"Believe me when I say that this is not an attack on American parents": The intercultural in intercultural parenting books

Patricia von Münchow, Université Paris Descartes, France

Abstract

Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother (Chua, 2011) and *Bringing up bébé: One American mother discovers the wisdom of French parenting* (Druckerman, 2012) are two recent global bestsellers belonging to a relatively new discursive genre: the intercultural parenting book. The purpose of this article is to present the first findings of an extensive study on this category of texts. I will show in what ways Franco-American intercultural parenting books (FAIPBs) display intercultural features: how do their authors, who not only have intercultural experience but write about this experience, negotiate competing practices and discourses about childrearing from different cultural contexts in their personal narratives? First, the study is placed in the theoretical framework of Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis. The analysis then focuses on how the authors portray their own intercultural development and interact with their readers to foster intercultural development on their behalf. Finally, the discussion highlights how non-child-centred child rearing, which the authors culturally situate as being a French practice, is discursively promoted. A comparison with "monocultural" guides shows the influence of the community in which the authors were first socialized on their discursive productions, even when they explicitly criticize this community for its childrearing practices.

Key words - discourse analysis, contrastive studies, intercultural analysis, discourse of parenting

1. Introduction

In 2011, Amy Chua published her much discussed global bestseller *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* and triggered extensive media coverage on mothering styles. In 2012, Pamela Druckerman's *Bringing up bébé. One American mother discovers the wisdom of French parenting* made it on the bestseller list in many countries as well and was followed by a series of similar publications, thus inaugurating what could be a new discursive genre termed "French-American intercultural parenting books" (FAIPB). According to Druckerman (2012: 3) French parenting was not "a thing, like French fashion, or French cheese" before these FAIPBs appeared. While "the mutual inclusiveness of France and Romance in the popular imagination implies that any tale of travel in France is by definition already a love story", as Hanna and de Nooy (2006: 4) suggest, there seemed to be no particular correspondence between tales of travel in France and parenting books until Pamela Druckerman wrote *Bringing up bébé*. This phenomenon calls for an (intercultural) analysis of this new category.

Another reason to be particularly interested in how French childrearing is portrayed by American authors in these books is previous research I carried out on French, German and American parenting guides (von Münchow 2011, 2012, 2013). The striking differences it revealed between the parenting styles advocated raised the question of whether, and in what way, French and American beliefs about parenting would "clash" in FAIPBs.

The purpose of this article is thus to present the findings of the first part of an extensive study on this new category of texts. More precisely I will show in what ways FAIPBs display intercultural features: how do FAIPB authors, who not only have intercultural experience but write about this experience, negotiate competing practices and discourses about childrearing from different cultural contexts in their personal narratives? I will first describe the data sets used for the analysis and place the study in its theoretical and methodological framework. I will then explain how the authors portray their own intercultural development connected to childrearing practices and beliefs, and how they interact with their

readers in order to foster intercultural development on their behalf and prevent negative intercultural reactions. Finally I will focus on non-child-centred child raising as a culturally situated practice that authors choose to promote. A comparison of intercultural parenting books with "monocultural" guides will shed some light on the reasons why non-child-centred child raising is an important issue in FAIPBs, and on the discursive procedures mobilized to promote this practice.

2. Data and theoretical framework

2.1. *Data*

The main dataset for this research comprises three intercultural parenting books:

- *Bringing up bébé: One American mother discovers the wisdom of French parenting* (Druckerman, 2012). The British version of this book was titled *French children don't throw food*.
- *French twist: An American mom's experiment in Parisian parenting* (Crawford, 2013).
- *French kids eat everything: How our family moved to France, cured picky eating, banned snacking and discovered 10 simple rules for raising happy, healthy eaters* (Le Billon, 2012).

The second dataset, the corpus of "monocultural" parenting books mentioned earlier, primarily comprises three French and three US publications:

- *Élever mon enfant aujourd'hui.* [Raising my child today] (Antier, 2003 [1999]).

- *J'élève mon enfant.* [I am raising my child] (Pernoud, 2004 [1956]).

- *Élever Bébé. De la naissance à six ans.* [Raising Baby. From birth to the age of six years] (Rufo & Schilte, 2004 [2003]).

- *What to expect the first year* (Murkoff, Eisenberg & Hathaway, 2003 [1989]).

- *Caring for your baby and young child. Birth to age five* (Shelov, Hanneman & Trubo, 2005 [1991]).

- *Dr. Spock's baby and child care* (Spock, 2004 [1946]).

These publications were selected on the basis of their being among the bestselling titles in the category of parenting books at the time the corpus was collected (2004).

2.2. *Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis*

The theoretical framework on which my research is based is what I call Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis (CCDA), at the crossroads of French Discourse Analysis (Maingueneau 2005; Moirand 2006), text linguistics (Adam 2005) and cross-cultural studies (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1994, 2005; Béal 2010; Fix et al. 2007 [2001]; von Münchow 2010).[1] CCDA's long-term aim is to come to an understanding of "discursive cultures", which can be defined by means of social representations that are circulating within communities concerning social objects, on the one hand, and the discourse to be held about these objects on the other hand (that is, what must, can and cannot be said about them and how it can and cannot be said).

From a methodological point of view, CCDA involves identifying traces of discursive operations (Grize 1996: 69) in data belonging to a specific discourse genre and inferring hypotheses on social representations. First linguistic markers are described via translingual categories, such as the positioning of the addresser and the addressee, nomination and characterisation, determination and quantification (studied here mostly by reference to Reisigl

and Wodak's list of collectivisation strategies 2001: 48-50), predication, enunciative heterogeneity and in particular dialogic procedures and reported speech, sequential types (narration, description, explanation, argumentation), etc. The results of linguistic description then have to be interlinked in order for hypotheses on discursive representations to be inferred. Addressees use discursive representations to construct mental representations. Hence analysts can use these discursive representations to infer hypotheses on addressees' mental representations (Grize 1996: 63). Social representations (Guimelli 1999) that circulate within the community in which the text was produced both influence authors' mental representations and evolve along with the addressees' mental representations. Mental representations are in turn influenced by discursive representations, as mentioned above. Thus we can ultimately reach the level of social representations through discursive representations and the hypotheses they allow us to infer on mental representations. Conversely, we can examine how social representations — as authors construct them in their mental representations — are both reflected and created in discursive representations. In this sociocognitive perspective, mental representations are an essential bridge between discourse and social situations, which never have a direct relationship, but can only be linked by cognitive phenomena (van Dijk 2009: 4).

In the early stages of any study, the existence of the community (or of two or more communities in the case of a comparison), the assignment of a specific text to a discourse genre and the existence of the genre as such have to be considered as *etic*. Only after complete analysis, or a series of analyses on a variety of discourse genres in the case of communities, can an *emic* status be conferred to these entities.[2] Unlike "monocultural" parenting books, FAIPBs are explicitly created under (at least) a double cultural influence, the authors having been raised in the USA or in Canada before spending an extended period of time in France. The research nevertheless entails constructing hypotheses on these authors' representations based on a description of linguistic markers in their discourse, but the data requires in-depth

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reflection on the relationship between discursive, mental and social representations in an intercultural context.

2.3. *Discourse genres in Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis: What are French-American intercultural parenting books?*

In CCDA, what analysts characterize in a single study is a discourse genre and not a community nor an individual. The discourse genre thus holds a pivotal position between society and text (Maingueneau 2014: 77) and helps avoid overgeneralization and culturalism as well as "undergeneralization". CCDA thus acknowledges that "culture" is a problematic concept (see also Yates in this volume).

I consider a discourse genre a prototypical category both of practices and of (mental and social) representations about who must/can/does not have to/cannot say what and how in a certain type of communicative situation (see von Münchow 2010). These interrelated practices and representations are in constant evolution not least because they are caught in the crossfire of the need to repeat a well-known pattern and of the opposite necessity to constantly innovate (Adam 1997: 13). As mentioned above, a study on a discourse genre can only be defined in an *etic* or tentative way until it is complete, but an etic definition is mandatory in order to gather a dataset. The etic definition of a discourse genre can be based on the genre's macro-function as well on the following five parameters listed by Maingueneau (1996: 44): respective status of the addresser and the addressee, temporal and spatial circumstances of enunciation, media and modes of distribution, themes that may be treated, as well as length and textual organization. Finally, since discourse genres can be situated at different levels of a rather complex hierarchy, I follow Maingueneau (2014: 28) in his distinction of three generic components of the "enunciative scene", understood as both a frame and a process. A text supposes:

- an *embedding scene*, which is a discourse type (political discourse, journalistic discourse, etc.),

- a *generic scene*, which is a discourse genre as we currently understand it and assigns the above-mentioned parameters,

- a *scenography*, which is the situation speakers construct for and by their enunciation and which can correspond to or superimpose itself on the generic scene.

As this article is only the account of the first part of my study on FAIPBs, the generic status of this category and its definition can only be *etic* and will need to be reassessed in a future publication. What can be said so far is that the embedding scene of FAIPBs can be identified as being educational discourse. On a macro-generic level between the embedding and the generic scene, FAIBPs can be considered advice literature. Their generic scene could be deemed to be the well-established "parenting book", but FAIPBs belong to a sub-category for which "intercultural parenting book" is a tentative name. In fact all the books in the main dataset deal with parenting in different cultural contexts. Their macro-function is to convince parents of the advantages of French parenting and to introduce them to how it works. The authors are life-style journalists or academics. On the scenographic level, FAIPBs establish themselves as memoirs. The script they enact is as follows:

- The author claims North American (or "Anglophone") childrearing is going very wrong.

- She presents a narrative on how she realized that what is going wrong is not universal but North American, and that French families act in a much more reasonable way.

- After a series of observation tasks, the author explains what the problem is, using either narration or a more descriptive or explicative text type; main issues are identified as food, sleep and discipline.
- She explores and documents what French parents do, applies it to her family and reports the process and the positive outcome.

Karen Le Billon follows this template more loosely than the two other authors, as she focuses mainly on food culture issues. All three authors nevertheless activate a memoir scenography not only in the general script, but also in the positioning of the addresser and the addressee, as they are providing extensive self-descriptions. Druckerman presents herself as an American with an English husband and based with him in Paris, where her three children were born. Crawford is an American, married to an American, who has some first-hand knowledge of France and many French friends in Brooklyn, where she lives and raises her two daughters. Le Billon portrays herself as a Canadian married to a Frenchman, who moved with him and her two young daughters to his native village in Brittany before returning to Vancouver. The personal positioning of the addresser in the data set is also reflected by the extensive use they make of the deictic "I".

The memoir is what Maingueneau (2014: 78) considers a *hypergenre*, that is a genre much less socio-historically situated than others and that thus transcends time and geography. Fairclough's term *disembedded genre* (2003: 68) refers in a more transparent way to the same category. As it has been for centuries, the (travel) memoir is a recurrent genre for texts with an intercultural aspect or perspective.

What is important in the case of FAIPBs is that the discourse genre *per se* (i.e. the generic scene) is the parenting book, whereas the memoir is the superimposed scenography. In the case of our data set, the intercultural component of the discourse genre seems to have a

more important influence on the scenography than the parenting component, as the memoir is not a typical form for (monocultural) parenting books. It can be a scenographic choice for intercultural advice literature, however, as in Mireille Guiliano's (2005) famous food guide *French women don't get fat*. This best-selling publication is clearly a reference for FAIPBs: the very title of the British edition of Druckerman's book, *French children don't throw food*, is a transparent allusion to Guiliano's title.

There is another scenographic feature that FAIPBs share with different texts belonging to the macro-genre intercultural advice literature, i.e. they draw on feminine lifestyle magazines. This is not surprising since two of the three books in the data set are written by lifestyle journalists. Just like lifestyle magazines, FAIPBs create a sense of community with a North American — or, more generally, "Anglophone" or "English-speaking" (see [15]) — female audience through the use of the deictics "we" and "you", through the simulation of dialogue with the reader and through frequent mention of, or allusion to, elements of North American popular culture, as disseminated especially by television.

In conclusion, defined in an etic perspective, FAIPBs seem to belong to the discourse genre "(intercultural) parenting book", which itself can be assigned to the macro-genre "advice literature" and to the embedding discourse type "educational discourse", but authors superimpose on this discourse genre the scenography of the memoir with features from feminine lifestyle journalism. This choice of scenography seems rather uncommon for parenting books, but it is far from being new for a series of other discourse genres displaying an intercultural aspect, which can be seen as the generic network in which FAIPBs found a niche.

2.4. *An interdisciplinary perspective: Intercultural sensitivity and competence in intercultural communication and education.*

Like the other theories and methodologies represented in this volume, research in CCDA calls for an interdisciplinary perspective, especially when it comes to formulating hypotheses on mental and social representations. The disciplines from which information should be gathered depend on the discourse genre at stake and the data to be examined. My research on parenting guidebooks was informed by studies in the sociology of the family, the sociology of education, educational studies, history, feminist discourse analysis, etc. (see von Münchow 2011, 2013). For the present research, I mostly turned to the field of intercultural communication and education as well as Critical Discourse Analysis.

Research in intercultural communication and education is critical in a study on an explicitly intercultural genre. A comprehensive review of literature on the development of intercultural competence in the field of language learning is presented by Garrett-Rucks (2010) and several recently published handbooks give an overview of research in intercultural communication (Kotthoff and Spencer-Oatey 2009; Bratt-Paulston et al. 2012; Sharifian and Jamarani 2013). Two approaches are particularly relevant for this study, in which I am investigating how authors portray their personal intercultural *trajectory*: Bennett's "*developmental* model of intercultural sensitivity" (DMIS) centred on cognitive structure rather than on attitudes and behaviour, and Byram's (1997, 2008) research on the *development* of intercultural competence in intercultural education which mainly involves attitudes and skills.

Bennett's DMIS is designed as a framework for explanatory accounts of what people experience in intercultural situations according to their own reports or to analysts' observations (Bennett and Bennett 2004: 152). It identifies three ethnocentric and three ethnorelative stages (respectively *denial*, *defence*, *minimization* and *acceptance*, *adaptation*, *integration*). Bennett observed that people move through these stages in a predictable way and

that the chronology of stages has to be taken into account in intercultural communication training.

The stages that are particularly relevant for this study are defence, minimization, acceptance and adaptation, defined below in line with Bennett and Bennett's accounts (2004: 154-156). In the defence stage, which can be characterized by "us-them distinctions", other cultures appear less complex than one's own. People thus refuse generalizations concerning their own group, but readily engage in stereotyping others. *Reversal* is a version of defence "where the 'us and them' are switched in the polarized worldview", i.e. the culture in which one's socialization took place originally is simplified in a stereotypical and derogatory way, while the "other" culture is considered superior. Minimization consists of perceiving others mainly in their similarity to ourselves, thus oversimplifying cultural difference, whereas acceptance implies that others are understood to be different from oneself but equally as complex. Finally, adaptation, which generally occurs in cases of intense contact with another culture, consists in *cognitive frame shifting* enabling people to adopt a perspective that belongs to that culture. These stages correspond to the authors' representations of the development of intercultural sensitivity as they can be inferred from their texts and thus constitute a useful tool for the analysis of these texts. Authors' actual intercultural sensitivity or competence will not be assessed in any way, however.

Bennett's model has often been criticized especially on account of the sequentiality of the six stages. It has also been argued that people could be at different stages at the same time according to the issues with which they are dealing and to the "other" they are facing (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin 2009: 160). There is evidence in this research that FAIPB authors simultaneously display the characteristics of two or more different developmental stages or move back and forth between them. This study thus contributes to the debates on the linear or non-linear development across Bennett's stages.

Finally, concerning the defence state, it is useful to distinguish 'othering', making derogatory statements and stereotyping. For Duszak (2002: 2), *non-othering* is impossible in the construction of social identities, which are always categorization processes. So where othering is termed "discrimination", it is in the etymological sense, meaning "distinguishing" (or differentiating) (Reisigl 2009: 365–366), which is not necessarily derogatory. Negative discrimination does occur when "distinguishing features" can be "interpreted as stigmata that are considered to indicate a negative deviancy from a positive 'normality'" (Reisigl (2009: 368), following Goffman). Whether it is accompanied by derogatory statements or not, stereotyping is a process of (over-) simplification, and can be considered negative discrimination when the entity that is being stereotyped is compared to a group that is not subject to oversimplification.

To supplement Bennett's DMIS, I will also draw on Byram's (1997, 2008) research on the development of intercultural competence in intercultural education. Byram defines intercultural communicative competence as involving "attitudes", "knowledge", "skills of interpreting and relating", "skills of discovery and interaction" and "critical cultural awareness" (2008: 69). Attitudes include "curiosity and openness", but also a "readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own". Conscious awareness is what differentiates using intercultural competence from being bicultural (2008: 72; see also Guilherme 2002: 130). For Byram (2008: 188), comparison "serves as an epistemological tool for 'making the familiar strange and the strange familiar' /…/, rais[ing] to consciousness that which is too familiar and taken for granted, whilst making the unfamiliar apprehensible". Again, this study is not about assessing authors' intercultural communicative competence, but deals with texts that can be analysed by means of conceptualisations of such intercultural competence or sensitivity, as defined by Byram.

3. FAIPBs as an "intercultural genre": the explicit intercultural component

In this section I will address the explicit intercultural component of FAIPBs as it is expressed through different linguistic traces of cognitive operations. I will link these operations to Bennett's DMIS, Byram's definition of intercultural competence or to discrimination as defined by Reisigl.

3.1. *"Reverse astonishment"*

Unlike more common intercultural narratives (see Hanna and de Nooy 2006: 2), FAIPBs do not directly start with astonishment about the "other culture", but with the observation that something in "American" or "Anglophone" culture does not seem normal or "under control" anymore. It is as if "the familiar" had already become "strange" (Byram 2008: 188). In the following excerpt from the very beginning of Crawford's book, the noun "bafflement" and the verb "lost control" — used twice — clearly express this: [3]

(1)   As a mother with two young daughters in a trendy urban neighbourhood [Park Slope, Brooklyn], hedged in by hordes of other trendy urban families, I often feel a keen sense of **bafflement** at what I see going on with the procreators in my midst. So, at the risk of being a traitor to my generation, I have to say: I don't know when or how it happened, but it's clear to me that, even as we have tried harder than any of our ancestors to mentor, please, and encourage our kids, we have completely **lost control** of them, and in the process we've **lost control** of our own lives as well. And it isn't pretty. (Crawford 2013: 3)

Another version of seeing oneself as abnormal consists in reporting the derogatory way in which one is characterized by "the others". In Le Billon's case, these "others" are her French in-laws watching her feed her toddler:

(2)   Perhaps the deepest difference of all between North American and French parents is their attitude to playing with food. The parenting books I read after Sophie [her older daughter] was born encouraged me to allow her to play with her food—to finger it, mouth it, even throw it. I patiently draped large sheets of plastic over and around her highchair, and let her go at it. (This was one of the practices that had **my in-laws convinced I was truly an irresponsible parent**.) (Le Billon 2012: 25)

Druckerman presents another variation on this perplexity about self. In a seemingly conventional way for an intercultural publication, she presents the foreign world as a source of astonishment, but the foreign strangeness is obviously ironic. Her book starts with a narrative about a disastrous meal in a restaurant while on vacation with her husband and 18-month old daughter in a French coastal town. This is how she describes her subsequent observations:

(3)   After a few more restaurant meals, I notice that the French families all around us don't look like they're in hell. **Weirdly**, they look like they're on vacation. (Druckerman 2012: 2)

Characterizing as "weird" a situation described in a tautological way — vacationers "look[ing] like they're on vacation" — can only be ironic and indirectly applies to the observer rather than the observed.

In summary, what should be noted here is that the "negative deviancy from a positive normality" or the "stigmata" (Reisigl 2009: 368) are distinguishing features of the American in-group instead of the French out-group. Thus, negative discrimination, if/where present, seems to be directed against the "self" rather than the "other."

3.2. *A cognitive process of intercultural discovery*

The phase of "reverse astonishment" is followed by the description of a cognitive process of intercultural discovery in several different stages. This description is particularly detailed in Druckerman's book. First the author flags French children's behaviour, during mealtime in restaurants as she observes it while on vacation, using dialogical markers such as "no". The utterances featuring these markers draw readers' attention not only to the behaviour discussed, but also, by means of the corresponding affirmative sentence, to what the author would have expected, namely the contrary of what she notes:

(4)   French children the same age as Bean [the author's eighteen-month-old daughter] are sitting contentedly in their high chairs, waiting for their food, or eating fish and even vegetables. There's **no** shrieking or whining. Everyone is having one course at a time. And there's **no** debris around their tables. (Druckerman 2012: 2)

The author then reports her incomprehension of what she observed and asks questions in order to come to an understanding. Apart from the genetic hypothesis, that is probably not serious, her initial interrogations index a (negatively) discriminating way to see French education, as the expressions in bold characters show:

(5)   Though I've lived in France for a few years, I can't explain this. /…/ Before I had a child, I never paid attention to anyone else's. /…/ In our current misery, however, I can't help but notice that there seems to be another way. But what exactly is it? Are French kids just genetically calmer than ours? Have they been **bribed** (or **threatened**) **into submission**? Are they on the receiving end of **an old-fashioned seen-but-not-heard parenting philosophy**? (Druckerman 2012: 2)

But the negative stereotypes are immediately invalidated by new observations:

(6)   It **doesn't seem** like it. The French children all around us **don't look cowed**. They're cheerful, chatty, and curious. Their parents are affectionate and attentive. There just **seems** to be an **invisible**, civilizing force at their tables—and **I'm starting to suspect**, in **their** lives—that's *absent* from **ours**. (Druckerman 2012: 2)

The copular verbs ("to seem", "to look") used to describe the observations constitute an epistemic modality and indicate a doubt about the interpretation of what is observed, probably because it does not correspond to the author's first hypotheses. These first hypotheses are also signalled by the negative forms, which constitute dialogical markers again. French cultural practices are termed "an invisible, civilizing force;" "invisible" because the author's representations are preventing her from fully seeing elements that belong to a logic she has not yet come to understand. She starts "othering", opposing "their lives" to "ours". "Thinking" then helps her to select elements from her everyday life she will have to integrate into a theory of French parenting:

(7)   Once **I start thinking** about French parenting, I realize it's not just mealtime that's

different. I suddenly have **lots of questions**. **Why is it**, for example, that in the

hundreds of hours I've clocked at French playgrounds, I've **never** seen a child (except

my own) throw a temper tantrum? **Why don't** my French friends **ever** need to rush off

the phone because their kids are demanding something? (Druckerman 2012: 2–3)

These elements are always elliptically compared to the author's representations of

what parenting is like in the USA. The American parenting style is the implicit measure of the

French one, which is "different". Unlike the preceding ones, the questions here are not based

on negative stereotypes of French parents, but they now suffer from overgeneralization, as

indicated by the intensity markers "never" and "ever", which also accentuate differences.

In order for discovery to turn into knowledge, "thinking" must be followed by

"understanding", i.e. the cognitive development that leads to acceptance (as in Bennett's

DMIS) of the existence of different cultures:

(8)   Slowly, **I began to understand** how the French think about children and eating. (Le

Billon 2012: 12)

The development of intercultural sensitivity, as the authors describe it, even allows

them to attain the stage of adaptation, that is "to take the perspective of another culture"

(Bennett and Bennett 2004: 156). Such "cognitive frame shifting" can be observed in the

following excerpt from the description of an afternoon at the playground:

(9)   Frederique [a friend of the author's] says I should be sterner with Leo [the author's

two-year-old son], so he knows that it's not okay to leave the sandbox. /…/ **In my**

mind, spending the afternoon chasing Leo is inevitable. **In her mind**, it's *pas possible*. (Druckerman 2012: 220)

What we can retrace here is the authors moving through Bennett's defence, acceptance and adaptation stages, probably from initial minimization, for Druckerman in particular, who seems surprised "that there seems to be another way". In the context in which Druckerman lives it is indeed unlikely that denial should precede defence. FAIPBs thus do not entirely move through Bennett's stages in the predicted order. Even though negative hetero-stereotypes seem to fall within a rhetorical strategy only, the defence stage is indexed by recurring overgeneralization.

3.3. *Invalidating negative stereotypes… and creating positive ones*
All three authors engage in the invalidation of stereotypes, thus trying to fight off cultural defence by their readers:

(10)   The idea that French parents place high value on their children eating well is obvious. What is less obvious is *how* French parents get their children to eat well. Before we moved to France, I had my suspicions. Maybe tyrannical French parents *force* their kids to eat everything, I thought. Maybe this is just another version of the Asian "tiger mother" syndrome: the fierce French parents who insist that their children *mangent absolument de tout* (*must* eat some of everything). In fact what we saw in France was just the opposite: fights over food were rare, and I never saw a parent force any child to eat anything. (Le Billon 2012: 13)

Le Billon represents her own, negatively discriminating thoughts in reported speech and thus allows her reader not to feel bad about similar thoughts, but immediately proves them wrong, showing that she is ready to suspend false beliefs about the other culture. As for Druckerman, she finds it necessary to affirm that French parents are neither indifferent nor ignorant or irresponsible, unlike what her readers might believe:

(11)   French parents are very concerned about their kids [footnote containing a reference to a survey]. They know about pedophiles, allergies, and choking hazards. They take reasonable precautions. But they **aren't panicked** about their children's well-being. This **calmer** outlook makes them **better** at both establishing boundaries and giving their kids some autonomy. (Druckerman 2012: 3–4)

The dialogical marker consisting of a negative form ("aren't panicked") then opposes a French parenting practice, not so much to American beliefs about the French, but to their own parenting. It is as if American parents were told that not only are French parents *not* the ignorant, irresponsible people readers might believe them to be, but that they also have a healthier parenting style than Americans. The comparatives "calmer" and "better" in the last sentence leave no doubt as to the hierarchy that is being established by Druckerman. The same is true for Le Billon, who provides similar comparatives:

(12)   We worry **more**, and we eat **less well**. The French worry **less**, and eat **much better**. (Le Billon 2012: 231)

These authors can hardly be accused of exclusively positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. On the contrary, they seem to at least have come to "critical

cultural awareness" (Byram 2008: 69), if not to have moved from defence to reversal, "where the 'us and them' are switched in the polarized worldview" (Bennett and Bennett 2004: 154). The authors know that this could well create communicative problems with their audience and take action against these potential problems. In the excerpt below, Druckerman first argues against a possible accusation of reversal by using what can be understood as a disclaimer (i) and makes sure a concession precedes her appraisal of French parenting. She then moves on to the minimization stage (ii) and insists on the basic similarity between French and American parents — again without mentioning the latter — before putting forth yet another appraisal (iii):

(13)   (i) Why France? I certainly don't suffer from a pro-France bias. *Au contraire*, I'm not even sure that I like living here. I certainly don't want my kids growing up into **sniffy** Parisians. **But for all its problems**, France is the perfect foil for the current problems in American parenting. (ii) On the one hand, middle-class French parents have values that look very familiar to me. Parisian parents are zealous about talking to their kids, showing them nature, and reading them lots of books. They take them to tennis lessons, painting classes, and interactive science museums. (iii) Yet the French have managed to be involved **without becoming obsessive**. They assume that even good parents aren't at the constant service of their children, and that there's no need to feel guilty about this. "For me, the evenings are for the parents," one Parisian mother tells me. "My daughter can be with us if she wants, but it's adult time." (Druckerman 2012: 6–7)[4]

The direct speech, whose "reported speaker" is "one Parisian mother" seems to be designed to present the correct worldview here, which, again, could be ill received by an

American audience and thus could well cancel Druckerman's previous cultural mediation efforts, all the more so as "without" could be read as a dialogical marker indicating that "becoming obsessive" would be the expected behaviour of the in-group.

FAIPB authors are very concerned with the cognitive frame that characterizes Bennett's defence stage. They report on their own former defensive attitude towards French parenting, they suspect that their audience has the same attitude, they end up constructing a frame representing defence reversal, and deny this at the same time, knowing full well that it will prevent their audience from joining their cause.

3.4. Collectivisation versus particularisation

The extremely positive way to portray the French is somewhat contradicted by collectivisation and overgeneralization, as opposed to systematic particularisation of Americans. In the following excerpt, the author employs generic reference ("French parents") and another type of collectivising nomination ("they all"), providing only minimal modalisation ("may", "seem to," "more or less"):

(14)   I'm struck that while **French parents may** not know exactly what they do, **they all seem to** be doing **more or less** the same thing. (Druckerman 2012: 5)

By contrast, the group whose habits are described in excerpt (15) is not referred to by generic but by generalizing reference ("My English-speaking friends") and the author stresses the uniqueness of each case:

(15)   **My English-speaking friends tend to** view their kids as having **unique** sleep needs, which they just have to accommodate. /…/

Simon and I had of course **chosen** a sleep strategy. (Druckerman 2012: 37)

It is important here to insist on the essential nature of the comparative element in discrimination. As Reisigl (2009: 369) points out, discrimination can only be identified by comparison with another actor "with different identity markers as distinguishing features" in a similar situation. "French parents" and "My English-speaking friends" are not treated in the same discursive way. The choice of the linguonym might not be a refusal of ethnification for the author's in-group, and rather derive from her belief that Anglophone countries share a set of parenting practices. But the French all "parent" in the same way, according to Druckerman, whereas "Anglophones" display a variety of possible behaviours and make choices.

The "us"-and-"them" distinction is recurrent in Le Billon's book as well. In the following excerpt, generalizing reference for the in-group ("our kids") is once again used alongside generic reference for the out-group ("A French child"):

(16)   When bored, **our kids** turn to food. When they're tired, they eat. When they're upset, they eat. **A French child** would **never** think to do this. They're just not **programmed** that way. (Le Billon 2012: 25–26)

The intensifier "never" reinforces the idea of monolithic French behaviour. The choice of the verb "to program" and the passivation further strengthen this idea of the coercive character of French culture. In contrast, North American parenting is particularized in the following excerpt:

(17)   I'm certainly not suggesting that every [North American] family should follow the

same [French food] rules, which might not always be appropriate or even possible. No

two families (or indeed no two children) are alike. (Le Billon 2012: 212)

In summary, although the three authors fight stereotypes and describe their cognitive

trajectory towards understanding French culture from the inside, they tend to construct

dualistic us-them comparisons by means of what Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 48–50) call

collectivisation, ethnification and linguification. By contrast with negative discriminatory

discourse, though, "the us-them/the French-Anglophones" comparisons almost always turn

out positive for the French and negative for the North American childrearing style. This

image of the French being better parents than the Americans contrasts with them being

portrayed, on a more implicit level, as all being and doing the same thing without actually

knowing what they are doing (they are "being acted" by their culture) whereas Americans are

all different individuals who have different childrearing strategies, which they consciously

choose. This could be considered a form of negative discrimination, Americans being

recognized as having agency whereas the French seem to not have fully reached the

individuality constitutive of modernity. Alternatively, one could also talk about a magnifying

effect that is symptomatic of the DMIS defence stage, in which "the other" is constructed as

less complex than the self. In summary, FAIPBs can be characterized by a mixture of ethno-

relative and ethnocentric discursive procedures.

4. FAIPGs as a "parenting genre": the implicit intercultural component

In this part of the study, I will concentrate in greater detail on the parenting aspect of FAIPBs

in order to show that even when authors do not explicitly reflect on their intercultural

trajectory, their discourse is still influenced by the interaction in their minds between the successive cultural contexts in which they lived. More precisely, we will focus on the presentation and justification of what authors think is the essence of French, as opposed to North-American, parenting and confront the representations thus constructed (explicitly or implicitly) to the ones that are put into circulation by "monocultural" parenting books, again explicitly or implicitly.

Comparing two different but related discourse genres, on the one hand, and explicit and implicit procedures on the other, helps to focus on "hidden information", or "implied or presupposed" knowledge or beliefs, perhaps more interesting than explicit information because more consensual. As van Dijk (2012: 480) puts it, "discourses are like icebergs of which we only see or show new information or knowledge, but of which the larger part of the information remains hidden as implied or presupposed knowledge."

Among the list of subjects that could be treated in this perspective we will concentrate here on the hierarchy between parents and children, i.e. child-centred childrearing versus parent-centred childrearing.[5] The authors of the intercultural parenting books in the corpus recurrently comment on the difference in the parent-child hierarchy in North America and France, which they trace back to a series of institutions and other sources, among which parenting books:

(18)   The critical assumption [in French childrearing] is that while the baby has his own rhythm, the family and the parents have rhythms, too. The ideal, in France, is finding a balance between these two. *Your Child* explains, "You and your baby each have your rights, and every decision is a compromise." (Druckerman 2012: 76)

I pointed out in my earlier contrastive study of French and German parenting books (von Münchow 2011: 87-98) that French authors champion a balance between parents' and children's needs or even parent-centred childrearing. That attitude is very different from what American authors recommend. Steven Shelov on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, for example, promotes child-centred childrearing when talking explicitly about who should be the centre of attention (excerpt 19), but also more implicitly when he addresses other subjects (excerpt 20):

(19) By creating an appropriate environment for your child, you are allowing normal brain development to take place. You may wonder what is considered an "appropriate" environment. It's one that is "child-centered" and provides opportunities for learning that are geared to your child's development, interests, and personality. /…/ How nurturing and responsive to your infant you are as a parent will play a critical role in shaping your baby's future. (Shelov et al. 2005: 149)

(20) Remember, the pacifier is for your baby's benefit, not your convenience, so let him decide whether and when to use it. (Shelov et al. 2005: 162)

It is this exclusively child-centred parenting style that FAIPB authors criticize. Their arguments in support of the French approach deserve scrutiny, however. In the following excerpt Crawford describes her feelings while trying to implement her newly-adopted French parenting attitude:

(21) I'll stretch out with that Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and then feel guilty—like I should be making Play-Doh or researching summer camps. That is when I summon to

mind the French design, legions of *mères et pères* who don't spend their days hustling to make their kids' lives perfect in every way. What is even better, it seems to be good for the kids—that is, if you consider a serious decrease in the frazzle factor a good thing. (Crawford 2013: 112)

Crawford here defends a non-child-centred approach to childrearing, but in the end her argumentation homes in on the child's benefit and thus stays within the American set of representations after all. She endorses French representations of childrearing itself, but seems to be stuck in American representations of the discourse to be held about childrearing, consciously or unconsciously. Even her "parental constitution" (she seems to be trying to "establish justice" and "insure domestic tranquillity" for "us, the parents") in the end centres on the child's best interest:

(22)   The paradox I've observed on the playgrounds of several U.S. cities is that even as we work ourselves to dust to ensure that our kids are thrilled beyond a shadow of a doubt, we the parents are suffering in the process. Exhausted, dissatisfied parents can't be good for the kids. (Crawford 2013: 10)

This type of argumentation could be a conscious strategy designed to convince American parents by means of American discursive representations. It is nevertheless interesting to observe that what Crawford explicitly states is contradictory to what her argumentation implies. The same is true when Druckerman addresses the subject of guilt after having described an outing on a grassy field on Bastille day, which she spent playing with her daughter whereas the French woman next to her had a conversation with a friend, letting her one-year-old daughter play by herself:

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(23)   *All this goes* a long way toward explaining the mysteriously calm air of French

mothers I see all around me. But it still doesn't tell the whole story. There's a crucial

missing piece. That ghost in the French mothering machine is, I think, how

Frenchwomen cope with guilt. (Druckerman 2012: 145)

Guilt is presupposed here. The question is "how Frenchwomen cope with guilt" and

not "if they feel guilty." In spite of Druckerman's admiration for French parenting with regard

to guilt, she cannot envision parenting without guilt and thus stays under the influence of her

initial representations.

This suggests that we have to distinguish between the opinions authors put forth and

the discursive cultures to which they belong. An author can write a manifesto against what is

happening in her native country and yet show on a more implicit — and maybe unconscious

— level that she is so much a part of the (or one of the) corresponding discursive culture(s)

that she cannot completely free herself from its constraints. Druckerman and Crawford may

well be convinced that the USA should become a more parent-centred society, but they still

use the argumentative procedures that characterize a child-centred discursive culture. As

initially noted, the relationship between discursive, mental and social representations in the

analyzed data is problematic.

In any case, FAIPB authors seem to be under the influence of different sets of

representations or of different discursive cultures at the same time. This discursive "tension"

is in no way exclusive to intercultural data, though. It can also be found in parenting books

that are not (explicitly) intercultural (see von Münchow 2011, 2014). What we are witnessing

in these cases is a change of representations that remains incomplete and manifests itself in a

contradiction between what is explicitly asserted and what is conveyed in a more implicit way.

5. Conclusion

In this article, I presented an intercultural reading of FAIPBs, both for the explicit intercultural component and the parenting component. One could reasonably argue that the parenting manifesto is likely to be the main concern for the authors, the intercultural component only representing a subordinate function, possibly at least partially for commercial reasons (see Hanna and de Nooy 2006). But the intercultural aspect turns out to be omnipresent, without the authors necessarily being conscious of its reach.

In the data examined, Bennett and Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity and Byram's definition of intercultural competence were valuable tools for the analysis of the intercultural trajectory the authors construct for themselves to account for their experience, and for their readers to foster the cognitive development necessary to accept the authors' childrearing suggestions. The analysis also highlighted procedures that can be identified as constructing discrimination of the "others" as well as of the in-group. These procedures are far from unequivocal. On the one hand, the (French) others are generally considered superior to the (North American or "Anglophone") in-group as far as childrearing is concerned. On the other, the in-group is described as being complex and composed of individuals who are all different and who make individual conscious choices, whereas the others are recurrently presented as a monolithic mass whose behaviour is predetermined by its culture.

FAIPBs show that what Rampton (1999: 421) calls a "linguistics of contact" cannot altogether replace what he names a "linguistics of community". Rampton notes that what is mostly observed nowadays in language use is how people "appropriate, explore, reproduce or challenge influential images and stereotypes of groups that they *don't* themselves (straightforwardly) belong to" [authors' emphasis]. This observation is certainly relevant but I hope to have shown that the influence of the community in which authors are first socialized can still be traced in their discursive production and even has a pervasive effect on it (see Yates in this volume on the powerful impact of culture on language use). In the case of FAIPBs authors also address their "original" community, which further increases this community's influence on their texts. In any case, cultural membership may be produced in interaction, but it is certainly mainly shaped by *prior* interaction, throughout life.

Notes

[1] For a more detailed presentation of CCDA, see von Münchow (2009 [2004], 2010).

[2] See von Münchow (2010) on the concept of "etic" and "emic" communities and escaping the circularity of research that presupposes the existence of such entities.

[3] The bold type in all excerpts is mine and points out elements that are particularly important for the analysis. All italics are the authors'.

[4] My numbering.

[5] It is not possible in this article to deal with possible explanations for the representations of childrearing that can be found in French and American parenting books. I treat this subject extensively in von Münchow 2011, 2012, 2013.

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