

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Learner Responsibility Ideology in Pearson Inspire English International Textbook

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how learner responsibility ideology is constructed in selected texts from Pearson Inspire English International Textbook, with the aim of examining how learners are positioned as self-regulating individuals responsible for managing health, digital practices, physical safety, and fake news identification. Using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the study examines the linguistic and discursive strategies through which learner responsibility ideology is constructed. Adopting a qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis approach, the data consists of four purposively selected instructional passages addressing hydration awareness, online safety, cycling safety, and fake news identification. The findings indicate that the textbook constructs learner responsibility as a multidimensional ideological framework using imperative structure, direct address, evaluative expressions, and instructional sequences. These discursive strategies present responsibility as an individual obligation and promote learner identity and self-regulation as a key characteristic of learners. The study further demonstrates that the textbook constructs a specific learner identity characterized by responsibility, caution, and informed decision-making. It shows that beyond its pedagogical function; the textbook also functions as an ideological resource that shapes learner identity and promotes expectations of self-regulation. While previous research has examined ideology in ELT textbooks through various perspectives, limited attention has been given to how learner responsibility ideology is constructed and how it shapes learner identity and self-regulation.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, ELT textbooks, learner identity, learner responsibility, ideology, self-regulation

Introduction

English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks are commonly viewed as pedagogical tools designed to develop students' reading, writing, and grammar skills. However, textbooks also function as cultural and ideological artifacts that may convey particular values, beliefs, and assumptions. This is what happens in many globally published ELT textbooks, where topic selections, represented voices, and proposed solutions to real life problems may reflect values and beliefs whether the textbook writers intended this or not.

As many students from various backgrounds read these textbooks, their worldviews may be shaped through the presentation of forms of knowledge as legitimate and natural. Babaii and Sheikhi (2018) argue that ELT materials often reproduce dominant ideological assumptions embedded within broader

social, political, and economic structures. The study will look closely at four texts selected from the Pearson Inspire English International textbook, a popular book used by secondary school students. The topics covered in the selected passages include hydration awareness, online safety, cycling safety, and fake news identification. The topics are different, but they all share similar messages in which individuals are personally responsible for solving their own health and life problems. It also positions learners as self-regulating agents.

It is very common to see stereotypes and embedded beliefs and messages in ELT textbooks. ELT textbooks function not merely as pedagogical tools but as ideological artifacts that reflect and reinforce dominant social values. Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012) demonstrated this through a content analysis of Iranian high school English textbooks, revealing that gender bias was not incidental but structurally embedded in the materials. Women appeared significantly less frequently than men across illustrations, written texts, and occupational role depictions, with female characters consistently confined to domestic or low-status positions while male characters occupied roles of authority and agency. Such representational patterns are not neutral; as Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012) argue, unequal portrayals shape the learning environment itself, normalizing hierarchical gender relations and presenting them as natural social facts. When learners are repeatedly exposed to these asymmetries through the authoritative medium of a textbook, the ideological messages embedded within become difficult to question or resist, suggesting that curriculum design carries significant responsibility in either challenging or perpetuating gender inequity.

Although previous studies have examined ideology in ELT textbooks, limited attention has been given to the construction of learner responsibility ideology and its relationship to learner identity and self-regulation. This gap is important to address because the four texts analyzed in this study are not merely reading passages; they function as instructional models that guide learner behavior. As a result, learners are exposed to texts that simultaneously teach language and construct expectations of responsible behavior. This dual function makes the ideological impact of these texts particularly significant and worthy of critical examination.

The present study investigates how learner responsibility ideology is constructed in selected texts from the Pearson Inspire English International textbook through linguistic and discursive strategies. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, the study investigates how this ideology shapes learner identity and promotes self-regulation in relation to health, safety, digital behavior, and fake news identification.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How is learner responsibility ideology constructed in the selected texts?
2. How are learner identity and self-regulation constructed through learner responsibility ideology?

Literature Review

This section reviews the literature related to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), ideology in language, (ELT) textbooks, learner identity, learner responsibility ideology, and self-regulation in English learning contexts. It also discusses previous studies concerning learner responsibility ideology in educational discourse. Moreover, this section examines how textbooks function as ideological tools in education and

how linguistic choices in textbook discourse may shape learner responsibility, identities, and self-regulation. Finally, the research gap addressed by the current study is identified.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach concerned with the relationship between language, power, and ideology in society. CDA studies how discourse reflects social structures and how language can influence beliefs, attitudes, and social relations. According to Fairclough (1992), discourse is not simply a form of communication but a social practice that both shapes and is shaped by society. CDA aims to uncover hidden meanings and ideological assumptions embedded in texts by analyzing linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, repetition, modality, and rhetorical strategies.

One of the most influential models in CDA is Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework, which analyses discourse through three levels: the textual level, the discursive practice level, and the social practice level. The textual level focuses on linguistic features such as vocabulary and sentence structure. Discursive practice examines how texts are produced and interpreted, while social practice explores the broader social and ideological context surrounding discourse.

Another important scholar in CDA is Van Dijk (1998), who emphasizes the role of ideology and cognition in discourse, arguing that discourse contributes to shaping social beliefs and group identities. In educational contexts, discourse can influence how learners perceive their roles, responsibilities, and identities, while promoting particular forms of self-regulation and behavior.

In the context of English language teaching textbooks, CDA is particularly useful because textbooks are not neutral materials, they often reflect educational ideologies and values. Through CDA, researchers can uncover how textbooks construct meanings about power, ideology, and cultural norms.

Ideology in Discourse

Ideology is a system of ideas, beliefs, and values shared by individuals or social groups. In discourse studies, ideology is often embedded implicitly in language and communicated through specific linguistic and rhetorical choices. Ideology influences how people understand reality and interpret social experiences.

According to Fairclough (1995), ideology becomes naturalized through repeated discourse until certain beliefs appear normal and unquestionable. Language therefore plays a significant role in spreading ideological messages and shaping social understanding. Through discourse, speakers can encourage audiences from accepting certain worldviews and values.

Ideology is closely connected to power because dominant groups often use discourse to maintain their influence within society. Educational discourse, political speeches, media content, and motivational talks may all carry ideological assumptions that affect audiences consciously or unconsciously. Persuasive language can present specific ideas as common sense while ignoring alternative perspectives.

In ELT textbooks, ideology may be constructed through representations of learners, learning practices, and expected learner behavior. Textbooks may emphasize values such as responsibility and self-regulation, which reflect broader educational expectations of how learners should act in different

contexts. Ideological meanings are often conveyed indirectly through instructional language, examples, and task-based guidance. As a result, learners may internalize these expectations as part of their understanding of appropriate behavior and learner identity while engaging with textbook content.

English Language Teaching (ELT) Textbooks and Ideology

ELT Textbooks play a central role in language education and are often viewed as authoritative sources that shape classroom learning and students' attitudes. However, textbooks are not neutral materials; they reflect particular ideological values and assumptions through the language and topics they present.

According to discourse and curriculum studies, textbooks influence learners not only linguistically but also socially and ideologically. They present specific ideas about appropriate behavior, responsibility, health, safety, and decision-making.

ELT textbooks are not merely language-learning resources; they also transmit social values and ideological assumptions that may influence learners' perceptions of themselves and the world around them.

In this sense, ELT textbooks function as ideological tools that shape learners' understanding of what it means to behave responsibly and make appropriate decisions in everyday life.

Learner Responsibility Ideology

Learner responsibility ideology refers to the belief that learners are primarily responsible for their own decisions. This ideology emphasizes self-management, awareness, discipline, and responsible action as important factors in achieving positive outcomes. This perspective reflects a broader educational trend toward what Halse, Hartung, and Wright (2017) describe as responsibilisation, whereby individuals are increasingly expected to manage their own behavior, choices, and outcomes.

In ELT textbooks, learner responsibility ideology is often conveyed through advice, warnings, instructional discourse, and behavior-oriented tasks. It can influence how learners understand themselves and their role in society. Students may develop positive attitudes toward responsibility and critical thinking, but they may also feel pressure to manage challenges independently. CDA helps reveal how textbooks normalize learner responsibility ideology through repeated linguistic patterns, warnings, advice, and persuasive techniques.

Learner Identity

Learner identity refers to the ways in which individuals understand themselves as learners. The beliefs, roles, and characteristics they associate with who they are in educational contexts. Identity is not a fixed innate quality but is socially and discursively constructed through ongoing interactions with language, texts, institutions, and social relations. As Norton (2000) argues, identity is multiple, contradictory and subject to change across time and space, and it is through language that individuals negotiate and invest in particular social positions.

Identities are shaped not only through classroom interaction but also through the texts learners engage with. Textbooks, in particular, play a significant role in constructing subject positions for learners - that is, defining who the learner is, what the learner values, and how the learner should behave. According to

Fairclough (1992), every text constructs a particular subject position for its reader, inviting them to adopt a specific identity in relation to the content. When learners repeatedly encounter texts that address them as responsible, rational, and self-managing individuals, they are gradually invited to internalize these qualities as natural aspects of their identity.

In the context of ELT textbooks, Block (2007) argues that language learning materials construct learner identities by representing certain values and behaviors as desirable and universal. Textbooks that foreground individual responsibility, critical thinking, and self-protection implicitly define the ideal learner as one who is autonomous, disciplined, and capable of managing personal risk. Such constructions, while appearing neutral or pedagogically motivated, carry ideological significance because they normalize particular ways of being a learner while excluding others.

Self-Regulation and Autonomous Learning

Self-regulation refers to the capacity of individuals to monitor, manage, and direct their own behavior, cognition, and motivation in pursuit of particular goals. In educational psychology, Zimmerman (2000) defines self-regulated learning as a proactive process in which learners set goals for their learning, employ appropriate strategies, monitor their progress, and regulate their cognition, motivation, and behavior to achieve those goals. This model positions the learner as an active and responsible agent whose academic outcomes depend primarily on individual effort and strategic self-management.

In language education, self-regulation has become closely associated with the discourse of learner autonomy. Holec (1981), whose work established the foundational definition of autonomy in language learning, describes it as the ability to take charge of one's own learning. This concept has been widely adopted in ELT materials and curriculum design, where learners are increasingly expected to manage their own learning processes independently of the teacher. While learner autonomy has clear pedagogical value, critical scholars have questioned the ideological assumptions that underpin it.

Benson (2011) argues that autonomy discourse in language education frequently reflects broader neoliberal values by framing self-management and individual responsibility as universal educational ideals. When autonomy is presented not as a pedagogical option but as a normative expectation, it functions ideologically — constructing the self-regulating learner as the only legitimate or successful type of learner. Learners who struggle to self-regulate, or who depend on social or institutional support, are implicitly positioned as deficient.

In ELT textbooks, self-regulation ideology is embedded through repeated instructions, warnings, and advice that place the burden of outcomes on the individual learner. Bori (2020) demonstrates, globally produced EFL materials consistently construct learners as self-governing subjects expected to take personal accountability for their health, safety, digital behavior, and knowledge. This study examines how self-regulation is linguistically constructed across the four selected passages and how it contributes to the broader ideological framework of learner responsibility.

Previous Related Studies

Many studies have explored ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and educational discourse from different perspectives.

Afzal et al. (2021) examined the ideological constructions embedded in English textbooks used in Pakistani schools. Using Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis, intertextuality, foregrounding and backgrounding, presupposition, and the representation of social events. The findings revealed that the textbooks promoted religious, national, political, and societal ideologies and contributed to shaping learners' perspectives. This study is relevant to the present research because it demonstrates how educational texts can convey ideological meanings through discourse and because both studies employ Fairclough's CDA framework to analyze educational texts (Hmouma, 2025).

Babaii and Sheikhi (2018), in their study *Traces of Neoliberalism in English Teaching Materials: A Critical Discourse Analysis*, examined highly popular ELT materials taught in Iranian private Language institutions using textbooks as common sites for social reproduction and ideologies. The corpus was analyzed through Fairclough's CDA methodology, drawing specifically on the frameworks presented in *Language and Power* (Fairclough, 2001) and *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* (Fairclough, 2003).

Their findings revealed that the textbooks popularized neoliberal values such as market orientation, consumerism, individual productivity and marketability. This study is relevant to the present research because it demonstrates how ELT materials reproduce ideological assumptions through discourses of individualism, self-management, and personal responsibility which are closely related to the concept of learner responsibility ideology.

Another study by Bori (2020) examined two best-selling UK produced global EFL textbooks through qualitative content analysis, finding that these materials consistently positioned earners as entrepreneurial, self-governing subject through language that normalize competition, self-improvement and personal accountability as universal common sense. Using Foucault's concept of governmentality, Bori argues that such textbooks do not merely reflect neoliberal ideology but actively participate in the responsabilization of learners, cursively constructing individuals as solely responsible for their outcomes while erasing structural conditions. These findings are directly relevant to the present study, as Pearson Inspire English International is similarly a UK-produced global EFL textbook, and the responsabilization identified by Bori at the content level is closely related to what the present study investigates at the linguistic level through Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model (Hmouma, 2024).

Similarly, Holborow (2007) argues that language and ideology are closely connected. She defines ideology as a set of ideas that emerge from social relations and serves the interest of particular social groups. According to Holborow, neoliberal ideology is reproduced through language and becomes naturalized through repeated use in media, institutions, and official documents. As these ideas are continually reproduced by powerful social actors, they come to be perceived as common sense rather than as ideological or political positions. She also argues that texts do not simply carry ideology; they invite readers to see the world in particular ways, which readers may accept, question or resist depending on their own social position. Re-semanticisation is a key concept in her framework and is defined as the process by which words are lifted from their original context and apply to new settings, acquiring new meanings and gradually changing how people understand those situations. This perspective is relevant to the present study because it highlights how textbook language can contribute to the construction and normalization of particular ideological values.

Although these studies provide valuable insights into ideology and educational discourse, limited research has specifically examined how learner responsibility ideology is constructed linguistically in selected passages from the Pearson Inspire English International textbook through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Methodology

This section outlines the methodology employed in the study. It describes the research design, research corpus, sampling technique, theoretical framework, analytical tools, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures used to investigate how learner responsibility ideology is constructed in selected passages from the Pearson Inspire English International textbook. The section also discusses the measures taken to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis.

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Qualitative research is particularly suitable for examining meanings, representations, and ideological constructions embedded in texts because it focuses on interpretation rather than quantification.

The primary focus is on how language functions to promote specific beliefs about learning and the responsibilities placed on learners. Because ideology tends to operate beneath the surface of language, a qualitative approach allows for a thorough examination of linguistic choices and the social meanings they carry.

CDA was selected as the analytical framework because it provides a systematic approach to investigate the connection between language and ideology. It assumes that discourse is not neutral but reflects and reproduces social values, power relations, and ideological assumptions. Through CDA, it becomes possible to uncover how educational texts shape learners' perceptions of themselves and their responsibilities within the learning process.

Research Corpus

The corpus of this study consists of four reading passages selected from Pearson Inspire English International textbook, an English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook designed for lower secondary learners. The textbook is published by Pearson and is currently used in a number of international schools in Libya as part of English language instruction.

The selected passages are entitled Hydration, Online Safety, Cycling Safety, and Identifying Fake News. These texts were purposively chosen because they contain informational, instructional, and advisory discourse that encourages learners to adopt particular attitudes and behaviours.

Although the passages address different topics, they share a common emphasis on personal decision-making, self-management, awareness, and responsible action. Such characteristics make them particularly relevant to the investigation of learner responsibility ideology.

The selected texts provide a suitable corpus for investigating learner responsibility ideology because they contain instructional and advisory discourse related to health, safety, digital behavior, and information

use. These texts offer rich linguistic data for examining how educational discourse constructs expectations of responsible learner behavior.

Sampling Technique

This study employed purposive sampling to select the textual data for analysis. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research because it allows researchers to select data that are particularly relevant to the objectives of the study. Instead of analyzing all texts contained in the textbook, the researcher selected passages that were most likely to reveal how learner responsibility ideology is constructed and how learner identity and self-regulation are represented within the textbook discourse.

The data were drawn from Pearson Inspire English International textbook, a Grade 8 English language textbook used in international schools in Libya. Four reading passages were selected: Hydration, Online Safety, Cycling Safety, and Fake News and Identification. These passages were chosen because they contain rich instructional, advisory, and evaluative discourse that constructs expectations of learner behavior across multiple domains. In addition, the passages include linguistic features such as recommendations, warnings, directives, and guidance that make them particularly relevant for investigating learner responsibility ideology, learner identity, and self-regulation within educational discourse.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis is grounded in Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which views discourse as a form of social practice. Fairclough argues that language both reflects and shapes social realities and that texts may contribute to the production and reproduction of ideological meanings. This framework is particularly relevant to the present study because it enables an examination of how educational discourse constructs particular understandings of learners, learning, and responsibility.

The first dimension, textual analysis, focuses on the linguistic features of the selected passages. According to Fairclough (1995), textual analysis involves examining the vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and textual structures through which meanings are constructed. In the present study, particular attention is paid to linguistic features such as repetition, pronoun use, imperatives, modality, evaluative language, and other lexical and grammatical choices that contribute to the construction of meaning. Through the analysis of these features, the study seeks to identify how learners are positioned within the discourse and how responsibility is represented linguistically.

The second dimension, discursive practice, concerns the production, distribution, and interpretation of texts. Fairclough (1995) argues that texts are both produced and consumed within specific social contexts and the meaning is shaped through processes of production and interpretation. In the context of educational discourse, textbooks are produced by authors, editors, curriculum specialists, and publishers, while their meanings are interpreted by teachers and learners. This level of analysis helps explain how persuasive messages are communicated and how learners are expected to engage with and respond to them.

The third dimension, social practice, situates discourse within broader social and ideological contexts. According to Fairclough (1992), discourse is a form of social practice that both reflects and shapes social

realities. At this level, the study examines how the selected passages may reflect broader educational values and ideological assumptions related to learner responsibility, autonomy, self-regulation, and personal accountability. Through this approach, the analysis moves beyond the linguistic surface of the texts to examine their wider ideological implications and the educational values embedded within the textbook discourse.

Analytical Tools

The analytical tools employed in this study are derived from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In line with the study's aim of examining how learner responsibility ideology is constructed in the selected texts, the analysis focuses on recurrent linguistic features that shape learner identity and promote self-regulation.

The first analytical tool is the use of imperatives, which are analyzed as directive structures that position learners as active agents responsible for following instructions, adopting appropriate behaviors, and making responsible decisions. Such forms often function to construct obligation and encourage self-regulation.

Direct address, particularly through the pronoun *you*, constitutes another analytical focus. This feature is examined for its role in personalizing discourse and directly assigning responsibility to the learner, thereby strengthening the interpersonal relationship between text and reader.

The Analysis also considers evaluative language, which includes lexical choices that present behaviours, attitudes, and actions as desirable, necessary, or beneficial. Such language is significant in constructing value judgments that guide learner interpretation and behavior.

Modality is also examined as a linguistic resource through which degrees of obligation, recommendation, possibility, and certainty are expressed. Modal expressions such as *should*, *must*, and *can*, contribute to the construction of learner responsibility by guiding learners toward particular attitudes and behaviors.

In addition, advice and recommendations are analyzed as instructional features that guide learners toward specific actions while maintaining an educational tone. These forms function to construct expectations regarding appropriate learner behavior and support the development of self-regulation.

Finally, the study examines the representation of responsibility across the texts, focusing on how success, failure, awareness, and effective learning are attributed to individual effort and decision-making. This allows for an understanding of how learner responsibility ideology is constructed and how learner identity is shaped through discourses of personal accountability.

Collectively, these analytical tools provide a systematic framework for identifying and interpreting the linguistic mechanisms through which learner responsibility ideology, learner identity, and self-regulation are constructed in educational texts.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process began with a systematic review of the Pearson Inspire English International textbook. The researcher examined the reading passages contained within the textbook and identified texts relevant to the research objectives. Particular attention was given to passages that construct learner

responsibility ideology through instructional, advisory, and informational content, particularly those that shape learner identity and encourage self-regulation.

Following the initial review, four passages were selected based on their relevance to learner responsibility ideology and their ability to construct learner identity and promote self-regulation. The selected texts were then compiled and prepared for detailed analysis. Each passage was read repeatedly to ensure familiarity with its content, structure, and communicative purpose before the analytical process began.

Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis was conducted through a systematic qualitative procedure informed by Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework. The selected passages were first read several times in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their content and underlying messages. During subsequent readings, linguistic and discursive features were identified and highlighted. The analysis followed Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, consisting of textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, applied systematically to each of the four selected passages.

Textual Analysis (Micro Level)

The identified features were then coded according to the analytical tools established for the study, including repetition, imperatives, direct address, evaluative language, and advice or recommendations. These features were examined to identify recurring linguistic patterns that construct learner responsibility ideology, shape learner identity, and promote self-regulation within the selected passages.

Discursive Practice (Meso Level)

Following the textual analysis, the findings were interpreted at the level of discursive practice to explore how learners were positioned within the texts and how particular meanings and expectations were communicated to the intended audience. Particular attention was given to the relationship between the text and the reader, and to the ways in which learners were encouraged to assume responsibility for their actions, decisions, and learning outcomes.

Social Practice (Macro Level)

The final stage of analysis focused on the dimension of social practice. At this level, the texts were connected to broader educational values and ideological assumptions. The analysis examined how learner responsibility was represented and normalized, and how the selected passages promote the image of learners as responsible and self-regulating individuals. This stage aimed to reveal the ideological significance of the texts in shaping learner identity and reinforcing expectations of self-regulation within educational contexts.

Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the analysis and the findings of the critical discourse analysis of the four selected passages from the Pearson Inspire English International textbook which are hydration, online safety, cycling safety and fake news. The analysis is guided by Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model across three levels: the micro level (text and linguistic features), the meso level (discourse practice – how

texts are produced and consumed), and the macro level (social practice – ideological and societal implications).

Passage 1: Ready for Social Networking

Linguistic Feature	Textual Analysis (Micro)	Discursive Practice (Meso)	Social Practice (Macro)
"Know who your friends are." / "Share with care." / "Use privacy settings."	Imperatives are used to create a rule-based instructional checklist.	The text is presented as web-style safety guide to make official instructions seem normal and trustworthy.	Learners are constructed as self-regulating individuals responsible for managing online risk through correct choices,
"You", "your", "yourself"	Second-person pronouns create direct address to the reader.	The textbook engages learners as individual users in digital environments, reinforcing instructional authority.	Learners are positioned as individually accountable agents, reinforcing a responsible learner identity.
"You shouldn't be using them..." / "you need to know..."	Modal verbs express obligation and necessity.	Advice is framed authoritative safety guidance, typical of institutional discourse.	Responsibility is constructed as a personal obligation, reinforcing self-regulation as a core learner trait.
"If you are already using social networks..."	Conditional structures present cause-effect relationships.	Reflects a risk-prevention discourse style, common in safety education materials.	Responsibility is individualized as learners are positioned as the source of risk and the managers of consequences.
"Do you really want them seeing your pictures...?"	Rhetorical questions create interactive engagement.	Simulated conversational tone enhances engagement and persuasive impact.	Learners are encouraged to internally regulate behavior through reflection and caution, reinforcing self-regulation.

The analysis shows that learner responsibility ideology is constructed through imperatives, direct address, modality, and rhetorical questions. These linguistic features position learners as responsible for managing online risks through their own actions and decisions. As a result, learners are represented as cautious and self-regulating individuals in digital environments.

Passage 2: Ride Safely on the Road

Linguistic Features	Textual Analysis (Micro)	Discursive Practice (Meso)	Social Practice (Macro)
"Protect your head" / "Be aware and be seen" / "Ride safely" / "Follow the rules of the road"	Dense use of imperative subheadings structures the text as a sequence of behavioural commands.	The passage adopts a public safety leaflet genre, borrowing institutional authority from transport and health campaigns.	Responsibility is individualized as learners are positioned as self-regulating agents required to manage personal safety through strict behavioural compliance.
"Always wear a"	Use of absolute	Reflects authoritative	Responsibility is constructed as

helmet" / "Never wear headphones"	modal intensifiers creates moral certainty.	safety discourse that discourages questioning and promotes compliance.	non-negotiable behavioural control, reinforcing a disciplined learner identity.
"Statistics show that young riders..."	Use of statistical reference creates an appearance of objectivity and urgency.	The discourse mimics institutional safety communication to legitimize its claims.	Risk is individualized, positioning learners as primary agents responsible for preventing harm through personal choices.
"So before you get on your bike make sure..."	Cause-effect structure redirects risk from structural causes to individual behavior.	The text shifts from general risk information to instructional guidance.	Responsibility is placed on the individual learner, who is constructed as responsible for safety outcomes.
"Effective," "alert," "fatal," "killed," "seriously injured"	Evaluative vocabulary creates contrast between safe and dangerous.	The text constructs a risk discourse that legitimizes behavioral regulation.	Learners are shaped into risk-aware self-regulating individuals whose actions determine survival outcomes.

The findings indicate that the passage relies heavily on imperative structures, intensifiers, and risk discourse to promote safe cycling practices. Responsibility for safety is placed on the learner through a series of behavioral instructions and warnings. Consequently, learners are constructed as responsible and self-regulating individuals who must control their actions to avoid any harm.

Passage 3: Water is the Best Drink for Your Body

Linguistic Features	Textual Analysis (Micro)	Discursive Practice (Meso)	Social Practice (Macro)
"You can live for WEEKS without food. But only a few days without water,"	Use of contrastive emphasis and capitalization creates urgency.	The passage adopts didactic health-education genre, resembling public health awareness messaging.	Learners are constructed as self-regulating individuals who must prioritize bodily maintenance through correct health choices.
"Water makes up three-quarters of your body weight." / "It keeps your temperature stable."	Heavy use of declarative scientific statements presents health knowledge as factual and unquestionable.	The text simulates scientific/medical authority, positioning textbook discourse as expert knowledge.	Health is constructed as objective knowledge that learners must internalize and act upon individually, reinforcing responsible learner identity.
"Drink at least 2 pints of water every day."	Use of imperative instruction embedded in scientific register gives command-like advice medical authority.	Blends instructional discourse with scientific explanation, increasing persuasive legitimacy	Learners are positioned as self-regulating agents expected to manage daily health behavior.

"Your body weight," "your temperature", "your teeth"	Repeated second-person possessive reference personalizes physiological processes	Creates direct instructional address typical of health education discourse aimed at behavior change.	Learners are constructed as personally accountable for maintaining bodily wellbeing through self-management.
"Bottled waters are unlikely to be better for you than tap water." / "Isotonic drinks are not as good..."	Comparative evaluative language constructs hierarchy of choices.	Reflects consumer-oriented health discourse, typical of lifestyle guidance texts.	Learners are positioned as rational decision-makers responsible for making correct health-related choices.
"Drink more when it's hot, or if you're exercising..."	Conditional and situational guidance links behavior to self-management.	The discourse mirrors preventive health instruction commonly used in public health campaigns	Self-regulation is emphasized as learners are expected to adjust behavior according to environmental and physical conditions.

The analysis reveals that the passage combines scientific facts, health advice, and imperatives to encourage healthy behavior. Health is presented as a matter of personal choice and daily practice. Therefore, learners are positioned as responsible and self-regulating individuals who are expected to manage their own wellbeing.

Passage 4: Fake News and How to Spot It

Linguistic Features	Textual Analysis (Micro)	Discursive Practice (Meso)	Social Practice (Macro)
"Type the story into a search engine..."/ "Look up any facts..."/ "Ask an adult or trusted friend..."	Use of imperative constructions creates a checklist for evaluating information	The text adopts an instructional format that guides learners through fact-checking procedures.	Responsibility is individualized as learners are positioned as accountable for verifying information before accepting or sharing it.
"Do any of us check if the stories are actually true?"/ "We can't be doing anything wrong, can we?"	Rhetorical questions encourage reflection while drawing readers into the discussion.	The text simulates dialogue with the reader, increasing engagement and participation.	Learners are constructed as reflected individuals who are expected to question information rather than accept it passively.
Shift from "we" to "you" throughout the passage.	Movement from collective to individual address personalizes the issue and directs attention to personal action.	A shared social problem is introduced collectively, but solutions are presented as individual responsibilities.	Responsibility is transferred to the learner, who is positioned as the one responsible for identifying misinformation.
"If we share these	Conditional structure	The discourse frames	Responsibility is constructed

made-up stories... we could actually be causing people..."	links actions to consequences through cause-and-effect reasoning.	misinformation as a problem that can be prevented through careful behavior.	as a personal obligation, with learners expected to consider the consequences of their actions.
Ask yourself..."/ "Is the story being reported anywhere else?"/ "Are the supporting sources reliable?"	Interrogative structures encourage evaluation and critical reflection.	The text presents critical thinking as a routine process that learners should follow when sharing information.	Self-regulation is emphasized as learners are expected to monitor, evaluate, and regulate their own engagement with information.

The findings demonstrate that the passage promotes responsibility through fact-checking instructions, rhetorical questions, and evaluative processes. Learners are encouraged to verify information before accepting or sharing it. As a result, they are constructed as critical, responsible and self-regulating individuals capable of making informed decisions.

Discussion

The discussion is organized around the two research questions guiding the study. Through the analysis of the selected passages, three interconnected themes emerged: learner responsibility ideology, learner identity construction, and self-regulation. These themes provide a framework for understanding how textbook discourse positions learners and promotes particular educational values and expectations.

Learner Responsibility Ideology

The findings demonstrate that learner responsibility ideology is consistently constructed across all of the passages through the repeated use of imperative structure, modality, direct address, and instructional discourse. These linguistic strategies construct responsibility as an individual obligation that learners must fulfill through their own actions and decisions. Across the texts, responsibility is not shared with institutions or wider social structures but is instead placed directly on the learner. Whether in relation to online safety, road safety, health practices, or information verification, learners are repeatedly positioned as the primary agents responsible for preventing risk and ensuring appropriate behavior. This reflects a strong ideological emphasis on the individualization of responsibility.

These findings are consistent with Babaii and Sheikhi's (2018) observation that ELT materials reproduce neoliberal assumptions by foregrounding individual productivity and self-management. Similarly, Bori (2020) argues that globally produced ELT textbooks responsabilize learners by constructing personal accountability as natural and inevitable while erasing structural or institutional factors. The present findings extend this argument to the linguistic level, demonstrating that responsabilization is achieved through specific grammatical choices rather than content alone.

Learner Identity Construction

The findings indicate that the textbook constructs a consistent learner identity across the selected passages. Learners are represented as, cautious, informed, rational, and accountable individuals who are expected to make appropriate and informed decisions in different contexts. Through evaluative language, conditional structures, and behavioral instructions, the texts shape an image of an ideal learner as

someone who is capable of self-management and sound judgement. This identity is reinforced through repeated positioning of learners as decision-makers who must act correctly in order to avoid negative consequences. As a result, the textbook promotes a normative identity of the “good learner” who is compliant, careful, and socially responsible.

This construction aligns with Block's (2007) argument that language learning materials define the ideal learner through values and behaviors presented as desirable and universal. The subject position constructed across these passages – responsible, cautious, rational – reflects what Bori (2020) terms the entrepreneurial self-governing subject, a learner who is expected to manage risk independently and take full accountability for outcomes.

Self-Regulation

The findings further highlight the strong emphasis on self-regulation across all four passages. Learners are repeatedly encouraged to monitor their behaviour, assess risks, and regulate their actions in accordance with provided guidelines. This includes managing online interactions, following road safety rules, maintaining healthy habits, and critically evaluating information. Self-regulation is constructed as a key skill that learners must develop in order to navigate everyday life successfully. The texts therefore promote continuous self-monitoring and behavioural adjustment, positioning learners as individuals who are responsible for controlling their own actions across multiple domains.

This emphasis on self-regulation reflects the broader autonomy discourse critiqued by Benson (2011), who argues that when self-management is framed as a normative expectation rather than a pedagogical option, it functions ideologically. Learners who depend on social or institutional support are implicitly positioned as deficient. Holborow's (2007) concept of re-semanticisation is also relevant here: terms such as awareness, responsibility, and safety are lifted from their broader social contexts and reapplied as individual behavioral obligations, gradually making personal accountability appear natural and unquestionable.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how learner responsibility ideology is constructed in four selected passages from the Pearson Inspire English International textbook, and how this ideology shapes learner identity and promotes self-regulation. In response to the first research question, the analysis demonstrates that learner responsibility ideology is constructed through a consistent pattern of imperative structures, direct address, modal verbs expressing obligation, evaluative language, and conditional reasoning. These linguistic features position learners as the primary agents responsible for managing their own health, safety, digital behavior, and information use, with little acknowledgment of institutional or structural factors.

In response to the second research question, the findings show that learner identity is constructed as responsible, rational, cautious, and self-managing — an idealized subject who makes correct decisions across multiple life domains. Self-regulation is embedded through repeated instructions, warnings, and behavioral checklists that normalize continuous self-monitoring as an expected learner trait.

These findings are consistent with Bori's (2020) argument that globally produced EFL materials responsabilize learners by erasing structural conditions, and with Babaii and Sheikhi's (2018) observation that ELT materials reproduce neoliberal assumptions of individual productivity. The findings suggest that Pearson Inspire English International textbook functions not only as a language learning resource but also as a site where particular assumptions about learner responsibility, identity and self-regulation are constructed and reinforced.

This study is limited to the analysis of four passages from a single textbook and does not examine how learners or teachers interpret, negotiate, or respond to these ideological messages. Future research could extend this analysis to a larger corpus, compare multiple ELT textbook series, or incorporate classroom reception studies to explore how learners negotiate or resist the subject positions constructed in these texts.

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