A Critical Discourse Analysis on Ableist Ideologies in Primary Education English Language Textbooks in the Philippines

Authors : Brittany Joi B. Kirsch

Abstract : Textbooks carry a crucial role in imparting ideologies that stimulate inclusivity and social diversity. In the Philippines, a law on inclusive education (IE) for differently-abled learners has recently been signed in order to ensure their rights to quality and IE are protected and upheld (Republic Act No. 11650, 2022). With the presence of ableism in textbooks, the promotion of IE may be challenged. A considerable amount of research has been done on disability representation and ableism in foreign countries; however, none, to the extent of the researcher's knowledge, has been conducted on ableist ideologies in primary education English language textbooks in the Philippines. Hence, this paper aims to investigate the negotiation of ableist ideologies in primary education English language textbooks in the Philippines. Utilizing Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the framework, six prescribed primary education English language textbooks from different grade levels were analyzed to examine instances of ableism in the texts. To further support the analysis of the study, supplemental data were gathered from the accounts of six public elementary school English language teachers. Findings reveal that the textbooks contain ableist ideologies with a limited representation of differently-abled people; by disclosing them as (1) invisible, (2) equipped with negative abilities, and (3) plagued with delicate health. By identifying ableist ideologies in textbooks, educational institutions and publishers may benefit in assessing and reforming instructional materials to resolve the presence of such ideologies, thereby abiding by the country's law on IE and strengthening its overall implementation.