

Inclusive and Exclusive Uses of *We* in four American Textbooks for Multicultural Teacher Education¹

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This study analyzes four American multicultural teacher education textbooks for instances of inclusive and exclusive representations through the use of first person plural pronouns (i.e., we, us, our, ours). Positioning Theory is used as a theoretical framework to examine the textbook authors' uses of first person plural pronouns and to understand how these pronouns perform reflexive and interactive positioning and fluidly (re)negotiate and (re)delineate the borders between 'self' and 'other.' The findings suggest that first person plural pronouns are used extensively in the focal textbooks to refer to such groups as authors, Americans, humans, teachers, and teacher educators. Expressing differing levels of ambiguity in interpretation, these pronouns play significant roles in the discursive representations of inclusivity and exclusivity across topics of multicultural education. This study implicates that language teachers should use criticality and reflexivity when approaching exclusionary discourses and representations that neglect the particularities of individuals from different cultures.

I. Introduction

Cultural and economic globalization continues to reinforce national and transnational interactions amongst individuals who have varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Preparing language learners for such interactions, the practices of foreign language education should promote learners' construction of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This conceptualization of foreign language education primarily entails reconsidering language education curriculum and teacher education. More specifically, as the key agents of classroom instruction, language teachers need to fashion class content that supports the incorporation of ICC into learners' language development. Pre-service teacher education is usually the stage where language teachers build their pedagogical knowledge, develop their competencies, and shape their conceptions about language teaching. Multicultural education and diversity courses in teacher education programs, afford pre-service teachers with professional learning experiences that pertain to teaching diverse student populations. Some teacher educators design the curriculum of these courses by following the content of the textbooks, partially or entirely. This makes textbooks a crucial resource, contributing to teacher candidates' knowledge base and

¹ Uzum, B., Yazan, B. & Selvi, A. F. (Under review/Revisions) Inclusive and exclusive use of *we* in for American textbooks for multicultural teacher education. *Language Teaching Research*. (Special issue edited by Byram, Houghton, and Porto on intercultural citizenship)

forming the professional dispositions that will impact their priorities and decisions about the integration of ICC as an instructional goal in their future classes (Byram, 2008; Porto, 2015).

The importance of the textbooks used in multicultural education and diversity courses, with regards to ICC, becomes increasingly apparent when the discourse in these texts is critically approached (Fairclough, 2015). The texts could include instances of cultural inclusivity and exclusivity that impact emerging teachers' conceptions of interculturality. These instances are particularly observable in the use of pronouns, whose interpretation hinges on the intersection of their linguistic function and the speakers' social, cultural, and personal contexts (Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990). Interpreting pronouns is challenging because they "are in fact very complex and political words, always raising difficult issues of who is [not] being represented. There is, therefore, never an unproblematic 'we' or 'you' or 'they' or 'I' or 'he/she'" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 173). Thus, the critical analysis of teacher education textbooks should include exploring and addressing the use of pronouns for culturally inclusive and exclusive instances, both in research and teacher preparation. The current study focuses on *we* that can function as inclusive and exclusive because of its ambiguity (Harwood, 2005), and can be used in textbooks for the purpose of discursive representation of social and cultural categories through identification and othering. More specifically, this study addressed the following research question: *How does the discourse in some American multicultural teacher education textbooks represent inclusivity and exclusivity through first person plural pronouns?*

II. Literature Review

1. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

The concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) was theorized by Byram (1997) and expanded by Houghton (2012). Byram (1997) offers an ICC framework which comprises *five savoirs: attitudes-curiosity/openness, knowledge of self and other, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness*, along with the axioms and characteristics of ICC (Byram, 1997; 2008, pp. 230-237). Focusing on the complexity of learners' evaluative processes, Houghton (2012) later extended Byram's (1997) model with *knowing how to develop oneself selectively through interaction with others*. In the model of ICC, becoming interculturally competent language users, individuals need to raise critical awareness and construct the knowledge and skills to change how they perceive themselves and how they relate to those in other communities. This change involves acknowledging the particularities of other communities and cultures and developing critical interculturality. The integration of ICC in language development requires readjusting the objectives and curriculum that guide foreign language instruction. Therefore, language teachers need to view ICC as one of the main goals of language instruction and raise students' awareness about this goal. ICC-oriented instruction fosters students' understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of (their own and others') social identities and the ways in which these identities are negotiated through intercultural communication.

Three recent transnational studies (Porto, 2014; Porto & Byram, 2015; Porto, 2015) have evaluated how projects that emphasize ICC influence learners' transformation as language users who can approach their own and other communities with critical cultural awareness. The researchers had their students (from three contexts, Argentina, Denmark, the UK) investigate some significant historical events (e.g., Malvinas/Falklands war in 1982) or environmental issues, by relying on the analysis of multiple data sources and interacting through an online platform. They found that these foreign language (English and Spanish) learners developed varying degrees of critical cultural awareness and built new ways of thinking and acting by questioning the 'common sense' of each national group as they engaged in research and transnational collaboration. As the researchers note, the presence and success of such interventions hinge on teachers' preparation, agency, commitment, and willingness to adopt ICC-oriented language instruction and adjust their curriculum and classroom practices accordingly.

2. Learning to teach ICC

Earlier work (Byram, 2008, 2012; Kelly, 2012) stressed that education for interculturality should be added to the responsibilities of language teachers. Language teachers should view language learning "as a rich and deep process taking learners into new experiences and critical reflection on them" rather than a mere investment in developing language skills (Byram, 2008, p. 153). Byram suggests explicit use of Brumfit et al's (2005) notion of "criticality," which is also aligned with "critical cultural awareness" in ICC. Criticality entails students' shift "from holders of opinions to users of appropriate, theoretically interpreted and structured data to inform considered views of cultural, social and linguistic phenomena" (Brumfit et al, 2005, p. 150). Additionally, Byram (2008) suggests using his five 'savoirs' framework when including intercultural competence in language teacher education (pp. 234-237).

Because teacher candidates are most concerned about learning the strategies and skills to ensure their students' foreign language development, it becomes challenging to explicitly include the teaching of intercultural competence across teacher education practices (Kelly, 2012). Also, "the effect of compartmentalization" leads to language teachers identifying with a single language and culture and minimizing their engagement with other cultures and teachers of other languages (p. 413). However, intercultural experiences could be enhanced in the programs that offer teacher candidates the opportunity to study in two countries and those with student-teach abroad options, but this does not necessarily sidestep the impact of compartmentalization. Additionally, Kelly (2012) suggests integrating interculturality across the courses taken by pre-service teachers of different foreign languages in a program and using this diversity of languages for promoting interculturality in teacher education. Rather than providing separate modules on teaching intercultural competence, Kelly (2012) recommends infusing these dimensions across various teacher education activities.

3. Teacher Education Textbooks

Textbooks serve as socializing agents for teacher candidates' preparation and practicing teachers' professional development endeavors. As "the *de facto* curriculum" of teacher education

(Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008, p. 185), they provide the key subject information and the instructional theories and strategies teachers need to acquire to be successful in their classroom. Textbooks are also the principal means through which teachers negotiate and appropriate the professional discourse in their field. Their dialogic interaction with the language in textbooks is therefore part of their identity negotiation and socialization into the teaching profession.

Extant studies have conducted content analysis of teacher education textbooks for such critical issues as gender equity (Sadker & Sadker, 1980; Zittleman & Sadker, 2002), representation of ethnic and racial minorities (Sadker & Sadker, 1980), lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) topics (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008), and issues of ethnic diversity (Prater, Sileo, & Sileo, 1997). These studies converged on the conclusion that the analyzed textbooks in varying content areas overwhelmingly lacked the presentation and discussion of the critical issues whose significance is indisputable in teacher education research. Moreover, Sadker and Sadker (1980) found that when presenting information about minority groups, the texts provide “stereotypic and demeaning implications” with vast generalizations by using terms like “culturally different,” “disadvantaged,” and “low socioeconomic” (p. 42). Delpit (1995) discusses the ramifications of this stereotypical representation with her ethnographic data. Her participants (novice and experienced teachers of color) reported that they were viewed as prototypes of minority groups rather than as individuals because the textbooks (as well as other reading assignments and teachers’ talk) portrayed oversimplified and stereotypical representations of their cultural experiences.

The earlier work has addressed the lack of or stereotypical representation of diverse populations in teacher education textbooks. While the content or thematic analyses of the texts provides significant insights into the treatment of these issues, such analyses overlook implicit instances of discursive exclusivity. Because of their topical focus, they do not parse out the language to further explore the authors’ discursive positionings. Therefore, to gain a more nuanced understanding of inclusivity and exclusivity in textbook discourses, the present study adopted a micro level focus. It examined the use of *we* to understand how textbook authors position ‘self’ and ‘other’ through the pronoun *we*, drawing boundaries between *us* and *them*, thereby deciding who is in and who is out.

III. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Positioning Theory (Davies & Harré, 1999) as the theoretical framework to explore the discursive construction of inclusivity and exclusivity in four textbooks that are available for use in American teacher education programs. Viewed from the lens of Positioning Theory, social identities are negotiated and fashioned within socially, culturally, and historically situated discourses that afford individuals access to certain ‘possible’ subject positions. Positioning is “a discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines” (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 37). As an ongoing and fluid discursive construction of personal storylines, positioning transpires when individuals assign subject positions to themselves (*reflexive positioning*) and others (*interactive positioning*) through social interaction and imagination (Davies & Harré, 1999).

Because a subject position comprises “a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those who use that repertoire” (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 46), individuals have access to resources such as images, concepts, expectations, practices, ideas, and values, but how an individual uses these resources varies by circumstance. By capitalizing on these resources, individuals can assert agency to negotiate their positions.

Even though it can be unintentional, in any discursive practice, participants engage in interactive and reflexive positioning simultaneously because the positions available are relational. “Whenever somebody positions him/herself, this discursive act always implies a positioning of the one who is addressed. And similarly, when somebody positions somebody else, that always implies a positioning of the person him/herself” (Harré & Langenhove, 1991, p. 398).²

The conceptualization of social identities as relational and discursive was instrumental in the current study in investigating the use of inclusive and exclusive *we* by the textbook authors. As they use *we* with varying referents, they perform reflexive and interactive positioning and fluidly (re)negotiate and (re)delineate the borders between ‘self’ and ‘other.’

IV. Analytical Framework

In a comprehensive review of English grammar, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) explained the classification of personal pronouns as: (a) 1st person pronouns: *I, me, my, mine, myself, we, us, our, ours, ourselves*, in which the referents include the author of the message; (b) 2nd person pronouns: *you, your, yours, yourself, yourselves*, in which the referents include the addressee, but not the author; and (c) 3rd person pronouns: *he, him, his, himself, she, her hers, herself, it, its, itself, they, them, their, theirs, themselves*, in which the referents exclude both the author and addressees. To illustrate the inclusive and exclusive functions of pronouns, Quirk et al. (1985) applied the symbols: *s* (speaker), *h* (hearer), and *o* (other) along with + and – indicators to show the presence or absence of an agent. For example, in the sentence “*We*, the undersigned, pledge *ourselves* to...” the analysis is (s+, h-, o-), thereby including the speakers in the scope of *we* and excluding the hearers and others. However, the analysis and interpretation of pronouns is dependent on the information provided in the context and is sometimes ambiguous and problematic. In classroom interactions, teachers often use *we* and *you* in connection with their students, and the referents of these pronouns can reveal symbolic values and political representations (Pennycook, 1994; Uzum, 2013).

In addition to their linguistic function of indexing referents, pronouns can tell more about the authors’ personalities, emotions, and connections with other people (Pennebaker, 2011). Pronouns are not always noticeable, but a close and systematic analysis can reveal their subtle powers in representing alliances, connections, and memberships. In an analysis of a televised

² To further illustrate positioning-in-action through pronouns, the previous quote designates *him* before *her* on two occasions. Whether intentional or not, this sequencing reveals a tiered positioning of *him* and *her* even within the explanation of the positioning theory. Though this is not an uncommon positioning, it could be avoided with the use of *s/he*, *(s)he*, or *they* as a gender neutral pronoun. In fact, singular *they* was selected *Word of the Year* in the US in 2015 by the American Dialect Society because it successfully addresses English’s lack of a gender neutral third person pronoun (American Dialect Society, 2016).

political debate, Zupnik (1994) explored the speakers' use of first person plural pronouns in relation to discourse spaces, participant structures, participant roles, linguistic indicators, and deixis. Using a discourse analysis approach, Zupnik analyzed the transcripts of the debate and argued that solidarity building was an outcome of strategic use of first person plural pronouns. Zupnik concluded that "a speaker's power of persuasion, for example, may stem from an ability to shift in and out of various roles within and across discourse spaces" (p. 376), navigating across solidarity, joint responsibility, evasion of responsibility or mitigating criticism.

Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) attend to the ambiguity of *we* relative to discourse types and the communicative, personal, and sociocultural contexts in which it is uttered. They maintain that *we* is used not only referring exclusively to the speaker, but also referring to a group that excludes the speaker. Helmbrecht (2002) views *we* as "the most complex category of all person categories" (p. 33) and discusses its functions for interlocutors' identification with and membership to social groups. Pavlidou's (2014) recent volume brings together studies that investigate the function of *we*, "the dynamic process of constructing – delineating, reconstructing, de-constructing, etc. – collectivities in interaction, with consequences for personal responsibilities, collective agency, and interpersonal relationships" within various languages and contexts (p. 1).

Gordon and Luke (2012) observed the contribution of strategic use of first person plural pronouns (*we*, *us*, *our*) to school counseling interns' professional identity development in their email exchanges with their internship supervisors. In a later study, Gordon and Luke (2016) specifically explored the use of *we* in email supervision of 23 Masters level counseling interns. They found that interns predominantly use 'exclusive *we*' denoting themselves and their peers, while supervisors substantially use 'professional *we*' referring to 'you (the intern) and I,' which "invites" interns into the professional community of counseling practice (p. 57). Uzum (2013) examined a foreign language teacher's use of pronouns 'we, you, they' in her classroom talk. His analysis indicated that the teacher "positioned herself and students in relation to classroom and broader cultural communities" through inclusive and exclusive use of these pronouns (p. 76). Regarding the use of *we* in academic writing, Hyland (2001) observed in the corpus of 240 research articles that through the use of inclusive *we*, writers bring readers "into the text as discourse participants" (p. 557) and position themselves and the reader in "joint affiliation to a community-situated pursuit of knowledge" (p. 558). Harwood's (2005) analysis also revealed that exclusive *we* is predominantly avoided in research articles and inclusive *we* is used to organize the text, and to advertise the writer's claims and findings..., [and] to map the structure of the paper out" (p. 365). In light of previous research on the use of *we* in oral and written discourse, the present study explored the instances of *we* in four American teacher education textbooks and analyzed their immediate environment and referents in terms of inclusivity, exclusivity, and their representation of interculturality.

V. Methods

The authors selected four teacher education textbooks on the basis of their focus (e.g., multicultural education), publishers (e.g., variety in publishing houses), authors (e.g., racial

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diversity in authorship) and current availability (e.g., in print and latest edition), in the American educational context. Then, for reliability, each author served independently as a reviewer, and identified and coded the instances of first person plural pronouns in each focal textbook (See Table 1). The codes were created on a spreadsheet. While each row displayed a token (an instance of *we* and its variants), the columns show the coding categories, such as token number, page, paragraph, chapter, topic, referent, and sentence. When the identification and coding were completed, the researchers compared their review and reached a consensus on any tokens on which initial reviews diverged.

Table 1
Coding example according to the referents and topic

Tokens	Sentence Used	Code	Topic
4	We have tried to present different perspectives on a number of issues in the most unbiased manner possible. We are not without strong opinions or passion on some of the issues. However, in our effort to be equitable, we do attempt to present different perspectives on the issues and allow the reader to make his or her own decisions	Authors	Introduction and Contents
3	Culture defines who we are. It influences our knowledge, beliefs, and values. It provides the blueprint that determines the way we think, feel, and behave.	Humans	Culture
1	Sexual harassment occurs in the halls and classrooms of our schools, often while other students watch. Perpetrators of sexual harassment include male and female teachers, school administrators, janitors, and coaches as well as other students.	Americans	Gender
2	As we stereotype individuals with disabilities, we deny them their rightful place in society. The disability dominates society's perception of the person's social value and creates an illusion of deviance. Individuals with disabilities are viewed as vocationally limited and socially inept.	Multicultural Educators	Special Education

In the first stage of the analysis, each instance of a first person plural pronoun (e.g., *we*, *us*, *our*, *ours*) was entered as a token, and the referents (e.g., Authors, Americans) to which these tokens refer were identified, to calculate the total number of tokens and their referents. In the second stage of the analysis, the context or topic where the tokens occurred, was identified (e.g., Gender, Special Education) based on the environment of the token and the researchers' judgment. For example, in the following quote, "Most researchers have found little evidence that *our* brains are hardwired to make *us* behave differently. Why then do *we* see differences in behavior between the two sexes?" (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013, p.111), there were three tokens, *we*,

us and *our*. These tokens were coded as referring to *humans* and the topic was *Gender*. The percentages of pronoun use by topic and referent were calculated using a Pivot table in Microsoft Excel, to see the distribution of tokens under the categories of referent and topic. In order to support the quantitative findings garnered from the analysis of tokens across referents and topics, qualitative examples from the textbooks were analyzed to illustrate the various uses of first person plural pronouns in the discourse of the focal textbooks. The inclusivity or exclusivity of these pronouns were interpreted in context by using Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2015). These direct quotes from the textbooks were presented along with the discussions on how the pronouns were used in inclusive and exclusive ways.

VI. Findings

The analysis of the focal textbooks illustrated that first person plural pronouns are used extensively in these textbooks to refer to such groups as authors, Americans, humans, teachers, and teacher educators. Expressing differing levels of ambiguity in interpretation, these pronouns play various roles in the discursive representations of inclusivity and exclusivity across topics of multicultural education. The following section presents the findings for each textbook with supporting tables and qualitative examples.

Gollnick and Chin (2013) Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society

In this textbook, the total number of tokens (first person plural pronouns) was 562. As Table 2 illustrates, the most common referent was Americans (N=173), followed by Multicultural Educators (N=143), Humans (N=138), Authors (N=49), and Practicing Teachers (N=31). The other referents (e.g., Researchers, Christian Americans, Publishers, Religious Americans) were in minority and were used fewer than ten times each. Finally, referents such as Native Americans, African Americans, Jews, and Bullies were used in direct quotes since they were not the words of the authors, but were cited verbatim from a source. The category of Other included tokens in which the referents were specific people (e.g., Mr. and Mrs. Smith) and did not reflect the voice of the authors, but were used in scenarios or direct quotes.

Table 2

Instances of “we”, “our”, “ours”, and “us” in Gollnick and Chin (2013)

Referents	Sum of token numbers for “we”, “our”, “ours”, “us”
Americans	173
Multicultural Educators	143
Humans	138
Authors	49
Practicing Teachers	31
Researchers	3
Christian Americans	3
Pearson Publishers	2
Religious Americans	1
Natives (in quotes)	1
African Americans (in quotes)	1
Jews (in quotes)	1
Bullies (in quotes)	1
Other (e.g., Smith family)	15
Grand Total	562

The second phase of the analysis focused on the distribution of first person plural pronouns according to topic, which was determined by the sections of the book and the researchers’ interpretation. The analysis of tokens indicated that although chapter lengths were comparable, the authors used *we* pronouns more or less frequently in certain topics, and their distribution showed certain tendencies. Table 3 illustrates the total number of tokens in each topic and the distribution of percentages according to the focal topic.

Table 3,

Distribution of “we”, “our”, “ours”, and “us” in Gollnick and Chin (2013) across topics

Referents	Percentage of token numbers for “we”, “our”, “ours”, “us”
Culture (N=134)	%
Humans	53
Americans	25
Multicultural educators	21
Authors	1
Multicultural Education (N=71)	%
Multicultural educators	55
Practicing Teachers	24
Americans	17

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Authors	2
Humans	2
Gender (N=54)	%
Humans	67
Americans	20
Multicultural educators	9
Other	4
Geography (N=54)	%
Americans	59
Humans	22
Multicultural educator	9
Authors	6
Natives	2
Practicing Teachers	2
Age (N=53)	%
Multicultural educators	30
Americans	26
Authors	21
Humans	21
Bullies	2
Contents and Introduction (N=41)	%
Authors	63
Multicultural educators	12
Practicing Teachers	10
Americans	7
Publishers	5
Humans	3
Special Education (N=40)	%
Multicultural educators	78
Americans	18
Authors	2
Researchers	2
Religion (N=34)	%
Americans	67
Authors	12
Christian Americans	9
Humans	3
Jews	3
Multicultural educators	3
Religious Americans	3
Race and Ethnicity (N=31)	%
Other	32

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Americans	29
Practicing Teachers	29
Multicultural educators	10
Social Class (N=20)	%
Americans	80
Authors	10
Researchers	10
Language (N=23)	%
Americans	40
Multicultural educators	35
Humans	17
African Americans	4
Other	4
LGBT and Sexual Orientation (N=7)	%
Americans	57
Other	29
Humans	14

The topics are listed from the largest to smallest number of tokens, starting with Culture, and ending with LGBT and Sexual Orientation. This could be interpreted as an issue of alignment or solidarity. In other words, the topics of Culture (N=134) and Multicultural Education (N=71) yielded more frequent opportunities for the authors to relate to the readers and create a *we* community, but the topic of LGBT and Sexual Orientation (N=7) did not. As the textbook focuses on multicultural education, the N numbers are not surprising, but the contrast between *we* or *they* choices reveals a disconnect between the authors and LGBT community. In the following example, the authors align with readers in the shared space of *Multicultural Educators*: “As educators, *we* behave in certain ways toward students because of *our* own cultural experiences within the power structure of the country”. In contrast, LGBT individuals are referred to as “they,” and the authors and readers are held outside of this reference group of ‘us’. For example, in the following, although ‘they’ are in ‘our society’ they are presented different from the ‘privileged sexual identification category’

Similar to racial and ethnic groups, LGBT individuals appear to move through stages of development as **they** become comfortable with their sexual identity. Because heterosexuals are in the privileged sexual identification category in **our** society, they may not identify their sexuality unless they become aware of their privilege or become an LGBT ally. The first step for LGBT students is the realization that **they** are attracted to same-sex individuals, which distinguishes **them** from most of **their** peers (p. 147)

The analysis also indicated that some referents are more frequently used than others in certain topics. For example, in the discussion of Age as a topic of diversity, *we* is used most often to refer to *Multicultural Educators* (30%), followed by *Americans* (26%), *Authors* (21%) and

Humans (21%). It could be argued that the topic of Age (e.g., youth culture) does not produce as many ways to be divided or exclusionary, and the authors could align with the readers on this topic. On the other hand, in the discussion of Social Class, *we* is used to refer to *Americans* (80%) almost exclusively. Since the topic of social class is related to American social class experiences, the authors situate their discussions around this particular group and align with their readers as other Americans who are also in a variety of social classes. For example, there is no instance where *Humans* is indexed in the discussion of social class. *Humans*, however, is the most frequently used referent in the discussion of *Culture* (53%) and *Gender* (67%). Because culture and gender are discussed broadly, relating to people in the world, the references to Americans are much fewer in *Culture* (25%) and *Gender* (20%).

Another area where *we* referents are reserved for Americans (67%), and in some examples in exclusionary ways, is Religion. In a few examples, the scope of Americans is narrower as *Religious Americans* (3%) and *Christian Americans* (3%). Compared to other topics, religion stands out as yielding many exclusionary uses of *we* to refer to Religious or Christian Americans, excluding Atheist/Agnostic or Non-Christian Americans. The references to Multicultural Educators are also quite limited within religion (3%), while Multicultural Educators are used more frequently in other areas such as Special Education (78%) and Multicultural Education (55%). As for the exclusionary referents in *Religion*, while a few of the tokens are found in example scenarios or debate activities, one of the uses reflects the authors' voice. Although the authors make a case for education for all, including students from other religious groups, they write the following, directly reflecting their own voice and nuanced perspective:

It is clear that in the United States and in other parts of the Western world, many individuals are uncomfortable with and suspicious of Muslims. It is also true that there are individuals in the Muslim world, including those who are not extremists, who either dislike the United States and other Western nations or, at best, have a negative perception of **us** (p. 255).

In this quote, the authors put themselves in the *we* group that includes the readers, but does not include Muslims, dismissing the possibility of Muslims' being in their readership. It could be argued that the authors create a negative picture of Muslims and reject any variation or diversity within this group, by creating a single story. For example, in the sentence "including those who are not extremists, who either dislike the United States and other Western nations or, at best, have a negative perception of **us**," Muslims who are not extremists are perceived and portrayed as disliking the United States. The addition of the phrase "at best" rejects any possibility of Muslims who may like the United States. Using first person plural pronouns in such exclusionary manners creates *we* versus *them* dichotomies and perpetuates negative stereotypes through othering, thereby damaging the possibilities of unbiased intercultural communication.

Irvine (2003) Educating Teachers for Diversity: Seeing with a Cultural Eye

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The first stage analysis of this textbook indicated that there are a total of 174 tokens. The most frequent referent was *Teacher Educators* (N=82), followed by *Teachers* (N=52), *Americans* (N=24), and *Authors* (N=6). A small number of other uses are to refer to *Humans* (N=4) and *African American teachers* (N=2) and *Children* (N=4) in direct quotes. Through her use of first person plural pronouns, the author aligned with her readership on the common ground of being teachers and teacher educators.

Table 4

Instances of “we”, “our”, “ours”, and “us” in Irvine (2003)

Referents	Sum of token numbers for “we”, “our”, “ours”, “us”
Teacher educators	82
Teachers	52
Americans	24
Authors	6
African American kids (in quotes)	4
Humans	4
African American teachers (in quotes)	2
Grand Total	174

It is also striking that references to *Teacher Educators* are more common than *Teachers*, putting the teacher educator and researcher identities of the author in the foreground. For example, the author suggests:

Finally, I should add two more c words: commitment to children. Producing caring, competent teachers is a means to an end. **We** educate caring, competent teachers because they make schools places where all children, regardless of ethnicity, income, gender, and physical condition, become successful learners and productive citizens. As teacher educators, **we** should never lose sight of this most essential mission of our profession (p. 50-51).

In this quote, the author assumes that her readership includes, perhaps exclusively, teacher educators. However, references to teachers are not uncommon in the text, emphasizing the “teacher and teacher educator” identity of the author, although her teacher educator identity is in the foreground. For example, the author invites the readers to imagine being the teachers of an underprivileged African American student: “Sometimes, **we** forget that a large number of children, such as Darius, ‘don’t see nothing and don’t have no dreams’ when **we** ask them to envision their futures” (p. 2).

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Table 5,
Distribution of “we”, “our”, “ours”, and “us” in Irvine (2003) across topics

Referents	Percentage of token numbers for “we”, “our”, “ours”, “us”
Competent Teachers in Diverse Classrooms (N=66)	%
Teacher educators	58
Teachers	24
Americans	14
Authors	4
African American Teachers and Researchers (N=30)	%
Teacher educators	53
Teachers	23
African American kids	13
Americans	8
African American teachers	3
Urban Education (N=26)	%
Teachers	65
Teacher educators	15
Americans	12
African American teachers	4
Humans	4
Educating Teachers for Diversity (N=19)	%
Americans	26
Teachers	26
Teacher educators	21
Humans	16
Authors	11
Teachers of Color (N=11)	%
Teacher educators	82
Americans	18
Introduction and Contents (N=10)	%
Teachers	50
Americans	30
Authors	10
Teacher educators	10
Teacher Education Programs (N=10)	%
Teacher educators	100
Assessment and Equity (N=2)	%
Teachers	100

The second stage of analysis indicated that the most common use of first person plural pronouns according to the topic was in *Competent Teachers in Diverse Classrooms* (N=66). According to the distribution of the referents (e.g., *Teacher Educators*, *Teachers*, *Americans*, *Authors* etc.), there are occasional shifts between references to *Teacher Educators* and *Teachers*, where one becomes more frequent than the other. For example, in the discussion of Teacher Education Programs, all of the ten referents are *Teacher Educators*. On the other hand, in the discussions of Urban Education, a great majority of referents are *Teachers* (65%). When discussing Urban Education, the author aligns with her readership on the common ground of “caring for urban schools” and creates a space to explore examples and suggestions toward improving students’ learning experiences in urban school contexts. The author also uses this space to energize and inspire teachers in urban schools as in the example: “I am convinced, however, that eager, well-educated, committed teachers can and do make a difference. **We** already have the knowledge, skills, and technology to transform children’s ‘daymares’ into dreams. What **we** lack is the collective will to do so” (p. 14). In this quote, the author not only affirms teachers’ knowledge and competencies, but also shares responsibility, and in a way makes a promise to share the burden with all teachers in urban schools.

McLeod (2011) Diversity Awareness for K-6 teachers: The Impact on Student Learning

The first stage analysis of this textbook indicated that there are a total of 146 tokens of first person plural pronouns. The most frequent referent was *Humans* (N=99), followed by *Americans* (N=29), and *Teachers* (N=16). Only one reference was made to *Adults* (N=1) and *Authors* (N=1) each. The author most frequently aligns with her readership on the common ground of being *Humans* through a variety of topics. The next most common reference is to *Americans* in an effort to create allegiance on culturally shared topics presented in the form of examples illustrating diversity in the US.

Table 6
Instances of “we”, “our”, “ours”, and “us” in *McLeod (2011)*

Referents	Sum of token numbers for “we”, “our”, “ours”, “us”
Humans	99
Americans	29
Teachers	16
Adults	1
Authors	1
Grand Total	146

In this book, McLeod explores diversity through forty-six classroom activities that encourage teachers to demonstrate diversity to K6 students in tangible and concrete ways. These activities have been grouped in this study to facilitate analysis as follows: 1) Universal Items

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(e.g., jobs, stores, names, transportation, road signs, race, music, money, time); 2) Language and Communication (e.g., words, alphabet, sentences, punctuation, newspapers); 3) Cultural Artifacts (e.g., hats, pets, greeting cards, holidays, states and capitals, shoes, presidents); 4) Human Experience (e.g., body, emotions, multiple intelligences); 5) Introduction and Conclusion (e.g., foreword, summary); and 6) Physical World (e.g., colors, tools, weather, rocks, addresses).

Table 7,
Distribution of “we”, “our”, “ours”, and “us” in McLeod (2011) across topics

Referents	Sum of token numbers for “we”, “our”, “ours”, “us”
Universal Items (N=56)	%
Humans	95
Americans	3
Teachers	2
Language and Communication (N=26)	%
Humans	64
Americans	27
Adults	4
Authors	4
Cultural Artifacts (N=21)	%
Americans	76
Humans	24
Human Experience (N=18)	%
Humans	67
Teachers	33
Introduction and Conclusion (N=17)	%
Teachers	53
Americans	29
Humans	18
Physical World (N=8)	%
Humans	100

Using the topics listed in Table 7, the author shares some guidelines for classroom activities. For example, an activity on “birthdays” is shared as follows:

Everyone has a birthday, but there is a great variety or diversity in **our** birth dates and months. Continue reviewing some of your Days of the Week and Months of the Year activities. You may be able to generate activities from those areas that are applicable to birthdays. The following activities will enable students to see the differences in birthdays, while respecting each. (p. 119)

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The referent of *our* in this quote is found to be *Humans* since it addresses an inclusive scope of people in general (e.g., people who have birthdays). This is the most common use of the first person plural pronouns across various topics.

However, discussing some topics (e.g., hats, pets, greeting cards), the author uses *we* referring to *Humans* and assigns them particular attributes that are specific to certain cultures and are non-existent in other cultures. In other words, the author seems to presume some topics are universal and the referents of *we* are linguistically *Humans*, but the activities themselves are culturally exclusive. In the following example, the author recommends an activity around “pets”:

Pets bring so much joy and love to a family. Just think about the tremendous diversity **we** have in **our** homes relating to family pets. There are numerous pets from different species and an incomprehensible number of pets within a given species. ...Allow your students to talk about **their** pets, and share the name of the pet. Below are several activities that can be used and enhanced to create beneficial real-life experiences of your students' family pets. (p. 40)

In this example, from a linguistic perspective, the scope of *we* seems to be *Humans*. The author operates on the assumption that it is normal or expected for humans to live with pets in their homes. She also recommends teachers to inquire about their students' pets. However, there may be people around the world or in the US, who do not have a habit of living with pets in their homes, or this may not be part of their lifestyle and upbringing for both cultural and pragmatic reasons. With this example, the author brings her own imagination of home to make this assumption about pets and humans and seems to suppose that her readership has the same assumption.

A similar example is found in an activity about “hats” which is described as follows: “Enhance your opening presentation by setting parameters for categories of hats. List on the board or chart paper some of the more familiar categories of hats as well as situations when **we** most often wear hats” (p. 30). The author seems to miss the nuance that there are many humans who do not wear hats or may wear other head clothing like burka or turban. In these examples, the use of first person plural pronouns seems to be including all humans in its reference, but it positions entire group of humans in a way that may not be culturally relevant. The author operates on a cultural assumption that she thinks is shared by her readers. This kind of inclusion can be considered a “false inclusion” which is misguided by vast generalizations, since it denies the particularities and practices of the cultures that are not represented in the author's narrative.

DomNwachukwu (2010) An Introduction to Multicultural Education: From Theory to Practice

The first stage analysis of this textbook indicated that there were a total of 314 tokens of first person plural pronouns. The most frequent referent was *Americans* (N=111), followed by *Teachers* (N=63), *Authors* (N=59), *Humans* (N=48), and *Others* in quotes (N=33). The author most frequently aligns with his readership on the common ground of being culturally American and teachers.

Table 8

Instances of “we”, “our”, “ours”, and “us” in DomNwachukwu (2010)

Referents	Sum of token numbers for “we”, “our”, “ours”, “us”
Americans	111
Teachers	63
Authors	59
Humans	48
Chicano students (in quotes)	31
The court (in quotes)	1
Students (in quotes)	1
Grand Total	314

The distribution of referents across topics indicated that Humans as Cultural Beings displayed the most extensive use of first person plural pronouns (N=76), followed by Cross Cultural Encounters (N=56), American Cultural Mosaic (N=43), Educational Inequities (N=26), Exceptionality (N=18) and so forth. *Americans* and *Teachers* were the most common referents in most of these topics, exploring the specific experiences of being teachers in the American educational context.

Table 9,

Distribution of “we”, “our”, “ours”, and “us” in DomNwachukwu (2010) across topics

Referents	Sum of token numbers for “we”, “our”, “ours”, “us”
Humans as Cultural Beings (N=76)	%
Chicano students (in quotes)	34
Humans	29
Americans	22
Authors	7
Chicanos	5
Teachers	3
Cross Cultural Encounters (N=56)	%
Humans	36
Americans	30
Teachers	21
Authors	11
Students (in quotes)	2
American Cultural Mosaic (N=43)	%
Americans	47
Authors	42

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Teachers	9
Chicano students (in quotes)	2
Educational Inequities (N=26)	%
Americans	73
Authors	23
Teachers	4
Exceptionality (N=18)	%
Teachers	56
Authors	44
Gender and Women's rights (N=18)	%
Americans	78
Teachers	22
English Language Learners (N=16)	%
Americans	50
Teachers	44
Authors	6
History of Multicultural Education (N=15)	%
Authors	47
Americans	40
The court	7
Teachers	6
Introduction (N=14)	%
Teachers	57
Humans	22
Authors	21
Educational Process (N=9)	%
Teachers	67
Humans	22
Authors	11
Religious Diversity (N=9)	%
Americans	67
Authors	33
Standards-Based Teaching (N=8)	%
Teachers	63
Humans	13
Americans	13
Authors	11
Title I Fund (N=6)	%
Teachers	50
Americans	50

Similar to the examples discussed in other texts, the author's cultural perspective and nuanced belief system has left a certain imprint in the use of personal pronouns. In the example below, the author explores the topic of American Cultural Mosaic:

Americans have grown to love a life of pursuing happiness. **We** love big cars, big homes, big television screens, and whatever else **we** believe can make **us** happy. The sad part of the influence of this idea of happiness is the effect it has had on family structure in recent years. Men and women are no longer willing to work on difficult relationships. People quickly exit a marriage once **they** sense that their happiness is threatened. (p. 22)

In this excerpt, the author shares his beliefs about happiness and how it relates to American culture. The scope of *we* included *Americans*, as it is created in the first sentence and is differentiated from other nations on Earth. In this sweeping generalization, the author observes happiness is attributed to the pursuit of big cars, big homes, and big television screens. However, there are Americans who would not pursue happiness in these areas, but are incidentally included in the scope of *we* in this example, in a falsely inclusive manner. Furthermore, the author continues on a tangent about how the pursuit of happiness has negative outcomes on family structures: “**Men and women** are no longer willing to work on difficult relationships. **People** quickly exit a marriage once they sense that their happiness is threatened.” It is noteworthy that there is a shift from *we* to *men* and *women* or *people* in this sentence attributing the negative outcomes on *others* and not *us*. The author could have written this part as “**We** are no longer willing to work...,” but has chosen to exclude himself from these negative statements, in a way that reflects his perception of himself as different from people who are no longer willing to work on difficult relationships.

VII. Discussion

The findings in the current study, highlight how the authors of the four focal textbooks use *we* to shape discursive representations of inclusivity and exclusivity. As the most complex and ambiguous pronoun (Helmbrecht, 2002), *we* affords the authors with a linguistic flexibility to fluidly shuttle between “reflexive” and “interactive” positioning (Davies & Harré, 1999) and to concomitantly (re)draw the boundaries of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in their narratives. Taking on different *we*-positions, the authors negotiate and define who is “in” and who is “out” of the imagined construction of community or culture, because “pronouns can never be extracted from the political process of naming [and imagining] a self, selves, and others” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 175). *We* becomes a strong discursive tool for the authors to (knowingly or unwittingly) identify with social groups and make their membership to those groups visible in the text. As the identification of ‘self’ lies in the ‘other,’ first person plural pronouns simultaneously function as a tool for excluding and othering social categories that are not part of the authors’ portrayal of *we*.

The findings exhibited a significantly varying frequency of *we* across topics in the textbooks (e.g., social class, religion, LGBT), the social groups with which the authors align (e.g., educators, Americans), and the qualities the authors assume for those social groups in their own (tacit) definition (e.g., having birthdays, wearing hats). Intentional or not, the choice of *we*

in a statement is not a haphazard authorial decision. In reference to what lies under the hood of *we*, such choices determine the degree of inclusivity in a text, i.e. a teacher education textbook in this study. When authors position themselves as *we*, referring to educators of diverse and multicultural populations of students in American schools, they bring pre-service and practicing teachers, and teacher educators into their discourse as participants of teaching and teacher education. Such inclusive discourse is conducive to the readers' professional identity construction, which is consistent with Gordon and Luke's (2016) findings. However, authors might build an exclusionary discourse when they use *we* referring to members of a certain (dominant) social, cultural, or religious group, and assign some generalized attributes to this group and other (minority) groups in relation to *we*. Having various forms, this use of *we* further reinforces the borders between 'self' and 'other' and perpetuates the vast generalizations, biases, and stereotypes patrolling these borders. Granted they determine course content (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008), when teacher education textbooks include an exclusionary discourse, they could become detrimental components of teacher education practices.

Integrating intercultural communicative competence (ICC) into school curriculum is an endeavor to teach language users to critically interrogate and problematize the normativity of generalizations and stereotypes as vital impediments to intercultural communication within and across national borders. Exclusionary manners of describing social and cultural groups comprise and sustain idealized, essentialized, and reductionist representations of communities. ICC entails challenging and addressing these representations that could lead to misunderstandings and dysfunctions in interactions and perpetuation of stereotypes. With their skills of discovery and interaction as part of ICC, foreign language users can "identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins" (Byram, 2008, p. 182). Thereby, they "develop an explanatory system" eliciting from their interlocutors and "identify significant references within and across cultures" (p. 184). They lead their interaction relying on this system rather than their preconceptions about their interlocutors' culture that may be reinforced by exclusionary discourses in textbooks. Given that foreign language education prepares learners to communicate across cultures, teachers need to equip themselves with ICC and learn how to integrate it into their instruction. In that sense, teacher education textbooks for multicultural education play a significant role in exposing teacher candidates to the members of other cultures in the context of schooling. Whether teacher candidates, as main readers of these texts, are socially and culturally included or excluded in the delineation of *we* in the textbook discourse, the use of *we* could be problematic for their ICC development. The cultural or social othering, stereotypes and positionings manifest through authors' use of *we* in such texts will not allow teacher candidates to understand the particularities of individuals (e.g., students, parents, colleagues) from other communities unless they have developed some degree of critical cultural awareness.

VIII. Conclusions and Implications

This study demonstrated that the textbook authors' uses of *we* lead to discursive representations of inclusivity and exclusivity in which the authors engage in fluid reflexive and interactive positioning and imagined construction of communities and cultures through self-identification

and othering. In some of the references across the focal textbooks, inclusivity is carried out in its true sense and the scope of *we* is as broad as *humans* and included universal attributes (e.g., *we* all have birthdays). However, there are also examples of *false inclusion* in which the referents are used with attributes that may not necessarily be part of the referents' culture. For example, *we* is used to refer to *humans* as pet owners or to *Americans* who love big cars and big homes. It could be argued that *not* all humans are pet owners, and *not* all Americans love big cars and big homes. Therefore, boosted with a discourse of absoluteness, the inclusion was used in a false manner in these examples, leaving out some of the intended referents.

The analysis also indicated that inclusivity and exclusivity varied across the contexts and topics of references. For example, the authors tend to treat some topics (e.g., learners with disabilities, inequities in education) mostly with inclusive *we*, capturing teachers and teacher educators in the scope of *we*, as responsible agents for equitable outcomes for all learners. The authors' approaches to other topics (e.g., religion) are more divisive, which is observed in their use of pronouns in more exclusionary ways. The authors' perspective and nuanced beliefs about religion become visible through both inclusive and exclusive uses or avoidance of first person plural pronouns. The authors interpret and explore cultural and educational issues through their own subjectivities, and inevitably their personal views leave a trace on their narrative. However, authors should be conscious that an exclusionary use of pronouns can have a detrimental impact on pre-service teachers' understanding and conceptualization of interculturality, perpetuating othering, single stories, and stereotypes.

Teacher learning for ICC should include developing critical cultural awareness and reflexivity as teachers negotiate and appropriate the knowledge presented in textbooks. Teacher education should foster criticality and reflexivity as primary language teacher qualities to orient teachers' approaches to exclusionary discourses and representations that reduce individuals from different cultures to stereotypical stock characters. With this goal in mind, teacher educators should design class activities in which pre-service teachers analyze and deconstruct examples of such exclusionary discourses in textbooks. One focus in these activities could be the ways in which textbook authors use pronouns, how they shape the discourse in texts, and how exclusionary uses can be reverted.

Acknowledgements: We are thankful to the three anonymous reviewers and the guest editors, Drs. Porto, Houghton, and Byram for their comments and suggestions on the earlier versions of this paper, which significantly contributed to improving its quality. We also gratefully acknowledge Heather Baker's suggestions about the language of the paper.

APPENDIX

Textbooks analyzed

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