

EVALUATING GENDER-BIAS IN THE IRANIAN PRE-UNIVERSITY ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract: Textbooks can affect learners' attitudes, viewpoints, and their choice of language in second/foreign language (L2) communication. The various ways in which the people are displayed in communication may affect students' viewpoints. This study was an attempt to examine several potential areas of gender-bias in the representation of women and men in the pre-university English textbook, an English language teaching (ELT) textbook with two volumes taught in the high schools of Iran. To evaluate this textbook, content analysis was done in terms of gender-bias, gender-neutral, male-generics, and the firstness in the reading texts, instructions, exercises and illustrations. The frequency and percentages of names, nouns, pronouns and pictures attributed to each gender (i.e., males and females) were obtained and chi-square tests were carried out. In general, names, nouns and pictures pertinent to males outnumbered those attributed to females. Besides, there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in the two volumes of the pre-university textbook in terms of the above features. Also, male-oriented terms came first more frequently. However, there was not a statistically significant difference between male and female pronouns between the two volumes, though the percentage of male pronouns was higher. Moreover, the textbook included many gender-neutral nouns and pronouns not having any gender orientations. Findings indicated that the Iranian pre-university English textbook was somehow male-oriented and gender-biased as regards names, nouns, firstness and pictures associated with them though great efforts were made to avoid specific gender orientations.

Keywords: Evaluation, gender-bias, pre-university, textbooks

MENGEVALUASI BIAS GENDER DALAM BUKU TEKS PRA-UNIVERSITAS DI IRAN

Abstrak: Buku pelajaran bisa mempengaruhi perilaku, sudut pandang, dan pilihan bahasa para pelajar dalam komunikasi bahasa asing atau bahasa kedua mereka. Pajanan atas beragam cara orang-orang berkomunikasi bisa mempengaruhi sudut pandang para siswa. Kajian ini merupakan upaya untuk mencermati beberapa bidang yang berpotensi mengandung bias gender dalam representasi perempuan dan laki-laki pada buku pelajaran Bahasa Inggris pra-universitas, sebuah buku pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang terdiri atas dua volume yang diajarkan di sekolah-sekolah menengah di Iran. Untuk mengevaluasi buku pelajaran ini, analisa isi dilakukan untuk hal-hal yang berkaitan dengan bias gender, kenetralan gender, keumuman pria, dan kepertamaan dalam teks bacaan, perintah, latihan, dan ilustrasi. Frekuensi dan persentase nama-nama, kata-kata benda, kata-kata ganti, dan gambar-gambar yang dihubungkan dengan tiap gender (yaitu, lelaki dan perempuan) diperoleh dan chi-square digunakan untuk mengolah data. Secara umum, nama-nama, kata-kata benda, kata-kata ganti, dan gambar-gambar yang berkaitan dengan laki-laki jumlahnya

melebihi jumlah yang dihubungkan dengan perempuan. Selain itu, ada perbedaan yang secara statistik signifikan antara laki-laki dan perempuan di kedua volume buku pelajaran pra-universitas tersebut dalam hal-hal yang disebutkan di atas. Juga, istilah-istilah yang berorientasi pada laki-laki lebih sering muncul pada urutan pertama. Akan tetapi, tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara kata-kata ganti laki-laki dan perempuan diantara kedua volume tersebut, meskipun persentase kata-kata ganti pria lebih tinggi. Lebih jauh lagi, buku pelajaran memasukkan kata-kata benda dan kata-kata ganti yang netral terhadap gender, yaitu yang tidak memiliki orientasi gender. Temuan-temuan menunjukkan bahwa buku pelajaran Bahasa Inggris pra-universitas tersebut berorientasi pada laki-laki dan bias secara gender sehubungan dengan nama-nama, kata-kata benda, kepertamaan, dan gambar-gambar yang dihubungkan dengannya, meskipun beberapa upaya dilakukan untuk menghindari orientasi gender yang lebih khusus.

Katakunci: evaluasi, bias gender, pra-universitas, buku pelajaran

As learners are to be affiliated with their own distinct features bestowed to them, one is likely to think of females and males as different beings. They are indeed deemed to be 'opposite sexes'. From this point of view, they are biologically different. But, one comes across another term, which is 'gender'. As Holmes (2009) states, gender stands for the explication of the social expectations, rules, and norms affixed to femininity and masculinity. In support of this view of gender, one can have recourse to Connell (1995), who argues that gender has been formed as part of each society within history. Also, Humm (1989) states that gender is a group of culturally-shaped features and deeds allotted to both females and males. Accordingly, gender is something that people accomplish instead of part of what people are to be (West & Zimmerman 1987).

To gain ground on the aforesaid categories (i.e. sex and gender) more efficiently and to determine the role of gender in the teaching materials, one can make use of others' search in this realm of study. According to Cameron (1998), what was intriguing in specifying the women's role in linguistic settings was the *women's movement* in the 1960s. According to Sunderland, Cowley, Rahim, Leontzakou, and Shattuck (2001), as such inquiry about the women's role went on, characters allocated to gender drew a distinction to laying the groundwork for the content analysis of foreign language textbooks throughout the 1970s and 1980s so as to explicate the way women were excluded or subordinated in the teaching materials. Consequently, the women's movement started to have an impeccable impact on changing attitudes and behaviors toward females and the transformation of negative

standpoints about the capabilities of men and women. For example, in the German context, Hellinger (1980) started to argue against undervaluing the role of females in the German textbooks.

As Goddard and Patterson (2000) point out, knowing someone's sex may tell us a lot about him or her biologically, but it does not tell us much about his or her capabilities and tendencies. In fact, being acquainted with someone as a woman is not in compliance with the question that whether her athletic ability is closer to the best swimmer or wrestler; knowing that someone is a man tells us nothing about if his reading skills mirror those of a very brilliant student or a dull learner. In this regard, Brugeillies and Cromer (2009) state, this view that humans are divided into different genders does not coincide with the issue that they have been set aside biologically. Gender is something that we are about to perform; it is the social representations of biological sex (Goddard & Patterson 2000). Gender is not embroiled in biological sex because a woman or man is not born with gender. Besides, as Clatterbaugh (1990) states, highly convoluted social psychological process which a man or woman commits oneself in pursuing it varies across cultures and historical eras. In sum, sex is not a good predictor of academic skills, concerns or even emotional characteristics, but it has to do with the biological differences between males and females, but *gender* is in conformity with the qualities, tastes, aptitudes, roles and responsibilities incorporated into men and women in a society (Brugeillies & Cromer 2009).

Au (1992) states that earlier textbooks put more emphasis on stereotyped views of male

and female roles and their abilities. In those books which Au was bound up in studying, he was confronted with the prevailing presence of males. He provided evidence that both written textbooks and visual portrays were dominated by the presence of males. Au concludes that:

The sex ratio of the characters appearing in the textbooks was 1.9: 1 while the ratio of the general population was 1.038: 1 in 1991. Women were mainly depicted working in the home, engaged in household chores or in traditional women's work—as teachers, nurses, models or clerks, while men participated in 'active' pursuits outside the home, as in the workplace, in sports and recreational activities. (pp. 4-5)

The role of stereotypes and bias in instructional textbooks should not go unnoticed. Ellis (2002) states that the gender bias available in the textbooks and pictures brings about these sources to be unacceptable to be used. For that reason, textbooks cannot be ignored. Cincotta (1978) states that sex-role stereotype, as a kind of perception, is the stimulus of the students' reflection toward their textbooks. Here, one can resort to Scott's (1980) viewpoints that textbooks are considerably the main stimuli in paving the ground for having conspicuous impact on students' attitudes, values, and behaviors. Sadker and Zittleman (2007, p. 144) state that "students spend as much as 80 to 95 percent of classroom time using textbooks and that teachers make a majority of their instructional decisions based on the textbook." Consequently, the textbooks themselves mainly invite the students' mind to travel over sex-role stereotypes as a special kind of perception.

Given all aforementioned issues regarding gender, this study tried to investigate the role of gender in the pre-university English textbook (Birjandy, Ananisarab, & Samimi 2005) used in Iran and analyze gender representation in this English language teaching (ELT) material. More specifically, the present researchers sought to examine the noticeable availability of inequality in the above-mentioned textbook while unearthing the availability of names, pronouns and nouns allotted to each gender, the presence of female's pictures in comparison with male's, and the frequency of reading texts allocated to males and females. Whereas committing oneself in touching upon the role of gender in textbooks is accommodated to figuring out its definition

with respect to other researchers' standpoints, one is also required to be acquainted with the topics such as *stereotyping*, *gender-bias*, *gender-neutral*, *titles*, and the *firstness*, which will be reviewed briefly below.

Stereotyping

Lewin (1984) states that the many of gender stereotypes, nowadays allocated to women, reflects beliefs about women during the 19th century, the Victorian era. Hall, Lindzey, and Campbell (1988) define stereotyping/stereotypes as 'personifications', which are tangible among members of a designated society and are transmitted from generation to generation. In other words, In Fung and Ma's (2000) words, a stereotype is regarded as a subjective perception, which may also be in accordance with an intuition, a bias, an imagination, or past memorial of a person. Moreover, Martin and Halverson (1981) consider gender stereotype as one type of "subjective perception of what a man or woman should be or how people should behave" (p. 29).

Blum and Smith's (1988) study holds that women are more likely to be labeled as stereotypes because they are known to be "family focused" and "unwilling to travel", so they are not eager to accept an opportunity for more promotions (p. 6). For instance, Eagly and Carau (2002) assert that women are perceived less favorably with respect to their conspicuous capabilities and achievements. As another case of stereotypes, one can hold on to the belief that men are more efficient than women (Eagly & Carli 2007). As Campbell (2000) states, it is probably a stereotype if one describes how girls and boys are supposed to be. For example, the statement that "Women talk more than men" (Birjandy et al. 2005, p. 21) can be regarded a stereotype. Also, it is a stereotype if a book, toy or tool is explicated or depicted to be "for boys" or "for girls." For example, a chemistry set that only illustrates boys is stereotypic. Moreover, Durkin and Nugent (1998) claim that gender stereotype adheres to the tendency which is age-related.

Gender-biased

Whitcomb (1999, p. 1) states that "the most common forms of gender-bias come from unintended acts by teachers, teaching methods, and textbooks/resources. The bias can be against males or females, but most frequently it is

against females.” Holdsworth (2007) holds that “education plays a vital role in shaping, questioning and reinforcing the identities of boys and girls, in addition to helping shape perceptions about gender relations and equality in society outside the classroom” (p. 62). Additionally, Abbot and Wallace (1997) believe that in the textbooks:

Males appear more frequently when compared to females, and at times women fail to be featured at all in textbooks. The males are likely to be shown to be engaged in active rather than passive behaviors. (p. 63)

Moreover, Keong, Mohd Yasin, Abu Bakar, Jaludin, and Abdul Hamid (2007) point out that textbooks utilized in schools must equitably exhibit not only males, but also females. This is on account of the fact that images available in books are the probable signs of conforming both girls and boys self-perception and their views regarding themselves. Therefore, gender bias is determined to be formed by requiring both males and females to have disparate viewpoints in looking over these images.

Poulou (1997) examined two language textbooks with respect to male/female's amount of speech onset, terminating the dialogues, and language functions. He identified the “manifestations of sexism against women in these books” (p. 71). Also, Alrabaa (1985) came to this conclusion by analyzing 28 textbooks utilized in grades 8-12 in Syria. He found out that the textbooks in Syria were “male-biased in content and language; indeed, the author concluded that females were derogated and victimized” (p. 7).

In addition, to specify gender bias in textbooks, Cook-Sawyer (1998) examined gender bias and sex role stereotyping that were extant in grade seven history textbooks used in South Western Ontario in Canada. For the sake of accomplishing this study, three textbooks used largely in South Western Ontario Board of Education were analyzed. All aspects of the content, such as illustrations, language, suggested exercises and activities were investigated. The findings were in line with the availability of gender bias and sex role stereotyping in the history textbooks. He concluded that males appeared more frequently in illustration than females.

Sydney (2004) scrutinized the way gender roles were portrayed in 40 textbooks of six students who were taught in Tanzanian government primary schools. The findings showed that women were undervalued with respect to the pictures illustrated in the books not only by virtue of the frequency of their appearances, but also because of power related aspects, such as leadership, ownership of property. In another study, Firoz Bakht Ahmed (2006) investigated whether such gender-bias textbooks were unique to West Bengal. He came to the conclusion that the presence of male-centric in books on science, social studies, mathematics, English or Hindi was widespread. Women were shown fetching water, working in kitchens or cleaning the room. Thus, as Ellis (2002) concludes, gender bias available in the textbooks and other materials can make these sources unacceptable to be used.

Gender-neutral

According to Lee and Collins (2006, p. 19), sexism (i.e., gender-bias) seems to be visible in language when the ‘generic’ forms of the “masculine nouns (e.g., man, policeman) and masculine pronoun (e.g., him, he)” are widely represented in language and the referent is not recognized. Thus, feminists currently move against the same ‘generic’ use of language for the reason that “(1) it is confusing to people whether the forms include both males and females or whether they refer to males only, and (2) studies have shown that people rarely conceptualize females when masculine ‘generics’ are used” (p. 19). For this reason, the abovementioned issues are tantamount to the recommendation for “the avoidance of pseudo-generics such as—man compounds (e.g., spokesman, salesman, foreman), and of marked forms (e.g., female brain surgeons) and the use of symmetric phrases such as female and male journalists” (p. 22).

There are some studies representative of people who scarcely conceptualize females when masculine generics are utilized. For instance, Crawford and English (1984) report an study in which participants worked on an essay—one version was written by the use of masculine generic constructions and the other made use of gender-neutral terms—in about eight minutes. Later on, they administered a recognition test for differentiating between male generic and gender-neutral words. Crawford and English found that

males were more successful in getting higher recall scores due to the masculine generic constructions whereas females got higher scores on account of gender-neutral terms. The above finding substantiates the view that when masculine generic constructions are exerted in teaching materials, the likelihood of a negative impact on females' learning becomes prevailing.

The far-reaching issue conducive in looking over the materials in view of gender culminates in scrutinizing the titles. As Erickson (n.d.) points out, there are some discrepancies between the recent and earlier textbooks in terms of the frequencies for female titles such as Mrs, Miss, and Miss. The traditional titles (e.g., Mrs. and Miss) were used as an "identification of their marital status and their availability" (p. 16). According to Erickson, "the identification of women as Miss or Mrs served to inform men of women's sexual availability" (p. 94); that is to say, a man has owned a woman. Zittleman (2007, p.84) states that even a specific kind of title like "title IX", which was passed as an extensive prohibition against sex discrimination in 1972 in the US, does not inhibit gender-bias in textbooks. He believes that "title IX prohibited gender stereotypes [just] in career counseling, or materials aimed at recruiting males and females into different careers" (p. 84). In addition, Bahman and Rahimi (2010) state "the common title used for men in English is the term 'Mr.' whether the man is married or not. However, the titles used for women are 'Miss' referring to unmarried women and 'Mrs.' for married women" (p. 274). Still, as Bauer, Holmes, and Warren (2006) claim, "Ms is frequently interpreted as title for divorced, separated or widowed woman" (p. 164).

Firstness

Lee and Collins (2008) state that examples of male firstness occur in nouns (e.g. *Harry and Holly*), possessive nouns (e.g., *Harry and Holly's first day at school*), subject and object pronouns (e.g., *He is* or *him/her.*), and short phrases or sentences (e.g. *Birthday boys*). Lee and Collins investigated Hong Kong primary English textbooks and found that there were 37 occurrences of male firstness and just 3 instances of female firstness. They have concluded that there is strong tendency for men to be cited initially in single phrases in Hong Kong English textbooks. Yang (2010) holds that the higher frequency of male firstness in recent

books accommodates with the use of alternative pronouns like *he* or *she*. In addition, by virtue of setting forth the firstness of male in the textbooks, Yaghoubi-Notash and Nariman-Jahan (2012) point out that there was ample evidence which supports this issue that English was mainly taught through the presentation of male-oriented topics. Moreover, they believed that a close surveillance on the data would substantiate the use of male firstness materials in the textbooks whereas females would be more palpable in indoor static activities, such as helping and care-giving roles. Finally, Ansary and Babaii's (2003) study revealed that male firstness was tangible in examining currently used ESL/EFL textbooks in Iran while females' presence was more ostensible in indoor passive activities. In sum, by thoroughly delving into studies about the firstness in ELT textbooks, one can conclude that the male's presence was much more visible than the female's presence.

The present study intended to examine the role of gender in the pre-university English textbook (Birjandy, et al. 2005) in Iran. It tried to see if pre-university English textbook was gender-biased. For this purpose, this textbook was analyzed in terms of gender-bias, gender-neutral, male-generics, and the firstness. Also, the above textbook was examined to find out whether females and males had equal first-place occurrences in the instructions and exercises. Other areas investigated were reading texts to see whether they were giving support to specific gender. Apart from the preceding issues, such as gender-neutral, male-generics, and the firstness, the illustrations related to both genders were investigated to see the differences.

METHOD

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the pre-university English textbook. The pre-university English textbook (Birjandy et al. 2005) consisted of 8 lessons. Four lessons were in volume 1 and the other four ones were in volume 2. The whole passages of the present textbook were adapted from the World Wide Web. This textbook also paid less attention to the grammatical points and its emphasis was on reading comprehension. The current study used content analysis in which frequency of female and male names, nouns, pronouns, and pictures, as well as readings attributed to females and males were examined. As Elo and Kyngas (2008, p.107) state, "content

analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages", which can be used for texts and speeches. In order to find out whether women and men were treated equally in this ELT textbook, all pages of the textbook were investigated thoroughly including the illustrations. After the tabulation of the raw data, they were converted to the percentages. Also, when necessary, chi-squares were performed to find the significant differences in

the frequencies of names, nouns, pronouns and pictures attributed to females and males.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentages of male and female names in both volumes of pre-university English textbook. Also, the results of the chi-square test for gender differences in both volumes are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies of male and female names in volume 1 and volume 2 and chi-square results for names

Name	Male	Female	χ^2	Asymp. Sig.
Volume 1 (Total = 6)	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.6%)	2.07	.042
Volume 2 (Total = 17)	10 (58.8%)	7 (41.17%)		

According to Table 1, 23 cases of 'names' were observed. Also, males outnumbered females. The difference between male (83.3%) and female (16.6%) names was more noticeable in volume 1; the frequencies show that males (58.8%) and females (41.17%) were less differentiated in terms of names in volume 2. When the test of significance was run, the results of chi-square test revealed statistically significant difference between male and female names at .05 with respect to both volumes because the p values was not great ($\chi^2 = 2.07$, $*p < .05$). That is, males were likely to be more represented than females in the aforementioned textbook. Further analysis demonstrated that the percentage of male names was 71.5%, which was much greater than that of female names (28.88%).

The results of qualitative analysis show that the reading parts in the volume 1 of the pre-university textbook were mostly neutral in the sense that neither males nor females were presented; for example, the reading texts were about *exercise, making a speech, global warming, and earthquakes*, not connected to any names associated with a specific gender. But in other parts of the textbook, such as exercises, instructions, and single sentences, males outnumbered females. For example, out of four lessons in the first volume, five names (i.e., *Thomas Carlyle, Mr. Amini, and Mark Twain*) were allotted to males whereas just one name (i.e., *Mary*) was connected to females. Moreover, the other four lessons in volume 2

gave support to the dominance of males over females. For example, 10 names used in the volume 2 (e.g., *William Wordsworth, Neil Armstrong, Edison*) were related to males while 7 names (e.g., *Parvin E'tesami, Mother Teresa, Mary*) were connected to females (see examples 1 and 2 below). In addition, of four lessons in the second volume (i.e., *child labor, man and space, IT and its services, and great men and women*), both male and female names were equally reiterated just in one text (i.e., *Great Men and Women*) while the other three texts were free of any name representation.

Example 1 (p. 79): *Mother Teresa* taught at *St. Mary's* High school in Calcutta.

Example 2 (p. 43): *William Wordsworth* said: "The child is the father of the man."

The above results indicate that the names represented in both volumes of the above textbook gave support to the male's prominence over female. As Jasmani, et al. (2009) state, "despite efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination, there are occurrences of sexism, i.e., prejudice or discrimination based on gender in school textbook" (p. 64). This issue should not go unnoticed as Treichler and Frank (1989) state, gender-biased subject matters have a direct effect on the motivation of the learners who want to read the textbooks. By implication, the use of names which have been equally distributed is critical since it may change L2 learners' attitude in a positive way.

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentages of male and female nouns in both volumes of pre-university English textbook.

Also, the results of the chi-square test for gender differences in both volumes are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. *Frequencies of male and female nouns in volume 1 and volume 2 and chi-square results for nouns*

Noun	Male	Female	χ^2	Asymp. Sig.
Volume 1 (Total = 22)	15 (68%)	7 (31%)	4.34	.000
Volume 2 (Total = 44)	18 (40%)	26 (59%)		

As Table 2 shows, 66 cases of 'nouns' were observed and males statistically outnumbered females. The difference between the males (68%) and females (31%) concerning 'nouns' in volume 1 was found to be greater than the males (40%) and females (59%) in volume 2. Further analysis showed that, in general, male nouns made up 54 percent in reading passages, instructions, exercises and single sentences while female nouns made up 45 percent of nouns in the noun corpus. Thus, male proportion was larger. When the test of significance was run, the results of chi-square test revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female use of nouns between both volumes because the *p* values was small ($\chi^2 = 4.34$, $*p < .05$). That is, male nouns were more represented than females in volume 1, but in volume 2, female nouns were more represented than males.

The above finding was further supported by the results of qualitative analysis. The fourth reading text of volume 1 and the fifth, sixth and eighth texts of volume 2 were gender-centered in view of the presence of nouns allocated to both genders. Moreover, most nouns earmarked to

each gender were present in exercises and single sentences of both volumes of the above textbook. Out of four lessons in the first volume, 15 nouns (e.g., poet, sun) were allotted to males whereas seven ones (e.g., nun, mother, woman, and moon) referred to females (see examples 3 and 4 below). However, the other four lessons in volume 2 did not give support to the dominance of males over females.

Example 3

(p.55): With this telescope Galileo observed the moon.

Example 4

(p. 73): she went to India and in 1928 she became a nun.

Table 3 reports the frequency and percentages of male and female pronouns in both volumes of pre-university English textbook. Also, the results of the chi-square test for gender differences in the use pronouns in both volumes are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Frequencies of male and female pronouns in volume 1 and volume 2 and chi-square results for pronouns*

Pronoun	Male	Female	χ^2	Asymp. Sig.
Volume 1 (Total = 13)	9 (69.23%)	4 (30.76%)	3.575	.167
Volume 2 (Total = 54)	28 (51.85%)	26 (48.14%)		

As Table 3 shows, 67 cases of 'pronoun' were observed and males statistically outnumbered than females. The difference between males (69.23%) and females (30.76%) concerning 'pronouns' in volume 1 was greater,

compared with the proportions of male (51.85%) and female (48.14%) pronouns in volume 2. Twenty-eight pronouns in the volume 2 were related to males and 26 pronouns were associated with females; the difference was

small. When the test of significance was run, the results of chi-square test revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female use of pronouns between both volumes because the p values was great ($\chi^2 = 3.575, p = .167$). That is, male pronouns were not presumably to be more represented than female pronouns in the textbook. In general, male pronouns made up 60.54 percent and female pronouns constituted 39.45 percent of pronoun corpus. Investigating the pronoun percentage, the difference between two genders was not very significant.

The results of qualitative analysis showed that the reading parts in both volumes in the pre-university textbook were mostly free of any special gender partiality except the last text (i.e., *Great Men and Women*) in the second volume. Moreover, pronoun presence was observed in the exercises and single sentences in the textbook. Out of four lessons in the first volume, nine pronouns (e.g., *he, his*) were allotted to males whereas four ones (e.g., *she, her*) referred to females; the other four lessons in volume 2 also gave a little support to the dominance of males over females. In sum, by examining the qualitative analyses, one finds out that the use of pronouns both in the first and second volume did not preside over by any gender because all the texts but the last one were free of any pronoun allocated to special gender.

Meanwhile, the authors of the pre-university English textbook made use of 'I and we' and 'you' pronouns more in the first volume than the second one. The percentage of 'I and we' pronouns in the first volume was 87.69 while the percentage of them was 12.30 in the second volume. In addition, the percentage of second pronoun (i.e., *you*) was about 79.28 in volume 1 whereas that of the second volume was 20.71. Thus, there was a great difference between both volumes while utilizing 'I and we'

and 'you' pronouns in the textbook. But, the second volume used 'they' pronoun more than the first one; the percentage of 'they' was 33.33 in volume 1 and in the second one was 66.66. Consequently, the use of common gender pronouns was not proportionally consistent in the first and second volumes of the pre-university textbook. One possible explanation could be different topics covered in both volumes, demanding different use. In sum, the pre-university English textbook in Iran entailed plenteous gender-neutral pronouns (e.g., *you*), which were not attributed to each gender.

Concerning the firstness in the pre-university English textbook, there was a great difference between both volumes. In the second volume, there were more cases of the firstness (about 89%) than the first volume (11%). Moreover, when the firstness (e.g., 'man and woman', 'he or she', 'husband and wife', and 'he/she') was examined in the corpus, the results tilted toward the dominance of males over females. That is, male were represented significantly through the firstness and women lacked any first position in both volumes.

Meanwhile, as to the presence of titles (i.e., Mr. Miss, Mrs.), just one case of title was observed in a sentence (i.e., Mr. Amini is a teacher.) in the pre-university textbook. This case showed the male presence as a teacher. However, the inclination of titles toward males or females could not be specified conspicuously by only one example available in the textbook. Thus, it is better to avoid making strong claims about the dominance of a gender over the other.

Table 4 reports the frequency and percentages of pictures connected to each gender in both volumes of pre-university English textbook. Also, the results of the chi-square test for gender differences in terms of pictures in both volumes are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. *Frequencies of pictures in volume 1 and volume 2 and chi-square results for pictures*

Picture	Male	Female	χ^2	Asymp. Sig.
Volume 1 (Total = 14)	14 (100%)	0 (0 %)	3.94	.000
Volume 2 (Total = 17)	12 (70.58%)	5 (29.41%)		

As Table 4 shows, 31 cases of 'pictures' were observed. Males statistically outnumbered females in terms of pictures. The difference

between males (100%) and females (0%) concerning pictures in volume 1 was remarkable. Besides, the frequency of male

pictures (about 70%) was higher than that of female pictures (about 29%). To see if there was a statistically significant difference between male and female illustrations in the first and second volumes of the textbook, the chi-square test of significance was run. The results of chi-square test revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female at .05 ($\chi^2 = 3.94$, $*p < .05$). That is, Males were portrayed more than females in the textbook. In the illustration corpus, just 14.70% percent of pictures were allocated to females and 85% percent was connected to males.

In addition, qualitative analysis demonstrated that no special pictures were allocated to specifying the instructions and exercises. All the represented pictures were shown in the reading parts in both volumes of the pre-university textbook. The author made use of pictures to decorate the reading texts or help students to read the texts (e.g., *Exercise and Health*, *Making a Speech*, *Global Warming*, and *Earthquakes*) more effectively. Moreover, illustrations in the reading texts such as *Exercise and Health* and *Making a Speech* were male-oriented, but illustrations in the reading texts such as *Global Warming* and *Earthquakes* were gender free. In addition, the picture of lesson 5 (i.e., *Child Labor*) in volume 2 of the textbook was male-centered, but that of lesson 6 and 8 (i.e., *Space Explorations* and *Great Men and Women*) were gender-neutral. All in all, by examining the quantitative and qualitative data, one can find out that females were not treated equitably through the use of pictures available in the pre-university English textbook.

CONCLUSION

Gender and sex are two disparate issues. Sex comes to biological differences whereas gender is geared toward something that one is about to perform. That is, *gender* corresponds to the qualities, tastes, aptitudes, roles and responsibilities incorporated into men and women in a society while *sex* delves into biological differences. In light of this view, our views towards each gender might change as our world changes. Holdsworth (2007) holds that "education plays a vital role in shaping, questioning and reinforcing the identities of boys and girls, in addition to helping shape perceptions about gender relations and equality in society outside the classroom" (p. 62). Also, some years ago, Scott (1980) pointed out that

textbooks would be the major stimulus in paving the ground for having conspicuous effect on students' attitudes, values, and behaviors.

Acknowledging the importance of instructional textbooks in shaping L2 students' perception, this study tried to investigate gender representation in the pre-university English textbook. This textbook is studied by senior high school student in Iran. It is important for both last-year high school students in Iran, who spend most of the classroom time studying it, and their English teachers, who make a majority of their instructional decisions based on this instructional ELT material. In this study, both volumes of the textbook, including reading texts, instructions and exercises were examined. The results of the study showed that there was a gender discrepancy between the portrayal of females and males; despite great efforts to eliminate some forms of discrimination, there were occurrences of sexism, i.e., discrimination based on gender in the school textbook. The presence of male-oriented features such as names, nouns and pictures was remarkable in the aforesaid textbook; names, nouns and illustrations associated with males occurred more frequently than those associated with females in several parts of this ELT textbook. Males were also more visible in the case of firstness. Some of the above findings might not be pedagogically positive since the gender bias can have an impact on the language learners' views and perceptions while reading their textbook.

On the positive side, results showed that the pre-university textbook included many gender-neutral nouns and pronouns not having any gender orientations. The use of common gender nouns and pronouns (such as audience, police, doctor, you, we, and they) was very frequent in both volumes. Moreover, reading texts were less biased against a specific gender to be put into any specific gender orientations. It is hoped that the findings of this study can make teachers and learners aware of ideologies hidden in the ELT textbooks and encourage them to read the instructional textbooks more analytically.

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