Supplementary Readers and Developing Intercultural Competence: A Case Study of Sudan National Curriculum of English

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Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to investigate the supplementary readers in the Sudan National Curriculum of English for the themes and thematic areas with the potentiality of developing intercultural competence among learners. The study adopted a descriptive and analytical approach in the analysis of the content of the readers. The data were collected from four simplified readers supplementing the secondary English curriculum. The findings indicate that the readers are rich in themes and thematic areas potential for developing intercultural competence. The findings also outlined a number of factors may contribute to the inefficacy of the themes and thematic areas in developing intercultural competence among learners. These include the teacher's knowledge, his perception of culture, his previous experiences and his attitudes towards foreign cultures and his willingness to interculturalise his teaching practices. They also include student's standard of English, their attitudes toward different cultures and the teacher training on how to interculturalise teaching. Recommendations for meeting these deficiencies were suggested.*

Keywords: intercultural competence, cultural contents, culture of peace, supplementary readers, national curriculum, themes, thematic areas

1. Introduction

In the advent of the telematics era, people need to understand each other and not simply communicate information. Sudanese community is a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Conflicts in such a community are expected to erupt frequently. Social problems such as misunderstandings, erroneous beliefs about the others, and stereotyping outer groups are common. Instances of stereotyping originally based on individual cases were over generalized transferred over time from generation to generation. The effects of such social ills work actively in the inner minds of most of Sudanese and sometimes they were translated into positive actions and attitudes towards inner groups and negative actions and attitudes towards outers. So, adopting themes, which provide grounds for questioning such stereotypes, misunderstandings and erroneous beliefs, in the national curriculum represents a first step towards opposing such socials ills and eliminating them in the long run. Encouraging humanizing every member of the society is required. However, this is an advanced step in the human attitudes' ladder. To arrive at such a step, students need to be exposed to different cultures including their own. Exposing students to different cultures is the responsibility of both curricula designers and educators. Languages curricula are generally characterized by their flexibility which may enable both teachers and curricula designers to select texts from whatever discipline, to reflect certain themes and to service both linguistic and cultural objectives Understanding one another requires that language and culture learning has to be more complex and richer and the emphasis should extend the communicative competence in foreign language education to intercultural competence.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Research on language learning has recognized the close relationship between language and culture, Ando (1997);

Brown (1994). Cultures travel among and between nations through languages. Education plays a important role in changing the cultural set up of social groups to the better. Halliday and Hassan, (1989) have stressed the language role in molding and reshaping our consciousness. Among the many stakeholders, the job of making the youngsters embrace the culture of peace and raising their awareness of the destructive consequences of the culture of violence falls upon the shoulders of educators in general and language teachers and syllabi developers in specific as education plays a crucial role in learners' development as human beings. In spite of the durable, protracted conflicts that the Sudan has experienced, the question of peace promotion and maintenance has always been out of focus in the research in language learning for very long time. The current research is an attempts to contribute in this area of research. This research paper investigates the themes and the thematic areas potential of promoting students' intercultural competence in the supplementary readers in the Sudan national curriculum of English taught at secondary schools.

1.2 Research questions

The research paper tries to find answers to the following questions:
1) To what extent do the supplementary readers of the Sudan national curriculum of English taught at secondary schools have the potentiality of promoting learners' intercultural competence?
2) What changes do we need to make so that the readers can contribute to promoting learners' intercultural competence?

1.3 Research Assumptions

Literature is one of the effective tools for teaching languages. Literary texts are always loaded with cultural aspects of the community of the language. Exposing learners to a variety of cultures help in reshaping the mindsets of

learners and develop their intercultural awareness and competence. However, the efficacy of the cultural contents in literary texts depends on the teacher's knowledge, experiences and level of training. As most of secondary teachers in the Sudan hardly receive any form of training on how to interculturalise their teaching practices, the researcher assumes the lack of efficacy of the readers in developing the learners' intercultural competence due to the aforementioned factors. Moreover, selecting appropriate literary texts and giving ample training to teachers will increase the efficacy of the readers accompanying the national language curricula to yield the desired results. Fulfilling the aforementioned requirements coupled with adopting appropriate approaches and methods of teaching practices in the classroom can help in developing intercultural competence .

1.4 The Significance of the Study

Education plays an important role in promoting and maintaining peace. Its role has always been recognized and emphasized by many educators at both national and international zones, Wells (2003, p.2). In the Sudan, the rising phenomenon of violence in the institutions of education in the Sudan in general has put the question of peace in focus. In response to the phenomenon, some academicians and educators have published some essays in the daily local press about the causes of the phenomenon and its effects on the academic institutions and the community at large. They have also proposed some solutions. Also, a number of seminars and workshops have been held in some Sudanese universities on students' violence. All these efforts didn't go further than dealing with the symptoms of the problem. The present research tries to address the phenomenon from within our system of education in which promoting of the culture of peace seems to be missing. Hence, the current research comes to fill in the gap in research in this respect.

1.5 Rationale for the Study

In response to local and global problems Reardon (1988), suggested a paradigm shift that shapes content and pedagogy by incorporating issues of human security, equity, justice and intercultural understanding. The issues are related to the Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UNESCO. They can be derived from and applicable to many contexts. Sercu et al. (2005, p.2) suggested refining the objectives of language learning in terms of acquiring competences other than communicative competence in a foreign language. Many linguists and educators also call for reconsidering the role of languages in social problems, (Wertsch, 1987; Connor-Linton et al., 1987; Urban, 1988; Mehan and Wills, 1988 and Halliday, 1990). This paper tries to find out about the position of our national curriculum in the current global tendency towards considering the role of education in social problems.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

After analyzing more than hundred peace curricula guides in current use in the United States for general education, Reardon, (1988: p. xix) concluded that what to be included in peace education is neither clear nor precisely limited. Nine topical areas which have cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral components were identified in the contemporary peace education curricula. These areas include conflict resolution, cooperation, non-violence, multicultural understanding, human rights, social justice, world resources and global environment. The Sudan national curriculum of English has a series of six books, three of which are assigned for secondary. These three books are companied by four simplified readers. This research paper investigated the three supplementary literary books for themes and thematic areas potential for developing intercultural competence among learner.

2. Literature review

In successful education students' development is a central theme and goal, (Sanford, 1969). The development of the students can be processed through inculcating intellect, practical competence, and affective dispositions such as moral, religious, emotional, social, and aesthetic qualities of the personality, Bowen, (1977). Personal development is beneficial to students' lifelong development and quality of life (ibid). Research evidence suggests that the factual materials which students learn during college last for a relatively short time (Chickering and Reisser, 1993; Terenzini et al., 1995). Successful education requires long lasting skills such as intercultural competencies. The current paper investigates the contents of the curriculum of Sudan Practical Integrated National English (SPINE) to find out about its potentiality of promoting such capabilities among learners.

2.1 Goals of intercultural competence

Intercultural education serves different goals and purposes for improving life quality in multicultural countries. In the USA, for instance, the "intercultural education" aimed at describing educational programmes for integrating of different ethnic groups in North American society, Doye (1999: p.15). Similarly, the concept was introduced in Germany in the 1970's to soothe tensions between the native population and foreign workers (see Larzen, 2005: p.19). In culturally homogeneous societies, intercultural education is principally concerned with the education for global citizenship and multiculturalism.

The global movement towards socially responsible teaching has encouraged language educators to use global issues to develop language and social skills. Intercultural education aims to "enable students effectively acquire a foreign language while empowering them with the knowledge, skills and commitment required by world citizens to solve global problems" (Cates, 1990: p.41). Developing the learners' intercultural competence is a basic task for education to be successful in a diversified global society. Bowen (1977) outlined three educational goals for individual students related to intercultural competence. These include intellectual tolerance, human understanding, and adaptability, (ibid: p.78). Intercultural competence is intently associated with the three domains of the goals of teaching.

Intercultural education as used in the current paper refers to a mode of teaching, where the process aims at acquiring some kind of intercultural competence. Although the current study focuses on institutional practices only, and more specifically on the cultural contents of the curricula, both formal and informal, inside classroom and outside classroom learning situations are also relevant .

The research community has also emphasized the importance of intercultural pedagogies. Working with current issues such as environmental problems, war and peace, population explosion, inequality and the dangers of the new information and communication media and their use in foreign language teaching are considered very relevant as newer approaches that examine the learners within their social and natural environments, Klafki (1997: p.47-61). Intercultural skills help students to focus on current issues by guiding classroom interaction towards social awareness in world problems. Developing the Learners' empathy, critical thinking and argumentative skills represents an important tools for a more humane and democratic society.

Despite the increasing intercultural encounters, our ability to deal with differences seems to be limited. Difference related Phenomena such as racism, stereotypes, prejudices and their various manifestations seem to have become increasingly prevalent and they need recognition and considering urgently, (Seelye, 1988; Jensen 1995 and Larzen, 2005). Foreign Language Teaching may be a suitable arena for considering and combating such social problems. It provides opportunities for training in respecting otherness and developing a non-ethnocentric perception and attitudes.

2.2 Conceptualizing culture

In the English language, culture is complicated term (William, 1981). Over time, researchers in various fields of specialties have tried to develop definitions for the term. Two distinct forms of culture are recognized: "Capital-C culture" referring to works of art and music, buildings and monuments, literary and philosophical achievements and "small-c culture", referring to everyday products and the conditions of its production, Doye (1999: p.19). Brogger (1992), distinguishes between 'culture' as an elitist and aesthetic concept in the humanities and as an anthropological concept referring to collective assumptions and norms which people adopt and share, due to upbringing and socialization, Brogger (1992: p.31-32). Brislin (1990: p.27) defined culture as widely shared ideals, values, formation and uses of categories, assumptions about life, and goal-directed activities sub-consciously accepted by members of a society

Robinson (1985, 8-12) distinguishes between behaviorists, functionalist, cognitive and symbolic definitions. Both approaches (behaviorist and functionalist) represent a product perspective of culture, which tend to dominate FL instruction.

Hundreds of different definitions of culture were counted as early as fifty years ago (see Larzen, 2005: p.25). However, in the 1990's, researchers began to view culture as something thatis constantly re-created. Bruner (1997) points

out that cultures have always been in the process of change, but the rate of change has increased due to increasing contacts through both real and hypothetical migration, trade and the rapid exchange of information .

Analyzing teaching materials and Swedish curricular texts, Tornberg (2000) has developed three different analytical perspectives of culture in language teaching: "culture" as a fact fulfilled, "culture" as a future competence and "culture" as an encounter in an open landscape .All of the aforementioned definitions show the difficulty in arriving at a unanimous definition for culture fitting in all contexts. Similarly, all the above indicates the complexity of the relationship between culture and language .

The view of culture adopted in this research is that language influences our way of thinking and perceiving the world around us.

2.3 Culture and language

Language and culture feature a very unique relationship. Language is both an integral part of culture and a means of expressing the culture. It is both the substance and medium. Agar (1994) states that "culture is in language an language is loaded with culture" (Agar, 1994: p.28) Over time, people have preserved their cultures from generation to generation through oral traditions. Bruner (1996) linked the existence and evolution of the human mind to the development of culture, where "reality" is represented by a symbolism shared, conserved, elaborated, and passed on to succeeding generations by members of a cultural community. Risager recognized three mingled perspectives on the relationship between language and culture: culture as embedded in the pragmatics and semantics of language; culture as the macro context of language usage, and culture as the thematic content of language teaching. Halliday and Hassan, (1989) set apart "the context of situation" and "the context of culture". Fairclough (1992) asserted the connection between language usage, discourse and social structure .

2.4 Foreign Language Teaching Objectives

The last ten decades have witnessed a shift in emphasis in the general objectives of FL pedagogy. According to Brogger, (1992) language learning and philosophy were closely linked. An interdisciplinary approach to the study of texts, which was missing during 1930's and the 1960's, emerged. General structural rules were thought to ensure the necessary Linguistic Competence (LC), the target of every FL teacher. After the 1950's, two main disciplines emerged within FL studies at universities: linguistics and literary study. According to Brogger (1992, 12) both fields were highly professionalized and kept strictly separate. The four language skills were highlighted and every pupil was to acquire. Interestingly enough, these are still today often listed as objectives in curricular documents

A shift in the goals of FL instruction occurred in the twenties century from LC over Socio-Linguistic Competence to Communicative Competence (CC). Teachers realized that pupils need not only be able to produce grammatically correct phrases, but also the skill of using

these phrases in real communicative contexts. The term Communicative derives from Hymes, 1972, but it is above all van Ek who has applied CC to FL teaching. The "communicative turn" in language teaching, particularly in EFL, has been criticized by Byram, among others, for emphasizing speech act and discourse competence, rather than cultural competence The understanding of culture regained recognition as an important component of foreign language studies, intended to contribute to the pupil's CC (Brogger, 1992: p.12). Many attempts to teach culture followed an approach focusing on folk-dances, festivals, fairs, and food (Moore, 1996: p.597). Gradually, the study of culture changed its focus from historical, geographical of socio-political bits and pieces about specific nations to analysis of ideas and values shared by the members of a society or social groups .Intercultural Competence (IC) emerged in the 1990's. The term was introduced by Michael Byram. The sociocultural, social and strategic competences presented by van Ek were extended by Byram to IC. Byram and his colleague Genevieve Zarate (1997) defined an intercultural act as bringing two cultures into a relationship. They stressed that the outcomes of teaching languages as the ability to relate different cultures to each other in terms of differences and similarities, and to act as mediators between them, or rather between people socialized into them. This mediation, according to Byram and Zarate, also means being able to look at oneself from an "external" perspective when interacting with others, and to analyse and adapt one's own behaviour as well as underlying values and beliefs. Persons with the ability to take a double perspective by bringing into contact two sets of values, beliefs and behaviour are called "intercultural speakers. " Byram and Fleming, (1998: p.9) defined the intercultural speaker as someone who has a knowledge of one or more cultures and social identities and capable of discovering and relating to new people from unfamiliar contexts, Chambers (2001: p.52). Byram and Zarate challenged the long-standing assumptions of imitating the native speaker as the authority and the target goal. They saw the imitation of the native speaker as neither desirable nor fully attainable. Moreover, imitation implies abandoning one's social identity in favour of another. In addition, native speakers knowledge of their culture is not any more than their knowledge of their language .Other prominent language researchers (Phillipson, 1992, Kramsch, 1993, Risager, 1998, among others) had previously questioned idealizing the native speaker. Kelly, (2001: p.129) holds a similar line of thinking, pointing out producing native competence is no longer realistic. Enabling learners to function effectively in contexts where other languages and cultures are in play should be the goal to achieve.

A number of developments occurred in the last three decades. These developments have led to an essential rethinking of the goals of language instruction, and have resulted in a more intended focus on cultural issues. Abandoning the traditional language teaching was not an easy job, since theories of L2 acquisition and successive methods of language teaching tended to underestimate the cultural dimension. As pointed out by Chambers, (2001: p.50) research into the role of culture in language learning was necessary to underpin the new directions which language learning was taking. This successive development

was most certainly influenced by the transforming social and historical context in our modern world.

Abdallah-Pretceille (2001) identified two significant shifts in language current instruction: a shift from historical, geographical and institutional knowledge to cultural learning in a broader sense and a shift from cultural competence to IC as a tool for understanding the stage management taking place around us .Culture today should always be in the background of the activity of language learning, right from day one, Kramsch, (1993: p.1). The FL Teaching objectives and how they are implemented in the classrooms can make use of the ongoing research into Political and Cultural Education as a means to clarifying objectives .

Jiang, (2010) from China has carried out a research on culture in College English teaching in China. His study aims to examine the extent to which textbooks help intercultural learning. He used four methods: questionnaires, interviews, content analysis and content-based analysis. His findings have shown that the Chinese teachers and learners all agree that the teaching of culture is very important in English teaching and learning, but it seems that the teachers do not really know how to teach culture, and they normally rely on textbooks for guidance and instructions. A content analysis method is applied to determine the varieties of culture taught through textbooks, and a content-based analysis was used to investigate how textbooks teach culture .The results of the textbooks analysis indicate that the books are not targeted at the teaching and learning of culture; neither local culture nor world cultures are given much attention in the books; tasks are not designed to teach culture, stereotypes are generally not dealt with, and ICC does not seem to be a part of English education in China. All in all, Jian finds that there is a significant mismatch between the requirements of the government and what is carried out in practice, and a mismatch between the needs of English learning and the direction of English teaching in China .

2.5. The Current Study

Previous studies have shown that almost all of the studies in the cultural dimension of foreign language teaching were on either teachers' perception of culture in language learning or teachers' cognition. The current study targets the teaching materials. However, although both studies analyze national curricula with the purpose of finding out the cultural contents the national curricula contained, they differ in the parameters for identifying the cultural contents. The current paper sets out to explore the cultural dimension in the supplementary readers of the Sudan national curriculum of English language to find how out the extent of their contribution to developing intercultural competence among learners. The cultural dimension can be understood as consisting of three components: the conceptions about what culture in FLT is, the beliefs about the cultural objectives of FLT, and the teaching practices aimed at reaching those objectives. The conceptions about culture and beliefs about the cultural objectives are seen as interacting and together influencing classroom practice. The interest of the study can consequently be geared towards: the potentiality of the supplementary readers to developing the cultural dimension

of language learning and the cultural components in the readers. These points constitute the very core of the current study, and the researcher hopes to find out about the cultural dimension of the supplementary readers in the national curriculum and their shortcomings so that the findings of the study will be directives for future improvements.

3. Methodology

A content analysis approach was adopted and a descriptive and quantitative methodology was used. The supplementary readers in the Sudan National Curriculum of English Language taught at the secondary schools in Sudan, were surveyed and analyzed for themes with the potentially of developing intercultural competence the culture of pace.

3.1 Tools for data collection

The themes and thematic areas outlined in Vienna Human Right Declaration (1993) were used as a check-list. The four simplified Supplementary taught at secondary were surveyed and analyzed for themes and thematic areas with the potentially of developing intercultural competence were enlisted and interpreted

3.2 Procedures

The Sudan National Curriculum of English for secondary school has been supplemented by simplified graded readers by Macmillan. Each reader includes many themes of which only the ones which directly related to the area of the research are considered. The Supplementary reader for the first year secondary is "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens. The supplementary reader for the second year is "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte. The third year secondary is supplemented by two readers: "Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe and "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson.

A comprehensive survey of book 4, has been undertaken. The survey aimed to finding themes and thematic areas with the potentiality of promoting the culture of peace among learners. Sudan is a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Considering the diversity in the country, only the themes and thematic areas which rest upon global principles and reflect universal values were focused upon. Students are expected to develop thinking Skills, communication skills and personal skills. The themes and thematic areas as outlined by Vienna Human Right Declaration can be summarized as: human rights, social justice, development, population concerns, health and habitat, cultural diversity and the environment. These themes are expected to be incorporated and explored at appropriate time in the child's development. These themes might somehow be found in the readers, nevertheless, their presence in all the books with the same weight and strength is not expected.

4. Data analysis, results, and interpretations of the results

The results of the analysis of the Supplementary Readers

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4.1 Readers Literature and Language Learning

The study of literature is indispensable for the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language as it exposes the students to meaningful contexts that are replete with descriptive language and interesting characters. Structuring lessons around the reading of literature introduces a profound range of vocabulary, dialogues, and prose. In addition to developing their English skills, teaching literature also appeals to the students' imagination, develops cultural awareness, and encourages critical thinking about plots, themes, and characters. Furthermore, the activities that one can apply with literature lessons easily conform to the student-centred and interactive tenets of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

4.2 Synopsis of the Supplementary Readers

The Supplementary Reader for the **first year** secondary is "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens. The story, which was written in the nineteenth century, is about a poor orphan boy. It reflects the miserable life that the poor people who lived in England at that time had experienced. The main themes in "Oliver Twist"are: society and class, poverty, criminality, religion and fate and free will .

The supplementary reader for the **second year** is "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte. The story takes place in the nineteenth century in England. It is about a life of an orphan girl who suffered a lot on her quest for a normal and stable life. The story reflects the image of the woman in the English society at that era. The family, religion, social position, gender relations (inequality), and appearance (external versus internal beauty) are the main themes .

The **third year** secondary is supplemented by two readers: "Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe and "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson. Achebe's story "Things Fall Apart" which takes place in the sixteenth century was originally written in English and published in 1958. Though mostly fictional, the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe claims that the story documents Africa's spiritual history-the civilized and rich life of the Igbo who had lived before the arrival of Europeans and the ruinous social and cultural consequences that the arrival of European missionaries had brought about. Achebe wrote Things Fall Apart as a sharp criticism of the European colonization of the African countries. It depicts the African experience with Europeans. The main themes of the novel are: gender, family, respect and reputation, customs and traditions, fear, fate and free will, religion, and language and communication .The second supplementary reader for the third year secondary is "Treasure Island". The story, which takes place in the middle of the eighteenth century, is fictional. It is the story of pirates who stole a treasure from a ship in the Caribbean and buried it in an island. As the pirates all wanted the treasure,

they were cruel and violent to each other. They fought and killed each other. The major themes of Treasure Island are: criminality, drugs and alcohol, appearances, friendship, language and communication .

4.3 Discussing the Themes in the Supplementary Readers

As shown in the synopsis above, the supplementary readers for secondary schools cover a variety of themes which can easily be fitted in the adopted check-list. The readers provide the students with an opportunity to tour foreign cultures through literary works and compare them with their own cultures. Almost all of the readers are from foreign cultures. Three of the books, namely "Oliver twist", "Jane Eyre" and "Treasure island" are from the United Kingdom, and the fourth which is "Things Fall Apart from Nigeria, an African country. Although the cultural aspects reflected in the story in many ways have some cultural resemblance to the students' culture, the story also represents a foreign culture because in some respects it embodies cultural features which are foreign to Sudanese culture. . English language is a common medium for all stories. The books were originally written in English. In addition, the main characters have much in common. They were young ordinary people from poor families. Each of the main characters was aspiring for recognition and acknowledgements by his or her society. The characters followed different ways and strategies in their quest for fulfilling their ambitions. They worked hard to establish the desired social position and to be looked at with respect and dignity. However, as common people do, some of the main characters of the stories have fulfilled their ambitions while others have failed to achieve theirs., For instance, Jane Eyre has succeeded in attaining her quest for a family at the end of the novel. As well, the boy in Treasure Island has succeeded with his team in winning the battles of the treasure against the other team of pirates and finally he has become rich although the means by which he achieved his dream of entering affluent society were not moral or decent. The immorality of the means may provide a ground for questioning and discussing goals and ways or means for achieving them. The other characters in the stories have only partially succeeded in turning their dreams into a reality. Okonkwo in the story "Things Fall Apart" and Oliver in "Oliver Twist" are typical representatives for the group of partially successful characters.

The above overview of the main themes and characters in the four supplementary readers for secondary in the Sudan shows clearly that the readers contain rich themes with the potentiality of developing intercultural competence-an essential element for promoting the culture of peace among learners. These rich various cultural themes bridge the cultural gap which may exist in the Sudan National curriculum of English (SPINE series) or cover any deficiency in cultural themes in the curriculum. Nevertheless, the researcher has some reservations on one of the four novels, namely, Treasure Island. The novel is too violent. The rational for choosing such a novel to be taught at an educational institution is not clear, at least for the researcher. There are no obvious moral lessons that the novel aims to expose the students to or any intercultural quality or skill to be inculcated. The treasure was unlawful property and each group of the pirates wanted to possess it

by force and blood shedding, which means an unlawful means. The story flooded in blood to its brinks. What gains could a secondary school student get from reading such a story which is stained with blood from cover to cover?

Apart from the novel "Treasure Island", the supplementary readers are rich in cultural themes. They can provide students with windows to look through at the different cultures in different societies and from different angles. Moreover, the novel "Things Fall Apart" goes even further by featuring the clashes of two diverging cultures: "the African" and "the Western Culture". The story alludes to the consequences of the contacts of such different cultures. The clashes trigger discussions among learners on how to alleviate the differences in such cases and how to extend bridges between divergent cultures rather than fueling the clashes. As well, the dilemma of the main character of the story "Things Fall Apart" reflects different levels of conflict of values which provokes students' critical thinking capacities. Ockonkwa's failure to reconcile between escaping the nightmare of his father's unsuccessful past and the maintenance of his social recognition and acknowledgements for his achievements provides excellent opportunities for discussions. Students at secondary may not be capable of analyzing and interpreting literary work as competent critics do. Students many also not be aware of the analytical methods or tools for interpreting literary works. Adapting and adopting literary texts to serve intercultural ends requires the presences of a number of factors. These factors include the teacher's knowledge, the teacher's experiences, the teacher's attitude towards using literary work from other cultures to serve specific ends and the teacher's training on using story for intercultural goals. A knowledgeable teacher in literary criticism will lead his or her students step by step until they acquire the necessary abilities for interpreting literary works. Unfortunately, most postgraduate of the EFL teacher-training courses, apart from their paucity, focus mainly on language teaching methods and spare little space for the analytical methods that are essential for interpreting literature and designing effective classroom activities. Thus, both the teacher and the students are losing out.

In the existing curriculum of English language taught at the secondary school level in the Sudan, there is little room spared for the components which are necessary for promoting the culture of peace .

At this stage of the study, the findings met the requirements for answering the first question which is, "Do the supplementary readers which accompany the Sudan National Curriculum of English language taught at the secondary school stage have the potentiality of developing intercultural competence among learners?"

4.4 Summary of the findings

…. The discussion above has shown that the supplementary readers met the required themes and thematic areas identified by Vienna Human Rights Declaration and the framework of peace education. The readers included a variety of rich themes. On the basis of this, the researcher could proclaim that the readers contain considerable

potential themes for developing intercultural competences. This conclusion seems to go in line with the first hypothesis which presupposes the sparing of room in the supplementary readers for the required components of developing intercultural competence. However, the potentiality of these themes for developing intercultural competence among learners depends on a number of factors including the following: (a) the deliberate grading of the themes, starting with injecting smaller doses at the starting level of every stages (i. e. basic and secondary), and increasing the doses discretely through the intermediate to the higher levels where the themes density reaches its maximum; (b) the teachers' perceptions and recognition of the goal of developing intercultural competence as one of the objectives of English language teaching; (c) the teachers' familiarity with the cultures affiliated to English language; (d) the teachers' teaching experience and training in culture teaching and (e) the teachers' willingness to inter-culturalise their teaching practices.

5. Conclusion

The focus of this research paper has been on finding out about the potentiality that the themes and thematic areas in the supplementary readers in the Sudan's National Curriculum of English language has for developing intercultural competence, an essential element for promoting the culture of peace among learners. A comprehensive survey of the readers, using content analysis method was conducted. The findings have shown that the supplementary readers for secondary featured rich themes and thematic areas with high potentiality of developing intercultural competence.

In theory, the richness in cultural contents that the supplementary readers reflect indicates the potentiality which the curriculum has for developing intercultural competence and hence promoting the culture of peace. However, there are hardly any noticeable effects on the learners' performance. Violence is found everywhere in the community and even institutions of education are not spared. In order for the National Curriculum to contribute to promoting the culture of peace among learners, a number of amendments have to be made. The required amendments include: (a) the redistribution of the current themes included in the readers so that they look balanced and graded. Learners' standards of English have to be considered at this stage. This can be done by assigning smaller doses of cultural contents to serve certain ends at earlier stages and increasing the doses as the learners' standards of English improve. (b) Narrowing the scope of the broader themes outlined in the declaration of Human Rights by selecting sub-themes that provide grounds for addressing the direct problems of the society such as prejudice and stereotyping. (c) Supplementing the curriculum with more cultural themes of direct relevance to the learners' specific problems. (d) Training teachers on how to use cultural contents for developing intercultural competence. Three ways are suggested for carrying out these amendments: supplementing the current curriculum, reshaping it or producing an utterly new curriculum in which all the recommended amendments will be considered. Each of the three ways has its advantages and drawbacks.

These findings will be of interest to whoever interested in integrating cultural components into the language curricula so that they can be capable of promoting the culture of peace. The findings may also be of relevance to designers of teaching materials and textbook authors, since textbooks continue to play a central role in foreign language education, especially at beginner and intermediate levels. Although the presence of such themes is essential, other factors such as the teachers' roles, the teachers' perceptions and the institution perception of cultural contents are decisive in promoting intercultural competence among learners. Training on how to integrating culture and maximize its positive effects on learners is also essential. Training is needed for both textbook writers and language teachers alike. These remarks are required for improving the current national curriculum so that it can develop an intercultural competence among learners.

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