

Identity construction and negotiation through an EFL syllabus in Sudan

By Nada Sid Ahmed Aljak

Sudan University for Science and Technology

And

Abdelrahim Hamid Mugaddam

University of Khartoum

Abstract

This paper investigates the process of national identity construction among basic school pupils in The Sudan. The paper adopts the assumption that identity can be constructed and negotiated via language. SPINE3, a textbook of English as a foreign language taught to Grade 8 has been chosen as a representative of language programs implemented at basic level schools in the Sudan and thus the main source of data for the study. Issues such as traditions, customs, good values, religion, cloths, food, literature, historical events, famous people, etc, have been carefully considered in terms of their representation in the textbook. A critical discourse analysis approach has been employed in the process of data analysis. Results show that SPINE 3 promoted and help construct a national identity among the pupils. Yet, the identity constructed and negotiated through the textbook is based primarily on the Arabic and Islamic culture which is thought to be the most effective unifying factor of the Sudanese nation. As such, PINE 3 completely ignores and marginalize Sudan's rich linguistic, cultural and ethnic heritage. The paper concludes that paying due respect to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Sudan will help realize political and economic settlement in the Sudan.

Introduction

National identity is a collective feeling based on the belief of belonging to the same nation. In national identity people share most of the characteristics that make them different from other nations (Guibernau, 2007). These characteristics include a common culture, history, kinship, language, religion, territory and destiny. This suggests that people who belong to a particular nation share a set of attributes that constitute their national identity. The specific way in which the nation is defined affects the nature of these attributes.

The fact that Sudan is rich in different ethnicities, cultures, languages and religions serves as an incentive for us to attempt the present study. Constructing national identity through education is the main theme of the present study. Although this theme appeared in the 16th century becoming widespread in the 19th century (Parmenter, 1999), very little research was conducted in the Sudanese context. Construction of national identity in Sudan needs to be initiated in the school syllabuses. Like any other type of learning process, identity construction requires certain instruments (Smith, 1991). For example symbols such as the flags and the national anthems are important instruments in building and maintaining a nation. In this paper we are trying to show how national identity is constructed through written texts in school syllabuses. It is argued that the current Sudanese national syllabus at basic level (henceforth BL) is based on a policy favouring a certain ideology and culture. The main assumption here is that the syllabuses adopted at school do not reflect the diversity of Sudanese society. That is, pupils at BL are not provided with fair opportunities to negotiate, develop or construct their own identities through the current syllabus. In this context, this specifically addresses the negotiation of national identity in SPINE 3, an English language textbook taught to Grade 8 in Sudan.

Theoretical background

The term 'identity' proved to be highly significant in the 1960s, and acquired currency across disciplinary and national boundaries. It has established itself in many fields such as the journalistic and the academic lexicon. Foucault (1972) views identities (or subjects) as the product of dominant discourses that are attached to social arrangements and practices. Guibernau i Berdón (2007) claims that the two key questions in relation to identity are 'who am I?' and 'Who are we?' She argues that identity is a definition which she takes as a psychological and social interpretation of the self which establishes what and where the person is.

Smith (1991) suggest that the self is composed of multiple identities and roles: familial, territorial, class, religious, ethnic and gender. He also indicates each of these identities is based on social classifications that might be modified or abolished. Musa (2007) argues that religion, language, values and manners compose the main characteristics of identity and intersect with the component of culture. He goes on to highlighting different kinds of identities: individual identity, social identity and national identity. Moreover, Musa argues that discourse about identity is always linked with the discourse about ethnicity and culture. This fact is very clear in the newly independent countries which suffer from the existence of different ethnicities r

trying to homogenize their society. Being one of those countries that are characterized by diversity in ethnicity, culture, religion and languages, Sudan is a case in point. It has got about 572 tribes; 50 of them compose huge tribal groups which communicate through 115 languages. Addressing this situation, Sudanese political pioneers did not succeed in building a homogenous society, but a heterogeneous one that endangers prosperity, security and peace.

The relationship between language and identity

Researchers draw some correlation between identity and language. Joseph (2006) argues that language is of political origin which means that it is basically political. However, other linguists, particularly psycholinguists, counter this by stressing that the function of language has primarily to do with 'cognition' which is the connection with mental processes of understanding and not with relationships between people (ibid). In the same sense, Benwell and Stokoe (2006) define identity as essential, cognitive, socialized, phenomenological or supernatural phenomenon that governs human action . Many questions arise from this understanding such as : what identities people possess , how they may be distinguished from one another, and how they correlate with a variety of social science measures. It is assumed that in spite of presenting themselves differently in a number of contexts, beneath that presentation, people lurk a personal, pre-discursive and steady identity. Thus, people should know who they 'really' are, and if they do not, they may need the help of professionals, psychoanalysts, spiritual leaders, etc. to reveal that knowledge (ibid).

Going back to the argument of Joseph (2006) that language is of political origin, the significant question here is that what do we mean by 'politics'? Joseph elaborates the answer to this question arguing languages themselves are constructed out of the practices of speech and writing, and the beliefs (or 'ideologies') of those doing the speaking and writing. Language is shaped by the audience and what the interlocutors communicate will affect their relationship. It is believed that the politics of identity shapes the interpretation of the messages being exchanged which is a prime factor in deciding the truth value of utterances (Joseph 2006). Identity is also understood as a "public phenomenon, a performance or construction that is interpreted by other people" (Benwell and Stokoe 2006:4). The construction of identity occurs in

discourse and other social and embodied conduct. Hence, some questions rise such as: how we move, where we are, how we talk, etc.

To sum up, language and identity are inseparable. Thinking about language and identity, as reflected by Joseph (2004), improves people understanding of who they are, in their eyes and in others', which would deepen their understanding of social interaction. During their lives, people engaged with language in constructing who they are, and who everyone is that they meet, or whose utterances they hear or read. People from childhood engage in psychological and developmental processes through which their subjective feelings, attitudes, behaviors, affective and cognitive aspects, and beliefs are gradually constructed. The language they speak is crucial to them and is linked with their subjective identities.

Joseph (2004:6) argues that individual or group identities 'are not natural facts about us, but are things we construct'. Some people would not accept this idea when they think of their identities as related and grounded in a soul; or when they think of their identities as something stable and unchangeable through their life. The separate and inner identity is never singular or coherent. If one is to think about the fact that individuals usually have various roles with regard to others, such as to children, parents, friends, spouses, etc, their identities shift and change according to the context of whom they are talking to. People can construct others' identities depending on what they have observed of each other.

It is generally argued that the negotiation of identities occurs where relations of power are unequal. These situations are usually influenced by the social, cultural, political, and historical settings in which these identities are negotiated. Negotiation of identities occurs every day in multilingual contexts where different ideologies of language and identities come into conflict. This should be taken with regard to which languages or varieties of language are spoken by a particular kind of people in particular contexts (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).

Positioning and negotiation of identity in classrooms

Regan, V. and Chasaide, C. N.(2010) argue that first language sociolinguistic research has shown that identity construction is particularly intense during adolescence and young adulthood. They suggested that language use is an especial key resource in this dynamic process. Eckert (2000) and Rampton (1995) state that identity construction is at a particularly intense stage during adolescence and young adulthood, and language is powerful factor in this process.

Norton (1997) uses the term 'subjectivity' for 'identity'. Subjectivity refers to the ways in which our identity is formed through discourse. She has worked to show how language learners take up different subject positions in different discourses. Norton uses the notion of identity as multiple entity constructed through discourse, and a site of struggle. From this point of view, a person takes up different subject positions within different discourses. Language or discourse is a crucial element in the formation of subjectivity. Kearney is that in addition to the traditional factors which influence each individual learner such as age, previous experience etc., other factors have come into play. Some of these are the socially constructed nature of language learning and the effect that it draws on the individual learner.

Materials and methods

This study depends primarily on data derived from SPINE 3, a textbook taught to grade 8 pupils in Sudan. The textbook covers a wide range of topics and themes in English language. The actual sample used in the analysis is taken from six units. The choice of language textbook is based on the assumption that language is the field in which identity is more likely to be reflected. SPINE 3 as a non-probability sample, is taken to represent the English language syllabus taught at the basic level (SPINE2 at Grade 7 and SPINE1 at Grade 5). Selection of the units in this study depends on the purpose of the research (exploratory and descriptive). This study adopts a number of units of analysis such as: word, theme, characters, item, etc. Each unit of analysis is defined accurately before being used in the analysis. The direct relationship between the categories of analysis and the units of analysis is explicitly explained.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed based on qualitative and quantitative approach in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The quantitative data analysis (QNDA) was based on the instrument especially developed for this study entitled Dimensions of National Identity Construction (DNIC). The instrument was implemented on an inter-rater-based approach (see Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007). Two raters completed the checklist and the most commonly agreed rate was taken as the most acceptable. The texts were examined under the sub-dimensions mentioned in the taxonomy of the research instrument. The results of the tallying up of the checklist were tabulated and presented in graphs. The second instrument adopted by this study was used to analyze ideological expressions in the school textbooks. This instrument (ID) is based on a taxonomy developed by van Dijk (2006). Cohen's et al. (2007) approach to content analysis has been considered for handling the data. Three questions were raised to help organize the process of content analysis. The questions are as follows:

1. To what extent does the current textbook, SPINE 3, support the process of constructing national identity among the pupils ?

2. To what extent does SPINE 3 help deconstruct preexisting diverse ethnic identities of the pupils?
3. Is SPINE 3 based on a certain ideology?

The entire content of the six units chosen for the study were scrutinized against the dimensions of the checklist. Reference was made to different lessons that were examined under each of the criterion set. A special focus was placed on making the data representative to ensure reliable results. Teama's (Tea'ma, 2004) Priori Coding was used in coding the data. The categories of analysis were chosen based on previous studies and peer reviewing of three experts. To answer the questions posed by the study, both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data analysis have been used in the present study.

Discussions and Results

With respect to the quantitative analysis of this textbook, Table1 shows identity percentages, while Graph 1 shows ethnic and national identity frequency by dimension.

Table (1) shared values

Cultural dimension	Lessons	Examples	Comment
Shared values	Lesson(4),revision unit, page 9 ' Mustafa The Farmer'	-He likes his farm very much -After that he says his prayers	The text focuses on valuing certain customs and traditions and tries to perpetuate them through the language and techniques used in it.
	Unit 3, Lesson 1 'People Who Help Us'	A boy scout, Pupils <i>'learn discipline, first aid and many other useful things.'</i>	respect for all sorts of occupations and exaltation of the value of work
	Unit 3, Lesson 5, 'Keep Your Home Clean 2'	<i>-They intended to keep it clean</i>	-The texts try to inculcate the values of caring for the environment, self-hygiene and promotion of urban behavior - The texts enhance the sense of civic pride as well as civic duties and responsibilities.

	Unit 5, Lesson 9, 'Sarah and Mona'	'Would you ----?' or 'Could you---?'	-promotes the practice of addressing other people tactfully. -This lesson demonstrates the way people should request others to do things for them in polite ways by using certain structures
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Table (2) symbols

Cultural dimension	Lessons	Examples	Comment
symbols	Unit 2, Lesson 12, 'Sports and Games', page 45		Mohammed Ali Clay who has turned into a symbol for the blacks and his victories in boxing has placed him in high position and he turned into an idol amongst his fellow people not only in America but worldwide and for all coloured people let alone the blacks.
	Unit 3, Lesson 2 'Great Men and Women 1', page 54		talk about three figures who are real symbols. These people are: (1) Mohammed Ahmed Al Mahdi. (2) The great traveller Ibn Batutta (3) Nelson Mandela

Table (3) traditions

Cultural dimension	Lesson	Example	Comment
Traditions	Unit 4, Lesson 9 ‘Juha at the Chemist’s’, page 104	<i>‘Amna, Amna, today I’m not feeling well’</i>	A number of good traditions are presented such as the good relationship between husbands and wives, love between friends, hospitality and entertainment of guests, and the kind way of treating the elderly and showing respect to them.
	Unit 4 , Lesson 10, ‘Juha on a Sudan Airways Plane’, page 108	<i>‘Oh, Juha! You must eat something’</i>	
	Unit 6, Lesson 5 , ‘Juha at the Dentist’s ‘ , page166	<i>‘All right .I’ll give you the money’</i>	all of the above traditions are highlighted and in a light-hearted manner that sugarcoats the pill of direct instruction and makes it palatable to the young learners.

(a) Psychological dimension

● **Internal or external enemies**

There is a short text in unit3 Lesson 2 titled ‘Great Men and Women 1’. This text is about Al Mahadi. It speaks about him as a leader who drove away the Turks and who fought great battles against enemies to his people. *‘He did not want his country to be ruled by foreigners’*. The *foreigners* here refers to the Turks. The

word 'foreigners' itself connotes xenophobia and anti-colonization attitudes as well as nationalistic zeal.

Folktales represent one of the richest sources for instruction. They are also rich as linguistic resources. Because they are intrinsically interesting, motivating and appealing to the young. That is, the moral a folktale teaches is believed to be in producing the required impact on the learners. SPINE 3 has made use of folktale in a trial to instill the dimensions of national identity in the learners' hearts and minds. Two examples of this are Lesson 10 and 11 in Unit 3 entitled 'Stories from the Past (1)' and 'Stories from the Past (2)'.

The former is an example of 'external enemy'. It talks about a king who was defeated by his enemies losing seven battles. However, at the end he managed to lead his army to victory. 'The king and his army fought against their enemies and this time they won'. The latter is an example of 'internal enemy'. It talks about a prince who was chased by his enemies. The prince was helped by some of his loyal subjects who sacrificed themselves for him.

To sum up this sub-dimension is dealt with in a number of positive ways and is presented in different context and genres. The textbook relies a lot on the national history of the country and cites examples of how the Sudanese people and their historical leaders fought against all sorts of colonizers and invaders. In all of these instances a reference was made to the Sudanese people as one nation. The learners are addressed as one unified group who belong to one homeland . The sub-dimension is also treated through folktales and stories from the past. Such texts are neutral in nature and do not favour any group to others.

- **Belief in common ancestry**

Here, SPINE 3 seems to adopt a method of avoidance behavior. It tries to give a broad hint about belief in common ancestry. It uses the theme of great men and women to

inject the message and make it look more accidental than deliberate. No one would argue against including some great Arab people in this theme, since they are considered part of human heritage. However, the way they are presented may drop a hint. The two passages in Lesson 11, Unit 4, “Great Men and Women (2)” are examples. These two passages are fairly long and are both devoted to Arab scientists: Jabir Ibn Hayyan and Ibn al-Haytham. The topic sentences in the opening paragraphs in both texts read as follows:

1. *Jabir Ibn Hayyan is a famous Arab scientist.*
2. *Ibn al-Haytham was a famous Arab mathematician and scientist.*

The writers talk about Jabir Ibn Hayyan and Ibn al-Haytham with pride, delight and appreciation. Moreover, the choice of a great man such as “the traveler of Islam” and the lesson about “across the sea” made it possible to mention the names of some Arab places (countries and cities). It seems that the writer has deliberately created an opportunity in this theme to evoke this belief. This might give readers the impression that they belong to one region and one race.

(b) Cultural dimension

• Shared values

This sub-dimension is presented in a way that all learners are convinced to identify with. Common, universal and desired values are offered. Equal opportunities are offered to learners to position themselves within this system of values. As a result, learners will be apt to feel that equity prevail in their classrooms. An example of “shared values” appears in Unit 3, Lesson 5, “Keep Your Home Clean (2)”. The texts in this lesson talk about how pupils at Basic Level worked hard to keep their school and village clean and green. The texts try to inculcate the values of caring for the environment, self-hygiene and promotion of urban behaviour. The texts enhance the sense of civic pride as well as civic duties and responsibilities. This intersects with the political dimension as it stresses the duties of citizens and their responsibilities towards their own local communities.

• Beliefs

The authors treated this sub-dimension wisely. They use themes from both Islam and Christianity. However, the presentation of Islam first in the list might be interpreted as a sort of bias against other religions or that Islam is the dominant religion. The authors did not intend to be biased in any way. All pupils may feel that their religions and cultures are respected and catered for. This has a positive impact on the entire group of learners. An example is from Unit 5, Lesson 7, “Hunein's Pair of Shoes”.

(a) We went to the mosque.

(c) We listened to the “Khutba”.

(d) We said our Friday prayers.

(d) We put on our best clothes.

(e) We picked up our bibles.

(f) We went to church.

• **Symbols**

A whole unit beside other scattered lessons are devoted to encouraging learners to read about famous men and women and. Reading about such characters helps learners acquire good values and more positive attitudes towards the others. In this way, the authors can guarantee that the whole group of learners will identify with this sub-dimension. For example the three texts in Unit 3, Lesson 2, “Great Men and Women (1)” talk about three figures that are real symbols. These are:

(1) Al Imam Mohammed Ahmed Al Mahdi, who freed the Sudan from the Turks.

(2) The great traveller Ibn Battuta, who toured the world of his day and wrote about his travels.

(3) Nelson Mandela, who was one of the greatest freedom fighters in the history of humanity.

• **Traditions**

Traditions are presented through the popular character of “Juha”. In different units and lessons “Juha” encourages learners and focuses their attention on the importance of good relationships between husbands and wives; love between friends, etc. It is clear that the whole group of learners will identify with this sub-dimension. The traditions mentioned are common and are presented without reference to any specific creed or culture. Examples are in Unit 6, Lesson 5, “Juha at the Dentist’s”, and Unit 6,

Lesson 7, “Juha at the Cafeteria”. A number of good traditions are presented such as the good relationship between husbands and wives: “Amna, Amna, today I’m not feeling well”; love between friends: “All right. I’ll give you the money”; hospitality and entertainment of guests: “Oh, Juha! You must eat something”; and the kind way of treating the elderly and showing them respect.

- **Food**

SPINE 3 does not show great concern with “food” with which learners can identify. Some scattered parts of lessons talk about food, although some of them do not relate to the Sudanese way of cooking or traditional dishes. The texts focus on a few Sudanese ways of eating, and neglecting a great portion of dishes peculiar to some ethnic affiliations in the Sudan. Here, some students might feel that part of their traditions and customs are not catered for. For example in Unit 6, Lesson 2, “Cooking”, “[K]itchen utensils” are presented. The text shows the language of recipes through a dialogue between two Sudanese women. However, utensils are all modern ones and the meals the two women talk about have nothing to do with traditional Sudanese dish: “they had vegetable soup, tomato salad, aubergine, salad, okra stew, potato with minced meat”.

- **Clothes**

The authors do not give a proper regard to “clothes”. Various ways of dressing are presented in different pictures and drawings. However, no tribal clothes, such as the *laowo* or the *sidairi*, are shown in the pictures.

- **Names of people**

There are different names mentioned in the book, such as Kamal, Sara, Ohaj, Karlo, Arob, and Mansoor. The names come from various places and groups. In short, the authors succeeded in presenting this sub-dimension in such a way that all pupils can identify.

(c) *Territorial dimension*

- **The country**

This sub-dimension is presented in all aspects of the notion of country (the Sudan). It is presented in a number of texts. In the Revision Unit, Lesson 1, Section B, there is a personal letter written by two girls to their friend. The senders' address contains 'Omdurman' which is always referred to as the 'national capital' in contrast to Khartoum, the 'political capital'. Omdurman occupies a special place in the history of the Sudan and is considered to be the melting pot of many Sudanese who belong to different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. So, to choose it as part of the senders' address has the advantage of representing the broad spectrum of the Sudanese diverse ethnicities. The text also talks about Khartoum and its beauty in winter and the two girls invite their friend to visit it. They also refer to Jebel Marra and the nice holiday they spent there. Talking about these places in such a context fosters the sense of belonging to one country.

In Section 'D' of the same lesson, the text talks about two friends from eastern and western Sudan, Aroma and ElObied, respectively. Ohaj goes to visit his friend Ahmed in El Obied in Kordofan. The text also mentions that when Ohaj went back to his home town 'Aroma', he '*told his friends about the two beautiful towns*', which further consolidates the idea of spreading the notion of belonging to one homogenous national entity. The text, though short, capsulates a huge message. It tries to unify the different parts of the country as well as the different ethnicities and cultures. Another aspect that the language of the text implicates is the notion of taking pride in the homeland by speaking about its beauty.

In Unit 2 Lesson 7 'A Letter from Tom', Tom writes to His friend Mahmoud describing the Sudanese as '*very nice and friendly people*.' He also mentions that he '*visited some historical places*' and he '*shall never forget the beautiful green forests in southern Sudan*.' This kind of discourse is sure to raise the learners' awareness of nationalism. The most important issue here is the neutrality of the language when no given group is referred to. All learners will feel that they are included in the text.

In Unit 2 Lesson 9 'Farming and Industry' the reading text speaks about some factories that are national. They describe the textile factory in Hasahisa and other sugar and flour factories. The text talks about the top cash crop of the Sudan,

cotton, and that it is grown in the oldest and most renowned project, the Gezira Scheme. It also mentions the Nuba Mountains as an area that produces cotton.

The text also mentions that *'your jalabya is made of cotton'*, a clever hint that uses the national costume as something that unifies rather than discriminates. In reference to the national factories, the text also uses the expression *'They produce different things which are made from what is grown on farms'*. This highlights the potentialities of the homeland as having plentiful resources that can secure the basic needs of its people.

In Unit 4 Lesson 14 'Radio SPINE', and within the context of the 'Radio Programme for the Day', the text mentions the name of a Sudanese Professor who works in a foreign university and who was able to invent a substance that would help preserve the environment. One programme is about Hawa, a popular singer from Western Sudan and two famous footballers who play for two popular clubs in the Sudan.

In Unit 5, Lesson 2 'Port Sudan', the text talks about a very important city at the national level, Port Sudan the national port of the country. All the country depends on it for imports and exports. Most of the institutions there are national ones. Port Sudan is a cosmopolitan city. The people who work and live there belong to all parts of the Sudan. The text talks about *'big ships and tankers'*. It talks about ships that are carrying goods and products from other countries for the benefit of the Sudanese people. It also mentions a ship *'with some Sudanese products such as cotton, cow hides, and dura loaded for export.'*

The text mentions the sight-seeing tours that people can make in order to *'see the colored and other beautiful creatures in the sea'*. The passage itself is written in the context where a young boy travels by train from Khartoum to visit his sister and her husband in Port Sudan. This illustrates the ties that bond people in the Sudan and encourages the vision of being one nation.

Unit 5, Lesson 5 and Lesson 6 talk about an important city in the Sudan, Al Gedaref. This city is the centre for a big agricultural area which produces two

important cash crops; sorghum and sesame. They contribute a lot to the national economy. Besides, sorghum is the main cereal used as food for the Sudanese people. The text says that the two crops *'provide our country with hard currency when they are exported'*. By the phrase, 'our country', the text includes all groups constituting the population of the Sudan. It emphasizes the fact that *'people from all over the country live in Al Gedaref'*, which reflects the peaceful co-existence of the different cultures and ethnic groups. Moreover, the text stresses the role played by the network of roads and railways in the creation of national unity and identity (see the quotation below).

'the railway line and the main road, which join the town with most parts of the country, make it easy for people to move to and from Al Gedaref whenever they wish.'

By and large, this sub-dimension is treated with great concern. Almost all of the units and lessons hint at fostering feelings of pride of and gratitude to the mother land, Sudan. Different cities which have significant roles in the history of Sudanese life are described. The notion of 'country' is disseminated in different genres. They cover a wide range of ethnicities in Sudan. The message the authors want to convey is that in spite of the diverse ethnic and cultural affiliations in Sudan, the country is wide enough to accommodate all of its sons and daughters.

- **Images specific to the homeland**

Generally, the authors present a number of important images of Sudan. The images cover different parts of the Sudan reflecting the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of the country. For instance, in Unit 4, Lesson10, "Juha on a Sudan Airways Plane", the authors have chosen the national carrier, Sudan Airways, as a setting for the demonstration of the language items be taught. Sudan Airways, one of the oldest airlines in Africa and the Middle East, is without doubt an image of the homeland. The choice of the national carrier here is really very successful. The planes with the famous logo and the distinctive colors are known worldwide and they have been flying through the skies for decades. Sudan Airways is the mobile image of the country.

- **Flora and fauna**

Learners are sure to feel proud of the numbers of the country's animal wealth. Two texts to reflect on this important sub-dimension are not enough to help the construction of national identity. For example, in Unit 2, Lesson 2, titled "At Dinder National Park", the writer describes the national park and mentions some of its features. The text talks about the park and that it is "full of beautiful green trees and grass". It also talks about the animals, which "are not in cages; they move freely among the trees". On the whole, SPINE 3 raises learners' awareness of wildlife and domesticated animals. The Sudan is famous for its wealth of livestock and wild animals. Any textbook that aims at enhancing the development of national identity should not ignore this. In fact, the national emblem of the Sudan in the past was the rhinoceros, a native of Sudan (enclosed by two palm trees). The present emblem is the secretary bird. Like the national flag and the national anthem, an emblem is one of the greatest symbols for the country.

(d) Historical dimension

● **Historic memories**

Generally, "historic memories" are presented only in two places throughout the whole textbook. These presentations are not enough to identify with this sub-dimension. An example is in Unit 3, Lesson 2, "Great Men and Women (1)", where there is a short text that talks about Al Imam Al Mahdi who devoted his life to fighting against the Turks: "He decided to drive them out and make Sudan free"; "Before he died in 1885 he freed all the Sudan from foreign rule".

● **Sacred places**

With regard to sacred places, the only example is given in Unit 4, Lesson 2, and "Across the Sea (2)". The text here talks about the two holy cities, Mecca and Madina, as well as Al Haram Al Shareef "the greatest Mosque in the world". Sacred places are referred to in only one lesson in the textbook. The authors failed to mention places in Sudan which can be considered sacred places. For example, places such Shikan, where Sudanese heroes sacrificed themselves to free their people from the Turks; British and French colonizers. These places are sacred in the sense that they remind the pupils learners of historic battles and courageous heroes of the Sudan. Only Muslim learners identify with the above-mentioned sacred places.

People's creeds and beliefs represent a special area of concern in ideology. Religion is a sensitive issue that should be tackled carefully. Omoniyi (2004) argues that religion has been established in recent times as an important variable in identity construction. The representation of the history of different religions in school textbooks minimizes the conflicts that can arise between learners in the classroom. The texts in SPINE3 were to some extent successful in presenting categories that identify students' identities, self-image, cultures, and norms.

- **Heroes and historic battles**

In a number of texts, the textbook refers to some characters as heroes. For example the text about Osman Digna in Unit 5, Lesson 3, a brief account of the life of Osman Digna is given. It shows his struggle against the Turks and the battles he fought as a soldier and a commander in the army of Al Mahadi and his Caliph. The text concludes by remarking that "Osman Digna was a real hero. He was brave, honest and adventurous". The same text presents an example of "historic battles". In Unit 3, Lesson 2, "Great Men and Women (1)", the first text talks about how Al Mahadi fought against the Turks. It mentions an important battle in the history of the Sudan. It is the first battle he fought against the Turks in Abba Island. National heroes and historical battles are mentioned in a number of lessons. Bias is not felt towards any specific group of people. Hence, all learners can identify with the heroes and battles highlighted.

(e) *Political dimension*

The two sub-dimensions of 'citizenship' and 'loyalty to the state' are reflected here in a number of ways. Lesson 11 of Unit 2 is about 'The Football Match'. This is a very important symbol for the nation, the National Football Team. In today's world football teams have turned into socio-political institutions. The great sports competitions that are held at all levels, locally, regionally and internationally stand as live examples of how people value these events. Winning or losing a football match – especially if the National Football Team is involved – has become almost equivalent to winning or losing a battle.

This text describes the Sudanese National Football Team as a very skillful team which wins matches against other teams that are not easy to defeat – such as the National

Football Team of the Cameroon. It pictures the victory the team achieved as a hard won success, ‘(...)the two teams tried hard to score a goal’. The text refers to the Sudanese National Football Team as ‘our’ team. This makes the pupils view the team as a representative of all of them. In this sense, it helps the construction of national identity.

Another national institution mentioned in this area is in Unit 4, Lesson 3 ‘The Radio’ and in Lesson 4, ‘A Radio Programme’. These two lessons speak about the national radio station in Omdurman. Omdurman Radio Station, which started in 1943 has played a great role in the creation of a homogeneous Sudanese nation. It broadcasted different programmes that covered all of the traditions, folklore and heritage of the various groups.

Being the voice of the Sudan since its establishment, Radio Omdurman has acquired the status of being one of the greatest symbols of the country and ‘Hona Omdurman’ has been a call that represents the whole of the Sudanese people. SPINE Three devotes these two texts to inculcate the love of Radio Omdurman in the hearts of the young.

The first text starts with the famous announcement :‘*This is Radio Omdurman*’. When a dispute arose about listening to Radio Omdurman or Radio Monte Carlo, it was firmly settled. ‘*Let's listen to Radio Omdurman*’. Text two makes a comparison between Radio Omdurman and Radio Dubai. The comparison shows that Radio Omdurman is not in any way less than Radio Dubai, ‘*Is Radio Dubai the same as Radio Omdurman?*’, and the answer came as, ‘*Yes it is*’.

The two texts aim at making the pupils feel proud of their national radio station. As for the rest of the sub-dimensions in this category, SPINE 3 does not at all show any bias towards one culture or language. There is no a text that favors a specific language or misrepresents any culture. A special technique is evident in SPINE 3 which resolves the conflict between national identity and ethnic identity is juxtaposition of a number of texts and illustrations in one place.

The textbook does not devote any one text to one topic that talks about one ethnicity. It uses the technique of putting two to three short texts, sometimes with illustrations to create a balance between ethnic identity, national identity and international identity.

In short, a Great concern is devoted towards the positive construction of this dimension. National institutions which foster feelings of pleasure and satisfaction among the pupils are well catered for. These institutions play great roles in the life of Sudanese people and succeed in forming a homogenous community that include all learners. The learners find good opportunities realize their duties to preserve and respect these institutions as national symbols.

Furthermore, the authors succeeded to a great extent in maintaining a good balance between national identity, ethnic identity , and international identity in the textbook. No bias is felt towards one language or one culture. The authors follow a strategy of presenting more than one short texts in one lesson to ensure variety and reflect diversity. Everyone in the classroom can see himself/herself or his/her people presented in one of these texts. The successful technique adopted by the authors help learners to identify with this dimension

Ideological analysis

The ideological analysis of SPINE3 was restricted to context, overall strategy, and meaning. The remaining elements, i.e. lexicon, syntax, format, rhetorical structures and action are not included in this section. This is because the level of language in SPINE3 does not enable the learners to express and appreciate any sort of ideology. SPINE 3 is an elementary level, if not beginner, and as such the language used in it will not be so rich as to utilize lexicons, syntax or rhetorical structures beyond this level. It should be put in mind here that SPINE3 is the third book in the series used for teaching English to basic level students. This makes it very limited in its choice of language elements and discursive structures. For the same reason, the two other books (SPINE 1and SPINE 2) have not been included in our sample.

- **Context**

In this textbook, the speakers are the authors of SPINE 3. They speak as members of a social group and address the recipients as audience. In their introduction to the series (Ismail and Helen, 1995:4, emphasis in the original), the authors state that the series is a *national* syllabus addressing itself to all Sudanese pupils and is based on the learner's environment; it contributes to the education of pupils towards their becoming good Sudanese citizens.

The authors pinpoint three important facts here:

- (a) The target group of SPINE is the entire population of Sudanese pupils.
- (b) SPINE is based on the Sudanese environment which necessarily includes all of the dimensions in the checklist.
- (c) SPINE constructs good citizenship.

- **Overall strategy**

SPINE 3 adopts an overall strategy of Positive presentation of all groups and avoids Negative presentation of any groups. The overall strategy also avoids polarity in emphasis. This is manifested in the technique of providing texts that cover a wide range of daily life in Sudan including culture and history. It also presents more than one text in each lesson to avoid any tendency towards bias.

- **Meaning**

Topics

SPINE 3 selects topics that are fair to all groups. A quick look at the titles of some of them reveals this, for example “At Dinder National Park”, “Sending a Message”, “A Telephone Call”, and so on. Most of the topics deal with themes of a neutral nature. If and when a topic calls for any type of specification, the authors make every possible effort to include as many instances as they can in order to include some aspects of national identity. For example, in Unit 3, Lesson 1, “People who Help us”, the theme of jobs is used to cover names of people from different parts of the Sudan, such as Yasir, Nasir, Adrob and Mansoor.

Local meanings and coherence

SPINE 3 tries to avoid polarization of Positive/Negative meanings for us/them. It adopts a clear manifestation of the features which are common to most, if not all, of the Sudanese people. For example, in Unit 2, Lesson 2, “At Dinder National Park”, the writers present the park as a national institution. They give explicit details about it and the different features which makes it identifiable by all of the learners.

This textbook is very precise in presenting the different aspects of national identity. It uses specific examples from the history, geography and culture of Sudanese people. Examples are topics about cities in Sudan (such as Gedarif and Port Sudan), framing in Shendi and Industry in Al-hasahessa. The authors also write about different activities and games, such as wrestling in the Nuba Mountains and everyday activities that include people from different parts of the Sudan, for example Unit 5, Lesson 8, which refers to Lima, Karlo and Deng from the south, as well as Sami and Haajir from other parts of the country.

Conclusion

A Critical Ideological Analysis (CIA) of SPINE 3 revealed the properties of discourse that signal the opinions, perspectives, position, interests ,etc., of the dominant group. It showed that texts can make a significant change to learners’ knowledge. This is as Van Dijk (van Dijk, 2006) puts it, texts affect learners’ beliefs, attitudes and values, actions, social relations, and the material world. Taking into account the fact that interpretation is a complex process, the CIA that has been carried out in the present study not only depends on what is explicit in a text, but also on what is implicit or what is assumed (Fairclough, 1995). The Analysis showed that the texts did not give voice to those who have been traditionally silenced or marginalized. Indigenous languages, others’ cultures, and minority groups of people are silenced, marginalized and not catered for in the textbook. This is done through language which plays an important role in establishing and maintaining ideologies. In SPINE 3 language creates an ideology that guides the way learners think by creating and reinforcing certain value systems. It also shows the role of discourse in shaping the beliefs and behaviors of the students. In short, language in SPINE 3 has the power to establish certain ideologies as common sense and norms. In other words, SPINE 3 enhances the mainstream dominant Arabic Islamic identity among the pupils and completely ignores the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds they belong to.

The study, therefore , recommends that indigenous languages, diverse cultures and ethnic groups in the Sudan should be reflected on the schools textbooks at least at the basic level of education. Those who are keen about their ethnic group, cultures and

languages should find equal opportunities in life to enact and negotiate their identities alongside with the national identity. By doing so, decision makers can set the floor for political, economic and social stability in a unified prosperous Sudan.

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Appendix (1): SPINE 3

Aspects	National Identity			Ethnic Identity		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Dimensions						
1. Psychological dimension:						
• internal or external enemy	✓				✓	
• belief in common ancestry			✓			✓
2. Cultural dimension:						
• shared values	✓				✓	
• beliefs	✓				✓	
• symbols	✓				✓	
• traditions	✓				✓	
• Food	✓				✓	
• Clothes	✓				✓	
• Names of people	✓				✓	
3. Territorial dimension:						

• the country	✓				✓	
• images specific to the homeland	✓				✓	
• flora and fauna	✓				✓	
4. Historical dimension:						
• historic memories	✓				✓	
• sacred places		✓			✓	
• Heroes	✓				✓	
• Historical battles	✓				✓	
5. Political dimension:						
• citizenship	✓				✓	
• loyalty to the state	✓				✓	
• promotion of a specific 'national' culture				✓		✓
• promotion of a specific 'official' language			✓			✓
• indigenous languages				✓		✓
total	16	1		4	1	16
						4