

## Prospects or Projects, Which Is More Gender-biased: A Comparative Study in Critical Discourse Analysis [In English]

Vahid Ghorbani<sup>1\*</sup>, Nima Yamrali<sup>2</sup>, Hamed Zarabi<sup>3</sup>

1 Ph.D. of ELT, Instructor at Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Kavoods

2 M.A. Student of TEFL, Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Kavoods

3 M.A. Student of TEFL, Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Kavoods

\*Corresponding author: s39611171003@phd.araku.ac.ir

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### ABSTRACT

Sexism in textbooks can have terrible repercussions and a variety of detrimental effects on students. Leaning toward one sex can reinforce sexual stereotypes, which is why many researchers have been scouring books to look for any indication of gender favoritism. The aim of the current study was to evaluate the degree of gender bias in the Project series, a popular EFL textbook, and the Iranian EFL textbooks (Prospect series). It was investigated whether education in English-language textbooks was devoid of any form of discrimination or whether it took a systematic approach to a particular gender. The student books from the two series were carefully examined for any indications of preference for one gender. The quantity and gender of the staff members involved in the various stages of the creation of these series were verified. In the end, the frequency of all visual and textual items related to gender was checked and counted in light of content analysis. The results of this study demonstrated that gender bias was a problem in both series of books, but it was much more evident in Iranian textbooks. As in the previous generation's books, sex inequality was still present in the Prospect series, and it was clear that more thought needed to be given to this issue. In addition to some suggestions for resolving this problem, the study's conclusion also had some implications for those in charge of developing instructional materials, educating teachers, and formulating policies.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Content Analysis, Gender Discrimination, Gender Bias, Sexism, Prospect and Project Series, Language Teaching.

### Introduction

Every system has always placed a high priority on education. Many think that today's students are tomorrow's citizens who, with the right education, will be able to contribute to the development and growth of their country and fill a variety of societal roles in the future. For forty years, Iran was a developing nation and faced significant economic, political, social, cultural,

and educational challenges. As evidenced by instructional methods, textbooks, teacher preparation programs, etc., Iran's educational system had undergone significant change over the past ten years. This also applied to the teaching of the English language; over the previous ten years, both textbooks and methods of instruction had evolved. The most important change in English language education in Iran over the past ten years was the adoption of the communicative approach to teaching and learning, which was implemented in the Prospect and Vision books. Since the majority of educational systems heavily relied on them, it went without saying that textbooks were the most significant, widespread, and frequently used educational resource.

Only textbooks could be relied upon when examining all authority-related resources for students and teachers. Textbooks provided students with educational material. Mbilinyi (1996) asserted that textbooks were comparable to some instruments that had a significant impact on students' attitudes and feelings, helping to prepare them for the future.

According to Obura (1994), textbooks served as the main educational resource. When it came to how students were taught, textbooks occupied a very special and significant place. According to Sumalatha (2004), textbooks had a significant impact on the desired attitudes of children. Textbooks were one of the community socialization's adaptable elements. Textbooks had an effect on students' perceptions in addition to serving as a source of educational information. Mkuchu (2004) claimed that textbooks influenced students' attitudes and worldviews by teaching them about societal norms. Given the importance of the gender representation debate, students' perceptions of men and women in society might be influenced by how men and women were portrayed in textbooks.

A depiction of gender inequality could have a negative effect on the thoughts and behaviors of future citizens, or better yet, students, so educationalists were concerned about the gender discrimination views of the textbook developer, according to Gharbavi (2012). For example, the predominance of male pictorial items in math textbooks might imply subtly that women had no place in the field of mathematics and that co-education was not preferable to segregation. Due to this biased portrayal of women and men, the students' perceptions might be shaped to believe that certain behaviors were normal for men and certain behaviors were normal for women (Gharbavi, 2012). In other words, the knowledge found in textbooks contributed to the maintenance of gender inequality and the division of society into gendered groups.

This held true for all educational systems; the instructional textbooks' content was the most crucial policy for achieving objectives. This was

required to produce accurate, scientifically based textbooks. Textbooks were essential in establishing educational policy and content. They attracted the interest of numerous academics, textbook authors, researchers, and teachers as a result.

Several standards for selecting appropriate and useful content for textbooks had been recommended by numerous authorities. One of them was that the information in textbooks should be appropriate for and relevant to the intended students' gender (Eisner, 1985, p. 201-202). When textbook content matched the age and gender of the learner, it was beneficial and effective. Graci (1989, p. 79) pointed out that the lack of fairness in gender representation was one of the common issues with the current textbooks. The existence of gender bias in textbooks had already been demonstrated by some ESL researchers (Porreca, 1984; Lesikin, 2001).

It is crucial to emphasize that men and women were equal and that no form of gender discrimination was ever acceptable. Throughout history and into the modern era, gender bias in language had been a problem. Writing a textbook without gender bias might have been much easier for humans than it was for them to travel through space. A language that was gender biased could harm learners. Students' personalities shaped by what they learn in textbooks. As a result, it was essential to carefully review the textbooks that were given to students (Norton, 1997; Penny, 1990).

This study's significance came from its attempt to assess the degree of gender discrimination in the regional English language textbooks used in Iranian secondary high schools (Prospect Series) and the global English language textbooks (Project Series). Additionally, if implicit discrimination existed, we looked into whether it favored men or women. In contrast to a universal book that aimed to be taught throughout the entire universe, it appeared that some of these books had been altered to exclude women's existence because Iran's government was an Islamic one. The results of this study could clearly demonstrate the government's position and the ideology of the ruling system in the nation's educational system, in contrast to the Project's textbooks, which did not strongly favor gender. Because of this, the aim of this study was to thoroughly examine the English textbooks used in Iran and the popular English series taught across the globe for any sexism or bias. Teenagers and school kids were the target audiences for both of these series.

The researcher was motivated to carry out this research by the aforementioned issues. After considering the literature review and the researchers' own knowledge, the following research questions were created.

1. Which sex group contributed the most to the two series' production?
2. Do the male and female visual characters that appear more frequently in the Project series and Prospect series of Iranian English textbooks differ from one another?
3. Is there a difference between the Prospect series and the Project series in terms of the proportion of male and female textual items?
4. Is there a difference between the Prospect and Project series in terms of how characters are portrayed in their jobs and other activities?

### Literature Review

Since teachers had to either produce their own materials or use those that had already been created by others, McDonough and Shaw (2003) claimed that evaluating materials was a challenging task. Amerian (1978) was the first to investigate English Language Teaching resources in Iran. She did this by comparing two series, *Graded English* and *The Right Path to English*, in terms of content and methodology. No significant differences between the two series were discovered by the study. The process of comparing domestic ELT materials to those from other nations had undergone many changes and the materials had been looked at from a variety of perspectives.

There had been many recent (Amerian & Esmaili (2015); Aljuaythin (2018); and Ahmad, (2019) and historical studies (Porreca, 1984; Peterson and Kroner, 1992; Reese, 1994; Ansary, 2003) done on the topic of how sex is treated in textbooks. Porreca (1984) investigated the ways in which sexism appeared in ESL textbooks. She came to the conclusion that there was proof that sexism was still prevalent in ESL textbooks (Porreca, 1984, p. 718). Even though women made up slightly more than half of the US population, she claimed that they were only portrayed in books and illustrations about half as often as men. Early studies in Muslim developing countries showed that Syria's textbooks portrayed men as participating in a busy world while women were relegated to the background in servitude and frequently abused and victimized (Alrabaa, 1985). In a similar vein, an examination of 15 of the novels that were most frequently taught in Nigeria from 15 English literature textbooks revealed that only 61 of the 273 characters were female (Etim, 1988). Poulou (1997, p. 3) reviewed English Language Teaching Resources and found that the amount of conversation between men and women varied in textbook dialogues.

Earlier research by Ansary and Babii (2003, pp. 67–68), showed that, overall, 59–48% of the images in an EFL textbook were of men, and 27%

were of women. They viewed this as evidence of severe discrimination against women. Lesikin (2001), using the systemic-functional model as a tool for analysis, recently discovered numerous gender inequities in a widely distributed textbook called *Grammar in Use*. She discovered that 44 of the clause's 55 gender-specific nouns and pronouns were Themes, 34 percent of these were female and 66 percent were male. There were eleven clauses with pronouns and nouns that were gender-specific. There were 27% more women than men overall in this group. The final stressed element (end-focus) included seven gender-specific nouns. Females made up 29% of them, while men made up 71%.

Using T Sui's (1995) "Initiation," "Follow up," and "Response" models, Toolabi (2002) also investigated the language functions of Iranian High School English Textbooks. Between his research and Sui's model's assertions, he discovered some contradictions. International ELT textbooks were studied by researchers from all over the world. The books that were particularly biased against women include *Impact Values*, *New Interchange*, *Express Way*, and *Headway*.

Ansary and Babaii's (2003) study found that sexism was still present in current ESL/EFL textbooks. They conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses in two textbooks (*Right Path to English I and II*) that were locally produced to satisfy the English language needs of Iranian students in order to look for signs of sexist approaches and principles. Women clearly suffered the most from poor visibility they found (p. 69). There were 1.4 more women than men in the written text and the illustrations. There were 40 topics in total, and it was discovered that men dominated 27 of them.

A comparison of gender stereotypes in textbooks from two Arab countries found that Jordan had 20.8% of female characters, while Palestine had almost no or no mention of women's accomplishments (Alayan and Al-Khalidi, 2010). Additionally, gender stereotypes were present in Slovenian culture. Kavi (2011) claimed that gender differences persisted in western societies. According to Cankar (2004), Slovenian boys and girls picked up specific laws and values as well as sex roles during their formative years. It was obvious that they grew up in a sexually dualistic environment. In an effort to behave appropriately, they developed a self-image that included behaviors, emotions, and roles corresponding to socially acceptable gender roles.

The comparison of some domestic and foreign ELT textbooks' dialogues in terms of gender representation was the focus of Nazeri's (2010) research on Iranian High School English Textbooks and the Interchange Series. Her research confirmed the existence of degendered dialogues in secondary

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school English textbooks as well as the capitalist treatment of the gender issue in the Interchange Series. Yasin (2012) found that illustrations frequently used gender stereotypes. He examined English-language textbooks used in Malaysian schools, and the analysis's findings made it abundantly clear that there was a gender gap, primarily in favor of men. The analysis revealed that, despite the fact that male participants were overrepresented in the public sphere, the only domain that excluded female participants was the private sphere. Women were typically portrayed as mothers, wives, and nurturers. They were primarily limited to the interior and exterior of private residences. Males were depicted in a wider variety of activities, some indoors but especially those that involved outdoor settings, like on the playground, in parks, at the beach, and while playing sports like cycling, playing football, and shooting hoops. This was the preconceived notion of Malaysian women in sports, according to Bahiyah (2008). They did not live up to the standards that their male counterparts had set. In contrast to the portrayal of boys as assertive, intelligent, and capable leaders in many images, Yasin's analysis showed that many depictions of girls, particularly those in the educational setting (classroom), placed them in subordinate positions. There were not enough inspiring female role models for girls to be looked up to, according to more research (Yasin, 2012).

The standard of representation for women in textbooks and similar studies that were conducted in Iran were brought to light. Bahman and Rahimi (2010), for instance, found that between 70 and 80 percent of names, nouns, pronouns, and adjectives were gender-specific to men when they examined various aspects of gender bias in three volumes of English textbooks used in Iranian secondary schools.

According to research, developing non-Muslim countries also exhibited similar patterns. Studies done in India indicated that textbook content frequently exhibited male chauvinism (Sumalatha, 2004). Studies in African nations demonstrated sexism, much like India. The representation of women was underrepresented and of poor quality. For instance, Banda's (2014) content analysis of secondary school textbooks in Zambia found that 73.9 percent of the examples featured men who were willing to put in a lot of effort and maintain a job.

When content analysis of primary school textbooks in Urdu and English was done in the Punjab region, similar evidence of gender stereotypes and "gender apartheid" images were discovered (Jabeen et al., 2014). Women were underrepresented, especially in Pakistani textbooks, according to a comparison of Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal among three South Asian countries (Srivastava, 2006).

The topic of how sex was treated in textbooks had been the subject of numerous recent studies. In comparison to men, women were underrepresented in EFL textbooks, claimed Amerian and Esmaili (2015), Aljuaythin (2018), and Ahmad (2019). Men were overrepresented and women were underrepresented, according to Aljuaythin (2018), both in terms of social roles and the activities in which each gender engaged. Men were unfairly portrayed as having power and influence in textbook illustrations, while women were portrayed as having a subordinate and dependent position (Ahmad and Shah, 2019). Studies had shown that sexism existed both overtly and covertly, which caused women to be treated as inferior and second-class citizens (Amerian & Esmaili, 2015; Lee, 2018; Parham, 2013).

Only 35.2% of pictures in Bangladesh and Malaysia were of women, according to a recent analysis of picture content across nations. In Malaysia and Indonesia, there were 44 percent and 44 percent of female characters overall (text and images combined), compared to 24 percent and 37 percent, respectively, in textbooks from Pakistan and Bangladesh (Islam and Asadullah, 2018).

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design and Instruments**

The present study was conducted in Iranian English student books available for primary high school level known as 'Prospect Series' and a commonly taught English series in different language institutes of Iran known as 'Project Series':

- English for Schools, PROSPECT 1 Student book
- English for Schools, PROSPECT 2 Student book
- English for Schools, PROSPECT 3 Student book
- Project 1 Student book, Fourth Edition
- Project 2 Student book, Fourth Edition
- Project 3 Student book, Fourth Edition

To ascertain the presence of gender discrimination in the Project series and English textbooks for primary high schools in Iran, a single-method study with a quantitative focus was conducted. The original four categories proposed by JM Kobia (2009) were also applied to the content analysis of the textbooks.

1. Comparing the staff involved in the production of the two series.
2. Rate of occurrence of male and female characters (graphical representations) in the textbooks. In other words the number of

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pictures and figures devoted to sex groups in different parts of the books.

3. Linguistic usage in relation to female and male characters. Any term or vocabulary related to gender and sex such as the use of: "he-she, boy-girl, man-men, woman-women, girls name-boys name, etc.".

4. The representation of Characters in Occupational Roles and Other Activities.

**Participants & Setting**

Iran's Golestan Province and Gonbad Kavous City served as the study's location.

**Data Collection & Data Analysis**

In the current study, content analysis was done quantitatively. In order to assess the relative frequency of the categories mentioned above in the Research Design section, descriptive statistics were used for quantitative analysis.

The following procedure was followed to collect the required data in this study:

- The materials were chosen first.
- These six textbooks were evaluated and intensely investigated. This step consisted of a cursory examination of the textbooks to ensure that they contain the information the researchers were looking for.
- Then, the number of employees who participated in the entire process of writing these books was counted and divided into male and female involvement.
- Then, each female and male character's occurrences, along with their names, were counted and grouped.
- Following that, all of the images—both male and female—were counted and arranged into groups.
- Every term that was associated with one sex was carefully examined and counted. For instance, *how frequently were male and female names used?*

During data collection, each sex group's associated terms and images (figures) were counted and divided by the total number of both. The amounts discovered and their correlation with the total number of words and pictures revealed the books' propensity to appeal to various sex groups. Naturally, each of the aforementioned steps was initially carried out independently for each distinct book in order to clearly calculate the percentage of each book's



tendency to fall into either of the two sex groups. Tables were used to summarize the findings to make data analysis at this level easier.

### Results

The research's findings were presented in tabular formats. This covered the gender categories used in the two series' developments at different points, the frequency with which female and male visual characters appeared, and language use with a gender perspective in mind. Additionally, percentages were employed to contrast the representation of male and female characters in two series of textbooks.

#### 1. Composition of staff involved in the process of production of the PROSPECT and PROJECT series.

**Table 1. Authors involved in the writing of Prospect & Project Series**

| <i>Book</i>       | <i>Total</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Prospect 1</i> | 7            | 1             | 14.3     | 6           | 85.7     |
| <i>Prospect 2</i> | 10           | 2             | 20       | 8           | 80       |
| <i>Prospect 3</i> | 7            | 2             | 28.6     | 5           | 71.4     |
| <i>Project 1</i>  | 1            | 0             | 0        | 1           | 100      |
| <i>Project 2</i>  | 1            | 0             | 0        | 1           | 100      |
| <i>Project 3</i>  | 1            | 0             | 0        | 1           | 100      |

The majority of the writing staff (authors) for Prospect textbooks were men, according to data in table 1. For instance, Prospect 1 had 6 male authors and just 1 female, which meant that only 14 percent of women contributed to the book compared to 85 percent of men. Similarly to this, only a man was employed as a writer for the Project series.

It could be concluded that female representation in Project's global coursebook and Iran's primary English textbooks was diminished in some way based on the percentage of staff involved in the writing of the two series. This could be attributed to how communities view women, both in democratic and extremist nations. In Iran, few women contributed to the creation of English-language textbooks because of sexist attitudes which were still prevalent in society. Mbilinyi (1996) asserted that men who had

greater access to education than women dominated the field of textbook writing, as well as other intellectual pursuits. The representation of male and female characters in English textbooks was influenced by the underrepresentation of women among Prospect textbook authors.

**Table 2. Editors of Prospect & Project Textbooks**

| <i>Book</i>       | <i>Total</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Prospect 1</i> | 1            | 0             | 0        | 1           | 100      |
| <i>Prospect 2</i> | 1            | 0             | 0        | 1           | 100      |
| <i>Prospect 3</i> | 2            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |
| <i>Project 1</i>  | 2            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |
| <i>Project 2</i>  | 1            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |
| <i>Project 3</i>  | 2            | 0             | 0        | 2           | 100      |

Data in Table 2 demonstrated how uncommon it was for women to participate in the editing of Prospect books. For Prospects 1 and 2, no women were involved in the editing process, and for Prospect 3, only one woman took part. The story of the Project series was slightly different, there were more female than male participants, and in the third book of the series, women predominated in the editing process.

**Table 3. Artists Involved in Drawing Illustrations and Photographers for the Prospect & Project Series**

| <i>Book</i>       | <i>Total</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Prospect 1</i> | 6            | 0             | 0        | 6           | 100      |
| <i>Prospect 2</i> | 5            | 1             | 20       | 4           | 80       |
| <i>Prospect 3</i> | 4            | 1             | 25       | 3           | 75       |
| <i>Project 1</i>  | 4            | 1             | 25       | 3           | 75       |
| <i>Project 2</i>  | 7            | 2             | 28       | 5           | 72       |

|                  |   |   |    |   |    |
|------------------|---|---|----|---|----|
| <i>Project 3</i> | 7 | 4 | 57 | 3 | 43 |
|------------------|---|---|----|---|----|

The information in Table 3 demonstrated that there were still few female artists and photographers hired for the Prospect series' photography and photo design, with less than 14% of all participants being female. The same analysis, however, revealed a more equal distribution of power. Men were involved in greater numbers than women, which was the case in this instance as well.

**Table 4. Authors involved in the preparation of the books**

| <i>Book</i>       | <i>Total</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Prospect 1</i> | 5            | 2             | 40       | 3           | 60       |
| <i>Prospect 2</i> | 5            | 2             | 40       | 3           | 60       |
| <i>Prospect 3</i> | 2            | 0             | 0        | 2           | 100      |
| <i>Project 1</i>  | 2            | 0             | 0        | 2           | 100      |
| <i>Project 2</i>  | 3            | 1             | 33       | 2           | 67       |
| <i>Project 3</i>  | 2            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |

In both series, there were more men than women working on the book production team, as shown in Table 4, and some signs of favoritism toward men could be seen in both series.

**Table 5. Cover page developer**

| <i>Book</i>       | <i>Total</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Prospect 1</i> | 1            | 0             | 0        | 1           | 100      |
| <i>Prospect 2</i> | 1            | 0             | 0        | 1           | 100      |
| <i>Prospect 3</i> | 1            | 0             | 0        | 1           | 100      |
| <i>Project 1</i>  | 2            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |
| <i>Project 2</i>  | 2            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |

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|                  |   |   |    |   |    |
|------------------|---|---|----|---|----|
| <i>Project 3</i> | 2 | 1 | 50 | 1 | 50 |
|------------------|---|---|----|---|----|

Table 5 detailed the book's front cover. The cover page was the most important page in every textbook and provided a wealth of information about the book's content. As you could see, no women were still involved in the design or production of the cover pages for the Prospect series, and only men were doing the job; in contrast, both men and women had an equal voice in the Project series.

## 2. Visual characters available in the textbooks.

**Table 6. Cover Page and Gender Representation in Prospect & Project Textbooks**

| <i>Book</i>       | <i>Total</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Prospect 1</i> | 7            | 3             | 42.9     | 4           | 57.1     |
| <i>Prospect 2</i> | 8            | 4             | 50       | 4           | 50       |
| <i>Prospect 3</i> | 2            | 0             | 0        | 2           | 100      |
| <i>Project 1</i>  | 2            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |
| <i>Project 2</i>  | 2            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |
| <i>Project 3</i>  | 2            | 1             | 50       | 1           | 50       |

According to data in Table 6, there were more male characters overall than female characters on the cover pages of the Prospect textbooks examined for this study. 10 men (58.8%) out of a total of 7 women (41.2%) were represented in the textbooks as male characters. The majority of the Prospect series' photographers, designers, and artists were men, as Table 3 demonstrated. One could infer that the male artist wanted to include increasingly more male images on every page of the book besides the cover. On the cover page of the Project series, as opposed to the Prospect series, an equal number of men and women was used.

**Table 7. Images, characters, and cartoon-like pictures in Prospect & Project Textbooks**

| <i>Book</i>       | <i>Total</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Prospect 1</i> | 237          | 57            | 24.1     | 180         | 75.9     |
| <i>Prospect 2</i> | 229          | 59            | 25.8     | 170         | 74.2     |
| <i>Prospect 3</i> | 400          | 112           | 28       | 288         | 72       |
| <i>Project 1</i>  | 548          | 254           | 46       | 294         | 54       |
| <i>Project 2</i>  | 426          | 210           | 49       | 216         | 51       |
| <i>Project 3</i>  | 617          | 281           | 46       | 336         | 54       |

The frequency of characters, images, and pictures was presented in Table 7 above, which revealed that male characters were more prevalent than female characters in all three of the Prospect textbooks examined for this study. It was important to note that some of the photographs in which the gender of the subjects could not be determined were removed. However, a clear balance was discovered when the Project series was analyzed. It was still interesting to note that even in the Project series' three books, there were slightly more men than women.

### **3. Linguistic usage in relation to female and male characters.**

Any terminology or language that denoted gender or sexual orientation, such as the use of "he-she," "boy-girl," "man-men," "woman-women," "father-mother," "brother-sister," "uncle-aunt," "girls' names," "boys' names," "female/male pronouns," and "Mr./Mrs" was under the researchers' scrutiny. In this section, terms like Miss and all others that in some way referred to a single-sex identity were examined. But it should be noted that if a name appeared more than once on the same page, it was only counted once. When a character in a narrative story was involved, this mostly happened. The name might be used numerous times. However, if the same name appeared on the following page, it was counted again. This was due to the fact that the primary goal of this study was the textbook page.

Table 8. Frequency of Occurrence of Male and Female Names

| <i>Book</i>       | <i>Total</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Prospect 1</i> | 180          | 76            | 42.3     | 104         | 57.7     |
| <i>Prospect 2</i> | 53           | 24            | 45.3     | 29          | 54.7     |
| <i>Prospect 3</i> | 218          | 96            | 44.1     | 122         | 55.9     |
| <i>Project 1</i>  | 357          | 175           | 49.1     | 182         | 50.9     |
| <i>Project 2</i>  | 966          | 390           | 40.3     | 576         | 59.7     |
| <i>Project 3</i>  | 824          | 369           | 44.8     | 455         | 55.2     |

A close examination of the data in Table 8 revealed that the Prospect series mentioned more male textual items than female names. Also, interesting in the study was that when the labels Mrs. and Mr. were used, it was the Mr. title that came first. The story applied to *he and she, boy and girl, and men and women*. The same thing happened with the Project series. Of course, in comparison with the visual representative items, an effort had been made to maintain the balance between the two genders. However, in both series, the percentage of males was higher than the percentage of females.

#### 4. The portrayal of Characters in Occupational Roles and Other Activities

According to Kabira and Masinjila (1997), there were three main categories of human activity. To produce supplies and essential services for the creation of revenue, **productive** activities were carried out. Second, domestic **reproduction** activities like gathering firewood, baking, caring for children, and water storage took place at home. The third was **community initiatives** that serve the general good of the community, such as attending public barazas, church services, and funerals. Community and reproductive activities were not funded.

**Table 9. Productive and Reproductive Roles in Prospect Series (Prospects 1,2 3)**

| <i>Productive Roles</i>                | <i>M</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Reproductive Roles</i>            | <i>M</i> | <i>F</i> |
|--|----------|----------|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>Teaching</i>                        | 7        | 8        | <i>Chairing a meeting</i>            | 2        | 2        |
| <i>Law and order (security)</i>        | 10       | 0        | <i>Attending to a patient</i>        | 7        | 4        |
| <i>Making furniture</i>                | 0        | 0        | <i>Birthday celebrations</i>         | 0        | 0        |
| <i>Photocopying, Photography</i>       | 3        | 0        | <i>Clearing the compound</i>         | 1        | 0        |
| <i>Sports</i>                          | 22       | 1        | <i>Cleaning cars</i>                 | 0        | 0        |
| <i>Matatu business</i>                 | 0        | 0        | <i>Milking</i>                       | 0        | 0        |
| <i>Secretarial duties</i>              | 7        | 8        | <i>Planting &amp; watering trees</i> | 1        | 0        |
| <i>Selling items in a shop</i>         | 5        | 0        | <i>Graduation celebrations</i>       | 0        | 0        |
| <i>Driving passengers</i>              | 2        | 0        | <i>Dancing</i>                       | 0        | 0        |
| <i>Electrical fittings</i>             | 1        | 0        | <i>Scouting</i>                      | 2        | 0        |
| <i>Presiding over a case</i>           | 0        | 0        | <i>Fetching water</i>                | 0        | 0        |
| <i>Herding livestock</i>               | 2        | 0        | <i>Rescue operations</i>             | 8        | 1        |
| <i>Building and maintenance</i>        | 7        | 0        | <i>Buying items from a shop</i>      | 5        | 3        |
| <i>Pilot</i>                           | 1        | 0        | <i>Picnics, outings &amp; tours</i>  | 2        | 0        |
| <i>House construction</i>              | 6        | 0        | <i>Clearing the table</i>            | 5        | 0        |
| <i>Removing teeth (dentist)</i>        | 2        | 0        | <i>Playing football</i>              | 5        | 0        |
| <i>Pump attendant</i>                  | 0        | 0        | <i>Washing utensils</i>              | 0        | 0        |
| <i>Repairing tires</i>                 | 0        | 0        | <i>Reciting a poem</i>               | 1        | 0        |
| <i>Farming &amp; herding livestock</i> | 5        | 0        | <i>Wedding ceremonies</i>            | 0        | 0        |
| <i>Total</i>                           | 80       | 17       | <i>Total</i>                         | 39       | 10       |
| <i>Percentages (%)</i>                 | 82.4     | 17.6     | <i>Percentages (%)</i>               | 79.5     | 20.5     |

**Table 10. Reproductive and Productive Roles by Gender in Project Series (Project 1, 2, 3)**

| <i>Productive Roles</i>         | <i>M</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Reproductive Roles</i>     | <i>M</i> | <i>F</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>Teaching</i>                 | 12       | 4        | <i>Chairing a meeting</i>     | 8        | 10       |
| <i>Law and order (security)</i> | 15       | 6        | <i>Attending to a patient</i> | 6        | 3        |
| <i>Making furniture</i>         | 2        | 0        | <i>Birthday celebrations</i>  | 6        | 8        |
| <i>Photocopying,</i>            | 8        | 7        | <i>Clearing the</i>           | 3        | 9        |

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|  |      |      |                                      |      |      |
|--|------|------|--------------------------------------|------|------|
| <i>Photography</i>                     |      |      | <i>compound</i>                      |      |      |
| <i>Sports</i>                          | 29   | 17   | <i>Cleaning cars</i>                 | 4    | 0    |
| <i>Matatu business</i>                 | 0    | 0    | <i>Milking</i>                       | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Secretarial duties</i>              | 14   | 21   | <i>Planting &amp; watering trees</i> | 1    | 0    |
| <i>Selling items in a shop</i>         | 9    | 11   | <i>Graduation celebrations</i>       | 16   | 13   |
| <i>Driving passengers</i>              | 8    | 3    | <i>Dancing</i>                       | 14   | 17   |
| <i>Electrical fittings</i>             | 4    | 0    | <i>Scouting</i>                      | 5    | 1    |
| <i>Presiding over a case</i>           | 2    | 3    | <i>Fetching water</i>                | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Herding livestock</i>               | 5    | 1    | <i>Rescue operations</i>             | 2    | 0    |
| <i>Building and maintenance</i>        | 18   | 2    | <i>Buying items from a shop</i>      | 9    | 16   |
| <i>Pilot</i>                           | 3    | 1    | <i>Picnics, outings &amp; tours</i>  | 12   | 14   |
| <i>House construction</i>              | 11   | 3    | <i>Clearing the table</i>            | 4    | 2    |
| <i>Removing teeth (dentist)</i>        | 3    | 1    | <i>Playing football</i>              | 6    | 0    |
| <i>Pump attendant</i>                  | 0    | 0    | <i>Washing utensils</i>              | 3    | 4    |
| <i>Repairing tires</i>                 | 0    | 0    | <i>Reciting a poem</i>               | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Farming &amp; herding livestock</i> | 7    | 1    | <i>Wedding ceremonies</i>            | 0    | 0    |
| <i>Total</i>                           | 150  | 81   | <i>Total</i>                         | 99   | 97   |
| <i>Percentages (%)</i>                 | 64.9 | 35.1 | <i>Percentages (%)</i>               | 50.5 | 49.5 |

Tables 9 and 10 showed multiple explanations of occupational roles according to sex. From table 9, we could conclude that more males (82.4%) than females (17.6%) were involved in productive activities, which were mostly paid for, and from table 10 we could reach a conclusion on the idea that still in a so-called global book like Project series, there was still more male (64.9) than female (35.1). The data collected also uncovered that more men (79.5%) than women (20.5%) were depicted as acting in reproductive roles, which were not compensated. More men (39) than women (10) were depicted in activities that were not appreciated and taken for granted. These activities included attending birthday parties, dancing, cleaning appliances, fetching water, etc. More males were illustrated in more respected positions such as engineers, pilots, dentists, and farmers. Also, table 10 showed that considering reproductive roles, the competition was almost equal between men and women.

In the Prospect series, more women were portrayed performing less cherished professions as instructors and clerks, and even in these

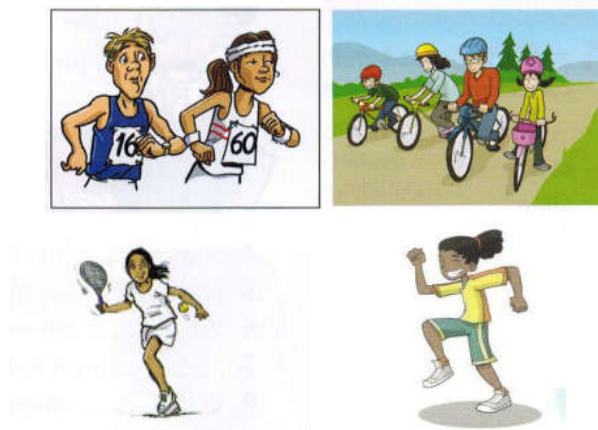


occupations, the difference was not that high. It was as if the books sought to bring up old stereotypes to show that women belonged to a series of specific and limited jobs and men were always identified with a specific series of jobs. Some of the most clichéd ones were as follows:



As mentioned at the beginning of the article, textbooks were very important in forming social roles for students. This kind of gender labeling based on profession would form a sort of idea that what job each gender should be applying for in the future.

On the other hand, the story was a bit different in the Project series. Less stereotypical pictorial items were being shown in this series and in the case of jobs, activities, sports events, etc. the author of these series made an effort to provide equality between male and female genders.



### Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of comparing and contrasting a high school EFL textbook (Prospect series) to a global English textbook (Project series) was to examine how men and women were portrayed in order to identify the ideology that supported those representations. Below was a review of the research findings based on the objectives and categories used in the content analysis of the textbooks for Prospect and Project.

There was undoubtedly a gender bias and sex injustice in these series of books, favoring the male sex at the expense of the female sex. The Islamic culture's ideological underpinnings in Iranian society appeared to be the cause of this gender bias. The gender gap was, however, unmistakably more pronounced in Iranian EFL textbooks. In the studies conducted by Esmaili and Amerian (2014), the same sexism in favor of men was found.

When it came to the first question of the research, more men than women worked on the writing, editing, photography, and graphic design for the Prospect series (Tables 1 to 5). As a result, women are marginalized and underrepresented in underdeveloped English textbooks. This result was consistent with Kobia's (2009) findings that women were underrepresented in the typesetting, editing, authorship, authorship, photography, and the illumination of the LLE textbooks. It was suggested that male and female authors be permitted to contribute to textbook creation.

The survey's questions two and three revealed that both textbook series had a gender bias. However, the Iranian EFL textbook had a much higher percentage of gender discrimination than the international one. Table 8 made it clear that there were differences between the observed frequencies of linguistic items used by men and women. The two book series' textual analyses generally favored men over women. Regarding the textual content, both series had a male preponderance. According to the review of the literature, this could have terrible repercussions because neither gender could be excluded without having a negative effect on the suppressed sex. In other words, when one of the genders did not manifest itself in the same manner as the other gender, it may be assumed that the accomplishments of the suppressed sex were unimportant (Esmaili and Amerian, 2013).

Another instance of sexism in language was masculine generic construction, which was the general use of masculine nouns or pronouns to refer to individuals, whether they were male or female. The investigation into this matter turned up some usages of the pronoun *he* that generally refer to both genders, which was suggestive of some sex bias. When it came to the names and terms used in both the Prospect and Project series, there was generally a bias in favor of men.

Tables 6 and 7 showed that there was a generalized gender disparity in the representation of gender images, with men being portrayed in more positive ways than women. Male characters were more prevalent than female ones in the Prospect series. This explained why there were no female photographers or artists involved in the creation of the series. A more fair representation of the world was presented in the Project series. These results were in line with those of Islam and Asadullah (2018), who discovered that their textbooks showed a "sexist attitude" toward gender that was biased in favor of men and featured more illustrations and pictures of men than of women. The formation of young language learners' gender identities might be influenced by repeated exposure to unequal male and female stereotypes in textbooks. This might conflict with current initiatives to advance gender equality (Aljuaythi, 2018; Mustapha, 2013).

If we turned to Research Question No. 4 and the findings in Tables 9 and 10, we could see that more often women were portrayed in reproductive roles. Gender stereotypes were reinforced in textbooks by the depiction of men working hard. The results of the prospect analysis showed that men were perceived as leaders while women were perceived as followers in terms of management and control relations. Only a small percentage of women held management positions, such as administrators, politicians, and people in professional jobs demonstrated in the media. But this problem is a little bit different in the Project case. The Project series attempted to maintain an equal position for both sexes in terms of various social functions.

As stated by Hamilton et al (2006), these stereotypical depictions of female characters could harm children's development. He held that gender stereotypes and the underrepresentation of one gender, in particular, had an effect on how children develop. Their perspectives on their future roles and career aspirations were impacted by these stereotypical patterns. Modern society of Iran enjoyed a variety of social roles for both men and women that were never mentioned in Prospect textbooks.

The majority of social roles were depicted as being filled by men in these textbooks, and this issue had given rise to an ideological position. Many women held professional positions that required driving or outdoor work, including those in medicine, psychology, and engineering. It was particularly intriguing to discuss the monopolized roles that women had in society. Household chores like cooking, cleaning, and washing dishes or clothes were exclusively the domain of women in the Prospect series. These textbooks appeared to be working to strengthen stereotypes about both sexes, but especially those about women. This topic shed some light on the persistence of outdated stereotypes in these textbooks despite the changes in the social roles that women now play in Iranian society. A stereotypical

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attitude toward women was exposed by examining the distribution of domestic roles. But unlike the Project series, where men and women had an equal chance of landing a job, this one had a completely different story.

This study had significant pedagogical implications for language classrooms. English teachers played a crucial role in addressing the linguistic inequality that favored men, which was imperative. The textbook authors, who were in charge of writing and developing the textbooks, ought to try to draw attention to these linguistic injustices. The adoption of a critical stance on societal issues, such as gender equity, and the discussion of it in the classroom were strongly advised for teachers when they came across stereotypical propaganda or sexism in textbooks. Additionally, it was critical to provide language classrooms with additional resources that were devoid of bias against either gender. For young Iranian language learners to learn to represent both men and women in an objective, nonsexist way, the Iranian Ministry of Education must update the published content and pay close attention to balanced textbooks.

It had been a long time since women have been holding significant leadership positions in society, such as those of managers, politicians, judges, and other high-level positions, according to the authors of these textbooks. Allowing nearly equal numbers of men and women to participate in the development of the text and illustrations for the books' text and design would be one way to address this issue. Another great idea was to create a division within the Ministry of Education whose sole responsibility was to check school textbooks for gender bias. It was quite surprising that, after many years, we were still witnessing such an event in our nation in the twenty-first century and the digital age, when the issue of gender discrimination in textbooks had turned into a non-issue.

Sadly, despite many studies and suggestions being made at the time, sexism was still present in the new books. This problem also affected older English language textbooks used in classrooms. Although the government claimed to the contrary, the material in EFL textbooks contradicted the government's claims that men and women played equal social roles. Taking a look at the range of occupations that exist in Iranian society today, both for men and women. Women had recently surpassed men in every field that was previously held exclusively by them. Because of this, the textual and visual content of the Prospect series greatly departed from what we know about Iranian society today.

Despite the widespread belief that textbooks should be gender-neutral and that neither gender should be given more attention than the other, it could be deduced from the aforementioned findings that more work needed to be done on the Prospect series. Of course, it should be noted that the Project series

also experienced gender bias, albeit in a less noticeable way. Both of these series were undoubtedly impacted by gender inequality against women. Furthermore, the study's findings showed that favoritism toward one particular sex—in this case, favoritism toward men—was a part of the ideology that the highest echelons of power wanted to infiltrate as a part of the "hidden curriculum" mentioned by Skelton (1997). In some aspects of Iran's educational system, it appeared that some individuals were attempting to mold the students' way of life. The implication was that content producers should produce material that was more equal in the social roles that were given to both genders so that language learners would understand those roles in the future. The other implication was that teachers and language organizations should pick the content with care to avoid gender bias.

A thorough analysis of other books was also required to ascertain whether gender discrimination of any kind had been used, whether intentionally or not. It should go without saying that since most students first encountered and learned from textbooks, these gender disparities in textbooks had terrible unintended consequences for society. It should be noted that certain stereotypes were depicted in the book's photographs, which were an essential part of every textbook. Examples included a photograph of a woman cooking or a man at work as a mechanic, and the list was endless. This issue highlighted how women were in charge of managing the home and how their contributions outside of the home were easily overlooked because they were marginalized in a variety of contexts, including social roles. This study showed how textbooks had a big socializing impact on how students think about gender roles. The gender representations in textbooks served to further the gender stereotypes of what it meant to be a man or a woman. The gender stereotypes portrayed in textbooks led to differences in how boys and girls behaved in society. Therefore, there was a need for more primary school textbooks that considered gender issues.

The fact that women were prohibited from taking on many of the roles that were previously mentioned showed that the current Prospect textbooks did not take a neutral stance. It is important to note that, for the purposes of this experiment, we only examined the student editions of six textbooks to look at the topic of sexism in those books. Additional research could be done on any EFL textbook, including any of the Vision series books currently being used in classrooms around the country. Additionally, the data in this study were only quantitatively collected, whereas future research could use a mixed method and seek input from educators, students, and content developers. The current study was descriptive in nature; future studies may investigate how gender bias impacts students' motivation or academic performance.

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