

## A Critical Visual Analysis of Gender Representation of ELT Materials from a Multimodal Perspective

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### Abstract

This content analysis study, employing a multimodal perspective and critical visual analysis, set out to analyze gender representations in Top Notch series, one of the highly used ELT textbooks in Iran. For this purpose, six images were selected from these series and analyzed in terms of 'representational', 'interactive' and 'compositional' modes of meanings. The result indicated that there are no stereotypical predictions of any genders, and that both female and male social actors were represented on an equal footing. The corollary of this critical image analysis was the implications which are of vital importance for material developers as well as those responsible for choosing language teaching in general and ELT materials in particular.

**Keywords:** critical visual analysis, ELT materials, gender representation, multimodal perspective

## Introduction

Image as a comprehensive mode of contemporary communication gives us a kind of representation of reality being “as multiply interpretable as reality itself” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.137). According to Van Leeuwen, if the reality in visual representation can be seen from different perspectives resulting in different interpretations, there will be a must in the deep analysis of this kind of representation. This kind of analysis becomes more significant when it aims at providing the readers with critical interpretations like those made in critical discourse analyses. Approving that every communicative/discursive practice is ideological in nature, critical studies attempt to disclose those ideologies and in this way provide the audiences with a critical awareness.

Textbooks are universal part of teaching (Taki & Shahbazi, 2012) that are produced by numerous aid projects in different countries every year. Textbooks provide structured framework to study and learn a language in a systematic way. Sheldon (1988) observed that textbooks are not only at the heart of any ELT program but also offer considerable advantages when they are being used in the SL/EFL classroom. Textbooks are one of the means employed as a manipulative instrument for power relations, in order to form opinions and perspectives of learners.

Gender is one of the sociocultural issues shaped by textbooks, in general, and ELT materials, in particular. In addition, most investigated ELT textbooks showed that gender is always presented in a biased way (Farooq, 1999). Therefore, ELT textbooks especially those disseminated in large scales and used by people with different background knowledge and cultural backgrounds, have the potential to inject some type of ideology. The ideological potentiality of the discursive features of these materials has been under investigation by many researchers in the field, but what has remained untouched is the critical image analysis of these materials (e.g. Tahririan & Sadri, 2013; Taki & Shahbazi, 2012).

Images portray the outside world and provide learners with more authentic situations; besides, learners' perspectives of target language speakers, their culture, society, lifestyle, and even physical features will be directly affected by the way images in EFL textbooks represent them (Tahririan & Sadri, 2013). Nevertheless, they may wittingly or unwittingly expose learners to specific

ideologies since as van Dijk (1995) noticeably asserts, ideologies can be conveyed not only by the verbal mode, but also by the non-verbal semiotic modes such as pictures and movies.

In fact, what is realized in the visuals is not an innocent reproduction of the reality but is inspired by the interests of the social institutions (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Likewise, it is argued that photographs are chosen from among an infinite number of possible sights; hence, they mirror the way the photographer sees the world (Berger, 1972). And so, in the modern world, which is highly visualized, ignoring the multimodal analysis of teaching materials, especially those employed in many countries, is not justifiable. However, it should be explained how images in English language teaching material in EFL/ESL contexts can be applied ideologically.

Meaning-making processes lie at the heart of each theory of communicative and media analysis and the story about critical visual analysis is not an exception. Though implicitly, the drawbacks of some of the so-called pure theories of communication and language analysis such as linguistics and pragmatics have been discussed before. The theory which tries to question the validity and authenticity of these theories is social semiotics. The focus of social semiotic theory is on finding meaning in all representational modes (Kress, 2010). This theory assumes that “meaning arises in social environments and social interactions”; consequently, it can be concluded that society is “...the source, the origin and the generator of meaning” (p. 54).

Generally, media has two main aspects: forms and content, and according to Kress (2007), in the present time, drawing a boundary between these two aspects is not easy at all. Kress claims that the mere discursive (content) analysis of media does not suffice and to have a comprehensive analysis the consideration of forms and formats is necessary. Kress believes that in the current state, in which media contents tend to be localized, forms and formats tend to advertise global norms and in this respect media cannot be considered as neutral tools.

What Kress has put forward is related to the genres of global media that raises the question of whether teaching methodologies and their relevant materials (both visually and verbally) can be considered as global media infiltrated with institutional ideologies (Kress, 2007). To find the answer to such a question, we have to refer to the conception of methods.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) has comprehensively discussed this point. Criticizing the conception of methods, he states that the conception and construction of methods have been largely guided by a one-size-fits-all, cookie-cutter approach that assumes a common clientele with common goals. Without admitting such a phenomenon, methods have been preoccupied with their possible global reach; and, hence, they lack an essential local touch. Kumaravadivelu (2006) talks about this locality in terms of learners' identity and, as can be drawn from the above statement; these identities are subject to a global culture resulting in a kind of cultural imperialism.

Ideologies are, in fact, "belief systems ... socially shared by all members of a collectivity of social actors" (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 112). These belief systems reflect interests, values, identity, activities and goals of members of a social group (Van Dijk, 2006). Van Dijk (2006, p. 117) asserts that ideologies are not necessarily negative, referring to such ideologies as racist versus antiracist, communist versus anticommunist to illustrate this point: that is while some ideologies serve to "legitimate domination", some others "articulate resistance".

Language is ideological in nature and this fact has been elaborated and analyzed sufficiently in the works of Kumaravadivelu (2003, 2006), Thompson (1990), Foucault (1972), and Bourdieu (1991). Besides, the concept of ideology in English language teaching has been examined by Canagarajah (1999), Pennycook, (1998), Phillipson (1992), and Ricento (2000). Meticulously analyzing the concept of method, Pennycook (1989) incisively suggests that "the concept reflects a particular view of the world and is articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships" (pp. 589-590).

To sum up, it can be claimed that methods of English language teaching use educational materials which are (un)deliberately ideological in nature. Nowadays the abundant presence of images and visual effects in EFL or ESL materials is so obvious for everyone dealing with them. While a majority of critical discourse analysts have examined the linguistic features of these materials, the critical visual analysis is an area in dire need of attention.

Having engaged with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual social semiotics, either exclusively or in conjunction with other frameworks, researchers have revealed how different visual factors manipulate meaning in the visual texts of different magazines, newspapers and advertisements (e.g.,

Dominguez, 2003; Godeo, 2009; MartínezLirola, 2010; Bezemer and Kress ,2009; Chen, 2010 & Manolache, 2010). However, very few studies have investigated gender representation in the images of ELT materials (e.g., Kordjazi, 2012) and textbooks (e.g., Tahririan & Sadri, 2013) based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual social semiotics.

The present study attempted to analyze the images included in an EFL/ESL series. Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) framework developed in their comprehensive book, *Reading Images*, regarding the visual analysis has been adopted for the purpose of the study. This model looks at images from three different and at the same time interrelated perspectives (i.e., representational, interactional, and compositional, which will be discussed below) which, at the end, make the readers aware of visual features included in each image. Finally, the results of the study will be analyzed according to an appropriate social theory. The applied social theory which is mainly concerned with social actors and their role in the society gives a critical color to the findings of visual analysis.

### **Representational, Interactional, and Compositional Meaning in Visual Resources**

To describe, explain, and analyze semiotic resources, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996/2006) take a functionalist approach in the sense that they see visual resources as tools for performing special kinds of semiotic work (Jewitt & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Such a functionalist approach is directly under the influence of Halliday's (1978) concept of "metafunctions" of language: 'ideational', 'interpersonal', and 'textual' (Tahririan & Sadri, 2013). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) have adopted the same concept while they change the terminology to 'representational', 'interactional', and 'compositional', respectively instead, so as to adapt it to a visual perspective. To clarify the exact meaning of the three kinds of metafunctions, they will be discussed under three separate headings of representational meaning, interactional meaning, and compositional meaning.

#### **Representational Meaning**

Like linguistic structures, visual structures and the visual processes within them are associated with participant roles and with specific circumstances that are divided into three kinds being Locative Circumstances (setting), Circumstances of Means, and Circumstance of Accompaniment. The task of

locative circumstances is relating other participants (situated in the background) to the specific participants (situated in the foreground). Circumstances of means refer to “the tools used in action processes” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, p. 56). Thus, the analysis of the intersemiotic relationship between visual and verbal modes in representational terms needs the identification of the represented participants whether animate or inanimate, the processes or the activity described the attributes or the qualities of the participants and, finally, the circumstances in which the action is being developed (Unsworth & Wheeler, 2002). When participants are connected by vectors of motion (actional) or by eyelines (reactional), as in narrative images, they are represented as doing something to or for one another. These narrative patterns, realized by specific visual techniques, serve to present unfolding actions and events, processes of change and transitory spatial arrangements (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006/1996). Contrary to the narrative representation, conceptual representation represents participants in terms of essence which is more general and stable. The essence of participants can refer to what they mean, of what categories or components they are composed, and how their being is represented, to put it differently, classificational, analytical and symbolic processes are different categories of conceptual processes.

Van Leeuwen (1996/2006) assigned three main categories to discuss the conceptual structures of images: According to this categorization, one kind of conceptual pattern is the classification structure. Referring to the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), Jewitt and Oyama (2001) suggested that “classification structures bring different people, places or things together in one picture, distributing them symmetrically across the picture space to show that they have something in common, that they belong to the same class” (p. 143). Another conceptual pattern is concerned with the definition of meaning or identity of the participants. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) refer to this pattern as ‘symbolic structures’ or ‘symbolic attributes’. In symbolic structures the meaning and identity of the participants (carriers) are established by other participants (symbolic attributes). These attributes can be recognized when they become salient in the representation. Other characteristics making participants salient are the gestures which are pointed out, looking out of a place in the whole, and associating conventional with symbolic values.

The third kind of conceptual structures is analytic structure. In this type of structuring, participants are related to each other in terms of a part-whole structure. The carrier (the whole) and any number of possessive attributes (the parts) are always the key participants in this pattern (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

### **Interactive Meaning**

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), this dimension deals with the (imaginary) relationship between the represented participants and the interactive participants (the image producer and the viewers) and is realized by the gaze, size of the frame, perspective, and horizontal and vertical angle. Here the kinds of connection between viewers and elements involved in an image become significant. The depicted image interacts with the viewers and suggests them attitudes for the interpretation of the image. 'Distance', 'contact', and 'point of view' play the key roles for the recognition of interactive meanings.

*Distance:* Kress and Van Leeuwen, (2006) used the 'size of frame' in choosing shots of images. 'Close-up', 'medium shot', and 'long shot' frames convey an intimate and personal relationship, a social relationship, and an impersonal relationship, respectively. Of course, these types of 'shotting' should be interpreted based on some other contextual factors; however, what has been suggested regarding their meaning is approximately correct in most situations (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

*Contact:* People in pictures look at viewers in two ways: they may look directly at the viewer; consequently, they usually 'demand' something or they may look at other sides and in this way they usually 'offer' something. In each of these cases the facial expressions and gestures determine what people in pictures demand or offer (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

*Point of view:* this semiotic resource indicates different types of interactive meanings. When people in a picture are shown by a frontal angle, there is the probability of involvement with viewers, while the application of vertical angles suggests some kind of detachment with viewers.

### **Compositional Meaning**

In the two previous dimensions of visual social semiotics, the relations among the participants of an image, the representational meaning, and also the more complex relations of the elements in an image and the viewer (i.e., interactive meaning) were considered. However, a holistic analysis of any



visual media demands a third element to bring the representational and interactive meanings together. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) name this element 'compositional meaning' of an image. Compositional meaning deals with how the representational and interactive elements are made to connect to each other and how they are connected to make up a meaningful whole. Three interrelated systems are involved in the consideration of compositional meanings which are information value, salience, and framing, respectively. Different zones of an image have different informational values: while right is the area of the new, left is the zone of the already known information with which the viewer is supposed to be already familiar; while the top section shows the ideal information, the bottom section is the place of the real information; while the center is the place of the core, the margin is the zone of dependent parts. Salience refers to such factors as size, color contrasts, and placement in the visual field of pictorial elements which are intended to attract the viewers' attention. And finally, framing can connect or disconnect the represented participants by concrete framelines, white space between elements, and dividing lines produced by means of other devices.

Bearing in mind the related literature, especially with regard to the special role played by visual elements included in ELT materials, the analysis of ELT materials from the critical visual social semiotic perspective is a gap which demands more attention. In this regard, through concentration on one of the most widespread ELT materials-Top Notch Series- the study aimed to find the answer to the following questions:

1. How much the analytical framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) is applicable to the existing images being related to conversation models of Top Notch series?
2. How gender is represented regarding the existence of any ideological orientation in images under study?

## **Method**

### **Material**

The photographs for data analysis were chosen from Top Notch series of different proficiency levels. Indeed, there is an assumption that the books



merited close scrutiny in terms of gender representation. Thus, all the textbooks of this series--totally six textbooks—were analyzed and from each textbook three images were selected. From among 18 images being purposefully selected to fulfill the first objective of the study, six images were chosen randomly so as to avoid the interference of any subjective point of view (see Appendix).

### **Procedure**

Visual social semiotics deals with the potential meanings of semiotic resources (Van Leeuwen, 2005). So, describing the existing resources in Van Leeuwen's sense, which includes, for instance, frames and composition of images, has of great significance in any kind of semiotic analysis. In the current study, these resources were selected according to what Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) have included in their descriptive model of visual social semiotic analysis.

The entire selected images were chosen from conversation sections. The reason which caused the researchers to select images from these sections is that the conversation models have the capacity of modeling the authentic situations in which a given conversation can take place. Besides, the authors, Saslow, Ascher and Ruzicka (2006) of the series in the Teacher's edition and lesson planner guidebooks have claimed that the photos placed besides each conversation section support meaning and can be considered as stimulus for additional oral work. The gender representation either in images depicting only one gender, either men or women, or in images including both genders were compared in order to avoid heterogeneity of the sample and to make comparison possible. The initial analysis unveiled that most of the categories of the framework were appropriate and relevant to the images which involved both genders. Also, only images encompassing both genders were used and images including one single gender were excluded. As such, out of 18 images, six images selected through random sampling provided the necessary data for the present study.

It was also necessary to explain how potential meanings of the selected resources were explained and employed in the particular domain preferred by the analysts. Finally, the obtained results were analyzed according to the

appropriate social theories (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001), and new semiotic resources or new uses of the existing resources were discovered.

In the current study, images were associated to gender stereotyping, hence, there would be reference to social theories as well as the related studies of Goffman (1979). The main reason for which the Goffman's theory of gender advertisement (1979) has been applied to complement the result of the application of Kress and Van Leeuwen framework (2006) into the images under consideration was that this theory has been applied and confirmed widely by the researchers whose primary purpose has been conducting investigations into gender stereotyping (Belknap & Leonard, 1990; Kang, 1997). In order to have a fuller picture of Goffman's (1979) theory, the identified dimensions of this theory will be employed.

In order to categorize his advertisements, Goffman utilized a coding strategy that arranged the advertisements into six dimensions: The first dimension, *Relative size*, indicates that men tend to be represented larger than women in size. Of course, Goffman believes that when the case is the reverse, that is, women have been represented larger than men; they are depicted as having high social status. The second dimension, *feminine touch*, describes the phenomena of women who lightly or delicately touch objects or their own body parts in an unnatural way. The third dimension, *function ranking*, was created after Goffman noted the continued presence of women as subordinate to men within the family structure, the workforce, and nearly any other social arrangement. The fourth dimension, *the family*, is where its members are represented through special 'bonds'. As such mother-daughter bond on the one hand and that of father-son on the other hand tend to be differently in their distance to the viewers. According to this proposition father-son relationship tends to be represented as being distant from the viewers out of image space and also less emotionally represented by creating the space between the represented participants. The fifth dimension, the *ritualization of subordination*, in which women adopt postures such as bashful arm or knee bends or lying down in order to indicate submission to men's authority and control. The sixth dimension, *licensed withdrawal*, describes women in advertisements who

appear disoriented and psychologically removed from a social situation (Goffman, 1979).

### **Design**

This study was designed within the framework of qualitative research methodology of content analysis. As already touched upon, the analytical framework adopted in the current study is the model raised and developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996/2006). Based on this model, the selected images in the Top Notch series were analyzed from the 'representational', 'interactional', and 'compositional' perspectives.

## **Results**

### **The Realization of Representational Meaning**

From a representational point of view, in most of the images both narrative and conceptual structures were employed in the representation of the existing participants. In narrative structures, both actional and reactional processes were present. Approximately in all cases both actional and reactional processes were maintained by both represented participants, hence, the presence of bidirectional transactional structures. From among the three Circumstances mentioned in the adopted analytical framework, the presence of Locative Circumstance and Circumstances of means had been strategically used and, as a result, the represented participants were to some possible extent identified through the location and means they were attributed to, hence, the ideological application of these circumstances. While the predominance of narrative structures was tangibly observable, some of the conceptual structures were recognizable in the images. From among classificational, analytical, and symbolic patterns of conceptual representation, the first two ones were detected and analyzed. The analysis of both analytical and symbolic patterns of the images revealed that conceptual elements can be employed to identify the represented participants, at least at face value, with specific characteristics.

### **The Realization of Interactive Meaning**

Contact, social distance, and point of view are the three elements of interactive images through which imaginary relationships can be held between represented participants in an image frame and the viewers out of it. In this study, all these

three elements were found and analyzed. The analysis of the eye contacts of the represented participants with the viewers indicated that the targets of the represented participants were in the image, hence lacking any demand picture. In the majority of the cases, the two represented participants in an image were looking at each other and in this way the image implied that a conversation demands a 'face-to-face' interaction. The second element being analyzed from an interactive perspective was social distance. The employed 'shot'—the criterion based on which the existing social distance between the represented participants and viewers is measured—in most of the images was the 'medium long shot'. In this way, it can be inferred that the learners are supposed, to a possible extent, to maintain a personal relationship with the represented participants. The analysis of the point of view, the third interactive element in an image, keeping with the last two elements, showed that the human participants in the images were mainly depicted from the oblique angle, confirming the lack of direct interaction between the represented participants and the interactive ones (learners). As being alluded to in the previous chapter, although none of the interactive elements showed any kind of direct interactive relationship between the represented and interactive participants, the main purpose of incorporating these images has been complementing written conversation with pictorial representation of the participants with their natural eye contact, social distance, and point of view maintained while they are talking to each other.

### **The Realization of Compositional Meaning**

Information value, framing, and salience, the three compositional elements regarded in the Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) framework, were clearly found and analyzed in the images under consideration. The analysis of the placement of the represented participants in the image space betrayed that, in the majority of cases, the participants were placed in the image frame based on their especial roles and status. For example, in the Image 6 (see Appendix) while the man as the patient had been placed on the left, hence, as the Given, the woman being supposed to give him suggestion and even sympathy was placed on the right side of the image frame, hence, indicating the New and the one who provided the patient with what he did not know. The analysis of the way through which

the represented participants were framed in the images indicated that in spite of the relationship between the human participants in the images, these participants, with regard to the different roles, were separated from each other through some explicit and/or implicit frame lines. Finally, what was drawn from the analysis of the ways through which some participants, both human and non-human, become salient in the images is that whatever made salient in the images was of ideological significance. This issue will be elaborated in details in the following paragraphs.

### **Ideological Representation of Social Actors**

Social semiotics is not a 'pure' theory, not a self-contained field (Van Leeuwen, 2005). The mere application of a descriptive social semiotic framework cannot be conclusive on its own; consequently, to achieve a full interpretation, there should be a reference to the relevant social theories. As such, in this study, the Goffman's theory of gender advertisement (1979) as a tool for use in critical research, has been used to complement the use of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotics.

It is worth mentioning that most of the categories of the three Meanings could be and were actually utilized in the sample photographs except a few categories, and that generally, all aspects and categories of the framework can contribute equally well to determining ideologies. Though, in terms of gender representation, some of the categories were more close-fitting while others did not indicate any precise and explicit pattern of ideological representations.

The 'Size' of the represented participants is one of the issues being addressed by Goffman (1979) in his theory. Referring to the result gained by the application of Kress and Van Leewen's (2006) framework, no difference was found in the size of the represented participants. The analysis of the size of the represented participants was done by analyzing the conceptual representation and modality of the images. The dimension of 'Feminine touch', in the Goffman's theory, deals with the way females touch their surroundings. In this regard, no especial case was detected confirming the light touching of women and the grasping gesture of men. In other words, both participants in the images have been depicted in a natural way in which two people are supposed

to maintain a face-to-face interaction. Such a finding has been achieved through the action analysis present in the representational structures of the images.

‘Function ranking’ is another dimension of the said theory based on which women are often represented as passive participants and men as active ones. By referring to the representational meanings of the images, it can be observed that both participants are approximately equally active, providing that in the image an action was detected.

According to the dimension of ‘the family’ in the Goffman’s theory (1979), there is special father-son and mother-daughter representation in which the former relationship is usually represented as being spatially more distant from the viewers. In the current study, there is not any image in which any kind of the two said relationships is observable. In other words, the relationship of the represented participants is mostly that of existing between people who do not belong to the same family. Goffman in the dimension of ‘the ritualization of subordination’ refers to the ways women tend to be literally or figuratively represented as being lower than men in terms of position. In this study, in the majority of cases, women are represented on an equal footing with men. This finding could be justified through the analysis of conceptual and compositional representations of the represented participants. In the majority of cases both male and female participants are represented in standing position while women tended to be situated in the right side of the images, hence, representing as the New.

The last dimension of the Goffman’s theory (1979) deals with the ‘symbolic withdrawal’ of women from the scene around them. In line with Goffman, such a kind of representation results from the protective presence of females. In the present study, some cases were found, for instance, in Image 4 (see Appendix), in which women have been ideologically separated from the men; however, such a kind of demarcation is done for the purposes other than representing the males as the supporter and the females as the supported.

Also, there are some facts which cannot be analyzed directly by referring to this dimensions. The study dealt with the fact that especial roles have been attributed to the women in the images under consideration. During the conceptual analysis of the images, it was observed that women have been

represented more formal than the men. This formality can be realized more in the ways women have been dressed and when women are represented out of their professional sites, for instance, in a restaurant as a waitress. Besides formality, the ways through which some of the items became salient in the images were strategically employed. In this respect, these items, such as dressing style, were eye catching and could highlight the professional identity of the represented participants.

### **Discussion**

In the present study, six images were chosen randomly so as to avoid the interference of any subjective point of view with the result of the study in relation to finding ideological pitfalls. The present researchers tried to investigate the existence of a number of dimensions of the Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) framework in the existing images related to conversation models of Top Notch series, and attempted to explore the realization of any ideological orientation in these images based on Goffman's (1979) theory of gender representation. As the data analysis revealed, regarding the questions, it can be said that, with some difference in degree, all the three metafunctional dimensions of meaning making, namely, representational, interactive, and compositional, which are probable to be found in an image, were clearly detected in the images under the analysis. To put it briefly, the findings confirmed that, at representational level, the images demonstrated the participants in factual and familiar ways. With regard to the interactive meanings determined in terms of social distance and perspective, the images brought forward messages of equality and objectivity. At the compositional level, the status of the images manifested salience over the texts accompanying them because they communicate informative/illustrative functions as they provide contextual cues for subsequent activities and tasks. According to Jewitt and Oyama (2001), visual semiotic frameworks, due to their descriptive nature, cannot determine whether a given representation accompanies any particular ideological orientations. To compensate for this gap, in this study, Goffman's (1979) theory of gender representation was also employed and discussed. Finally, based on the achieved results, it was concluded that there are no



stereotypical predictions of any genders, and both female and male social actors were represented on an equal footing.

While so many academics, especially in the field of ELT, think of language as the most and the sole perfect mode of communication, the current study, in line with a number of studies having been conducted to date, tried to show the importance of imagery aspect of ELT materials as a perfect means of communication (e.g., Giaschi, 2000; Tahririan & Sadri, 2013; Taki & Shahbazi, 2012). Chen (2009) studied the multimodality of EFL textbooks in China focusing on the interpersonal meaning, which can be claimed to have more affinity with the present study considering its adopted approach. The study shows the influential role of images in realizing attitudinal meanings. And finally, the amount of emphasis put on the social context determines the reality of multimodal texts.

With regard to the above analysis, it can be concluded that a comprehensive theory being capable of dealing with the visual aspects of ELT materials distributed in EFL/ESL contexts should be considered. This study can have significant implications for all the groups involved in the process of English language teaching and learning in EFL/ESL contexts including textbook designers, textbook critics, material developers, and teachers. material developers, for instance, in designing multimodal texts incorporating visual mode of communication because they may, intentionally or unintentionally, develop instructional materials which impose negative ideologies on learners. Accordingly, the findings of the study may be used as hints helping material developers avoid such drawbacks so that they can hopefully develop instructional materials which provide knowledge in a unbiased and neutral way. Additionally, the syllabus designers and materials/textbook writers can consider selecting those images that are in direct relation to the content of the textbook that subsequently has the implications which are of vital importance for those responsible for selecting LT in general and ELT materials in particular. When images are analyzed critically and, as a result, the detailed elements of images- by which images can bring about special feeling in the audience- become clear, then, it can give some functional hints to material developers so that they can include images in the material which have the least negative ideological orientation.

In addition, teachers should be aware of the representational, compositional and interactive functions which can be played by modes other than language, especially by images whose substantial metafunctional role have been confirmed. Besides their crucial roles in transferring the assumed knowledge, images can be considered as a fully-fledged instrument in transferring positive/negative ideologies. Thus, images are of significant role in the processes of learning and teaching and, as a result, their presence should not be taken as merely decorative.

Inspired by the findings of the present research, as a final point, further research is warranted in the following areas. One can recommend that consideration of a broader and larger sample of images might result in different interpretations. The other aspect which can give a new direction to the field is the in-depth analysis of the cognitive resources of learners in ELF/ESL context which are often activated when these learners encounter a visual phenomenon or other semiotic resources. Such a study can shed light on the existing discrepancy of the learners' cognitive resources and the semiotic resources being represented to them.

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## Appendix

### Adopted Images from Top Notch Series



### **Biodata**

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