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This special issue compiles papers from the 48th Systemic Functional Congress (ISFC48) organised in March 2023 by the Systemic Functional Linguistics Association of Tunisia (SYFLAT) and the Laboratory of Approaches to Discourse (LAD-LR13ES15), under the auspices of the Faculty of Letters and Humanities at the University of Sfax. This special issue, which explores the theme of power and empowerment in relation to language and systemic functional theory, is divided into two volumes. The contributions in the first volume provide some reflections on SFL notions, which can empower both the theoretical apparatus and its application to different types of discourse. The papers in this second volume showcase how SFL language descriptions can empower pedagogical practices.

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Interpersonal encounters in Tunisian EFL textbooks: An SFL and multimodal approach

Dorra Moalla, Fatma Benelhadj, & Nadia Abid

Abstract

With the intercultural turn in the 1990s, EFL textbooks became sites for culture and identity expression: they need to equally represent the cultures and the participants in question (cf. Byram 2021; Guilherme 2002; Kramsch 1993; Risager 1991, 2014). This paper studies how participants from different cultures are portrayed when brought together in ‘encounters’ through conversations, dialogue balloons and visuals in the 7th and 8th form EFL textbooks in Tunisia. Nine conversations, one dialogue balloon and 233 pictures were extracted from the textbooks and analysed borrowing the tools of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), namely the mood system, and the Grammar of Visual Design (GVD). The analysis has revealed that although the textbook designers managed to represent the participants (Tunisian versus Non-Tunisian) and the cultures equally at the quantitative level, they failed to do so qualitatively. In fact, the conversations and the visuals are rather simplistic, and depict the Tunisian characters as inferior, less knowledgeable and less articulate compared to the Non-Tunisians. There is also a lack of complementarity between the verbal conversations and the visuals. As implications of this piece of research, the study calls for a more careful selection of authentic materials for textbooks to promote Tunisian students’ intercultural communicative competences.

Keywords

EFL textbooks; culture representation; Systemic Functional Linguistics; Grammar of Visual Design; Intercultural Communicative Competence

Introduction

Textbooks are widely used as an authorised education medium whose design and production reflect the culture and identity of the society in which they are produced (Canale 2020; Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger 2015). In foreign language education, textbooks are considered as “cultural artefacts” (Weninger 2020,132) and “windows to the world” (Risager 2020,119) offering representations of culture of the language in question. The textbook is a space where images of other people are constructed and learners’ knowledge and perceptions of ‘self’ and ‘other’ are developed (Zarate 2004).

Given this role, textbooks can be considered vehicles for intercultural learning through varied types of multimodal texts organised into topics, storylines and scenarios (Risager 2020) as well as different forms of intercultural encounters between people from different cultural backgrounds (Sercu 2000). These encounters introduced in textbooks can take the form of conversations, interviews, dialogues, discussions and debates. They replace real encounters that are rarely possible in a foreign language context. Intercultural encounters in textbooks can provide learners with good opportunities for the negotiation of cultural meanings (Turner et al, 2007) and identity (re)construction and ‘self’ and ‘other’ positioning (Houghton 2013; Kim 2012; Zarate 2004).

In the Tunisian context, textbooks are the main pedagogical tool used in the English class. They are designed by inspectors and senior teachers of English, published by the National Pedagogic Center, and used by all Tunisian students in public schools. Textbooks include different types of texts and activities, whose major objectives are to promote communicative competence and enhance language proficiency through Anglophone contexts (English Programmes for Secondary Education 2008). Culture and culture teaching are not explicitly emphasised in these textbooks. A few studies, however, have examined the potential of Tunisian EFL textbooks’ cultural content in promoting the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Abid & Moalla 2022, 2020; Abid 2021). Abid and Moalla (2022, 2020) analysed intercultural encounters in terms of the extent to which they promote the development of the intercultural speaker. The intercultural encounters, that is conversations, dialogues and interviews, took place either between native speaker characters or between native speakers and Tunisian characters. The intercultural encounters in the textbooks were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative content analysis highlighting the representation of the target language culture(s) in comparison with the students’ own culture and other cultures.

This study takes a different orientation and proposes to analyse the direct encounters showing how the participants from Tunisian (self) and foreign cultures (other) engage in the exchange of ideas,

objects, values, and how they negotiate roles and positions. The encounters include nine dialogues and one dialogue balloon, in addition to 233 visuals depicting the self and the other in isolation or in combination. All the texts are written by the textbook writers. The conversations including participants from the same cultural background were excluded. The analysis covers not only the content of interaction but also on how ‘self’ and ‘other’ interact “to establish and maintain appropriate personal and social links” (Thompson 2014, 45). An interpersonal perspective drawing upon Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) and Grammar of Visual Design (henceforth GVD) can be useful for mapping these interpersonal encounters using the system of negotiation in the verbal and visual modes (Kress & van Leeuwen 2021, 1996; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

This paper aligns with the current research studies on interpersonal negotiation in EFL textbooks (Chen 2010, 2022). Previous research focuses mainly on visual analysis and intermodal connections while this paper adopts a systematic analysis of the verbal text along with the intermodal analysis. This study uses a critical orientation aiming to evaluate the extent to which the Tunisian EFL textbooks construe successful and balanced interpersonal encounters. A balanced encounter is an interaction where the interactants exchange turn-taking, alternate in speech roles at the verbal and visual levels and exploit the affordances of the visual mode to yield natural and informative conversations. This is believed important given the saliency of the interpersonal in educational discourse and its potential contribution in building up the learner’s ICC (Byram 2021).

The tools of SFL and GVD are believed to empower research on EFL textbooks. By modelling multimodal conversations introducing self and other, the two frameworks not only provide instruments for discourse analysis but also help in diagnosing problems relative to the development of ICC. This is validated by the literature on ICC, which advocates that textbooks are mediators to teaching intercultural communication for the purpose of developing ICC (Ndura 2004; Sercu 2000).

This study seeks to answer the two following research questions:

- To what extent do texts and visuals encode balanced interpersonal encounters between ‘self’ and ‘other’ as depicted by the negotiation systems?
- To what extent do multimodal resources successfully combine to convey balanced interpersonal encounters?

The following sections introduce the conceptual frameworks and an empirical review of the literature. The first section offers to anchor this paper within research on multimodal literacy. The second section explains the theoretical framework. Focus is laid on the similarities and differences in the conceptualization of the interpersonal across SFL and GVD. Following this, focus is narrowed down to the review of literature on empirical research pertaining to the interpersonal metafunction in EFL discourse adopting multimodal analyses.

1. Multimodality and multiliteracies

With the profusion of modes of representation and communication, the field of multimodality has emerged to explain how modes combine to convey meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen 2021, 1996; Hodge & Kress 1988). In parallel, multimodal literacy is used to replace a traditional view of alphabetic literacy- the ability to form words out of letters and sentences out of words (Center for Media Literacy 2008). Multimodal literacy expands the view of literacy to:

the ability to use and combine different semiotic modes [such as images, writing, speech, or video] in ways that are appropriate to the given context, both in the sense of the context-bound rules and conventions that may apply and in the sense of the unique demands made by each specific situation (van Leeuwen 2017, 4).

Multimodal literacy has increasingly been associated with pedagogical practices in the classroom and outside it. Their main premise is that the use of various semiotic resources promotes learning (Moalla 2023; Kress et al. 2001; Lemke 1998). Chen (2022, 12-20) classifies research studies on multimodal literacies into two

broad directions: mediated discourse analysis and social semiotic analysis.

Mediated discourse studies argue for using “discourse analysis to engage in social action” (Scollon & Scollon 2004,7). Adherents of mediated discourse studies in multimodal literacy believe that educational discourse (in the classroom and outside it) offers a picture to social relations, values and events and “shapes how we think and act in this world” (Ledin & Machin 2018, 15). The social semiotic analysis adheres to SFL and Social Semiotics (cf. Halliday 1978) and argues, through the analysis of education-related printed and digital texts and the analysis of classroom practices, that meaning resides in the co-deployment of several semiotic resources and that the implementation of multimodal literacy in educational contexts is among knowledge requirements.

Multimodal literacy in the social semiotic approach stresses three basic principles. First, meaning-making is possible only through the integration of several semiotic resources. Second, meaning-making, in its different semiotic forms, is context and culture-bound. Literacy, therefore, resides in the ability to draw from the culturally available resources to produce meaning that coheres with the context in which it is produced. Third, literacy is the ability to recognize that every semiotic act fulfils simultaneously three interrelated metafunctions: (a) the ideational (representational in GVD), (b) the interpersonal interactional in GVD), and (c) the textual (compositional in GVD) (Kress & van Leeuwen 2021, 1996; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

Several research studies anchored within social semiotics have been conducted to explore the role of multimodality in promoting learning, focusing on printed and digital texts as well as classroom practices. The main premise of these studies is that the language user/learner should uncover how meaning is made through the interplay between the three metafunctions simultaneously (Moalla 2023; Jewitt & Kress 2003; Lemke 1998). The majority of metafunction-based studies are oriented towards promoting ideational, logical and textual skills. There is, however, a lack of substantive research studies zooming on interpersonal exchanges in

discourse to explore their contribution to promoting interpersonal literacy (cf. Chen 2022, 2017, 2010; Koutsikou et al. 2021; Taylor & Leung 2019).

The study at hand showcases that the focus on interpersonal exchanges is particularly relevant to the EFL contexts where two cultures meet and engage in dialogues. We propose to uncover the role of language and visuals mediated through pictures, dialogues and dialogue balloons in encoding interpersonal exchanges (between ‘self’ and ‘other’). This paper postulates that being exposed to classroom materials that project balanced and communicative interpersonal encounters can promote the learners’ ICC, which is a major literacy requirement in this globalised context (Byram 2021).

2. Theoretical framework

The social semiotic theories of SFL and multimodality constitute the theoretical underpinning of the present study. Both theories draw upon the seminal work of Michael Halliday ‘Language as a social semiotic’ (1978), which showcases that meaning-making is bound to the social and cultural contexts of use. The principles of social semiotics are extended by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) to semiotic resources beyond language such as images, gesture, music...etc. A fundamental principle in social semiotics is metafunction. It posits that all semiotic systems should fulfil three functions simultaneously to be considered as full communicative systems (cf. Kress & van Leeuwen 2021, 1996; Halliday 1994). The metafunctional principle organises the systems that build up the modes. The ideational metafunction (referred as representation(al) in GVD) organises the resources that ‘construe human experience’ (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 29). The interpersonal metafunction (labelled as interaction in GVD) models the role of language and other semiotic systems in enacting social relationships. The textual metafunction (labelled compositional in GVD) organises the resources for constructing cohesive texts both internally and with the context (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996).

Beyond the terminological differences in the metafunctional classification in SFL and GVD, there are a few differences between the two theories in their understanding of the interpersonal metafunction with respect to its conceptualization, the encoding of certain interpersonal meanings, and associated systems. In SFL, the

interpersonal metafunction organises how language users take different roles in the exchange of meaning (Andersen 2016). According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), the participants in this exchange are given the general roles of speaker and listener. This posits that the status of listener can be a cover term to designate the listener in the immediate context of communication and can expand to include the listener outside the immediate exchange.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2021, 2006) distinguish two types of participants: represented participants, the participants depicted in images, and interactive participants, the people who communicate with each other, namely the producer of the image and the viewer. Out of this distinction, three kinds of relations arise: the relations between the represented participants, the relations between the represented and interactive participants and the relation between the interactive participants. The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the two last relations, highlighting how the interactive participants (designer and viewer) interact by means of images. Within the interpersonal metafunction, the role of the image producer is “designing the viewer’s position” (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, 113). The metafunction shapes the role assigned to the viewer towards the represented image. To sum up, SFL highlights the dialogic role of the interpersonal metafunction, whereas GVD focuses on its orientational role (Graham 2016).

This discrepancy in the conceptualization of this metafunction is projected in the systems, in which this function is modelled across the two theories. In SFL, the interpersonal function is mapped in the mood system. In GVD, it is mapped in the systems of contact, social distance, and perspective. The interaction between represented participants (self and other in pictures and dialogue balloons), which is the focus of the present paper, can hardly be studied with the systems of the interactional metafunction as the latter models the interactions with the viewer. The interactions between the represented participants can be encoded in the representational metafunction. The potential of the metafunction to decipher the interaction between ‘self’ and ‘other’ is articulated by Graham (2016, 7) when defining it as “the construction of how things are in the natural and social worlds by their explicit description as participants, processes, relations and circumstances standing in particular semantic *relations to one another*” (emphasis added). In

GVD, the represented participants can assume different roles (for instance, actor versus goal, reactor versus phenomenon). A systematic comparison of distribution of roles in a text can reveal the semantic relations binding up the participants (for instance, the roles of the self-versus the other).

Bearing in mind the distinction mentioned above in interpersonal relations, recent studies in discourse semantics classified interpersonal systems into three systems: negotiation, evaluation and involvement (cf. Chen 2022)

- Negotiation is concerned with the negotiation of relations between speakers in the exchange.

- Evaluation focuses on the negotiation of attitudes in texts and it is associated with the appraisal system (Martin & White 2005).

- Involvement deals with the ‘resources for negotiating tenor relations, especially solidarity’ (Martin & White 2005) between interactants.

Focus is laid in this paper on the system of **negotiation**. The following section will introduce the system and the resources associated with it.

2.1. Negotiation system: Mapping social relations

SFL and GVD use different systems for mapping negotiation meanings, as shown above, due to different conceptualization of the interpersonal metafunction. Within SFL, the system of mood is introduced [Section 3.1.1.] and within GVD, the system of representation is highlighted.

2.1.1 Mood system in SFL

In SFL, the interpersonal analysis of language focuses not only on how participants interact with each other, but also on how they “establish and maintain appropriate personal and social links with them” (Thompson 2014, 45). Dialogues, as interactions between participants, are therefore suitable for an interpersonal analysis. Matthiessen and Slade (2010, 385) maintain that the interpersonal analysis of dialogues can reveal “what kinds of role relations are established through talk, what attitudes interactants express to and about each other, what kinds of things they find funny, and how they negotiate taking turns, etc.”

The system of resources that accounts for this interaction in dialogues is called negotiation (Martin & Rose 2007, 220). In any act of negotiation, the clause is considered as an “interactive event involving speaker, or writer, and audience” and this assigns “a particular speech role” to the speaker and a potential “complementary role” to the listener (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 134). For instance, a person asking a question would be considered as a “seeker of information” and the respondent would be a “supplier of the information demanded” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014,134).

Furthermore, there can be two major speech roles: ‘giving’ something to the listener (i.e., ‘inviting to receive’), or ‘demanding’ something from the listener (i.e., ‘inviting to give’) (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 135). The commodity exchanged can be either ‘goods and services’, where the commodity is ‘nonverbal’, or ‘information’. These variables result in four speech functions: “offer, command, statement and question” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, 135). These functions of offering something to the speaker or asking him/her a question would require the other interactant to respond, and therefore, the turns can be either ‘initiating’ or ‘responding’, as summarised in the following table.

Table1: Basic speech functions

	INITIATING	RESPONDING
Giving information	Statement They took my phone	Acknowledgement Did they?
Demanding information	Question Everything ok?	Answer Yes
Giving goods-and-services	Offer Some tea, father?	Acceptance Yes, please!
Demanding goods-and-services	Command We have to gut and salt!	Compliance Ok

(Source: *Martin and Rose 2007, 224*)

These speech functions are realised via different clause types. Typically, the ‘indicative’ is used to exchange information, the ‘declarative’ to express statements, the ‘interrogative’ to ask a question (which can be either polar (yes/no interrogative) or content

questions (wh-interrogative)) and the ‘imperative’ for commands (Eggins & Slade 1997, 75). Alternative grammatical realisations are also possible in language, and they seem to be important while analysing discourse (Martin & Rose 2007, 227). For instance, Martin & Rose (2007) claim that the command ‘*I need you to talk to them*’ is considered metaphorical as it is realised via a declarative clause.

The aim of the interpersonal linguistic analysis is to unveil the relations between the participants in the textbooks. This, however, can be complemented by a GVD analysis of the pictures through the negotiations system in GVD, encoded in the representational metafunction.

2.1.2 Negotiations in GVD

GVD maps the resources of negotiation within the representation metafunction through a configuration of participants, process and circumstances, according to which the participants enact social relations through performing participant roles (for example in dialogue balloons as shown in Figure 2, the participants can perform different participant roles such actor/goal, sayer/receiver, reactor/phenomenon). These process types serve as mediators for the realisation of participant roles. Among the process types mentioned in GVD, the following ones can carry out the negotiation in the present study because they involve human participants (Kress & van Leeuwen 2021, 44-112).

- Transactional: the image conveys action from an actor towards a goal, for instance, the image depicts a participant, an actor doing something to another participant, a goal.
- Non-transactional: it depicts an actor and an action without a goal, for example, the image shows a participant performing an action.
- Reactional: it involves a reactor looking at a phenomenon, for instance, in an image, a participant is looking at another human participant or at something.
- Verbal: it depicts a participant saying something. They can be transactional involving a sayer, speech and a receiver or non-transactional depicting one participant saying something without a receiver.

- Symbolic suggestive: it involves one participant; the carrier whose mood is depicted, for example, an image depicts the mood of the participant (happy, sad, shocked etc.).

2.2. Interpersonal relations in (multimodal) EFL pedagogies

In the previous sections, we have tried to point out that studies on interpersonal literacy are scarce, failing to capture the cultural anchoring of discourse and interpersonal exchanges and ignoring the role of the ‘interpersonal’ in literacy development (Chen 2022). It is, however, worth mentioning that a few studies have explored interpersonal exchanges in EFL discourse and pedagogies. Chen (2022) has introduced an extensive and comprehensive analysis of interpersonal relations in Chinese EFL textbooks by analysing multimodal texts through the systems of negotiation, evaluation and involvement. She has focused on dialogues combining text and images and stressed the synergy of text and visual in enhancing interpersonal relations.

Koutsikou et al. (2021) and Chen (2010) have focused on interpersonal exchanges between text designer and viewer. Chen (2010) has drawn upon the Appraisal-based systems of graduation and engagement to gauge the voice of the editor (designer) building on multimodal texts in Chinese EFL textbooks, which include illustrations and the labelling on illustrations, dialogue balloons, and incomplete jointly-constructed texts. Koutsikou et al. (2021) have analysed modes separately and in combination to show the way the multimodal science texts for young children address the viewer through the systems of contact/address, involvement and distance.

The present study aligns with Chen’s (2022) study through focusing on exchange as **negotiation**, which foregrounds the interaction between the represented participants (between ‘self’ and ‘other’). Similarly, this study focuses on multimodal texts in two Tunisian EFL textbooks which include separate pictures, dialogue balloons, dialogues with or without picture. It offers to analyse the modes (verbal and visual) separately and in combination. While mapping the interpersonal relationships instantiated in the texts under analysis, this paper offers a critical exploration of interpersonal relations in Tunisian EFL textbooks. Building on different systems, we propose to analyse the multimodal texts to see whether they construct potentially successful intercultural

encounters in terms of turn-taking, variety in speech roles and participant roles as well as the depiction of natural encounters through exploiting the full meaning potential of visuals. This study is anchored within a very distinct cultural context from the above-mentioned studies, which can offer a different, culturally-shaped exploration of interpersonal exchanges in EFL textbooks.

3. Methods

This section introduces the corpus of the study. Afterwards, it presents the methods of data analysis, which focus on the verbal text and visuals in isolation and combination providing simultaneously quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data.

3.1 The corpus

The corpus used in this study consists of two Tunisian locally-designed and published EFL textbooks. These two textbooks entitled *Let's Learn English* and *Let's Discover more English* are used respectively by all the 7th and 8th grade Basic Education pupils. The two textbooks were selected because they are the only textbooks, among the nine official textbooks in EFL education in Tunisia, which include encounters between Tunisian characters and other culturally different ones.

The two textbooks are structured around stories of the visits that a Tunisian character, Imene, and a British character, Peter, made to each other's country. The two characters were hosted by a local family and discovered different cultural aspects of the country (celebrations, school, family life, entertainment, food, and everyday life). The textbooks selected for analysis offer instances of intercultural encounters, mainly conversations, where characters of the two nationalities exchange cultural information, feelings and attitudes. The textbooks, which are supposed to implement the guidelines of the 8th form English language official programme and achieve its objectives, aim to enhance the development of language proficiency and the promotion of tolerant identity through teaching social skills and values such as cooperation, and respect for other people's views and attitudes (English programmes for basic education 2006, 5).

The texts selected for analysis include nine dialogues between a Tunisian and a British character. Among these dialogues, only one

is accompanied with a picture. In addition to the dialogues, the corpus includes one dialogue balloon jointly constructed with verbal text and images. As shown in Figure 2, a dialogue balloon depicts a sayer with a speech and “a protruding line serving as a vector to connect the sayer with the speech” (Kress & van Leeuwen 2021, 73). The corpus also includes 233 pictures depicting human participants whose identity is clearly established as ‘self’ or ‘other’. The pictures portray ‘self and other in combination or in isolation.

3.2 Methods of data analysis

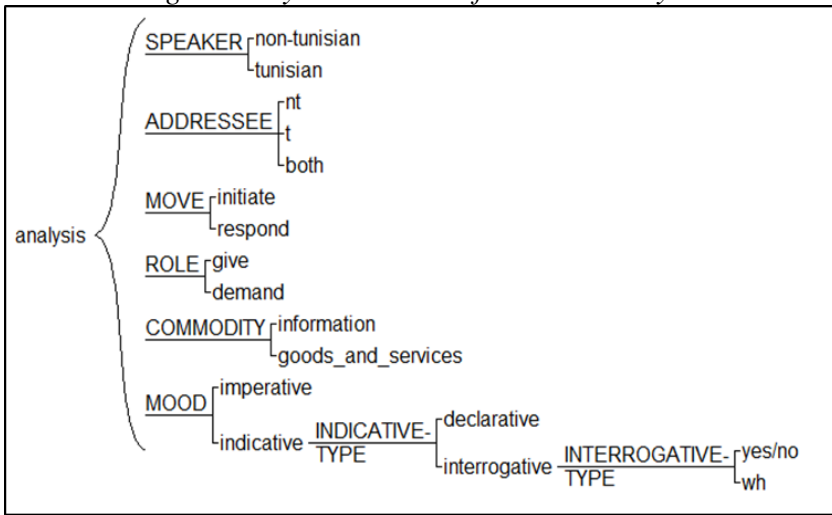
The present study aims at exploring the interpersonal encounters drawing upon the systems of negotiation. For each system, we propose to employ the parallel dimensions used in SFL and GVD. Table 2 introduces the systems used to analyse negotiation across the modes.

Table 2: System of negotiation of self and other

Type of interpersonal discourse semantics	Text analysed	Theoretical framework	Type of analysis
Negotiation: Interaction as exchange between communicating parties (the represented participants)	Texts in linear dialogues Texts in dialogue balloons	Mood system (clause as exchange)	Quantitative (CorpusTool) Qualitative
	Dialogue balloons Pictures depicting ‘self’ and/or ‘other	Representational metafunction; Process types with human participants	Quantitative Qualitative

The verbal conversations are analysed using UAM CorpusTool, software for text annotation (O’Donnell 2010). The following system network, based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) has been used:

Figure 1: System network for mood analysis



In addition to the quantitative analysis of the verbal conversations, this paper studies conversations for a deeper qualitative analysis. Along with this, the qualitative analysis explores the synergy of text and visual. In analysing the synergy between text verbal and image, the two modes are evaluated along the parameters of convergence and complementarity (Koutsikou et al. 2021) as shown below:

- Convergence: it aims to assess whether the picture replicates the content introduced in verbal language to achieve the highlighting function or fails to do so, and, therefore, a lack of convergence happens.
- Complementarity: it aims to evaluate whether the picture expresses additional meanings that the text cannot naturally express (for instance, expressing the symbolic suggestive process of happiness).

4. Results

This section introduces the interpersonal relations depicted by the negotiation system of mood in SFL, which is used to analyse the textual negotiations, and the representational system in GVD, used to analyse the visual negotiations. At the end, we propose a qualitative analysis based on two examples, a dialogue and a dialogue balloon, to assess the role of the synergy between text and visuals in the realisation of these negotiations.

4.1.Negotiation between Self and Other in verbal interactions

The analysis of the negotiation relations between self and other in verbal interactions is divided into three dimensions, as presented in the system network (figure 1): the participants (speaker and addressee), the moves and roles, and the mood system. Starting with the participants, the results have revealed that almost equal space is given to ‘self’ and ‘other’, as from the 89 turns analysed, 44 were performed by ‘other’ and 45 by ‘self’, with ‘self’ referring to Tunisian characters and ‘other’ to non-Tunisian characters. The exchanges included eight Tunisian and five British interactants. The addressees in each case are from the opposing nationality, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Speakers and addressees in self-other conversations

Speaker	Addressee	
	Non-Tunisian	Tunisian
Non-Tunisian	0	44
Tunisian	44	0
Both	0	1

Table 3 shows that whenever there is a conversation including participants from different nationalities, they are most of the time one-to-one, even if other participants are present in the situation. For instance, the following dialogue balloon depicts Peter having lunch with Aly’s family:

Conversation 1: (extracted from *Let’s Learn English 7th Form*, 61)

Participants: Peter, Mrs Soltane and the brother

Context: Peter, who is visiting Tunisia for the first time, is having lunch with Aly’s family.

Turn	Speaker	Text
1	Peter	Mmm. This dish smells delicious. What is it, Mrs Soltane ?
2	Mrs Soltane	That’s couscous. It’s a traditional dish in Tunisia.
3	Peter	What about these Mrs Soltane?
4	Mrs Soltane	Ah! Those are briks.
5	Peter	Are they sweet?

6	Mrs Soltane	No, they are savoury.
7	Brother	Tell me Peter, what is the popular dish in Britain?
8	Peter	Fish and chips. It's my favourite fast food.
9	Brother	Would you like to have an orange Peter?
10	Peter	Yes, please. I like oranges very much.

Conversation 1 shows that only two characters from the people present interact at a time. From turn 1 to 6, the conversation is between Peter and Mrs Soltane, and then for the rest of the conversation, it shifts to be between the brother and Peter, without the participation of Mrs Soltane, the father and the sister. The organisation of a conversation in this way seems to contradict natural conversations. In fact, Eggins and Slade (1997) state that conversations with only two participants are frequent in language teaching materials as the focus is only on the 'pragmatic goal' of exchanging information and goods achieved by the 'complementarity' between the participants: "one interactant demands and the other gives" (Eggins & Slade 1997, 20). However, such type of conversations might not help learners of English because "[f]or students to learn how to manage conversation effectively in the target language, they need to have realistic models of proficient users doing the same thing" (Gilmore 2007, 17).

Furthermore, participating in a conversation is an 'interpersonal need' "to establish who we are, how we related to others, and what we think of how the world is" (Eggins & Slade 1997, 6). By building the conversation on two participants and not giving turns to the other characters present in the situation, the designers of this textbook, disempower the silenced characters (the father and the sister) as "the interactant who is linguistically more active receives "the greater share of social pleasure and self-entrenchment" (Malinowski 1946, as cited in Ventola 1979).

Moving to the moves and roles of the participants, the studied conversations are organised in a systematic way: one interactant initiates a role in a conversation, and the other responds, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Speech roles in self-other conversations

	Initiate	Respond	Chi-square
Give	9	40	42.106
Demand	35	5	42.106

Table 4 shows that most initiating roles are cases of demand and most responses are about giving. The chi-square test shows a high significance with a value of 42.106 for each line showing an even distribution of the speech roles: most of the acts of ‘giving’ are responses, and most of the ‘demands’ are cases of initiation. This can be linked to the structure of the conversations in the textbooks. In most of these conversations, one interactant takes an initiating role and keeps demanding services or information, while the second interactant just responds. The following conversation is a case in point:

Conversation 2: (extracted from *Let’s discover more English 8th Form*, 41)

Participants: Imene and the deputy head teacher

Context: Imene visited London and wanted to know about the English secondary schools. She, therefore, visited a school and had a conversation with the deputy head teacher.

Turn	Speaker	Text	Move	Role
1	Imene	How old are the pupils who go to secondary schools?	Initiate	demand
2	Deputy head teacher	Children from the age of 11 to the age of 18.	Respond	give
3	I	Do they all go to state schools?	re-initiate	demand
4	D	More than 90% of them go to state schools.	Respond	give
5	I	Where do the others go?	re-initiate	demand
6	D	To private schools, of course.	Respond	give
7	I	Do parents have to pay for their children’s education?	re-initiate	demand

8	D	State schools are free, but private schools are very expensive.	Respond	give
9	I	Can pupils wear what they want to school?	re-initiate	demand
10	D	Of course not! School uniform is compulsory in most schools.	Respond	give

Conversation 2 is between Imene, a young Tunisian student, and the deputy head teacher in England. Imene initiates the conversation by asking questions as she wants to know about the English secondary schools, and the deputy head teacher answers her. The conversation shows a lack of reciprocity revealed in the moves and roles associated with each interactant. Imene is the interactant who initiates and re-initiates the conversation by demanding information, while the deputy only responds by giving the requested information. This is also reflected in the type of clause used: Imene produces interrogative clauses (questions) only, while the deputy produces declarative clauses (statements). This patterned distribution of clause types shows different social roles: Imene is represented as ‘an information seeker’, while the social role of the deputy is actually more privileged: he has the right to make statements, as he is the ‘primary knower’ (Martin & Rose 2007). In this context, Eggins and Slade (1997) maintain that the repeated use of *wh*-interrogative clauses would make the interactant seem like “an interrogator” (Eggins & Slade 1997, 87). Although this conversation manages to teach learners how to ask questions, it fails to take into consideration the issue of ‘dominance’ (associated with the primary knower) and ‘marginalization’ (linked to the role of ‘information seeker’) in conversations (Eggins & Slade 1997, 121-122).

As for the mood realisations, Table 5 presents the type of clause associated with the role of the participant:

Table 5: Clause types in self-other conversations

		Give	Demand	Chi-square
Mood type	Imperative	1	7	6.433
	Indicative	48	33	6.433
Indicative type	Declarative	47	1	77.354
	Interrogative	1	32	57.369

Table 5 shows that almost all cases of giving are realised via declarative clauses, and that cases of demand are mostly interrogative, with a few cases in the imperative mood. This patterned distribution is further highlighted by the chi-square test result which indicates high value for the last two lines, highlighting the uneven distribution of indicative clauses with respect to acts of ‘giving’ and ‘demanding’. In fact, declarative clauses are associated with cases of ‘giving’, while interrogative clauses are rather associated with ‘demand’. These different types of clauses are illustrated in the following conversation:

Conversation 3: (extracted from *Let’s Learn English 7th Form*, 162)

Participants: Aly, Peter, Mrs Soltane and Mr Soltane.

Context: The boys are leaving to London, and Mr Soltane is taking them to the airport.

Turn	Speaker	Text	Role	Clause type	Function
1	Mr. Soltane	Are you ready boys?	demand	Interrogative	Question
2	Peter	Not yet, Mr Soltane.	Give	Indicative	Answer
		<i>Aly, can you help me please?</i>	<i>Demand</i>	<i>Interrogative</i>	<i>Command*</i>
3	Aly	What’s the matter Peter?	Demand	Interrogative	Question
4	P	I can’t carry this suitcase to the car,	Give	Indicative	Statement
		<i>it’s too heavy for me.</i>	<i>Demand</i>	<i>Indicative</i>	<i>Command</i>
5	A	Let’s carry it together	Give	Indicative	Compliance

6	M S	Hurry up boys. You must leave for the airport now.	Demand	Imperative	Command
7	P	Goodbye Mrs Soltane and thank you for everything	Give	Indicative	Statement
8	Mrs S	It was nice having you with us.	Give	Indicative	Acknowledge-ment
9	P	<i>Please come and visit us in Britain with Aly</i>	<i>Give</i>	<i>Imperative</i>	<i>Offer</i>
10	Mrs S	Thanks for the invitation. Have a safe trip home.	Give	Indicative	Acceptance
11	P	Goodbye everybody		Greeting	

* The items in italics refer to incongruent, or non-typical grammatical, realisations.

Conversation 3 shows that turns 1, 2 and 3 contain cases of demand realised via interrogative clauses. Turns 1 and 3 represent the congruent ways of asking for information. However, the interrogative in turn 2 (*Peter: Aly, can you help me please?*) is rather a command, which is a polite way of demanding goods and services. This can be explained by the fact that Peter does not have the right to issue a direct imperative command to his friend as Martin and Rose (2007, 229) state that “[r]ealizing a command as an interrogative thus masks the inequality in status implied by the command.”

Conversation 3 also contains two cases of demand realised via an indicative clause (turn 4) and an imperative (turn 6). Turn 4 (*Peter: it's too heavy for me*) is also another polite incongruent case of expressing demand: as “an even more indirect way to realize a command is with declarative mood” (Martin & Rose 2007, 229). Peter, through using incongruent demands, is represented as a polite person.

Additionally, almost all the cases of giving are realised via indicative clauses, except for turn 9, where Peter again is using the imperative to offer goods and services. According to Martin and Rose (2007, 230), this realisation cannot be considered as incongruent because offers do not have “a congruent grammatical realisation of their own.” This can be considered as a variation in expressing offers.

Conversation 3, as well as the quantitative data presented in Table 5, reveal the over-reliance in textbooks on congruent conversations, and this can be related to the “paucity of adequate materials for teaching casual conversation to learners of English as a second or foreign language” (Eggins & Slade 1997, 8). In fact, most of the materials used in textbooks are not authentic; they are written by the textbook designers to teach certain grammatical points without much focus on the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of language.

Furthermore, despite their efforts to depict an equality between self and other in conversations, the textbook designers manage that only quantitatively by giving equal utterances to each party (Table 2). In fact, the study of the social roles shows how they empower the other by depicting him/her as polite (conversation 3), knowledgeable person (conversation 2) while they disempower the self, represented as a marginalised information seeker (conversation 2) and lacking semantic and pragmatic knowledge (conversation 3).

4.2 Negotiation relations between self and other in visuals

Table 6 reports the distribution of process types in the visuals depicting ‘self’ and ‘other’. This Table indicates that the number of process types construing direct encounters are very limited compared to the total number of process types depicting human participants (out of 395 process types, only 58 are associated with the interpersonal encounters). They are depicted in four situations and 9 pictures. The participants involved in these interactions are two ‘other’ and seven ‘self’. If we consider the difference in the number of represented participants, the ‘other’ appears a more articulate, more active participant and this is particularly shown in the number of transactional processes, which depict an ‘actor’ doing something to a ‘goal’ (2 versus 5). As Figure 2 shows, the Tunisian

participants are depicted as passive participants, who are engaged in reaction only (the father and sister in Figure 2) or presented for decorative reasons not accomplishing any process (the children in Figure 2).

Table 6: Distribution of Interpersonal relations between self and other as depicted by the representation metafunction

			Self	Other
Narrative	Transactional		2	5
	Non-transactional		1	1
	Reaction	Reader	0	0
		Each other	4	3
		Something	5	5
Verbal		8/5	5/2	
Conceptual	Suggestive	Happy	7	6
		Sad	0	0
		Neutral	4	2
		Other	0	0
Total			31	27

The negotiations between ‘self’ and ‘other’ are more focused on ‘reaction’, looking at something than on interaction, speaking to each other (10 versus 7). The atmosphere of interaction between self and other, however, seems relaxed and based on harmony and understanding with 13 symbolic suggestive processes depicting happiness but this reduces and oversimplifies interpersonal connections.

The modal density of visual elements (the affordance of visuals to express more than one meaning in the same picture) is not fully exploited. A picture construing a natural human interaction can afford naturally the simultaneous realisation of more than three process types (verbal, reaction, transactional and symbolic suggestive). In the visuals analysed, 58 process types are performed by 21 human depictions, which amounts to an average of 2.75 process types for each participant. This means that the meaning potential of visuals is not fully exploited, which may affect the clarity of the interpersonal exchanges and their naturalness. To illustrate this with an example, Figure 3 introduces a conversation between Peter and the customs officer. In this visual, each participant performs two process types: a symbolic suggestive process encoding the mood of happiness and a unidirectional action (holding the

passport and pushing the trolley). Not only do the process types fail to connect the participants, but also no eye-contact connects them. Important information included in the linear conversation is not indexed in a visual form, such as the interrogative mood. This limited use of the meaning potential of visuals reduces the communicative capability of the visuals.

To sum up, the verbal and visual analyses yield consistent results showing an over-simplification and the unnatural nature of the exchange. The over-simplification is manifested at the verbal level by a patterned distribution of turns (Table 3) that does not really portray equal social roles between self and other, as highlighted by the qualitative analysis of the conversations. The equality between the characters is only achieved at the level of frequency but not in terms of roles. At the visual level, the oversimplification of the exchange is highlighted by the limited number of process types performed by each participant as well as their lack of diversity. The majority of process types focus on 'reaction' and 'being' (symbolic suggestive) rather than 'doing' (transactions). The exchange also depicts passive participants who are present for decorative reasons.

The exchanges are also characterised by unnatural conversations failing to fully exploit the meaning potential of the verbal and visual modes. At the verbal level, the mood analysis reveals that the interactants keep their roles most of the time. For instance, in conversation 2, Imene asks questions and the deputy answers them without any attempts to change the roles. Such adjacency pairs (such as question/answer) "serve often as a core, around which even larger sequences are built" (Peräkylä 2004, 167). A natural conversation cannot be made up of only such pairs without other sequences, or without, at least, a change of roles. At the visual level, the analysis shows that the participants fail to combine several process types in the same exchange, which renders unauthentic and only partially communicative visual data. This stands against Lemke's (1998) principle of visual density, which posits that visual modes condense information and multiply meaning.

Nevertheless, the 'other' appears more articulate than the 'self' both at the verbal and visual levels. At the verbal level, most of the conversations rely on congruent realisations: that is, cases where the function of the turn is realised via the typical type of clause

associated with it. In casual conversation, this is not always the case, and incongruent realisations are rather more frequent. Only the other (Peter) is presented as the speaker who can use such incongruent, sometimes more polite, forms of speech, in comparison to the self, presented as less knowledgeable. At the visual level, although the participants representing ‘self’ outnumber those representing ‘other’, the two types of participants perform almost equal numbers of process types. This indicates that ‘other’ is more articulate, especially that s/he performs diverse process types (see Table 6).

Similar results are found by Abid and Moalla’s (2021, 2020) studies on Tunisian EFL textbooks in terms of their representation of intercultural contacts including conversations. Using a different analytical tool which is content analysis, the studies show that intercultural contacts are underrepresented in terms of prominence and variety of genres. The analysis of the conversations reveal that the characters’ participation is not equal and mono-directional, emphasising the role of the Tunisian characters as information seekers and the native speakers (British or American) as the only sources of knowledge and information. The researchers argue that the lack of mutual representation of the two cultures and the unequal exchange of information failed to teach Tunisian learners that they can have various roles in intercultural conversations and to introduce them to the communication challenges of day-to-day natural intercultural conversations. Those results conform to those obtained from the present research.

4.3 Negotiation analysis mediated by the interplay between visual and verbal modes

This section introduces a qualitative analysis of the synergy of text and visuals in the realisation of the negotiation between ‘self’ and ‘other’. The example analysed in Table 7 refers to a situation in which Peter, who is visiting Tunisia for the first time, is having lunch with Aly’s family. From a linguistic point of view, this situation, as analysed in conversation 1, is conducted between Peter and Mrs Soltane and then shifts to questions and answers between Peter and the brother. The synergy between text and visuals indicates that many meanings in the text are not highlighted by the visual representation.

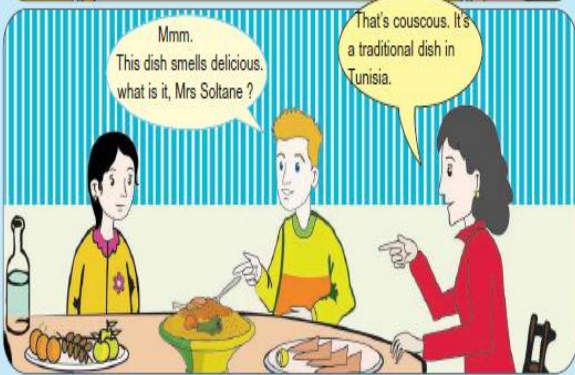
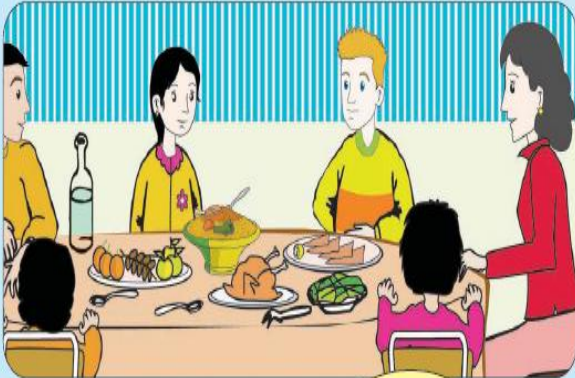
Figure 2: An example of a dialogue balloon

Activity 2

Look at the pictures. Read the text and answer the questions.

Peter is having lunch with Aly and his family : couscous with lamb and vegetables, roast chicken, briks, salad and fresh fruit.

Peter is eating couscous for the first time.



Mmm.
This dish smells delicious.
what is it, Mrs Soltane ?

That's couscous. It's
a traditional dish in
Tunisia.

Table 7: An Example of Negotiation between self and other mediated by the text and visuals in a dialogue balloon

Verbal instance	Speech function	Visual pattern
<p>-Mmm. This dish smells delicious. What is it, Mrs Sotane?"</p> <p>-That's couscous. It's a traditional dish in Tunisia.</p>	<p>-The conversation is between two members: Peter and Mrs Soltane. Peter is demanding information about the food and Mrs. Soltane responds to the questions.</p> <p>-Peter, takes an initiating role in the conversation, while the self, Mrs Soltane, is merely responding to the questions.</p>	<p>Convergence/Lack of convergence</p> <p>-The visuals introduce the speaker, addressee and other participants.</p> <p>-Peter's finger is used to index the 'dish'.</p> <p>-The participants establish eye-contact with the 'dish'.</p> <p>-Mouth closure indexes speech.</p> <p>-There is an absence of the visual representation of demanding information (question).</p> <p>-There is an absence of indexation of "delicious" in visual representation.</p> <p>Complementarity/lack of complementarity</p> <p>-The Symbolic suggestive function of happiness is realized.</p> <p>-The visuals introduce where the exchange took place (around lunch table).</p> <p>- There is an absence of eye-contact (a vector to indicate the direction of interaction).</p>

The second example analyses a linear dialogue supplemented with a picture depicting a conversation between the customs officer and Peter in the airport. The linguistic analysis shows the customs officer asking Peter for his passport. The synergy between text and visual aligns with the previous example indicating a limited interaction between the modes. This is particularly evident in the absence of the semiotic resources encoding negotiations such as the visual representation of the question and the lack of eye-contact to visualise the direction of interaction.

Figure 3: An example of a linear dialogue supplemented with a picture



Figure 3 is supplemented with the following conversation.

Conversation 4: (extracted from *Let's Learn English 7th Form*, 55)

Participants: Customs officer and Peter

Context: Peter arrived at Jerba Zarzis Airport. He is showing his passport to the customs officer.

Turn	Speaker	Text	Function
1	Customs Officer	Good afternoon.	Greeting
2	Peter	Good afternoon, Sir.	Response to greeting
3	Co	Can I see your passport, please?	Command
4	P	Yes of course. Here you are, Sir.	Compliance
5	Co	Is this all your luggage?	Question
6	P	Yes, Sir.	Answer
7	Co	Where are you staying in Jerba?	Question
8	P	Well, I have a Tunisian friend in Ryadh. I am staying with his family.	Answer
9	Co	Have a nice stay.	Statement
10	P	Thank you. Goodbye	Acknowledgement-Greeting
11	Co	Goodbye.	Response to greeting

Figure 3 and conversation 4 are analysed in Table 8 through a combined analysis of visual and verbal information.

Table 8: An Example of Negotiation between self and other mediated by the text and visuals in a linear dialogue

Speech function	Visual pattern
<p>The conversation is between the customs officer and Peter.</p> <p>The customs officer initiates the conversation by asking questions, and Peter takes the role of a respondent.</p>	<p>Convergence/Lack of convergence</p> <p>Visual representation of the participants in the conversation.</p>
	<p>Absence of visual representation of demanding information (questions in the conversation).</p>
	<p>Representing commodities mentioned in the exchange (luggage and passport).</p>
	<p>Absence of eye-contact with ‘passport’ and ‘luggage’.</p>
	<p>Absence of eye-contact (vector to indicate the direction of interaction).</p>
	<p>Complementarity/lack of complementarity</p> <p>Symbolic suggestive function (happiness)</p> <p>Indicating where the exchange took place (airport)</p>

To recapitulate, only a partial convergence between the text and visuals is achieved. The visual mode typically represents two dimensions in the system network of mood, which are the participants in the exchange (speaker and addressee) and commodities, goods mentioned in the exchange, such as the dish in the first conversation or the passport in the second. A deep analysis of visual information indicates a failure to realise important dimensions in the mood system such as role and mood: the indexation of ‘demanding information’ through the visual representation of the interrogative mood is hardly represented.

The analysis of the synergy between text and visuals also highlights a simplified representation of complementarity between modes: the visual mode serves to contextualise the exchange in space (for instance, the airport in the second example). It also typically represents a symbolic suggestive process through representing the happiness of the participants. However, the visual fails to represent

the ‘move’ dimension in the system network of mood. In both examples, the picture scarcely represents the direction of exchange through highlighting the participant who initiates the exchange, a function typically realised in visuals by vectors (body posture, gaze, or hand movement).

This stands in contrast with Chen (2022) who pointed out that in the textbooks under her analysis, visuals play two major roles in multimodal exchanges: **highlighting** the verbal information through the use of bold, different colours, etc. and **illustration** of verbal information through a visual representation of verbal content.

Conclusion

In foreign language contexts, textbooks are intercultural domains in which ‘self’ and ‘other’ engage in multimodal forms of intercultural exchanges including dialogues and dialogue balloons. In these exchanges, the interactants not only exchange ideas, objects and values but also negotiate roles and positions in order to maintain balanced personal and social roles. To address the problem of the lack of substantive research on interpersonal exchanges in EFL textbooks, the present study concentrates on two Tunisian EFL textbooks depicting several instances of interpersonal encounters. In contrast with the descriptive research tackling the issue of interpersonal negotiations, this paper adopts a critical evaluation of the conjunctive use of visual and verbal modes to assess the extent to which the two modes build up balanced, informative and authentic interpersonal exchanges. This analysis was done by means of the conjoined uses of quantitative and qualitative methods drawing up the negotiation systems; the mood system in SFL and the representational system of GVD, which depicts interactions between represented participants.

The quantitative analysis has revealed an equal number of turns, as far as verbal conversations are concerned, despite the fact that Tunisian participants outnumber British ones. This equality between ‘self’ and ‘other’ is only achieved at the level of numbers. The quantitative analysis of visuals indicates that the participants from the two cultural backgrounds perform approximate process types despite the fact that ‘self’ outnumbers ‘other’.

The qualitative analysis has emphasised the differences between ‘self’ and ‘other’ in terms of roles. In fact, these conversations disempower the self by representing him/her as silenced characters (conversation 1), a marginalised ‘information seeker’ (conversation 2), and with limited linguistic and pragmatic knowledge (conversation 3). On the other hand, the interactions empower the other by representing him/her as a more active interactant (conversation 1), a dominant ‘primary knower’ (conversation 2), and a more polite and articulate character (conversation 3). As for the visuals, the qualitative analysis reveals a simplified, rudimentary realisation of convergence and complementarity between the modes, revealing a failure to fully exploit the meaning potential of visuals in illustrating verbal information and representing mode-specific meanings.

This study has implications pertaining to the learners’ generic awareness and their development of ICC. At the first level, this study has shown that the learners are exposed to the **simplified and unauthentic** genre of conversations, which would negatively influence their awareness of this genre. Literature on the role of the foreign language textbooks’ representation of intercultural encounters, including conversations, has pointed out that authenticity and variety of encounters are prerequisites for the learners’ development of ICC and preparation for future intercultural communication outside class. In this respect, Sercu (2000) argues that authenticity and variety of genres are required to familiarise students with possible contacts they may have with other people in real life. She suggests that “the more diverse the form of contact portrayed, the higher the chances are that pupils’ own experiences and perceptions of the target culture contacts will be addressed” (2000, 274). Along with authenticity and variety, Byram (2021) suggests that equal participation in intercultural interaction is a necessary condition for successful intercultural communication and the development of relativized attitudes and interaction skills. In textbooks, the skill of interaction and relativized attitudes can be developed by representing characters from different cultural backgrounds equally participating in conversations and providing different perspectives on the cultural information they exchange and discuss.

By exploiting the negotiation system within the interpersonal metafunction, this study focuses chiefly on the construal of interpersonal exchanges by highlighting whether these exchanges build up balanced, natural and communicative encounters. Along with this function, intercultural research has revealed that textbooks construct images of ‘self’ and ‘other’ and develop perceptions of each other (Zarate 2004). Textbooks also constitute domains where ‘self’ and ‘other’ connect with the outside world. The above-mentioned areas may constitute complementary levels for developing a thorough analysis of interpersonal relations in Tunisian EFL textbooks. These analyses can be done using the attitude and involvement systems within the interpersonal metafunction.

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