which focuses on the analysis of the texture of texts (Fairclough, 2003, P. 158). The textual analysis is the examination of the linguistic features of the text on lexicon and grammatical levels and textual structure.

The analysis of vocabulary is associated with the values and ideological representation words reflect. For instance, it is important to consider the following questions 1) Which kinds of words are assigned to which group of people? 2) Is there any aspect of re-wording and over-wording? 3) How about the presence of stylistic devices such as synonyms, antonyms and metaphors (because they are usually related to a particular ideology), and 4) Are there euphemistic expressions, formal and informal words? (Fairclough, 1989, PP. 92-95).

The analysis of grammatical features lies mainly upon the concept of transitivity which is part of the ideational function – Fairclough's term is experiential function – of language concerned with the transmission of ideas (Bloor & Bloor, 1995; Fowler,

1991; Simpson, 1993). Through this function of the language the speaker or the writer constructs their experiences. Webster (2002) claimed that this function, "... gives structure to experience, and helps to determine our way of looking at things, so that it requires some intellectual effort to see them in any other way than that which our language suggests to us" (P. 175). Therefore, transitivity provides a useful linguistic framework for uncovering the main linguistic features of a discourse.

Transitivity includes different processes such as material processes, relational processes, mental processes, verbalisation processes, behavioural processes and existential processes (Fowler, 1991, PP.74-75; Halliday, 1985, P. 102). The first two processes will be mostly used in this study because the former refers to who is acting upon whom whereas the latter concerns the relationship between the actors of the clause. In addition to that, these two processes are the most widely used in the English language especially in the texts I am analysing. These processes are used to identify positive and negative representations of people and their culture.

The mode system is part of the relational value of language which is used in CDA as it helps to account for the various options that are available to the writer or speaker in the use of language (Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough, 1989). There are three major moods: declarative, question and imperative (Yeibo, 2011; Wooffitt, 2005).

Pronoun usage is a central element for analysing the ways in which the authors establish relations and roles within the discourse between the authors and the readers themselves. In my analysis, generic references will be considered since they reflect upon certain ideology. The pronoun 'we' is used to refer to the implicit authority that shows that powerful and prestigious



people speak for others. It is also used to signal the ideology of the nationhood that represents the notion of a unified nation such as 'we, the Libyans'. Therefore, the speaker is not speaking or writing as an individual but as an entity that represents the addressees. On the other hand, the pronoun 'I' is used to express high commitment to what is being said and consequently expressing the authoritarian function in the discourse (Fairclough, 1989, P. 106). The present study is concerned with pronouns as expressions of being inferior or superior which reflect certain groupings (whites or non-whites).

#### 4.4 Discourse Practice: Text Interpretation

The second box of Fairclough's model is concerned with participant's text production and text interpretation (understanding). Texts are produced and interpreted against a background of commonsense assumptions. The interpretations are generated through the combination of what is in the text and what knowledge and beliefs the interpreter holds (Fairclough, 1989; De Beaugrande, 1980; Brown & Yule, 1983), which according to Gee (1999) is the knowledge of language, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools and places of events that are recognisable to people as a particular type of identity that may engage in a particular type of activity. In Fairclough's terms, 'members' resources' (MR) are the background knowledge and the *interpretative procedures* that help to recognise ideological constructions (Fairclough, 1989, PP. 141-143).

#### 4.5 Social Practice: Text Explanation

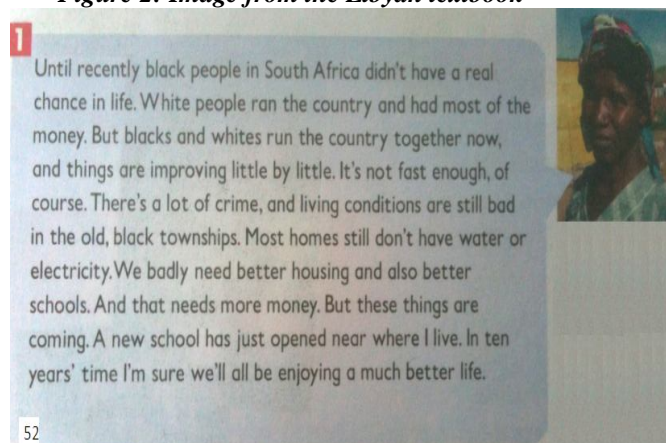
The third box of Fairclough's analytical model is the explanation stage which highlights discourse as part of the process of social struggle and power relations (Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough, 1989). In this stage, the analysis will draw upon the

discourse of Post-colonialism in general and upon the discourse of racism in particular.

#### 4.6 The sample

This sample is from the *Social Sciences Two* textbook used in year two by students aged around 16 years in Libyan secondary schools. The analysing procedure was done in terms of carrying out multiple readings of the sample to develop a greater understanding of the passage. In this regard, I physically explored the data using three A4 sheets of paper with each sheet reflecting one dimension of the CDA framework. After that the analysed data was put together by applying the three dimensions of data analysis.

Figure 2: Image from the Libyan textbook



The passage (figure 2) is about how life is changing in South Africa from bad to good for South Africans in general and for non-whites in particular. In this sample, I am going to borrow and use 'non-white' (Frank, 2003, P. 306; van Dijk, 1995, P. 18) for my analysis instead of blacks unless it is stated in the passage otherwise. The passage is about the non-white and the white people. There is an image of a non-white lady accompanying the text. It is presumed that she is the one who is talking about life in South Africa. The image shows the lady with her hair covered. She looks unhappy and tired in relation to what is included in the passage and in the image. There are



some other objects in the image which cannot be identified as they are not clear. There are no images of white people even though the passage is about both white and non-white people. This may possibly suggest that if white people were used, then they might be depicted in a way which is much better and well-off than non-white South Africans. Consequently, they would be possibly considered and represented semiotically superior and controlling the country. Thus, such omission may have been done to avoid any overt inequality and explicit discrimination among South Africans.

In terms of linguistic analysis, the experiential function of language is embedded in transitivity which is part of CDA. Transitivity presents how the world is perceived, constructed and produced discursively. In this text, the world is perceived and constructed in four processes, the material processes, the mental processes, the relational processes and the existential processes.

In the material processes, 'ran' and 'run' in 'White people ran the country' and 'blacks and whites run the country together' assign and produce the white people discursively in the first sentences as actors and both the non-whites and the whites as the actors in the second sentence. The goal - recipient or receiver - of the sentences is 'the country'. In this case, the country of South Africa appears to be the ultimate goal for both groups of people in the past and present. The world of consciousness is identified with the mental processes of *need* in 'We badly need better housing...'. Such processes require two participants, the first being a sensor 'we' and the second is a phenomenon 'housing'. The last among the most widely used processes are the relational processes which mainly deal with the verbs 'to be' or 'to have' such as 'black

people in South Africa didn't have a real chance in life'. The actor in this sentence is 'black people in South Africa' and the goal is 'a real chance in life'. Thus, the chance of better life for the non-white South Africans appears to be unachievable. The sentence 'There's a lot of crime...' is an existential process which indicates the existence of inevitable and escapable crimes.

In terms of the relational value of the text, through which users of language establish, negotiate and assume their position in social relationships the dominating type of sentences is a negative one with some positive declarative clauses. The negative sentences are assigned discursively to the non-white people and their lives such as 'black people in South Africa didn't have a real chance in life' and 'Most homes still don't have water or electricity'. In contrast, the whites are associated discursively with positive sentences such as 'White people ran the country and had most of the money'. The non-white people are associated discursively with a positive sentence when they are mentioned in conjunction with whites such as 'blacks and whites run the country together'.

The past and the present simple tenses of the sentences carry with them the understanding of a miserable life for the non-white South Africans. Unlike the past and the present, the future carries with it glimpses of hope and prosperity to the people of South Africa. The applications of the "we" and "I" pattern creates an intimate dialogic style, which can shorten the distance between the addresser and the audience and further persuade the audience to share and submit to the same proposal of the addresser (Chen-xi & Yang, 2009). In a general sense, the use of the personal pronoun "we" is to include and not to exclude. However, in this sample the





pronoun “we” is used to include only non-white people who suffer from the bad housing and social problems and does not include white people. This can be seen from the omission of the image of the white people and the language structure of the passage.

This passage can be seen as a type of racism discourse based on biological terms rather than cultural or religious aspects. Therefore, the gap between non-whites and whites is largely determined by genetic factors rather than socio-cultural ones. Inevitably such categorisations of people reproduce a discursive social hierarchy and segregation among the same members of a society. Discrimination also operates in this sample as there is an unequal distribution of power and wealth in which whites impose their domination and perpetuate it in order for it to become part of the socio-cultural reality of both groups (Antonovsky, 1960). Such representations of the South Africans at this blatant segregation would not be at all acceptable within the Libyan educational context. Thus, English language learners would assume that what is in the passage is realistic and is understood as commonsense.

In this respect, the majority of South Africans have passed through and experienced extreme processes of poverty, racism and lack of economic development which have echoes still present in this time. More recently, it is claimed in the passage, that South Africa is trying to build a country based upon equality, race, colour and gender. However, in recent years, even though the non-whites are in power in South Africa, they are unable to use the resources at their command (Fredrickson, 2002). Thus visual and discursive practices are producing racial prejudices based on the authors’ essentialised assumption and understanding of the South Africans. This could confirm what has been claimed in the discourse of

Post-colonialism that the colonisers left their colonies physically but not mentally, or more sceptically, they still remain in their colonies physically and mentally.

The use of *blacks* and *whites* in the passage implies a connotation to the race issue in South Africa which took place during apartheid. Thus, this distinction and division between people are based only on skin colour and not anything else, i.e. based on a historical context. In addition, Jones (2011) claims that townships were created during the period of apartheid in which the locals were controlled and ruled by the colonisers. That is due to how the white people think of themselves as superior and the only way that the non-white people can be civilised and develop to a certain level is being run by white people (Schwarz, 2011). Such thinking “... draws a distinction between the civilised and the primitive in which the white equals good, human, and civilised and non-white equals bad, inhuman and savage” (Frank, 2003, P. 306). Thus, the minority (whites) rule the majority (non-whites) (Jones, 2011), control and support the economic, cultural and political agendas more than the majority.

It has been claimed that South Africa’s transition to democracy has brought socio-economic benefits to many South African people in order to bridge past divisions established by the apartheid system (Keim, 2008). However, de Wet (2001) argues that “[t]he anti-apartheid political discourse ... highlights the perceived unwillingness of some whites to accept the political and educational realities in post-apartheid South Africa, ... the frustration of blacks with the fact that circumstances have not changed at grassroots level” (P.109). Hence, it could be agreed, from this sample, that apartheid and colonisation left the non-whites stigmatised and disadvantaged economically and socio-culturally and were prevented from



achieving racial justice and equality (Fredrickson, 2002).

Based on that, non-whites still suffer as they do not have enough money for '*better housing and schools need money and they don't have enough money*'. It could be supposed that the passage contradicts itself when it comes to 'money'. It says '*the whites have all the money*' and '*the blacks and the whites run the country together*'. While in the bottom sentence '*the black South Africans don't have enough money for housing and schools*'. In this case, racism is used as a social construction to legitimate a certain ideology in order to suppress and deny a social group from accessing the material and cultural resources such as work, housing, welfare services, hospitals, schools and political rights to name but a few (Wodak & Reisigl, 1999). Consequently, the whites and non-whites will accept the idea of racism and thus it becomes 'commonsense'. This advances the Post-colonialist claim that the division between the whites and the non-whites still exists and what is seen superficially is just painted practices to pass certain ideological, hegemonic and cultural practices that people are equal no matter what colour and, social class or cultural background they are. Thus, discourse plays a vital part in the production and reproduction, shaping and reshaping of prejudice and racism.

In reality, people and life in South Africa are still segregated and townships of non-whites are still there and white areas are still inhabited by white people. Hence, there is some sort of discrimination in house ownership in which the non-whites "... are barred in some degree from access to values such as housing, jobs, educational facilities [and] full participation in culture" (Antonovsky, 1960, P. 81). What makes the situation worse is that the excluded group (non-whites) accepts such elimination and

makes it as commonsense, legitimate and unchallengeable (Antonovsky, 1960). Such representations of the non-white South Africans would restrict them from accessing public institutions such as schools and consequently creates a semiotic determined representation of the non-white community in South Africa. This can be done through many types of media such as the English language textbooks that I am analysing. Thus, teaching English language or another language cannot be neutral as long as there is political and cultural agenda in producing such material.

Such types of discourse are loaded with social, political, racial and economic practices (Rogers, 2004) favouring whites to non-whites in order to reproduce, reinforce and maintain discursively certain relations, social and racial stereotypes and inequalities. Moreover, negative attitudes are formed and exclusively bound towards non-whites, which might be transformed towards all non-whites in general regardless of time and space. In this sample, racism consists of white supremacist and privileged ideologies of race that involve "... negative opinions, attitudes and ideologies and the seemingly subtle acts and conditions of discrimination against [blacks]" (van Dijk, 1993, P. 5). Such kinds of discourse would advance and convince the students of a particular ideology and motivate them to act and respond in a framed and particular way in order to internalise the explicit and implicit message.

The sample is packaged with information and how such information should be understood and interpreted discursively which eventually leads to the (re)production and (re)shaping of the South African social reality. Thus "...racism [is acted] in terms of white group [Europeanised or Africanised groups] dominance over ... non-European ones"



(van Dijk, 1990, P. 5) where the former confirms their domination and superiority through various discursive practices including the English language. Hence, educational institutions are influential in transmitting the dominant culture and reproducing unequal and racist society.

The way the passage is constructed and produced discursively suggests that the authors are not interested in why non-white people are poor, less privileged, isolated and deprived from a better life. What has been identified is only their current life and how slow improvement in their social and economic life is taking place. However, there is no sign of how the white people became rich and have all the South African money. Thus, what has been manifested discursively in the text directs and narrows the reader to a particular reading, the subtly emphasised negative life of non-white people, rather than having broad views of interpretation including all the social and economic dimensions of the South Africans regardless of their skin colour or cultural background.

What is relevant is the way in which suppressed people are depicted and how they and their culture have been affected by such subjugation until the writing of this text. Since racism refers to the superiority of one nation or a group of people over the others, therefore, such a text still represents discursively the fact that colonial rule still persists as revealed in the field of postcolonial studies. This is because the non-white South Africans are placed within the domination of white South African colonisers and viewed as inferior and remain deprived and in isolation on their own soil. What might be the intention of this sample is deceiving the students by addressing injustice, inequality and segregation with positive clothes of liberation, justice and

equality to have their point accepted and appreciated.

From this study, it can be argued that there are two clear significant conflicting points on racism in English language textbooks used Libyan schools about the South Africans. This may include which group of people is being discriminated against the other, which group of people is abused and marginalised culturally and economically, and which group of people acts violently against the other group. All of this depends on which group every individual South African belongs to (non-whites or whites). Thus, the non-whites are still disempowered despite the constitutional change in post-apartheid era. This would advance the ideological conception of the non-whites as the victims of the past, present and future.

## 5. Conclusion

Negative explicit or implicit other-representations have been employed to enlarge the non-white South Africans' deficiencies in reference to controlling and overcoming many aspects of life. This is done by emphasising subtly the negative characteristics and social activities of the non-whites and de-emphasising the positive characteristics and social activities the non-whites. On the other hand, the whites' positive social activities and characteristics are emphasised and the whites' negative activities are de-emphasised or omitted. For instance, there are unequal relationships and representations of people where the whites outweigh the non-whites in many aspects such as in ideas, lifestyles and prosperity. This can be seen through the negative sentences that describe the non-white people and the positive sentences that refer to the white people. In addition, the social, economical and cultural gap among the South Africans is clearly produced in the



passage where the non-whites do not have the basic elements of life while the whites have all the money and control the country. Another point which should be recognised is the omission of the white image which might suggest that they have better life and there is no need to produce them. In any case, if they are represented then the division between the South Africans will be clearer and easier to spot as the whites will be produced visually in a better and prosperous situation than the non-whites.

There is only one instance in which non-whites are presented positively; they are produced discursively in association with the white people and not presented on their own. Thus, it could be claimed that the English language brings with it social inequalities and injustices that create and discursively produce and internalise divisions and socio-cultural injustice among those who speak it and those who do not. This would encourage teachers and students not to respect and appreciate non-Western languages and cultures since discourses are the primary medium via which ideas and experiences are transmitted, shared and exchanged (Al-Omari, 2008).

English language education, thus, has not only contributed to the construction of the ideal image of the target language and culture but also failed semiotically to question inequalities, injustices and unfairness that exist in the world. In addition, image-text relationship seems to be not valid within this sample since there is omission of the white people's image. Thus, the socio-cultural values of the non-white community in South Africa are discursively devalued and misrepresented. This is because languages play an active role in classifying the experiences through which individuals construct, understand and represent reality. There is no neutral discourse since "... language is not a neutral

reflection of society and social reality" (Hyatt, 2005: 43). Finally, it would suffice to maintain that this study reveals the linguistic and socio-cultural features in figuring out biased and racist discourse that are manifested semiotically in English language textbooks used in Libyan secondary schools.

#### About the Author

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