

Developing An Evaluation Checklist for Identity in ESOL Textbooks

by

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ABSTRACT

Language Textbooks often play a major role in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classrooms, not only to provide information but also to help students construct their identities. Several studies showed that identity and language learning are inseparable, due to the simple fact that every learner has his/her own identity aspects like race, gender, social class, and speaker status (i.e., native speaker vs. non-native speaker of the target language). These aspects should be acknowledged because providing the students with limited identity options might cause the students to resist learning the language or be less invested in this practice (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

However, there is limited support for teachers who wish to examine identity in ESOL textbooks. Several scholars attempted to evaluate the range of identity options offered in ESOL textbooks, but they all used either Critical Discourse Analysis or Content Analysis which can be effective; however, these procedures require training and can take a long time, so they may not be practical for teachers. This suggests that there is a need for a less complicated evaluation tool that can be easily used by teachers.

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a teacher-friendly identity-focused checklist for ESOL textbooks, and the thesis is guided by the following questions: (a) what would an evaluation checklist for identity in ESOL textbooks look like?; (b) what can this checklist reveal about ESOL textbooks? The purpose of this thesis was achieved by developing a qualitative checklist that covers, race, gender, social class, and speaker status, and demonstrating how to use it on a collection of five adult ESOL textbooks. The checklist revealed similarities and differences between the textbooks, including important

shortcomings, and that kind of information can be useful for the teacher to make decisions about the textbook he/she uses.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, my siblings, and my wife.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are one of the main tools in English-for-speakers-of-other-languages (ESOL) classrooms. According to Richards (2001), who has authored some of the most successful ESOL textbooks and is an authority on language teaching materials development, textbooks can be used as the main source of knowledge inside the classroom and by the students on their own outside the classroom. After analyzing an English textbook that is used globally, Zohrabi, Sabouri, and Kheradmand (2014) noted that depending on the quality of its contents, textbooks can discourage or promote the learners. The authors also added that textbooks also provide the learners with consistency and provide support for the teachers and learners.

Textbooks are used in the ESOL classroom for different reasons. After teaching English as a foreign language in Germany, O'Neil (1982), noted that the school he taught in didn't think it was a good idea to use textbooks as teaching materials in the classroom. He then provided four reasons why textbooks are essential in language classrooms. First, textbooks meet the students' needs. He thinks that the textbooks he brought to class provided him and his students with a functional and grammatical framework that they can use, for example, his students needed to learn how to make requests, and this need was fulfilled by the textbook. Second, textbooks can be a source for the students to use outside the classroom and in future learning. He noted that students can use the textbooks to catch up if they missed a class or prepare for the next lesson. Third, textbooks are well presented at a good cost. He noted that textbooks are organized, easy to use, and at an affordable price. Fourth, finally, textbooks can be modified by the teacher to meet the

students' needs. He noted that textbooks provided him with the freedom to change and modify its content to be more suitable for his class, for instance, the textbook provided the objectives of the unit, and O'Neil brought extra materials that can achieve the objectives and are more suitable to his students.

Regarding ESOL textbooks, teacher-friendly evaluation tools and procedures are needed for a variety of reasons. The process of textbook selection for a teacher can be very complicated because some publishers might focus more on economic profits than the quality of the textbooks. A solution was suggested by another well-known ESOL materials developer and expert in second language education, David Nunan (1992), who noted that using systematic evaluation methods that will help make sure of the consistency between the students' needs, the students' interests and the materials under evaluation. Nunan also added that the evaluation will help make sure that the materials are in parallel with the institutional beliefs and nature of language learning. After reviewing several ESOL textbook evaluation studies, Ahmadi and Derakhshan (2016), suggested that evaluating textbooks allows the teachers, material developers, administrators, and supervisors to judge the textbook and choose the appropriate materials for the classroom. Additionally, after creating one of the most-used ESOL textbook evaluation checklists, Sheldon (1988), noted that the evaluation is needed for two reasons. First, it helps the teachers and program developers to decide when choosing the appropriate textbook for a particular course. Second, it helps to show the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook which in turn makes the teachers more familiar with the textbooks they use.

Language textbooks evaluation has been defined by multiple leading scholars in the field of language material development. A highly cited definition was provided by McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara (2013) as they defined textbook evaluation as the “procedure that involves measuring the value (or potential value) of a set of learning materials” (p. 50), and they suggested that, there are two types of evaluation, internal and external evaluation. McDonough and colleagues defined external evaluation as a summary of the organization of the textbook, and this can be done by looking at the statements made by the authors and looking at the table of contents. On the other hand, McDonough and colleagues defined internal evaluation as the in-depth analysis of the content of the textbook for example analysis of the activities and texts that make up the book's chapters. Furthermore, McDonough and colleagues also suggested that by following this two-phase model, the evaluator can compare between the claims of the authors and the contents of the textbook which will make the evaluation easier.

Another definition was offered by Cunningsworth (1995), who suggested that textbooks can be evaluated in three different stages, pre-use, in-use, and post-use. Pre-use evaluation refers to analyzing the textbook before using or getting to experience it. This evaluation helps predict the potential of the materials, for instance, a teacher might evaluate a textbook before using it in the classroom to see if it includes a pronunciation activity that his students need. In-use evaluation refers to analyzing the textbook while using it, to decide whether to keep using it or replace it if possible. Post-use evaluation refers to reflecting on the textbook after using it and determining its strengths and weaknesses to decide to use it or not in the future. Cunningsworth argued that the most popular and difficult stage of evaluation is the pre-use evaluation. That is because the

person evaluating the textbook will typically have no previous knowledge of it and its content.

ESOL textbook evaluation can be done using various approaches that differ in complexity. For example, textbooks can be evaluated by simply looking through their content, for instance, by reading the table of contents and skimming through the chapters to get an impression of a particular characteristic of the book, like how logically the chapters are sequenced, or how clear and colorful the graphics are. To carry out a deeper analysis some scholars have used more in-depth approaches like Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which focuses on the connections that appear between the text, structure and the cultural and social processes (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004; Alimorad, 2014), for example, Shardakova & Pavlenko (2004) used CDA to analyze two Russian textbooks from an identity perspective. For example, they looked at the textbooks to see what races, genders, and social classes that are included. This method, however, is relatively complicated and requires training which is one of the reasons why scholars have recommended and developed another approach: the use of textbook evaluation checklists that include relevant criteria to help the teachers with the evaluation process and that can be relatively simple to use (Cunningsworth, 1995; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Litz, 2005). The use of a textbook evaluation checklist is an approach worth considering because the checklist can be systematic by organizing the criteria so the evaluator can go through them one by one, and the checklist can also cover all the relevant areas for evaluation, for instance, the physical quality, or the layout of the textbook (Cunningsworth, 1995). Also, depending on their design, textbook evaluation checklists may be relatively easy and efficient to use.

There are different types of ESOL textbook evaluation checklists. After reviewing checklists developed from the 1970s to 2008, Mukundan, Hajimohammadi, and Nimehchisalem (2011), revealed that checklists can be qualitative or quantitative, and checklists of both types are capable of an in-depth analysis of textbooks. Quantitative checklists can provide an objective evaluation of the textbooks by using a Likert Scale (i.e., the textbook is compatible to the age of the learners, agree or disagree), while qualitative checklists use open-ended questions to gather subjective information from the textbook. An example of an open-ended question is “what visual material does the book contain and is it actually integrated into the text?” from the checklist of McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara (2013).

An evaluation checklist can highlight various characteristics of an ESOL textbook. This can be seen in various well-known checklists (Cunningsworth, 1995; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Litz, 2005). The characteristics can include what language skills are included (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening), and how the textbook has been laid out (e.g., organization, sequence of topics). However, in discussions of language textbook quality, one feature that has received growing attention is related to identity: Scholars like Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) have stressed that to be effective, language textbooks must provide students with a wide range of identity options, for example, presenting a variety of people who reflect various races, classes, and genders.

Identity has been defined in multiple ways in scholarly work on second language acquisition (SLA). A highly cited definition was presented by Norton (2012). She defined identity as “the ways in which language learners understand their relationship to the

social world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the learner understands possibilities for the future” (P.3). An example was provided by Norton (2000a) about a language learner named Eva “it was only over time that Eva’s conception of herself as an immigrant with no right to speak changed to a conception of herself as a multicultural citizen with the power to impose reception.” (P.128).

Identity is important in ESOL textbooks because insufficient attention to identity can lead to problems with learner *investment*. Norton (2000a) defined Investment as the desire that the language learner has to learn or practice the language in particular contexts. Investment is influenced by identity. Furthermore, Norton (2000a) suggested that a language learner can still be motivated but less invested in practicing the language in the classroom if he/she feels that there is bias against any aspect of his/ her identity, for example, his/her gender, class, race, or age. From this perspective, it is worthwhile for teachers to consider how their ESOL textbooks address identity. Additionally, Norton and Toohey (2011) suggested that if the language classroom doesn’t offer a range of identity options to the students, it will cause the students to resist learning the target language. This can also be the result of problematic practices from the teachers, like providing a too-narrow range of identity options, which often makes the learners resist that and chase after more creative options.

In summary, given the value of ESOL textbooks, the need for teacher-friendly textbook evaluation tools, and the importance of learner identity in ESOL education, there is a need for a teacher-friendly identity focused checklist for ESOL textbooks. To that end, the purpose of this study is to synthesize important and complicated scholarly work and present it in a way that can be helpful to teachers by creating a teacher-friendly

checklist that focuses on identity. To achieve that I created the following main questions to guide this thesis:

1. What would an evaluation checklist for identity in ESOL textbooks, look like?
2. What can this checklist reveal about ESOL textbooks?

The following chapters will answer these questions. This will begin with a review of relevant literature (Chapter 2), a description of a new textbook evaluation checklist (Chapter 3), a demonstration of the new checklist to evaluate a collection of current commercial ESOL textbooks (Chapter 4), and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the new checklist and future directions for building on this thesis (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is a review of the scholarly work on two main topics: evaluation checklists for ESOL textbooks, and identity in SLA. The chapter will include sections that focus on a review of current ESOL evaluation checklists, issues about identity of language learners, important concepts that are related to language learner identity, and concrete procedures that have been used to evaluate identity in ESOL textbooks.

What Practical Checklists for ESOL Textbooks Are Available, And How Have They Been Used?

There are many existing ESOL textbook evaluation checklists. In this section, I will present a review of the well-known published checklists and give examples of studies that used the checklists and what results were reached.

ESOL textbook evaluation checklists can be helpful to the teachers. After reviewing the universal characteristics of ESOL textbooks, Ansary and Babaii (2002) suggested that teachers are required to evaluate textbooks, but they are not confident about what to base their judgments on, how to make decisions, or how to describe the results of the evaluation. This might be due to the lack of systematical criteria. Many of the users of textbooks, including the teachers and students, have different views about what a good textbook is, but they need a reliable recommendation from experts to make an informed judgment about the textbooks they encounter.

Furthermore, in the field of language material development, there is a vast literature on generalizable criteria for the evaluation tool which is called a “Checklist”. The checklists provided by experts in material development were designed to try to help

the teachers to be more systematic and objective (Tucker,1975; Daoud and Celce-Murcia, 1979; Cunningsworth, 1995; McDonough and Shaw,1993; Litz, 2005; Mukundan, Hajimohammadi and Nimehchisalem, 2011).

In one of the earlier examples, Tucker (1975) presented an ESOL textbook evaluation checklist that consists of 3 components:

- a rating scale ranging from 1-4 that presents a method to measure the quality of the textbook;
- a number of criteria that is consistent with basic pedagogical, linguistic and psychological principles;
- a chart that compares between an ideal model and what the evaluator thinks of the textbook.

Tucker divided the checklist into two categories of criteria. Internal criteria and External criteria. Internal criteria cover the contents of the textbooks and it consists of three sub-categories: pronunciation, grammar, and content criteria. For instance, one of the items is “Adequacy of practice” (P:357), which is concerned with the readiness of the students to achieve a form and how much practice is needed to reach this adequacy. External criteria take a wider view of the textbook and it wasn’t divided into subsections. External criteria focused on characteristics like “competence of the author” (P:358). His model has been heavily used in the field., and an example of this is the study by Yarmohammadi (2002). He used Tucker’s checklist on a senior high school English textbook in Iran. The checklist helped to reveal that the textbook had numerous limitations, for instance, lack of attention to oral skills, lack of authenticity, and that Persian and English names are

used interchangeably which according to the author doesn't help the students learn about the culture of the target language.

Another textbook evaluation checklist that has been frequently used was developed by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979), and it is a qualitative checklist with straight forward and clear questions. It covers five main characteristics: subject matter (e.g., topics in the textbook), vocabulary and structures (e.g., words used, sequence of paragraphs in reading texts), activities (e.g., types of activities [e.g., comprehension activities]), illustrations (e.g., clarity of illustrations), and physical make-up (e.g., durability of the cover). The checklist was used in a recent evaluation that was conducted by Chegeni, Kamali, Noroozi, and Chegeni (2016) in Iran. They evaluated *Four Corners* which is an ESOL textbook that is heavily used in Iran. The checklist helped to reveal that the textbook is well-organized, provides useful, up to date and interesting information, presents activities that help the students learn more, and promotes learner autonomy. The only issues they found in the textbook are that it lacks task-based grammar activities and that the cover of the textbook is not durable.

Another study that used the checklist of Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979) was conducted by Hamidi, Bagheri, Sarinavaee, and Seyyedpour (2016). By using the checklist, they evaluated two general English textbooks, *New interchange 2* and *Four Corners 3*. They evaluated the textbooks separately and then they compared the two. The checklist helped to reveal that in terms of strengths, *New Interchange 2* presented topics that were very clear and relevant to the students and had a variety of activities that fit the students' needs. *Four Corners 3*, on the other hand, included more interesting topics and was clearer in terms of content. In terms of weaknesses, the checklist showed that *New*

Interchange 2, had weak structural rules, and *Four Corners 3* didn't provide a physical cover that is appealing to help draw the learners' attention.

Another heavily used checklist was presented by one of the leading scholars in the field of language material development, Cunningsworth (1995). This checklist considers cost and obtainability of textbooks, and it consists of 8 main categories of characteristics. The categories are: aims and approaches (e.g., does the textbook meet the aims of the teaching program?), skills (e.g., What language skills are covered? [e.g., reading, writing]), language content (e.g., What grammar items are covered?), design and organization (e.g., What is the sequence of content?), topic (e.g., What is the range of topics offered? [e.g., chapter about food]), practical consideration (e.g., How much does the textbook cost?), methodology (e.g., What procedures are used to teach language skills? [e.g., drilling activities]), and teacher's book (e.g., Does the teachers' guide provide sufficient guidance?). The checklist included a total of 44 items, that were all yes/no questions. An example of this checklist being used is a study by Azarnoosh (2014), in which he evaluated a textbook entitled *Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate*. The checklist helped to reveal strengths in the textbook, for instance, the reading passages were authentic, grammatical points and new words were presented in a rational way (e.g., the vocabulary items were presented in a separate section from the reading text) and writing and discussion sections were presented which could help motivate the learners because the topics would likely be interesting to the students. The checklist also revealed three weaknesses in the textbook: lack of a pronunciation section; small number of activities and activity types; insufficient recycling of vocabulary.

Cunningsworth's (1995) checklist was also used by Marzban and Zokaeieh (2017). In their study which was conducted in Iran, they evaluated *Mosaic 1: Listening and Speaking*, and the checklist helped to reveal strengths, like the content of the textbook (e.g., the activities in chapters) fits well with a statement of objectives in the introduction of the book, the quality of the listening tasks, a balance between implicit and explicit teaching of vocabulary and grammar, and the use of authentic language. The weaknesses of the textbook were the limited number of pictures, slight attention to writing and reading, and lack of different accents and dialects.

Another well-known checklist was created by McDonough and Shaw (1993). Their checklist is divided into two stages of evaluation (i.e., external and internal) and has a total of 22 criteria. The external evaluation analyzes the statements made by the author(s)/ publisher(s) on the cover and in the introduction. The internal evaluation, on the other hand, is an in-depth evaluation to see if the quality of the materials matches the claims made by the authors and see if the textbook is consistent with the goals and objectives of the program. Internal evaluation covers characteristics like the sequence of materials (e.g., are the units presented in a logical order?), appropriateness for different learning styles (e.g., does the textbook include a variety of activities?), reading beyond the sentence (e.g., does the textbook include reading activities that have texts of different lengths [e.g., words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs]?), and motivation (e.g., does the textbook include a variety of practice strategies? [e.g., pair work, group activities]). McDonough and Shaw's checklist was used by White (2003), to evaluate a textbook entitled *High Impact*. The checklist helped to reveal that the textbook fits the teacher's needs because it can be easily modified to fit his focus on oral production skills. There

are some weaknesses in the textbook nonetheless. The checklist helped show that the textbook focusses more on group and pair activities which might cause issues for students who prefer teacher dominant approach, and this can cause a lack of motivation. Another issue was that the sequence of topics and lexical items was unclear: For example, the checklist showed that unit 1 could be switched with unit 12.

Another textbook evaluation checklist was developed by Litz (2005). This checklist is quantitative, and it includes a 10-point Likert scale and consists of 25 items divided into 7 main categories: practical considerations (e.g., is the textbook affordable?), layout and design (e.g., is the textbook well organized?) activities (e.g., does the textbook include pair and group work?), skills (e.g., does the textbook include the four language skills?[e.g., reading, writing, listening, speaking]), language type (e.g., does the textbook include different accents?), subject and content (e.g., does the textbook include topics that are relevant to the learners?), and overall consensus (e.g., would you use this textbook again?). This checklist was used by Rezaee, Kouhpaenejad, Mohammadi (2013) to evaluate two ELT textbooks used in Iran, *Interchange 3rd edition* and *Top-Notch 2nd edition*. The checklist helped to reveal relative strengths and weaknesses of the two books, for example, that *Interchange* was affordable unlike *Top-Notch* which was very expensive, and that *Top-Notch* was very organized, unlike *Interchange* which wasn't coherent or systematic. Ahour, Towhidiyan, and Saeidi (2014) also used Litz's checklist to evaluate *English Textbook 2* to see if it was appropriate for second-grade high school students in Iran. The checklist helped to reveal that the weaknesses in the textbook outweigh the strengths. The weaknesses were that the topics in the textbook were

unrealistic, of a limited variety and were not relevant to the students. Also, the activities didn't encourage communication and the textbook lacked listening and speaking skills.

Another textbook evaluation checklist was developed by Mukundan, Hajimohammadi, and Nimehchisalem (2011). This checklist was produced after the authors reviewed the previous checklists that were developed from the 1970s to 2008. The authors then added what they thought was lacking in relation to important features. The checklist consists of two major sections, General Attributes, and Learning-Teaching Content. Under General attributes, there are five sections: (a) Relation to syllabus and curriculum (e.g., does the textbook match the goals of the curriculum?); (b) Methodology (e.g., does the textbook include a wide variety of exercises?); (c) Suitability to learners (e.g., is the textbook appropriate for the age of the learners?); (d) Physical and utilitarian attributes (e.g., is the cover of the textbook attractive?); (e) supplementary materials (e.g., does the textbook include audio materials?). Under Learning-teaching Content there are nine sections: (a) General (e.g., are the exercises in the textbook interesting?); (b) Listening (e.g., are the listening tasks appropriate for the learners?); (c) Speaking (e.g., does the speaking exercises encourage meaningful communication?); (d) Reading (e.g., are the texts interesting?); (e) Writing (e.g., are the goals of the writing activities achievable?); (f) Vocabulary (e.g., is the number of new words in each lesson appropriate for the learners?); (g) Grammar (e.g., are the grammar examples interesting?); (h) Pronunciation (e.g., is the pronunciation exercises learner friendly?); (i) Exercises (e.g., are the instructions of the exercises clear?). This checklist was used by Nazeer, Shah and Sarwat (2015) to evaluate two English textbooks used in Pakistan, *Concept Secondary English Book 1* and *concept Secondary English Book 2*. The textbooks were evaluated

individually, and the checklist helped to reveal numerous strengths like extensive grammar input and a wide variety of exercises. The checklist also helped to reveal a major gap which is that both textbooks ignored listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, Mukundan, Hajimohammadi, and Nimehchisalem's checklist was also used by Ghufron and Saleh (2016) in Indonesia to evaluate a textbook entitled "*Writing Academic English*". The checklist helped to show that the textbook has numerous strengths in areas like methodology, physical and utilitarian attributes, cost of the book, academic writing and general elements; however, the checklist also helped the authors to conclude that the textbook didn't satisfy their students' needs because the level of academic writing their students sought was higher than what is presented in the textbook.

To sum up, the checklists that I reviewed in this section are the most used and well-known language textbook evaluation checklists and they provide clear and systematic criteria for the teachers to evaluate different aspects of the textbooks. These criteria tend to focus on the physical attributes, layout, and content in relationship with methodology and skills. Although these criteria reflect important characteristics of textbooks, one important characteristic that is not reflected in these checklists is the way a textbook reflects identity.

How is Learner Identity Relevant in Second Language Education?

Identity is a topic that has been researched in numerous studies related to ESOL education. In this section, I will present a review of scholarly work on identity and how identity is viewed in SLA as well as important concepts related to identity (i.e., investment, imagined communities), the suggestions for how to deal with identity in language classrooms, the impact of not providing students with identity options, the role

of technology in providing students with identity options, and the procedures that have been used to evaluate ESOL textbooks from an identity perspective.

What is Investment and How is it Relevant to Identity?

If ESOL textbooks do not sufficiently reflect students' identities, students' investment in the language learning process might suffer. The concept of investment was introduced by Norton (2000a) and she defined it as “the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (P.10). Norton added that the notion of investment takes under consideration that the language learner has various desires and a complex social history, and when language learners speak, they are not just interacting, but they are constantly establishing a sense of who they are, and how they relate to the social world. Furthermore, Norton added that “an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner’s own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space” (P.11). Therefore, language learners might not be invested in practicing the language in a particular classroom because if they feel that the classroom is racist, elitist, sexist or anti-immigrant (Norton, 2012). Another factor that might affect the language learner’s investment is the possibility of gaining cultural capital. Furthermore, Norton and Toohey (2011) suggested that learners invest in learning the L2 in certain settings and at certain times because the learners think it will help them acquire material and symbolic resources and that will lead to the increase of the value of their cultural capital (e.g., learning English to get a better job).

There are several scholars in the field that investigated language learner investment. For example, Duff (2002) conducted a classroom-based study of language

learner investment in Canada. Through classroom observation in a multilingual secondary school, she noticed that non-native English-speaking students were not participating in the class. She then found out that the reason behind that was to avoid embarrassment in front of their native English-speaking classmates. Duff added that this silence was protecting the non-native English-speaking students from humiliation. Duff also revealed that the non-native English-speaking students were not invested to speak in this class because of the unequal power relations with the native English speakers who had a better command of English.

Additionally, Kinginger (2004), provided another example of language learner investment issues. She revealed the experience of an American young woman named Alice that was studying French abroad. Alice who was described as a highly invested learner overcame a lot of obstacles on her journey of learning French. She also faced a lot of identity struggles in both the United States and France. Kinginger discussed the many changes that happened to Alice's identity during her 4-year learning process as she tried to join an imagined France in her learning experience because she thought it would broaden her social options. He then concluded that she was clearly invested in learning the language because she took a lot of strides to be competent in French.

Furthermore, McKay and Wong (1996), did a qualitative study of the English language development of Chinese immigrants in California. Through two years of observation and interviews with 4 students that spoke Mandarin and were in the 7th and 8th grade, the researchers reached the conclusion that the students' investment in learning the language was connected to their desires and negotiations. The students felt that

English was viewed as if it's superior to Mandarin which lead to them resisting learning the language.

Another study of language learner investment was conducted by Skilton-Sylvester (2002). She closely observed 4 Cambodian women that were studying ESL in the United States. She stated that she based her study on Norton's theory of investment, and she found that the psychological construct of motivation didn't give an accurate description of these students' complicated lives. Furthermore, she added that in order to describe the investment they had in the ESL program we need to understand the professional and domestic identities of these women, because the friends and family members of the students had real impact on their participation in class, for instance, one of the participants had children and her investment in learning English was strongly related to her wanting better lives for her children.

Language Learner investment can also be affected by *imagined community*. A highly cited definition of imagined community was presented by Norton and Toohey (2011) as "when learners imagine who they might be, and who their communities might be when they learn a language" (P.422). Additionally, Norton and Toohey (2011) suggested that communities include associations like nationhood or transnational communities which expand beyond local sets of relationships. These communities can have a direct impact on the language learners' investment, and it is very difficult for the teacher to create activities in the classroom for the learners can invest in, if he/she is not fully aware of their imagined communities and imagined identities"(Norton &Toohey, 2011).

The concept of imagined communities has been investigated by several scholars. For example, Kanno (2008) conducted what is considered as the primary critical ethnography of bilingual education in Japan. He conducted several classroom ethnographic observations and his goal was to examine the link between school programs and bilingualism. The setting of his study was the programs of 5 bilingual schools. He revealed that these schools encourage immigrants to learn a second language with no regard to their first language and its culture, on the other hand, the schools taught upper-middle-class students the second language while keeping the value and culture of the students' first language. This led him to the conclusion that educators have multiple varieties for the learners' imagined communities (e.g., possibilities for the future of the students), and this led them to teach the students differently based on their social class.

Additionally, Kendrick and Jones (2008) also conducted a study based on Norton and Toohey's (2011) concept of imagined communities. The study was conducted in a secondary school in Uganda. Through multimodal methods, they investigated the drawings and pictures made by girls in the schools to see the perception these girls had about their participation in the literacy practices. In the first stage of the study, they conducted group discussions and interviews and while the girls were being interviewed, they were being asked to draw images about what they think, for example, one of the students drew two classmates studying together. In the second stage, the researchers analyzed the drawings. The authors revealed that the drawings presented by the girls are a symbol of their imagined communities. In these communities the girls have more symbolic materials like a solid grasp of English and an obtainable education.

How Can Teachers Deal with Their Learners' Identity Inside ESOL Classrooms?

Several scholars in the field of SLA have presented ideas on how to deal with the identities of students inside the ESOL classroom. According to Norton and Toohey (2011), teachers should always view the students' identities as "potential" and not force students into fixed identities, and this can be accomplished by providing activities with a wide range of identity options. Norton and Toohey (2011) added:

If language educators recognize that diverse classroom practices offer learners a range of positions from which to speak, listen, read, or write, it is important for educators to explore with students which identity positions offer the greatest opportunity for social engagement and interaction. (p. 429)

Additionally, Lee (2008) conducted a case study and explored the relationship between culture and language. He conducted interviews, focus groups, staff meeting observations and classroom observations in a post-secondary school in Canada. He revealed that even though the teachers tried not to force fixed identities on the students by allowing the students to engage in some controversial political and social issues, some of the practices they used (e.g., forcing their own perspective on the students) caused fixed identities to be reinstated. He added that some decisions that the teacher makes can restore subordinate student identities which will limit their language learning as well as their attempts to imagine other identities.

Furthermore, Clemente and Higgins (2008) conducted an ethnographic observation at Oaxacan University in Mexico to explore how the students modify their English use. They worked with non-native English-speaking student teachers and they revealed that the teachers questioned the dominant role of English in the world and they tried to keep their Mexican identities while practicing English. The authors described this

as dethroning English as the teachers practiced both Spanish and English in groups which was a way for them to explore more identity options.

What Would Happen If Teachers Force Fixed Identities on Students?

Forcing fixed identities on language learners can cause issues in the classroom. The main issue that has been highlighted by scholars in the field of SLA is the issue of *resistance*. According to Norton and Toohey (2011), some approaches and activities practiced in the language classroom can force the students into fixed positions and this might lead the students to resist the approaches and activities.

Several studies have focused on resistance. For example, McKinney and van Pletzen (2004), who were faculty at a university in South Africa, conducted interviews, an ethnographic observation as well as video recordings with their students to find the reasons behind the students' resistance to teaching materials at Bergzicht University. The participants were 35 Afrikaans students and 7 White students. During their work, they practiced critical reading with their students by giving them two units of South African literature. This led the students who were mostly Afrikaans and white to feel uncomfortable by how they were positioned in the materials because the materials mentioned South Africa's past, and this led the students to resist the materials, for instance, one of the students rejected the way his hometown was viewed, because it was presented as a location where violence and killing take place. The authors identified that this resistance by the students was a sign to show that these complicated political issues need to be taken under serious consideration.

Additionally, Talmy (2008) conducted a study of resistance in Hawaii. He examined the reasons behind the secondary school students' failed socialization by using

data consisting of an observation of 15 classrooms, 58 interviews with 10 teachers and 37 students, and analyzing classroom materials. He revealed that the students in the secondary school resisted being called ESL students. Furthermore, despite the school's efforts to motivate the students to follow instruction, bring their books, do their homework, or read fiction, the students did the exact opposite leaving the books at home and not paying attention in the classroom. Talmy revealed that the students' resistance was the reason behind all of that, and this made the ESL program hated by the students.

What Impact Has Technology Made on Language Learners' Identity?

Today multiple modern tools can be incorporated inside the classroom (e.g., digital media, music), and these tools can have an impact on identity and language learning. Through multiple communication systems, technology provides language learners with a big platform to construct imagined communities (Norton & Toohy, 2011). For example, Lam (2006) investigated the use of technology to construct imagined communities by studying the various identities used by immigrant youth in the United States while they use computers. He conducted interviews and classroom observation and revealed that on this platform (e.g., the computers), the students portray themselves as multilingual multicompetent actors, for instance, one of the students created a website and in this website he is better in English, he revealed that it was easier for him to write down his thoughts on the website than to speak in front of others. The students used these creative identity options as a way to escape being labeled in the classroom as stigmatized and incompetent immigrants. Another reason was to have more language learning opportunities than offered to them in class, for instance, it was reported that one of the students improved his social language fluency because of his use of the online website.

Additionally, Lewis and Fabos (2005) conducted interviews with Seven young language students to examine the effect Instant Messaging (IM) had on the social identities in the United States. According to the authors, the students assumed various identities on IM to increase their relationships and social conditions, for instance, one of the participants revealed that IM made her cooler: “I wouldn’t be as cool to some friends if I didn’t talk on the Internet.” (P.486). Furthermore, IM gave them a chance to use the things they learned in class in a different context and this, in turn, allowed them to do it in a different style, a style they weren’t able to use in class. The authors concluded that schools should always try to link what the students learn in class with the outside world.

After reviewing the relationship between L2 motivation and self-identity, Ushioda (2011) suggested some benefits of using the computers in the classroom with regard to the students’ identity:

Furthermore, the opportunities that cyberspace presents for trying out new and alternative identities and modes of self-presentation (e.g. through bots or avatars in virtual worlds such as Second Life) offer interesting possibilities for learning and communicating in the L2 in ways that are creative, individual and exploratory, yet without posing a threat to students’ real-world identities and private selves. (p. 207)

This view of the opportunities that computers can offer is very useful to the teachers to help deal with the students’ identities in the classroom.

What Identity Aspects Have Been Investigated in SLA Research, and How are These Aspects Reflected in ESOL Textbooks?

Language learners have different aspects of identity, for example, language learner identity can include religion, age, and marital status, however, Norton (2000b) pointed out that most studies of identity in relation to language learning have focused on identity in three main ways: gender, race, and class. Additionally, another identity aspect that is believed to have an important influence on language learning is speaker status (e.g., native, non-native speaker) (Sherman, 2010).

The work of Pavlenko (2004), Cameron (2006), and Menard-Warwick (2009) among other studies in SLA, reflected a new way of looking at gender in relation to language learning. That work suggested that gender should not be seen as just male and female but rather a structure of social relations and discourse where some inequalities can occur towards women. For example, Menard-Warwick (2009) examined how the language learning of adult women can be affected by their gender. She conducted an ethnographic observation and life history interviews and studied the relationship between the English class participation of Latin American women that immigrated to California and their gender background. The researcher revealed that one of the reasons that affected their participation was that they had to take care of their children at home which in turn affected their preparation for class. He concluded that gender identity was a decisive factor when it came to learning English.

Despite gender being an important identity aspect, it is also problematic. Several scholars challenged the idea that gender is binary (i.e., only male / female). For example, Delphy (1993), argued that gender is not just decided biologically, it is also a social construct which makes determining gender ambiguous. Additionally, Prior (2012)

problematized the idea of binary gender in education. She argued that binary gender discussions exclude transgender students.

According to two American sociologists, Omi and Winant (1994), race is an identity category and the way people construct race is strongly related to different kinds of human bodies. This includes physical features like skin color, hair texture, and eye shape. Additionally, race is a category that addresses vigorous issues of identity, social injustices and, power (Kubota & Lin, 2006). In relation to language learning, Shuck (2006) examined the relationship between race and language in the American public discourse as a way of positioning groups. He conducted 21 interviews with White native speakers of English who were undergraduate students at Southwestern University. The White native students stated that non-native speakers with non-European origins were inferior to them intellectually and that they are incomprehensible.

Another study on how race affects language learning was conducted by Ibrahim (1999). He conducted a 6 month long critical ethnographic observation in a Canadian high school, and the participants were a group of French-speaking African students. The goal of the study was to see how language learning impacted them becoming Black. He revealed that there are some linguistic styles that are related to becoming black and that the students used Black American English to construct identities that are familiar to their classmates. He also revealed that the American rap and hip-hop community was a source of linguistic styles as they imitated the variety of English that they listened to in the rap music. Furthermore, the African students viewed the hip-hop community is one that they aspire to join.

Race is an important identity aspect; however, it was also found problematic by several scholars. According to Kubota and Lin (2006) some scholars view race as a social construct rather than a biological category, which makes using race as an analytical category problematic. Additionally, Darder and Torres (2004) advocate that race shouldn't be used as an analytical category because dividing people into different groups could possibly lead to racism.

Besides gender and race, ESOL-related research has also focused on identity in terms of social class. After reviewing the role of social class in English language education, Vandrick (2014) suggested that social class can be defined as “hierarchical stratification of people in a given society, who are ranked according to their social, economic, occupational, and educational statuses” (p. 86). An example of ESOL-related research on social class is the study by Butler (2013). She examined how the *socio-economic status* (SES) of a group of parents affected the English development of their children. The researcher used a survey to collect data from 572 parents and students at two middle schools and two primary schools in China. Furthermore, she analyzed the performance of the students in the four language skills (e.g., reading, writing, listening, speaking). The analyses helped to reveal that the students with parents from a low SES had low competence in speaking, reading, and writing skills. The author revealed that the SES of their parents was one of the reasons behind their bad performances because the parents couldn't provide private lessons or put their children in high-quality schools.

Despite social class being an important identity aspect, it is also problematic. For example, Connell, Ashendon, Kessler and Dowsett (1982) argued that we can't classify people in terms of their income or occupation, instead we should focus on their social

relations and what they do with their resources. On the other hand, Gray and Block (2014) argued that while it might be problematic to make decisions about class based on occupation, it can be useful for textbook analysis.

Besides gender, race, and socio-economic status, another aspect of identity that needs to be addressed inside the English language classrooms is speaker status (e.g., native, non-native English speaker). Speaker status was the focus of a study by Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001). After reviewing four case studies of four non-native English language students, they revealed that Nativeness is not just a linguistic category but rather a socially constructed identity. One of the students under review was from Zimbabwe and he revealed that he was acknowledged by some of his classmates as a native speaker, but one of his classmates refused to acknowledge his nativeness because he didn't look native. The authors concluded that the social construction of a native speaker is affected by factors like race and ethnicity.

Additionally, According to Kachru (1985), English users around the world can be classified under three circles that relate to speaker status: the inner circle, outer circle and the expanding circle.

- The inner circle refers to the countries where English is the primary language like the USA, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The users in this circle are considered native speakers of English.
- The outer circle refers to the countries where English was integrated through colonization and now plays a significant second language role, in education, institutions, and law in counties like India, and Singapore. The users in this circle are considered non- native speakers of English.

- The expanding circle refers to the countries that acknowledge English as a global language but didn't get colonized. They also don't place English in any administrative status however they teach it as a foreign language. This circle includes Japan, China, and Poland. The users in this circle are also considered non-native speakers.

Despite speaker status being an important identity aspect, it was also found problematic by several scholars. For example, Yano (2001) questioned Kachru's (1985) three English circles model. Yano argued that the number of immigrants in a country like the US is very high, in fact in a state like California the number of immigrants from outer circle countries is more than the native residents which make the inner circle concept less meaningful. Furthermore, Matsuda (2002), also pointed out that there are people from the outer circle that grew up speaking English as a primary language, which makes the notion of nonnative speaker problematic.

Several studies of identity in ESOL textbooks revealed two main issues, inclusion (e.g., what is represented), and representation (e.g., how it is presented). For example, an evaluation of inclusion might focus on what race groups are included in an ESOL textbook. On the other hand, an evaluation of representation might focus on what types of roles are assigned to the characters from each race group. An example of inclusion is research that examined gender in language textbooks in the 1970s and 1980s, and the results showed that textbooks included substantial gender bias in it (Hartman & Judd, 1978). In another example, after evaluating 131 reading passages from three ESOL textbooks used in German secondary schools, Hellinger (1980) revealed that male characters were included in 93% of the passages, and female characters were included in

only 3% of the passages. The author also revealed that the male characters were always the speakers in the stories, which she described as an exclusion of female characters. Another example is an evaluation by Wu and Liu (2015). The authors counted the male and female characters in the pictures in 3 sets of ESOL textbooks used in China. The authors revealed that male characters were included more than female characters and males had more professional jobs (e.g., doctor), while females had more stereotypical jobs (e.g., serving food, cleaning).

Additionally, Yasmin and colleagues (2012) presented a view of the current status of gender representation in ESOL textbooks:

Research on linguistic sexism and gender role stereotyping in textbooks has indicated that there is a strong gender bias in them. The indoctrination of such stereotyping can degrade the dignity of one group (usually women) and thus impede the advancement of this group in education, politics, and society”. (P. 54)

Race has also been examined in ESOL textbooks. For example, Ndura (2004) evaluated 6 ESOL textbooks used in the United States. She revealed that the textbooks had issues with representation. For example, the textbooks contained stereotypical roles based on variables of cultural identity like race, and religion, for instance, two African characters were assigned the role of servants to a white character. She then defined stereotyping as “portraying one set of people exhibiting one set of values, behaviors and roles” (p. 146). Additionally, in a highly cited paper, Deckman, Fulmer, Kirby, Hoover, and Mackall, (2018), revealed that some publishers include the “non-dominant groups” as tokens because they do it in a superficial way which can reinforce stereotypes because they don’t “acknowledge and explore [the] implications [of difference]” (p. 15).

In another example, Song (2013) analyzed the texts in ESOL textbooks used in Korea for the purpose of finding cultural biases and cultural representations. The author revealed that American culture was included the most in the textbooks especially in the interactions and that this led to national, social, gender, and racial biases by presenting the White American Male character as more dominant over the others. He concluded that teachers should be more critical towards these textbooks and provide their students with more diverse worldviews.

Additionally, one of the things that EFL textbooks are most criticized for is their negligence of the English varieties of non-native speakers, and their focus on the varieties of native speakers (e.g., American English, British English). For example, one of the issues that face nonnative speakers of English is that they are sometimes viewed as the second-best. After evaluating two ESOL textbooks used in South Korea, *Person to Person* and *Top Notch* and analyzing the accents in the audio recordings, dialogues, and model conversations Sherman (2010) revealed that native English speakers were included the most in the textbooks. Sherman (2010) also added that “The native speaker has been long viewed as the correct model to be imitated, especially in regard to pronunciation, with non-native speaker as a second best” (p. 29).

Furthermore, Matsuda (2002) evaluated 7th grade EFL textbooks in Japan. Her goal was to examine the representation of the users and uses of English in the textbooks. She concluded that the textbooks included more inner circle users and that the locations referenced in the textbooks were mostly outside Japan. The mention of users from the outer and expanding circles was limited. Matsuda added:

Such a limited view of the language will not prepare students adequately to use English in the future with other nonnative speakers of English. In order to facilitate a better understanding of English users and uses, some changes in the textbooks are needed. For example, textbooks could include more main characters from the outer circle and the expanding circle and assign them bigger roles in chapter dialogues than the roles they currently have. (p. 196)

When it comes to social class in ESOL textbooks, it appears that the main concern is the inclusion of different social classes. After reviewing the best-selling ESOL textbooks from 1970s to 2014, Gray and Block (2014) revealed that ESOL materials are middle class dominant, and they are often concerned with middle-class students. Furthermore, López-Gopar and Sughrua (2014) presented their own experience as teachers in Oaxaca Mexico. They revealed that language teachers and students in Mexico struggle with the upper- and middle- class values and lifestyles that are included in the English textbooks as it excludes low-SES (socioeconomic status), for instance, one of the lessons was about the model car, and the teachers requested their students to ask each other if they can ski, play the piano, or speak French. The authors revealed that these lifestyle positions are not possessed by Mexican teachers or students.

What Concrete Procedures Have been Used to Evaluate Identity In ESOL Textbooks?

A variety of concrete tools and procedures have been used to evaluate ESOL textbooks from an identity perspective; however, these tools and procedures have typically been complicated. For example, Amalsaleh (2004) evaluated junior and senior high school EFL textbooks that are heavily used in Iran, with a focus on the gender and class of the characters. The author revealed that there is a discrepancy in the ways women

and men viewed in the textbooks. The women in the textbook had limited jobs and were mostly a stay at home wife. The author used the CDA framework of Van Leeuwe (1996), which focuses on expanding the limits of the representation of social actors through a sociosematic system. This framework consists of three main sections, inclusion, exclusion and Impersonalized social actors. The framework can help the researcher to analyze the texts critically, and figure how the social actors are represented in the text. The framework includes twelve subsections. First, under exclusion there are two subsections, suppression and backgrounding. Second, under inclusion, there are eight subsections, activation vs. passivization, genericisation vs. specification, individualization, assimilation, indetermination (anonymous), determination, nomination and categorization, and functionalization and identification. Finally, under impersonalized social actors, there are two subsections, abstraction, and objectivation.

The framework of Van Leeuwe (1996) was also used in another study by Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2012). The author also used the help of three colleagues to analyze the text to make the analysis more reliable. The authors' goal was to evaluate the linguistic representation of female and male actors in the ESOL textbook *Interchange Third Edition* which is a highly used textbook in Iran. The authors analyzed all the sentences in the 41 reading passages in the textbooks and revealed that the females were represented better than the male characters, for instance, females were assigned with high-status activities and were portrayed as more successful and independent than males.

Additionally, Sadeghi and Maleki (2016) also used Van Leeuwe's framework to evaluate 36 ESOL textbooks designed by the Iran Language Institute. After gathering the data, the authors applied a Chi-square test to measure the accuracy of the results. The

goal of the evaluation was to analyze the way male and female actors were represented in the textbooks, to achieve that the authors used the framework to analyze the dialogues in the textbooks. They focused on aspects like, who gets to talk first, and who were the participants in the dialogues (e.g., male-male, male-female, female-female). The authors revealed that the textbooks included gender bias, for instance, the male characters were included more in the dialogues, and some women are still labeled as housewives.

Another study that used Van Leeuwe's framework is Sarani and Kord (2018). After gathering the data, the authors applied a Chi-square test through a program called SPSS to ensure the validity of the results. The researchers' goal was to evaluate how genders are represented in the text and pictures in *Touchstone 2nd Edition* which is a highly used ESOL textbook in Iran. For the analysis, they collected 69 reading texts and a random sample of 60 images. The authors revealed that they discovered gender bias in the textbook, for instance, female characters were represented as food servers and babysitters, and male characters were represented as drivers and skilled at handling electronic devices.

Another example of the complexity of tools and procedures for evaluating identity in ESOL textbooks is the study by Farías and Cabezas (2015). In this study, the authors evaluated 4 EFL textbooks used in Chile. After they analyzed 7 reading passages, they revealed that among the many cultural issues they found in the textbooks there was an issue with racial representations. They revealed that the text reflects ideologies associated with the current social order, for instance, it was portrayed in the textbooks that the Anglo-Saxon physical features are model and that even the Latino celebrities aspire to achieve that physique. The researchers analyzed the reading passages by using the CDA

framework of Fairclough (1992). In Fairclough's framework, there are three levels to view language, and they work collectively. First, the text, in this level we can understand the written messages. Second, discourse, in this level we can observe the language in use. Finally, society, and in this level, the language is analyzed beyond the discourse. Furthermore, in this level language is analyzed through the construction and representation of society which produces relations of power (e.g., what roles are assigned to characters from each race?).

Another evaluation was conducted by Alimorad (2014). By using the CDA framework created by Fairclough (1995) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) she examined the dialogues, reading passages, and pictures in two textbooks, *Right Path to English* and *Cambridge English for Schools*, which are heavily used in Iranian EFL classes. Those particular CDA frameworks present an interoperative approach that considers the connections between the text and the cultural and social processes and structures. The two frameworks are shaped around the idea that humans live in the real world and their lives are shaped by their race, age, social class, religious affiliations, and gender. To confirm the validity of the results, the author asked a colleague to categorize the identity aspects and then compared the fairly similar results. The evaluation revealed that *Cambridge English for Schools* was more diverse in terms of identity options than *Right Path to English*, but she also had some critical points. The textbook presented an oversimplified image of the L2 community, and also presented stereotypical and old-fashioned identity options (e.g., most female characters are homemakers) to the students which may have an effect on their intercultural competence and create the wrong image of their imagined community.

What Concrete Procedures Were Used to Evaluate Identity In Textbooks of Other Languages?

With textbooks for learning languages other than English, researchers have used a variety of tools and procedures to focus on identity; however, these tools and procedures have typically been complicated. For example, Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) evaluated two Russian textbooks used for beginners entitled *Nachalo* and *Russian Stage*, by using CDA based on the framework of Fairclough (1989, 1995) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999). Shardakova and Pavlenko analyzed all the text in the textbook to see which learner identities are included and which identities aren't, and also to see which target language speakers are included. The results of the evaluation revealed that in both textbooks the main imaginary learner that is presented to the students is a heterosexual White middle-class male. It also revealed that *Russian Stage* offers the learners more identity options, while *Nachalo* presented stereotypical characters.

Similarly, another study that used Fairclough's framework was conducted by Stoilescu (2014) in the Elementary Language International Program at Toronto Public School in Ontario. In his study, he used the CDA framework to evaluate the Romanian textbook used in the EILP program in the first and second grade. He analyzed the concepts of religion, gender, social class, ethnicity, and post-communist tendencies while keeping in mind that the context in which the textbook was used is the recent Romanian immigrants in Toronto. The evaluation helped the author to reveal that this textbook maintained class, gender, ethnic and religious biases.

In another study, Wang (2016), evaluated *The Bridge* a Chinese as a foreign-language textbook used in Mainland China, to see what type of national identities are

being presented. The author analyzed the textbook by reading 125 reading passages that include nouns that represent nationality (e.g., names of countries). The author had to use specialized data analysis software (i.e., QSR Nvivo 10), and solicited the help of an additional person to check the reliability of coding. The author revealed that the textbook was promoting Chinese National identity which is in line with all the standardized textbooks in China. He revealed that the Chinese government is using the textbooks as a platform to shape the international students' ideologies and identities.

To sum up, the studies I reviewed in this section used CDA procedures to evaluate identity aspects in language textbooks. The procedures were effective and helped reveal numerous results, however, it appears that CDA is not easy to use. The procedures involve gathering large amounts of data, using specialized data analysis software, and in some cases soliciting the help of another individual. Assuming that ESOL teachers who need to evaluate textbooks may not have time to learn how and to then use such frameworks, there is a need for a new tool that can be used easily by teachers. Drawing on ideas presented in this chapter, I have developed such a tool, and it will be described and demonstrated in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHECKLIST

To answer the first main question of this thesis (e.g., What would an evaluation checklist for identity in ESOL textbooks look like?), I developed a checklist (see Table 1) in an attempt to provide teachers with an easy to use, systematic and reliable tool to evaluate ESOL textbooks from an identity perspective. Before developing the checklist, I considered how I might design it in a way that addresses validity, reliability, and practicality. According to Mukundan and Nimechi (2012), validity can be achieved if relevant theories are reflected in the checklist; since this checklist is meant to focus on identity, from a validity perspective, the checklist should include a variety of identity options (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004). Reliability can be achieved if a checklist's items are clear and understandable by the user; with this in mind, it was important to avoid creating items that asked about identity in a vague or confusing way (e.g., what role for what character was affected by his/her gender). Practicality can be achieved if a checklist is easy to use and not too long; for example, some of the textbook evaluation checklists reviewed in the previous chapter had limited practicality because they had 35 or more items and therefore seemed time-consuming to use. With validity, reliability, and practicality in mind, I developed a qualitative checklist that consists of 4 items.

Table 1

The Identity Checklist

Question	Answer
1. What races are included, and how are they represented (i.e., in what roles)?	
2. What genders are included, and how are they represented (i.e., in what roles)?	
3. What social classes are included?	
4. Are non-native speakers of English included? If so, how are they represented (i.e., in what roles, and what is their level of English ability)?	

Note. To fill out this checklist, choose a unit from a textbook, and answer each of the four questions. To answer the first three questions, focus on people in photos and drawings, characters in stories, participants in dialogs; to answer the fourth question, focus on audio recordings. "roles" include professional occupations (e.g., a specific job such as a teacher, a doctor, or a student). For example, race might include Asian, Black or White, gender might include Male or Female, socio-economic class might include Upper-class or Lower-class, and speaker status might include native speaker, nonnative speaker. (When using this checklist, it is important to keep in mind that the four identity aspects included in this checklist can be seen as problematic. For example, labels that can be used for sub-categories of race [e.g., "black", "white"], gender [e.g., "male", "female"], socio-economic class ["lower", "upper"] can be seen as appropriate or inappropriate depending on the context in which they are used. Therefore, teachers should use this checklist in a way that will be sensitive to their students' needs and perspectives.)

In terms of validity, the four items focus explicitly on relevant research and theory about identity. For example, these items focus on major aspects of identity that have been highlighted as relevant to second language learners (i.e., gender, race, social class, speaker status) (Norton, 2000b; Sherman, 2010), and focus on these aspects of identity

from two important angles: inclusion and representation (Hartmand & Judd; 1978, Song, 2013; Gray & Block, 2014). In terms of reliability, the four items are short, simple questions that include concrete examples; therefore, the items should be relatively easy to understand. Finally, in terms of practicality, the number of items is small, and they are in the form of open-ended questions; as a result, the checklist should be relatively quick and flexible to use.

The checklist is focused on four identity aspects race, gender, social class, and speaker status. As I mentioned, these identity aspects can be seen as problematic; however, I decided to include them in the checklist because I think that they can be useful to the teacher. Scholars have argued that these four identity aspects are important in language learning (Sherman, 2010; Norton, 2000a), and identifying them in ESOL textbooks can help the teacher to deal with existing bias that might affect the investment of language learners in the classroom.

As the table shows, the checklist has four main parts and each part covers one aspect of identity: race, gender, social class, and speaker status. Each part includes an open-ended question, and there is a blank space to fill with answers. In addition, there is a note that has instructions for the teacher. The instructions inform the teacher how much of a book to focus on (i.e., one unit at a time) and what parts of a book to focus on (i.e., people in photos and drawings, characters in stories, participants in dialogs, and audio recordings).

Looking at the checklist one part at a time, the first part is the question about race. The instructions suggest that a teacher should search the textbook for photos and drawings, stories, and dialogs and take note of the races of individuals in the photos and

drawings, stories, and dialogs. Also, the teacher should take note of the roles of those individuals, for example, what kind of jobs those individuals appear to have. To determine race in the stories and dialogues, the teacher might focus on names of people (e.g., Khalid), names of countries (e.g., Saudi Arabia), and types of food (e.g., Tacos) (Alimorad, 2014; Song, 2013). Determining race based on names of food or names of people can be tricky because it might not help make a definite decision, for instance, a person named Khaled could be from any race (e.g., White, Arab); however, these indicators can still be helpful because they may reflect ethnicity, a construct that can be linked to race (Alimorad, 2014; Song, 2013). To determine race in the photos and drawings the teacher might focus on physical appearance, for example, skin color, hair texture, and eye shape (Omi & Winant, 1994). To determine role in the stories and dialogues, the teacher might focus on the names of professional occupations (e.g., doctor, teacher) (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004; Wu & Liu, 2015). And to determine role in the photos and drawings, I suggest that the teacher might focus on the clothing of the character which can help decide the type of professional occupation he/she has, for instance, a character might be wearing a uniform, (e.g., doctor uniform, school uniform). Race and roles associated with race have been included in the checklist because research has shown that many ESOL textbooks assign stereotypical roles to characters based on their race, for example, the African character is a servant to a white character (Ndura, 2004).

The second part of the checklist is the question about gender. For this question, the instructions suggest that a teacher should search the textbook for photos and drawings, stories, and dialogs and take note of the genders of individuals in the photos

and drawings, stories, and dialogs. Also, the teacher should take note of the roles of those individuals, for example, what kind of jobs those individuals appear to have. To determine gender in the stories and dialogues, the teacher might focus on names (e.g., Ali, Maria), and gender pronouns (e.g., he, she) (Shardakova & Pavlenko; 2004, Ansary & Babii, 2003). The scholarly work I reviewed didn't provide a method to determine gender in the photos and drawings, however, I suggest that the teacher might focus on physical appearance, for example, hair texture, body shape. However, this should be done cautiously, because several scholars have argued that gender is ambiguous and may not be reflected in genetic features (Delphy, 1993). To determine role in the stories and dialogues, the teacher might focus on the names of professional occupations (e.g., doctor, teacher) or domestic roles (e.g., homemaker) (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004; Wu & Liu, 2015). And to determine role in the photos and drawings, I suggest that the teacher might focus on the clothing of the character which can help decide the type of professional occupation he/she has, for instance, a character might be wearing a uniform, (e.g., doctor uniform, school uniform). The teacher might also focus on the type of tool that the character is using (e.g., handsaw, frying pan). Gender and roles associated with gender have been included in the checklist because research has shown many ESOL textbooks contain gender bias, for instance, women are always assigned stereotypical roles, for example, the woman is always a housewife (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004).

The third part of the checklist is the question about social class. For this question, the instructions suggest that a teacher should search the textbook for photos and drawings, stories, and dialogs and take note of the social classes of individuals in the photos and drawings, stories, and dialogs. To determine social class in the stories and

dialogues, the teacher might focus on the references to the education, and occupation of the characters, for example, medical student, and engineer (Vandrick, 2014; Gray & Block, 2014). Determining social class based on occupation can be problematic (Connell, Ashendon; Kessler and Dowsett, 1982); however, it can still be used as an indicator for social class (Gray & Block, 2014). The scholarly work I reviewed didn't provide a method to determine social class in the photos and drawings, however, I suggest that the teacher might focus on the clothing of the character which can help decide the type of occupation he/she has, for instance, a character might be wearing a uniform, (e.g., police uniform, school uniform). Social class have been included in the checklist because research has shown that many ESOL textbooks are dominated with middle-class values, with the absence of inclusion of lower class (Vandrick, 2014; Gray & Block, 2014).

The fourth and final part of the checklist is the question about speaker status (e.g., native, nonnative). For this question, the instructions suggest that a teacher should search the textbook for audio recordings and take note of the status of the speakers in those audio recordings. Also, the teacher should take note of the roles of those individuals, for example, what kind of jobs those individuals appear to have. To determine speaker status, the teacher might focus on the accents of the speakers (Sherman, 2010). Using accents as indicators of speaker status can be tricky because it might not be a definite indicator, for example, a nonnative speaker might speak with a natively like accent; however, I still think that it can help the teacher identify speaker status, and it was used by other scholars to identify speaker status (Sherman, 2010). To determine role, the teacher might focus on the role the character is playing in the audio recording, for instance, the character might be playing an occupational role (e.g., teacher) or a social role (e.g., friend, brother)

(Sherman, 2010). Speaker status and roles associated with speaker status have been included in the checklist because research has shown that many ESOL textbooks are dominant with English varieties of native speakers, and this might not help prepare ESOL students to use English in a world full of nonnative speakers (Matsuda, 2002).

CHAPTER 4

DEMONSTRATION OF THE CHECKLIST

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the checklist can be used, what kind of results it can reveal, and how this can be helpful to the teacher. To demonstrate the checklist, I collected 5 units from 5 ESOL textbooks in the adult/young adult categories of the online catalogs of two major publishers of ESOL textbooks: Cambridge University Press, and Pearson English. I chose textbooks that are popular and used around the world, and most of the ones I selected were used in some of the studies I reviewed in this paper, for instance, *Touchstone*, *Interchange*, *Top Notch*, *Four Corners*, (Hemidi et al., 2016; Rezaee, Kouhpaenejad, Mohammadi, 2013; Sarani & Kord, 2018).

The textbooks I selected are as follows:

1. Four Corners 2nd edition (Bohlke & Richards, 2018, unit 1).
2. Interchange 5th edition (Richards, 2017, unit 10).
3. Top Notch Fundamentals (Saslow & Ascher, 2011, unit 1).
4. Summit 3rd edition (Saslow & Ascher, 2016, unit 1).
5. Touchstone 2nd edition (McCarthy, McCarten, Sandiford, 2014, unit 1).

To use the checklist, I analyzed each of the textbooks one at a time. With each textbook, I scanned the full unit to answer each question separately and in order. For example, with Four Corners, I skimmed over the entire unit to try to answer the first question on the checklist, and then I skimmed over the entire unit again to try to answer the second question on the checklist, and so on. Third, to answer each question on the checklist, I followed the instructions in the note precisely. For example, to answer the first question about gender, I found all of the photos and drawings in the unit and tried to

determine the genders of all people in those photos and drawings by looking at their body shapes and hair textures. I also tried to determine their roles by looking at the uniforms the characters were wearing and the tools the characters were using in the photos and drawings. Then, I found all the stories and dialogs in the unit and tried to determine the genders of all people in those texts by looking for names like "John" or "Patricia", or pronouns and like "she" or "he" and "her" or "his". Then, I tried to determine their roles by looking for the names of professional occupations and domestic roles.

Table 2

Results from the application of the checklist to 5 ESOL textbooks

Question from the checklist	Four Corners	Interchange	Top Notch	Summit	Touchstone
What races are included, and how are they represented (i.e., in what roles)?	Black: professor, science student, student, office manager. Hispanic: medical student, language student, bank worker, taxi driver White: artist, professor, science student, language student, office worker, long-distance learner.	Asian: biker, piano player, singer. India: soccer player, Mohiniyattam dancer. Black: football players. Hispanic: interviewee White: interviewer, biker, soccer player, football player, piano player, mechanic, swimmer, ice skater, cook.	Asian: musician, athlete. Black: actor, singer, actor. Hispanic: singer, athlete, banker, writer, receptionist White: teacher, student, architect, athlete, artist, banker, flight attendant, actor, chef, writer, manager, scientist, doctor, engineer,	Asian: office worker, student, travel agent. Black: student. Hispanic: businessman and woman, drug lord. White: tennis player, office worker, cop, drug trafficker, corrupt politician, army man, student.	Asian: businessman/woman, student. Black: businesswoman, student, receptionist, teacher. Hispanic: student. White: Businessman / woman, teacher, student, pilot, magazine salesman.

photographer,
pilot.

What genders are included, and how are they represented (i.e., in what roles)?	Female: professor, artist, scientist, medical student, language student, bank worker, office worker, office manager, long-distance learner. Male: artist, science student, student, language student, office worker, taxi driver.	Female: interviewer, biker, mechanic, piano player, cook, Mohiniyattam dancer. Male: interviewee, soccer player, football player, piano player, swimmer, ice skater, singer.	Female: student, actor, singer, flight attendant, musician, athlete, architect, chef, manager, scientist, engineer, pilot, photographer, artist. Male: teacher, architect, athlete, musician, artist, banker, actor, singer, writer, doctor, photographer, pilot, scientist, flight attendant,	Female: businesswoman, student, tennis player, office worker, travel agent. Male: businessman, office worker, student, army man, corrupt politician, cop, drug lord, drug trafficker.	Female: businesswoman, student, receptionist, teacher. Male: businessman, teacher, pilot, student, magazine salesman.
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receptionist

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What social classes are included?	Lower: taxi driver Middle: professor s, students, language students, bank worker, office workers, office manager, artists. Upper: scientist, medical student, 2 science students.	Lower: mechanic. Middle: interviewee , biker, soccer player, football player, piano player, swimmer, ice skater, singer.	Lower: receptionist . Middle: teacher, banker, flight attendant, chef, student, photographer, writer, banker. Upper: architect, actor, athlete, doctor, scientist, engineer, musician.	Middle: businesswoman , student, tennis player, office worker, travel agent, army man.	Lower: receptionist, magazine salesman. Middle: teacher, pilot, student, businessman, businesswoman.
Are non-native speakers of English included? If so, how are they represented (i.e., in what roles, and	Yes. An office worker. She paused a lot and used half sentences .	No	No	Yes, a German character. Her English speaking was very good, with no repeated pauses or grammatical mistakes.	No

what is their
level of
English
ability)?

Table 2 summarizes the results of my evaluation of the 5 textbooks. As this table shows, the evaluation of the 5 units revealed some similarities. First, in terms of race, all the textbooks included 4 major race groups, White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian. Second, in terms of gender, in all 5 units, the gender inclusion was balanced. Third, in terms of social class, all the units were dominated by middle-class characters. Fourth and finally, in terms of speaker status, all the textbooks used native speakers in the audio recordings.

The table also shows that the evaluation revealed some differences. First, in terms of race, *Interchange* added one more race group which was the Indian race. Furthermore, when it comes to the roles assigned to each race group issues were found in 3 textbooks. In *Interchange* and *Touchstone*, all race groups were assigned high ranking roles (e.g., scientist, manager), except the Hispanic race. Furthermore, in *Summit* an activity entitled "World Problems" had only one non-White character which was Hispanic, and he was stereotypically assigned the role of a drug lord.

Second, in terms of gender, issues were found in 2 textbooks. In *Four corners*, all the high-ranking roles were assigned to female characters (e.g., manager, scientist). And in *Summit*, all the negative roles were assigned to the male characters (e.g., drug lord, drug trafficker).

Third, in terms of social class, the representation of classes varied. First, the middle-class was represented the most in all the units. Second, the lower-class was represented only by 1 character in *Four Corners*, *Interchange* and *Top Notch*, and

represented by 3 characters in *Touchstone*, and had no representers in *Summit*. Third and finally, the upper-class was represented only by 4 characters in *Four Corners*, represented by 13 characters in *Top Notch*, and Not represented in *Interchange*, and *Summit, Touchstone*.

Fourth and finally, in terms of speaker status, non-native speakers were not represented in any of the audio recordings except in 2 textbooks, *Four Corners* and *Summit*. In *Four Corners*, the speaker named "Clara" made a lot of grammatical mistakes and had a lot of pauses in her speech; on the other hand, *Summit* presented, the German speaker named "Martina" who spoke fluently with no grammatical mistakes.

Overall, the results of this demonstration of the checklist can show that in all the 5 units from the ESOL textbooks the range of identity options was limited. First, in terms of race, the units combined only included 5 race groups, and one textbook included a stereotypical role (e.g., *Summit*). Considering the current state of the English language, it can be said that the ESOL learners are more diverse than 5 race groups. Some race groups are missing, for instance, Indian, Arab, Persian, and Hawaiian. Second, in terms of social class, the units were dominated by middle-class characters. Third and finally, in terms of speaker status, only 2 nonnative English speakers were represented. These results are relevant for several reasons. First, language textbooks can't be effective if they don't offer the learners a wide range of identity options (Shardakova & Pavlenko, 2004). Second, presenting only a few identity options might cause the learners to resist, or not be invested in learning or practicing the language (Norton, 2000a; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Talmy, 2008). Third and finally, the shortage of representation of nonnative speakers

might not prepare the students to use English with the other nonnative speakers that they might encounter in the future (Matsuda, 2002).

An application of the checklist in such a way, with these kinds of findings, can be very helpful to teachers. If a teacher was conducting a pre-use evaluation, the findings could help him/her decide which textbook is more appropriate to his classroom. For example, if an ESOL teacher had a collection of White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Indian students in his classroom, he might decide to choose *Interchange* because it includes all of the race groups in his classroom. On the other hand, if a teacher had a collection of upper-, middle- and lower-class students in his classroom, he might choose *Touchstone* because this textbook has more representers in each social class category than the other textbooks which makes it more suitable for this teacher's classroom.

On the other hand, if a teacher was conducting an in-use evaluation, the findings could help him find the gaps in the textbook so he could resolve it by bringing extra materials to the classroom. For example, if a teacher was using *Four Corners* which presented a negative example of a nonnative English speaker, the teacher could present examples of well-known fluent nonnative English speakers by using video or audio recordings. Furthermore, if a teacher was using *Summit* which presented a stereotypical Hispanic role (e.g., drug lord), and he had Hispanic students in his classroom, he could bring extra materials (e.g., reading passages, videos) where Hispanic people are assigned non-stereotypical roles (e.g., doctor, actor).

Finally, if a teacher was conducting a post-use evaluation, the findings could help him decide whether to keep using the textbook in the future or not. For example, if a teacher was using *Top Notch* which only presented 4 race groups, he might decide that he

wouldn't use it in the future. On the other hand, if a teacher was using *Interchange* which presented 5 race groups, the teacher might decide to keep using it in the future.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this thesis I synthesized important and complicated scholarly work on identity and developed a teacher friendly checklist. The thesis was guided by the following questions: (a) What would a checklist for identity look like? (b) What can this checklist reveal about ESOL textbooks?

The textbook is the main source of knowledge in many language classrooms, and that is why it must be of the best quality. To help measure the quality of the textbook, scholars in the field created textbook evaluation checklists to help the teachers to evaluate systematically, however, these checklists are usually concerned with the textbooks' physical attributes, content, and objectives, and none of the available checklists cover identity. According to Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004), a textbook must present the students with a wide range of identity options and every learner has his/her own identity aspects like race, gender, and social class. Ignoring these aspects or forcing fixed identities could cause the learners to resist learning the language or have no investment in learning the language (Norton & Toohey, 2011). This is why several scholars evaluated textbooks for identity, but all of them used content analysis or a CDA framework which is difficult and requires training. Therefore, there is a need for a textbook evaluation tool that focuses on identity and that would be relatively easy for teachers to use, and this gap was filled in this study by creating a new textbook evaluation checklist. The checklist was then demonstrated by evaluating 5 units from 5 different ESOL textbooks for adults/young adults, and it revealed important patterns related to race, gender, social class, and speaker status inclusion and representation.

The checklist was very clear and direct and by using it, I was able to extract important information about the textbooks and know their strengths and shortcomings in terms of the range of identity options offered in them. In some language classrooms, there is a different collection of students, and this checklist can help the teachers pick the appropriate textbook for each classroom they teach.

The user of the checklist should be aware that the identity aspects included in the checklist (i.e., race, gender, social class, speaker status), can be viewed differently in different contexts, for instance, social class can be classified differently in different cultures. For example, a medical student can be classified as upper class in one country and classified as middle class in another country. Therefore, in any given context, this checklist should be used cautiously and in a way that is sensitive to the needs and perspectives of students in that context.

The checklist has important limitations that should be kept in mind. The checklist I created was designed after reviewing the relevant literature to evaluate 4 important aspects of identity: race, gender, social class, and speaker status. These aspects of identity have been the focus of many studies related to ESOL education (Norton, 2000b; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001). Still, depending on the context a teacher might have to evaluate different aspects of identity like age, or religion and these are not part of the checklist. However, this can be solved by modifying the checklist through a process of adaptation. The teachers should view the checklist with a subjective eye and modify it to fit their needs, because as Cunningsworth (1995) stated a checklist is a "framework, not a straitjacket" (p. 5). With all of that in mind, the checklist can be easily adjusted, for instance, if a teacher wanted to evaluate "age" he/she could change the question from

“What races are represented in the textbook to “What age groups are represented in the textbook”. Another limitation of this thesis is to demonstrate the checklist I only evaluated 5-unit samples from ESOL textbooks this was sufficient for demonstrating that the checklist can reveal important patterns in these kinds of textbooks; however, the checklist might work differently with a different collection of textbooks.

With these limitations in mind, further work is needed to make the checklist more effective and efficient. First, the checklist should be used by teachers in a variety of contexts, for example, the checklist might be used to evaluate English For Specific Purposes textbooks to see if the checklist will be able to reveal similar results. Second, future research can have the teachers try out the checklist to see if it is easy to use or difficult, and if the identity aspects were easy to identify or they were problematic. Furthermore, the teachers can also bring the checklist to the classroom and have the students try it out and see how the students view race, gender, social class and speaker status. In addition, the checklist should be applied to a larger collection of textbooks to test the consistency of the results that the checklist can reveal.

Finally, it is important to note that this checklist is just part of a solution. When the teacher finds what the textbook is lacking, he/she may be able to select a different textbook. This, however, is not an option all teachers have. If a teacher is forced to use the textbook, he/she can bring supplementary materials to make up for the gaps in the textbook. For instance, if the textbook has stereotypical representations of a certain race, the teacher can bring different examples to the classroom to show his/her students the other representations of that race, to make sure that students don't feel any bias from the textbook towards them. These are just some examples of the multiple ways this new

checklist could be used to help solve important problems related to the use of textbooks in ESOL education.

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