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A Gender Analysis on English Grammar Textbooks

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ABSTRACT

Educational materials play an important role in socializing learners into different gender roles. This study was an attempt to examine different areas of sexism in English grammar textbooks (English Grammar Digest by Trudy Aronson, An Advanced Learners' Grammar by Mark Foley and Diane Hall, and Modern English by Marcella Frank) that are taught in Iranian universities. Content analysis was performed in this study. First, these textbooks were subjected to a systematic quantitative analysis with reference to: (1) gender visibility (2) occupation. Then, a qualitative analysis was undertaken by concentrating occupational roles. The findings revealed that in terms of visibility, the presence of men was more highlighted than that of women: regarding the number of male and female order of mentioning, male came first more frequently than those of females, regarding the occupational roles, men were portrayed as the dominant characters in occupational roles, they seem associated with more paying and higher status jobs than females, another discrimination against women, on the other hand women were far less visible than men in occupational roles and occupations for women were often restricted to the traditional service and entertainment jobs, such as waitress, nurse, secretary..

Keywords: Content analysis, Discrimination, Gender, Gender roles, Gender socialization,

Sex, Sexism.

INTRODUCTION

It is an optimistic view to think there is no gender bias and sexual discrimination in EFL textbooks. So teachers should be careful about choosing the textbooks and other materials, because the teaching materials used may influence learners' learning process. It is of utmost importance here to bring up the difference between the concepts of gender and sex, and the definition of the concept of discrimination as well, Gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do (West & Zimmerman 1987, cited in Eckert & Macconnell-Ginet, 2003) – something we perform (Butler, 1990, cited in Eckert & Macconnell-Ginet, 2003, p.10). To Bruegilles and Cromer (2009):

Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females. It relates to the observable difference between their genitals and to their physiological functions in procreation. Gender is related to culture and the social division into „masculine“ and feminine“. Gender therefore pertains to the qualities, tastes, aptitudes, roles and responsibilities associated with men and women in a society (p.29).



They go on to assert that definitions of masculine and feminine vary enormously – demonstrating their social origin – since every society develops its classification on the basis of its own criteria and principles. The concepts of masculinity and femininity are not developed independently of each other but are mutually dependent (Brugelies & Cromer, 2009, p.26).

But what Simone de Beauvire in 1940 comments 'One is not born a woman but becomes one', changed this way. Her idea referred to the very perspective that females had been stereotyped in sex and forced to learn how to become a woman under the instruction of traditional convention. Based on Lu and Lin (2014), It was a shift from biologically-based view towards the socially constructed views of how one was referred to be as a man or woman (Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Croco, & Woyshner, 2007, cited in Lu & Lin, 2014, pp.408-409). So in the present study, the concepts of gender bias and sexual discrimination are considered the same; i.e., any possible inequality that exists between men and women.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major issues in sociolinguistic research is the relationship between sex and language and how it is represented in language. As Ansary and Babaii (2003) comment, the study of language and gender prevailed in 1975 with the publication of three books: *Male/Female Language* (Key, 1975), *Language and Women's Place* (Lakoff, 1975), and *Difference and Dominance* (Thorne & Henley 1975), they were the main sources and start points of later sociolinguistic works. After publishing these books, sociolinguists have shown a huge deeply interest in sex and language relationship.

Language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of the political social and cultural attitudes. Certain language can help reinforce the idea of male superiority and female inferiority. What is now termed sexist language often suggests an inherent male dominance and superiority in many fields of life. Sexist language is language that expresses bias in favor of one sex and thus treats the other sex in a discriminatory manner (Cameron, 1985).

Similarly, Sunderland (1992) notes that:

If female learners are conscious of the female characters in their course book as relatively few, with limited roles, and are offended, alienated, or made to feel marginalized by this and subsequently demotivated, this is more likely to hinder than facilitate their learning (p.86). She also claims that while according to some educational folklore females are better learners and a little research supports this in some aspects, research into classroom processes materials, and the English language itself revealed that females to be at least potentially disadvantaged (Sunderland, 1992, p.89). She goes on to asset that sexism is one such system of beliefs that pervades all aspects of our lives from our social relations and institutions to our home lives, career choices, wages and even the language we use (Sunderland, 1994, p. 27).

So in order to eliminate gender inequality in textbooks as a possible source of conveying sexist attitudes, there was thus the need to carry out a systematic research that would show the extent and the form in which gender imbalance is portrayed in English grammar textbooks.

Significance of the Study

The motivation and importance of this research is grounded on the role of textbooks in the teaching and learning process. Textbooks are important element in teaching and learning as they create the basis of classroom activities.



Lesikin (2001) commenting on studies that tried to evaluate the effect of gender-biased representations in textbooks mentions:

These studies suggest that our female ESL students may also construct less powerful and prestigious identities than their male counterparts from similar sources. The undervaluing of women potentially adds to the female language learner's sense of alienation and worthlessness, making adjustments more problematic and perhaps slower than for her male counterpart (p.281).

The place of textbooks in socializing learners cannot be overemphasized, especially as textbooks are often viewed by learners as authoritative, and therefore have the potential to influence a significantly large and impressionable audience (Foshay, 1990; Robson, 2001, cited in Mustapha, 2013, p. 455). Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) also comment:

While textbooks may be the object of argument and controversy, everybody agree with their key role in society. Not only do they contribute to learning through dissemination of knowledge, but they also play a role in children's upbringing by directly or indirectly perceiving models of social behavior, norms and values. Textbooks are therefore an important tool for both education and social change. To monitor their content, ensure that they are distributed and guarantee their use in society, a clear policy is necessary (p.14).

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper was to examine the representations of men and women in two aspects: visibility and occupational roles. Given that there are almost equal numbers of women and men in the world, the ideal EFL textbook should represent both genders equally. Past research (as illustrated in chapter 2 of this paper) has shown that, in many teaching materials, this is not the case. There was often a male bias discovered in many research areas related to the representation of gender. So this study aims to look at the representation of gender and gender roles in English grammar textbooks.

This type of investigation is important because teachers need to be careful about how to choose the certain textbooks because their choices may affect learners' learning process. Teachers also have to make learners aware of possible inequalities of the textbooks and help students to be critical thinkers towards the texts. That is what Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) comment;

Textbooks, taken as a whole, are practical and powerful tools for introducing a process of social change which can help the individual find fulfillment according to his or her potentials and his or her desires rather than according to the attributes of his or her sex and its associated gender" (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009, p.89).

Research questions and hypothesis:

In order to put the theoretical aspects of gender roles on English grammar textbooks into action and eliminate gender inequality the main research problem is supported by 2 questions:

- 1) Is there any significant difference regarding the number of women and men represented in English grammar textbooks?
- 2) Is there any significant difference regarding the occupations depicted to men and women in English grammar textbooks?

To answer the questions, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

- 1-There is no significant difference regarding the number of women and men in English grammar textbooks.



2-There is no significant difference regarding the number and type of occupations depicted to both genders.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

Content analysis: Content analysis is a research methodology that utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text. Weber (1990, p. 89).

Discrimination: The term „discrimination“ includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education (Brugelies & Cromer, 2009, p.25).

Gender: It relates to culture and the social division into „masculine“ and „feminine“. Gender therefore pertains to the qualities, aptitudes, roles and responsibilities associated with women and men in a society (Brugelies & Cromer, 2009).

Gender roles: literally referred to the roles played differently by males and females. They were the behaviors, attitudes, and interests commonly appropriate to females and males in a specific society or culture (Liebert & Wicks-Nelson, 1981).

Gender Socialization: Henslin (2010) comments that the ways in which society sets children onto different paths in life *because* they are male or female (p. 75).

Sex: sex refers to the biological differences between males and females. It relates to the observable differences between their genitals and to their physiological functions in procreation (Brugelies & Cromer, 2009).

Sexism: Sexism is something learnt from childhood expressing the ways in which some unconscious cultural biases are communicated through females and through which some negative traits are ascribed to females and the stereotyped roles are reinforced for female characters (Mineshima, 2008).

Literature Review

Significant research has been conducted on EFL textbook treatment of gender roles. The following sections provide an updated overview. Ansary and Babaii (2003, P.2) contend that “Sexism, though embarrassing and undesirable, is subliminal and mirrors the institutionalized, unfair, and inexcusable sex discrimination to the disadvantage of women in society.” The present study concentrated on visibility and the issue of occupation.

Related empirical research studies done in Iran

Ansary and Babaii (2003) attempted to explore the status of sexism in current ESL/EFL textbooks. To do so, two types of analysis were performed to examine the manifestation(s) of sexist attitudes and values in two textbooks (Right Path to English I & II) that are locally designed to cater for and respond to the English language needs of Iranian students at secondary schools. First, a systematic quantitative content analysis was carried out with reference to (a) sex visibility in both texts and illustrations and (b) female/male topic presentation in dialogs and reading passages. Secondly, a qualitative inquiry was made into (a) sex-linked job possibilities, (b) sex-based activity types, (c) stereotyped sex roles (d) firstness and (e) masculine generic conception. Results revealed that Right Path to English I & II can be considered sexist textbooks that present students, in their early exposure to the English language, with an unfair and inexcusable picture of women. It is suggested that this sexism, though embarrassing and



undesirable, seems to mirror the institutionalized unfair sex discrimination to the disadvantage of women in society.

In another research, Nazeri (2010) compared textbooks from internationally to locally produced ones, New Interchange series to high school textbooks. The analysis revealed the Interchange series as an internationally distributed series mostly taught in numerous Iran's private institutes tend to define gender in capitalist economy and modern world of North American culture in spite of the author's effort to neutralize gender and consciously represent gender and avoid stereotypical norms with regard to both females and males. Moreover, in the locally produced textbooks used in high schools in Iran, conversations are de-gendered and gender issue benefiting a high position in social studies remains ambiguous in these textbooks because they just focus on grammatical features without any regard for its communicative and/or cultural functions. Moreover, neither of these textbooks represents a critical perspective toward gender and promotes passivity rather than critical engagement on the part of teachers and students.

Amini and Birjandi (2011) examined the extent and types of gender bias in in two of the Iranian mostly used EFL textbooks at the high school level. They investigated gender biased in in five categories of visibility, firstness, generic masculine constructions, occupational roles and activities. The results showed an imbalance in the number of characters in the favor of males, in the issue of firstness, again in the majority of cases men were mentioned before women. Another aspect was about generic masculine construction, in the two books studied the masculine generic was in addition solely male referred. Considering occupation, gender inequality was perceived even more. Regarding the depiction of male/females in activities, women were overall stereotyped as stay at home mothers who are busy with making tea, room cleaning, baking the cake, usually depicted as over emotional and carless creatures that cried after TV films. Whereas men were mostly busy playing football or ping pong, reading newspapers, filling car, swimming, finding a new job, buying different things.

Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012) in their research, *The Application of Functional Linguistics in Exposing Gender Bias in Iranian High School English Textbooks*, examined Iranian high school textbooks to find out whether any gender bias existed in these textbooks or not. The linguistic analysis revealed that there were more males in the Theme and Rheme position. In other word, males had dominated the communicative positions of the clauses in the textbooks. Also the outcome of the participant role analysis showed that the frequencies of males for different participant's roles were more than that of females. Thirty males played the role of actors whereas only twenty females were in the position of actor throughout the text of these textbooks. Eleven males were found in the role of senser in all clauses of the textbooks.

In addition, Tahriri and Moradpour (2014) investigated aspects of gender as represented in one of the currently used English language series, namely, *Top Notch Series* from a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Perspective. The study analyzed the series in terms of three major aspects of gender (relations, positions, and content). The findings revealed that the series represents both genders in a somewhat balanced way. In addition, the series presents both genders equally in such a way that stereotypical norms ingrained into learners are nearly removed. Furthermore, this textbook is argued to have adopted the discourse of marketing and advertising by exploiting both genders, especially the females.

Related empirical studies done in other countries



Sunderland's (1991) "*Gender in the EFL classroom*" was an overview of issues and research in three areas in which gender manifests itself in the EFL classroom. The English language materials (grammar, textbooks, dictionaries, and teacher's guides), and processes (learning styles and strategies, and teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction) were investigated. This article also briefly examined some implications of gender in materials and classroom interaction for language acquisition.

Lee (2006) tried to determine whether there have been changes in the nature of gender representation in Hong Kong secondary English textbooks over the past decade. He selected twenty English language text-books from the lists recommended for use by the Education and Manpower Bureau and the former Education Department in Hong Kong. Ten of the books had been published in the previous five years and all were in use at the time of the study. The other ten had been published in the 1980s or early 1990s and were no longer in use at the time of the study. He found no change over time: women continue to occupy traditional roles such as secretary, maid and typist.

In addition, Holmqvist and Gjorup (2006) examined the representation of gender and gender roles in six English textbooks. the result showed that there is an imbalance in the number of female protagonists, an over representation of male authors ,and that occupations for female characters are stereotypical or non-existent.at the same time a majority of occupations were held by men.

In another research, Mineshima (2008) investigated how an EFL textbook currently used in upper secondary English classes portrayed both gender. The investigation was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of gender visibility, character attributes, and picture representations. The results revealed that throughout the text, finely balanced appearances of both genders were observed in the numbers of male and female characters, their utterances and their first appearances. Furthermore, both genders are assigned with approximately the same number of school subjects, occupations, interests and family roles. In picture representations as well, they are treated almost equally. Although gender imbalance was observed in the number of pictorial and the quality of textual professions, all in all, there seems to be ample evidence to suggest that the textbook examined exhibits fairly egalitarian representations of the two genders.

In a research by Mustedanagic (2010), she examined two randomly selected textbooks in Swedish secondary schools. She chose *Team 8* (1984) and *Wings 8* (2000). In her analyses, a number of different aspects were taken into consideration, such as the gender distribution of narrators, main characters and sub characters, as well as the description of gender/gender roles, and the representation of gender in illustrations. The findings from the analysis showed that the language in *Wings 8* gives a broad and non-stereotypic view of gender roles, which is in accordance with the fundamental values of LPO 94.

Finally, Mustapha (2014) examined seven English language textbooks of Junior Secondary School to find out any gender biased in these textbooks the results indicate that population-wise males' figures were far higher than females". There was an over-representation of males outside the home in economically well-paid work whereas women's roles were largely associated with housework which suggested perpetration of women as mothers and homemakers, care-givers - stereotypes of gender roles in a typical patriarchal society and men as the dominant and important figures in public life. He also found that males" experiences were fore grounded while



females" were pushed to the background. Males' desirable character traits largely occupied the focus of the passages while females' undesirable character traits were given more attention than their desirable traits. At the level of discourse, males were over-represented in the allocation of dialogues, amount of words and primacy in conversations.

Methodology

The Corpus

A corpus, as explained by Sunderland (2006), is a representative, substantial body of systematically collected and recorded data, spoken or written, which is normally electronically stored as text on a PC. This body of data is then normally electronically scanned, so that individual words or phrases can then be retrieved, and seen as a set. Such a corpus can be „tagged“, not only for syntactic or lexical features, but for speaker features such as age, sex, social class, occupation, place of birth, current domicile and ethnicity. Corpora are analyzed using software which manipulates and sorts the data in various ways in order to uncover a range of linguistic patterns based around frequency, including keywords and collocation. Corpora have been used in CDA studies (for example, Stubbs 2001), addressing complaints of critics that CDA findings are based on very small amounts of specially selected texts. These large quantities of data also allow statistical significance to be established, that is, to show the likelihood of any „differences“ having occurred by chance. More importantly, corpora are often large enough to allow researchers to uncover unusual features of discourse, which may not appear in smaller samples of data (Sunderland, 2006, pp. 56-57).

Sexism in language textbooks can be evaluated in various aspects. Other studies examined Illustrations, texts or exercises related to teaching materials. This case study, however, focused on textual materials. The sources of data were three widely used English grammar textbooks in Iran universities that the researcher chose randomly among a large number of English grammar textbooks.

The first textbook examined was *English Grammar Digest* (Trudy Aronson, 1984). This book is an intensive review course in grammar and in writing structure for intermediate and advanced students of English as a Second Language. The book has been designed to promote good sentence construction and writing habits and to prepare students for college and university classes and for structure expressions section of TOEFL, a college or university qualifying English test which measures knowledge of standard English.

The text progresses developmentally from grammatical structures to proper forms in sentence writing. Included are succinct , easily understood explanation; numerous examples that serve as models and reinforcement; firm reminders to avoid typical errors; contrasts and comparisons of structures ; oral writing reinforcement; and a variety of exercises including progressively-complex TOEFL-type tests on “structure and Written Expression.”

By the way, *An Advanced Learners' Grammar* (Mark Foley & Diane Hall, 2005) is a comprehensive advanced level grammar of the English language with a cross-referenced practice and exercises and a full set of diagnostic tests. This book consist of :36 diagnostic tests and a key test,36 units of grammar explanation with practice exercises , double page Rounds ups of key



areas of grammar ,and an answer key for practice exercises .it covers a large number of exercises ,ranging from simple gap- filling, matching and transformation tasks to complex manipulation of text. Each unit consists of at least one exercise that is typical of the tasks found in advanced level examinations such as the Cambridge Advanced and Proficiency.

Another textbook used in this study was *Modern English by Marcella Frank* (1972), this book aims to provide exercises for non -native speakers .the exercises are arranged systematically for ease of location. They progress from the less difficult to the more difficult, from strict control to looser control. While the emphasis of these exercises is on written work, many of them maybe used for oral drill as well. Again, like the former textbooks, *Modern English* covers a large number of exercises, examples, grammatical points, and practices.

Design of the study

The study used content analysis (CA) as the design, both qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The CA method main concern is establishing a number of different content categories and counting the number of times each of them occurs in a particular set of recorded data. By utilizing the quantitative analysis, the researchers focused on investigating the presence or absence of target categories in the text/content of this study: visibility and occupations. Qualitative CA, on the other hand, focused on the implicit or underlying meanings referred to: the type of occupational roles. The questions have been based on above categories that have been representative of gender and gender roles exhibited by the characters in the textbooks been content analyzed. The categories have been analyzed were:

Visibility

Visibility refers to the relative numbers of males and females appearing in textbooks and is perhaps the easiest aspect of gender balance to examine. The problem with this kind of omission or “invisibility” (Sunderland, 1994, P. 55) is that, when females do not appear as often as males in the text (as well as in the illustrations which serve to reinforce the text), the implicit message is that women’s accomplishments, or that they themselves as human beings, are not important enough to be included. (Porreca, 1984, p. 706).

Occupational roles

Based on Porreca (1984), another reflection of sexism is in the portrayal of males and females in occupational roles. For example, to what extent do textbooks contain a wide variety of occupations for men and only a limited range of occupational roles for females? (p.706)

Procedure

The researcher used Porreca’s (1984) model where different aspect of sexism examined through a systematic quantitative content analysis. It carried out in terms of visibility, occupational roles, A qualitative analysis was also used to determine and the type of occupations depicted to both genders.The next step was tabulating the characters that appeared in the textbooks , the number of times these men and women characters are referred to directly by name or indirectly through the use of personal pronouns, and also the number of occupational roles , the kinds of occupations filled by both sexes and the ratio of men to women employed .

Data Analysis

The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. By utilizing the quantitative analysis, they focused on the presence or absence of target categories in the text/content of this study: visibility and the issue of occupations. Qualitative CA, on the other hand, focused on the



implicit or underlying meanings referred to: attribution, and the type of occupational roles. The questions have been based on above categories that have been representative of gender and gender roles exhibited by the characters in the textbooks been content analyzed. To analyze the quantitative data, the following descriptive statistics is used: frequency and percentage.

Results and Discussion

With respect to those research around the world that are trying to do serious actions about the elimination of gender inequality towards women, there are still great numbers of sexist reflections in the EFL teaching materials. To the importance of this issue, Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) comment “While textbooks may be the object of argument and controversy, everybody agree with their key role in society. Not only do they contribute to learning through dissemination of knowledge, but they also play a role in children’s upbringing by directly or indirectly perceiving models of social behavior, norms and values. Textbooks are therefore an important tool for both education and social change. To control their content, ensure that they are distributed and guarantee their use in society, a clear policy is necessary” (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009, p.14).

Cameron (1988) claims the issue gender-biased (sexist) language in textbooks can affect students adversely and it creates an oppressive world for them because this gender-biased language most often is unjustified and unfair (Cameron, 1988, p. 13).

Results for Research Questions

In order to present the quantitative data easily, the frequencies and percentages were collected and summarized. The results and discussion revolve around the following questions:

- 1) Is there any significant difference regarding the number of women and men represented in passages?
- 2) Is there any significant difference regarding the occupations dedicated to men and women in English grammar textbooks?

Section A: Quantitative Analysis

Investigating Question 1 (Gender Visibility)

Is there any significant difference regarding the number of women and men represented in passages?

The first aspect of sexism to be examined in the textbooks was gender visibility, it is important here to say that the issue of visibility is purely quantitative in nature, and this study aimed to conduct a quantitative analysis of the gender representation in terms of the number of woman/man characters (nouns, pronouns, common nouns, proper nouns). It is, counting and numbering all the sex-linked nouns, proper names or titles, and non-generic pronouns in textbooks .The findings are shown below. The raw numbers show the number of occurrences and

the numbers in parentheses indicate the percentage of male and female characters in texts.

Table 4.1. The population of women and men in *English Grammar Digest by Trudy Aronson* (visibility)

| The name of the textbook | The number of women | The number of men | The total number |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | | | |



| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------|
| English Grammar Digest | 690(41%) | 977(59%) | 1667 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------|

Table 4.2. The population of women and men in *Modern English, part 1*, by Marcella Frank

| The name of the textbook | The number of men | The number of women | The total number |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Modern English | 761 (74%) | 273 (26%) | 1034 |

Table 4.3. The population of women and men in *Advanced Learners' Grammar* by Mark Foley and Diane Hall

| The name of the textbook | The number of women | The number of men | The total number |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Advanced Learners' Grammar | 517(40%) | 780 (60%) | 1297 |

Table 4.4 The total number of women and men in three textbooks.

| The total number of women through the textbooks | The total number of men through the textbooks | The total number of men and women through the textbooks |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|------|
| 1480(37%) | 2518(63%) | 3998 |
|-----------|-----------|------|

Analysis of the data presented in table 4.1 *English Grammar Digest* by *Trudy Aronson* showed that, the number of women were (690) with the percentage of (41%) while the number of men were (977) with the percentage of (59%), and the total population of both genders was(1667). The numbers showed that women suffered most obviously from low visibility.

Again, As presented in table 4.2, *Modern English* by *Marcella Frank*, results revealed that the population of women were (273) with the percentage of (26%) , at the same time men population was (761) with the percentage of (74%) . In this case the situation is even worst, again men outnumbered women in terms of the population of both genders.

Similarly, as presented in Table 4.3 in *An advanced Learners' Grammar* by *Mark Foley and Diane Hall* , woman and man characters appeared 1279 times throughout the textbook, men" population was (780) ,on the other side women" population was (517) . The percentage of woman characters (40%) and man characters was (60%). Again results suggested that men are more important in terms of appearance. By the way, as presented in table 4.4, the total number of women in whole textbooks was 1480 with the percentage of (37%), and the number of man characters was in fact (2518) with the percentage of (63%).

Investigating Question 3(Occupation)

Is there any significant difference regarding the occupations dedicated to men and women in English grammar textbooks?

Porreca (1984, pp. 706-7) argues that „another reflection of sexism is in the portrayal of males and females in occupational roles“. Tables show various occupations the woman and man characters engage in .This is both a qualitative and quantitative analysis in that researcher defined and counted the number and also the type of occupations depicted to both genders. Tables also summarize in numbers both women and men position in reference to the different types of occupations.

The analysis of the data was based on the frequency of occurrences of female and male occupational roles in texts of the three English grammar textbook. The numbers mentioned in parentheses show the percentages.

Table 4.5. The occupations depicted to each gender in *Advanced Learners' Grammar* by *Mark Foley and Diane Hall*.

| The name of the textbook | Men's occupations | Women's occupations | Gender not specified |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|



| | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Advanced Learners' Grammar | Postman | Nurse | President |
| | Physiotherapist | Architect | Prime minister |
| | Leader of shopkeepers | Programmer | Accountant |
| | Composer | Manager | Manager |
| | Writer | Teacher | Teacher |
| | Driver | Doctor | Director |
| | President | Working in a lab | Dentist |
| | Finance Director | Hair dresser | Ship manager |
| | Group leader | Chairwoman | Maid |
| | Actor | Violin player | Journalist |
| | Musician | Secretary | Receptionist |
| | Waiter | Lawyer | Police officer |
| | Repairman | Boss | Nurse |
| | Professor | Babysitter | Shop assistant |
| | Designer | Ballet dancer | Secretary |
| | Theater director | Writer | Hairdresser |
| | Mayor | Nanny | Pianist |
| | Farmer | Dancer | Caretaker |



| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | Minister Engineer Executioner Scientist Police officer Negotiator Cinema manager Salesman Artist Senior officer Builder Golfer Spy Chairman Personal tutor Player Football player Teacher Magician Receptionist Businessman Politician Sales manager | Guitarist Pop star Editor Working in café Psychologist Stewardess | Scientist Boss Child psychologist Solicitor Waiter Police officer Builder Custom officer Psychotherapist Chief inspector Chief of police Worker Sales manager Head teacher Director Doctor Mayor Actor Judge Pilot Customs officer Press officer Athlete |
|--|--|--|--|





| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | Doctor Fitness instructor Boss Officer policeman Archeologist Saxophone player Fisherman Head office Fish monger Inspector Methodist minister Architect | | Designer clothing Minister Assistant Politician Sales director Secretary Lawyer Interviewer Departmental manager Dress maker Researcher Instructor Editorial director Programmer Spokesperson Driver photographer Fire officer Managing editor Managing director Engineer Philanthropist |
|--|---|--|---|

Table 4.6. The number of jobs depicted to each gender in *Advanced Learners Grammar*, by Mark Foley and Diane Hall

| The name of the textbook | The number of jobs depicted to men | The number of jobs depicted to women | The total number of jobs |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Advanced Learners Grammar | 55 (70%) | 24 (30%) | 79 |

Table 4.7. The name of the jobs depicted to each gender (*Modern English, part 1, by Marcella Frank*).

| The name of the textbook | Men's occupation | Women's occupation | Gender not specified |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| Modern English, part 1 | President Musician Doctor Scientist Mayor Camper Gardener | Cook Secretary Sales girl Typist Dancer | Doctor X ray technician Judge Chief Teacher Department head Dentist |



| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | Governor Teacher Policeman Mailman Waiter Actor Messenger Owner of the factory Writer Lawyer Chief Sanitation employee Police officer English teacher Prime minister Salesmen Painter Milkman Watchman Artist Dentist Spy Laundryman | | Employer Poet Captain Butcher Lifeguard Artist Guard Driver Typist Lawyer Professor Art collector Mechanic Principal Maid Physician Dentist Hotel clerk Heart specialist English teacher Hose keeper Engineer Prime minister |
|--|--|--|--|



| | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| | Judge Businessman Department head | | Worker Nurse Servant |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|

Table 4.8. The number of jobs depicted to each gender (*Modern English by Marcella Frank*).

| The name of the textbook | The number of jobs depicted to men | The number of jobs depicted to women | The total number of jobs |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Modern English | 33(87%) | 5(13%) | 38 |



Table 4.9. The occupations depicted to each gender *English Grammar Digest by Trudy Aronson*.

| The name of the textbook | Men's occupation | Women's occupation | Gender not specified |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | | | |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| English Digest | Grammar | Doctor | Actress | Engineer |
| | | Professor | Dancer | Politician |
| | | Postman | Editor | News announcer |
| | | Soloist | Saleswoman | Flight attendant |
| | | Plant manager | Accountant | Designer |
| | | President | Social director | Ornithologist |
| | | Engineer | Nurse | Teacher |
| | | Inspector | Teacher | Bus driver |
| | | Policeman | Waitress | Pilot |
| | | Composer | Typist | Accountant |
| | | Salesman | Supervisor | Architect |
| | | Contractor | Baker | Commissioner |
| | | Painter | Baby sitter | Shipping clerk |
| | | Electronic technician | Ski instructor | Farmer |
| | | Baker | Principal | Violinist |
| | | Designer | Controller | Dock worker |
| | | Employer | Working in | Nurse |
| | | Chief operating officer | library | Banker |
| | | Gallery owner | Designer | Scientist |
| | | | Geologist | Musician |
| researcher | | | | |



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|--|---|---|--|
| | Instructor Tailor Poet Chef Artist Counselor Press secretary Politician Singer Pilot Author Executive Officer Investigator Chief buyer Collector Workmen Police chief Mechanic Explorer Farmer Optometrist Inventor | Analyst Chief of staff Telephone operator Opera star | Presidential adviser Mechanic Interior decorator Instructor Campaign manager Photographer Janitor Contractor Mayor Publisher Doctor Editor Officer Federal judge Sergeant Clerk Reporter Legislator Weather forecaster Translator Astronaut Secretary Artist |
|--|---|---|--|





| | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Pianist | Advisor |
| Legislator | Forest ranger |
| Technician | Store clerk |
| Zoologist | Manager |
| Premier | Supervisor |
| Researcher | Lawyer |
| Secretary | Photographer |
| Comedian | Architect design |
| Chairman | Theatre manager |
| Director | Conductor |
| Lawyer | Driving instructor |
| Art teacher | Counselor |
| Fireman | Manager |
| Taxi driver | Marine biologist |
| Photographer | Employer |
| Milkman | Meteorologist |
| Repairman | Politician |
| Carpenter | Trainer |
| Arbitrator | Boss |
| Biologist | Firefighter |
| Chemist | Construction worker |
| Senator | Ambassador |
| Fisherman | Dress designer |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | Golfer Guard Detective Mathematician Nurse | | Principal State senator Zoologist Scholar Health expert Environmentalist Builder Captain Sailor Economist Nutritionist Psychologist Writer Architect Zookeeper Veterinarian doctor Worker Miner Historian |
|--|--|--|---|



Table 4.10. The total number of jobs depicted to each gender in *English Grammar Digest*.

| The name of the book | The number of jobs depicted to men | The number of jobs depicted to women | The total number of jobs |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| English Grammar Digest | 70(75%) | 23(25%) | 93 |

Table 4.11. The total number of jobs depicted to women and men in three textbooks.

| The total number of jobs depicted to women in textbooks | The total number of jobs depicted to men in textbooks | The total number of jobs depicted to both genders in textbooks |
|---|---|--|
| 52(25%) | 158(75%) | 210 |

As represented in Tables 4.5 and 4.6, a large number of occupations were mentioned in the *Advanced Learners Grammar* textbook. The distribution between occupations held by men and women, respectively, was investigated for 55(70%) occupational roles for men, there only 24(30%) occupational roles for women. As it is shown in table 4.7 and 4.8, When listing the occupations held by men and women in *Modern English*, men practiced 33(87%) jobs while there only 5(13%) occupational roles for women. as mentioned in tables 4.9 and 4.10, *English Grammar Digest*, For 70(75%) jobs for men there were only 23(25%) occupations for women. The number of jobs depicting to both genders was also examined through the whole textbooks as well, the number and percentage of occupational roles in table 4.11 showed, for men was in fact 158(75%) on the other hand this number and percentage for women was 52(25%). Findings revealed another sharp numerical difference regarding the number of occupations depicted to each gender in three English grammar textbooks. It should be noted that there were also a number of occupations where the gender was not revealed.

Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

The present study was an attempt to examine English grammar textbooks to investigate how they portray the two genders. For this purpose, three English grammar textbooks, *English Grammar Digest* by Trudy Aronson, *Modern English* by Marcella Frank, *An advanced Learners' Grammar* by Mark Foley and Diane Hall were investigated thoroughly.

The results revealed that there is not a fair treatment of women and men in these series of textbooks. Sexism is manifested in different areas in these textbooks. The areas of sexism found were: visibility and occupation.

Summary of the findings

Visibility

Although women comprise over half the population of the world and are recently quite active in a variety of social roles, they suffered from low visibility in some EFL materials. Analysis of the data presented in table 4.1 *English Grammar Digest* by Trudy Aronson, revealed that based on the frequency of occurrence, women suffered most obviously from low visibility.

As presented in Table 4.2, *Modern English by Marcella Frank*, the situation was even worse. Results suggested that there was a sharp imbalance in the visibility of woman and man characters in *Modern English*, which implies that men are dominant in terms of appearance.

Similarly, as presented in Table 4.3 in *An advanced Learners' Grammar by Mark Foley and Diane Hall*, findings showed that again there is an inequality in the visibility of woman and man characters, which suggest that men are more important in terms of appearance. By the way, as presented in table 4.4, numbers suggest this issue that the women low visibility may stem from the writers' ideology. The writers may look at women as unequal to men. They may think that women cannot play outstanding roles in their society, due to their physical or psychological nature.

These findings are similar to that of many studies into gender bias in EFL/ESL materials, for example, Porreca (1984) in her own investigation of 15 popular ESL textbooks yielded a ratio of 1.77 males to every 1 female. She reported that "although females comprise slightly over half the population of the United States, they are represented only half as often as males in both texts and illustrations."

Coles (1977) examined five sets of adult's education materials and found out that men outnumbered women by a ratio of 3:1.

Hoomes (1978) conducted a systematic examination of 28 high school literature anthologies for grades 9 through 12 and finally found out that the overall ratio of total female characters to total male characters in the books were 1:3:5.

Hellinger (1980) conducted a study of 131 passages from three ELT textbooks used in German schools and found that men were involved in 93% of the passages, while 30% of the textbooks did not include any women at all.

More recently, in our country (Iran), Ansary and Babaii (2003) explored the status of sexism in current ESL/EFL textbooks. They performed two types of analyses (quantitative and qualitative) to examine the manifestations of sexist attitudes and values in two textbooks (Right Path to English I and II) which were locally designed to cater for and respond to the English language needs of Iranian students at guidance schools. They found that women suffered most obviously from low visibility. The ratio of females to males was 1 to 1.4 in text and 1 to 1.6 in illustrations.

Occupational roles

The depiction of men and women in traditionally stereotypical biased occupations can be another reflection of sexism in EFL textbooks. As represented in Tables 4.5 and 4.6, a large number of occupations were mentioned in the *Advanced Learners Grammar* textbook. The distribution between occupations held by men and women, respectively, was investigated. A common feature is that a majority of the occupations mentioned were held by men, findings showed another dominance in the favor of men over women in term of occupational roles. When listing the occupations held by men and women in *Modern English* (tables 4.7 and 4.8), Findings revealed an unfair imbalance in terms of occupational roles depicted to each gender in this textbook.

Occupations mentioned in tables 4.9 and 4.10, in *English Grammar Digest*, showed that there were a considerably larger number of occupations held by men than by women, another sharp numerical difference regarding the number of occupations depicted to each gender as presented



in table 4.11, the number of jobs depicting to both gendered was examined through the whole textbooks as well, Based on the total results, men were portrayed as the dominant characters in occupational roles. In terms of the type of jobs depicting to both genders, there were some important issues to present here, totally in three volumes of English Grammar textbooks males seem associated with more paying and higher status jobs than females. Women were far less visible than men in occupational roles. Occupations for women were often restricted to the traditional service and entertainment jobs, such as waitress, nurse, secretary, actress, telephone operator, cook, secretary, accountant, sales girl, typist, dancer, singer, nurse, babysitter, hairdresser, nanny, and once a doctor. These are gender stereotyped and are traditionally considered female occupations. In contrast results show men being pegged to a wider range of occupations from the gardener, builder, mechanic, driver, carpenter, farmer, baker, to teacher, minister, doctor, lawyer, engineer, professor, politician, scientist, dentist, musician, inventor, mathematician, pilot, chemist, senator, detective, judge, policeman, boss, mayor, president and even spy and executioner. There were also jobs that held by both genders, for example; singer, designer, nurse, architect, baker, and teacher. So as these results reveal women were portrayed in a narrower and limited range of occupations, another pattern of discrimination in EFL textbooks. Previous studies conducted in this regard show the same results:

Coles (1977) found the same results, males had 73 different occupations, ranging from truck driving to medical jobs. In general, women managed little and owned nothing, while men holding a large number of unskilled jobs, were the predominant occupants of skilled, managerial, and ownership positions and women are far less visible than men in occupational roles.

More recently, Hamdan (2010) looked at a series of English language textbooks distributed in Jordan and found that out of 78 jobs, men occupied 62 (79%) which portrayed them as the dominant characters in the labour market despite the fact that nowadays, Jordanian women hold diverse positions such as government ministers, members of parliament, police officers, and taxi driver.

Pedagogical Implications

Two pedagogic implications might be suggested from the present study, the first one is about teachers. One crucial role for the teacher can be preventing gender discrimination into the classroom. To this end, a good language teacher needs to have a critical mind about the sociolinguistic research. S/he may discuss gender-related issues with the students with a critical point of view, a point that is forgotten by many teachers.

As Sunderland (1992) comments teachers can select their own teaching materials with more care if allowed and if needed “where the input of the course book reflects sexist practices or attitudes, comment on them. Critical reading and listening may thus become regular part of the suggested pedagogy” (Sunderland, 1992, p.87). In fact, teachers are expected to ask themselves how, for instance, this particular textbook represents both genders and even if there are some forms of gender inequality exists in textbooks, as long as the teacher is deeply aware of such discriminations, he or she could overcome this challenge and even uses this challenge as a valuable educational opportunity to increase learners’ consciousness of gender issues, they need to have a critical mind about what kind of teaching materials they select for classrooms, teaching materials free from any kind of gender inequality.



And as Mineshima (2008) comments , they should also be aware not to attribute any specific roles, domestic or societal to either gender so as not to inculcate any preconceptions in the learners.

The findings of this study will be also of great benefit to textbook designers who are interested in eliminating gender inequality in the texts and pictures of the textbooks. It is important for textbook designers to notice the learners' gender equality in all aspects. This will help them to keep a balance between male and female characters, occupational roles, social activities, and the frequency of males and females' pictures in the textbooks as an important issue in promoting gender equality. In their book, *Gender Equality through Textbooks*, Brugeilles and Cromer suggest some criteria for promoting gender equality in educational textbooks that can be helpful for textbook designers:

- 1) All representations of men, women, boys and girls must be monitored.
- 2) Characters embody representations of male and female, and it is on characters that action must be taken.
- 3) All characters form part of the gender system presented in a textbook, So the whole parts of the textbook such as passages of text, lessons, exercises and appendices must be monitored carefully, The connection between text and illustration must be analyzed carefully as well (P.41).

Suggestions for further Research

Finally, it should be noted that in this study, the problem of sexism was examined. The investigation was only carried out over the texts of English grammar textbooks. Perhaps, further research on a wide range of current widely-used ESL/EFL textbooks and investigating both texts and illustrations may give theoretically sound indications of how sexism works and how it affects students' performance. It is of utmost important here to mention the crucial role of modern teaching materials such as computer software, CDs, online sources, TV programs , and so on, it seems also a need to investigate other forms of educational materials in terms of manifestation of sexist attitudes.



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