

A Gender Analysis on English Grammar Textbooks

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ABSTRACT:

Educational materials play a crucial 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 university. Content analysis was performed: a systematic quantitative analysis was performed concerning 1) firstness and 2) masculine generic construction. Regarding the number of male and female order of mentioning, male came first more frequently than those of females. And using generic constructions, these textbooks contained many male-generics.

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 & MacconnellGinet, 2003, p.10).

Jackson also comments that gender is different from sex in that it refers the social and cultural origins of differences between women and men. It can also help us to clarify the meaning of the word sex. It refers to the distinction between women and men. So sexuality refers to the different erotic activities, desires, practices and identities. Another definition has been made by Liebert and Wicks-Nelson (1981). They believe that gender roles literally refer to the roles played differently by males and females. They are the behaviors, attitudes, and interests commonly appropriate to females and males in a specific society or culture. Henslin (2010) also comments that gender is the behaviors and attitudes that a society considers proper for its males and females; masculinity or femininity (p.75).

It is important here to remind that based on Mitchell's claim, sex and gender are interrelated concepts that are closely bound to each other (Jackson, 1998, P.132). 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

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). To Mustedanagic (2010), whenever a text is read, an interpretation is made by the reader and meaning is constructed. Comparing language teaching with building a house, she says that "compare teaching language with building a house, the text represents our material. It can be dangerous to use bad materials for building, because there is always the chance that the house might collapse. The same thing can be applied to English textbooks (p.2). Poulou (1997) as well as Treichler and Frank (1989) also report that linguistic sexism in textbooks creates deleterious real-world and damaging pedagogical consequences especially for women and girls.

To the importance of sexism and language, Wardhugh (2010) believes that there must be some neutral words in describing both gender, for example neutral words that can be seen in occupation, chairperson, letter carrier, salesclerk, and actor. He further claims that to make new changes in society we need to make changes in such categories as well, categories that represent genders equally (p.338).

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

As Cameron (1988) claims, the issue of 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). 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: firstness and masculine generic constructio.

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 6 questions:

- 1) Is there any significant difference regarding the order and firstness of each gender in English grammar textbooks?
- 2) Is there any significant difference regarding the use of generic constructions in English grammar textbooks?

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 (Brugeilles & 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 (Brugeilles & 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 (Brugeilles & 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 the issue of firstness; and the use of masculine generic.

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.

Similarly, Bahman and Rahimi (2010) in their research, attempted to examine different areas of gender-bias in representation of women and men in 3 volumes of English textbooks taught in the high schools of Iran. The findings revealed that the manifestation of women and men in these textbooks was not fair. In other words, the presence of men was more highlighted than that of women regarding names, nouns, pronouns and adjectives attributed to them. In regard to firstness, also, male-attributed terms came first more frequently than those of females. In reading passages, male characters appeared more frequently than female characters. Moreover, these textbooks contained many male-generics in which women were almost invisible. Also, sexism was detected in regard to animal representations. The results revealed that there is not a fair treatment of females and males in these series of textbooks, i.e., there is a big gender gap between the portrayal of females and males in the books under investigation. Sexism is manifested in different areas in these textbooks. The areas of sexism found were names, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, firstness, reading passages and male-generics. In the areas of names, nouns, pronouns and adjectives, males outnumbered females. In regard to firstness, males occurred more than females in the first places of instructions, exercises and sentences. Concerning reading passages too there was the supremacy of males over females, i.e., they occupied the titles and the topics of most passages and women were almost neglected. Another area of gender-bias manifested in these textbooks was the abundant use of male generics referring to both men and women. In regard to animals, also, the number of animals referred to males was more than that of women. Therefore, it

can be stated that in the textbooks investigated, women were almost invisible and discriminated.

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 sener in all clauses of the textbooks.

Related empirical studies done in other countries:

Graham's (1975) survey of the pronoun he in young people's textbooks found that the ratio of He to She in the textbooks was about 4:1. Of the 940 times that he appeared, 744 referred to male human beings, 128 to male animals, 36 to people who were assumed to be male, and only 32 were references to an unspecified singular subject.

Britton and Lumpkin (1977) compared reading, literature, and social studies textbooks published both before and after 1970 to determine whether guidelines to correct sexism had resulted in any positive changes. They found that females portrayed as major characters had increased by only 2 percent, up to 16 percent in the newer books.

In a study of children's textbooks, Nilsen (1977) went to two libraries and found books with the generic term man in their titles (such as *How Man Began*), then counted the number of pictures of males and females to see if man really expressed the meaning men and women. The books for younger children contained 267 pictures of males and only 33 of females. Those books written for older children had a better but nonetheless disappointing ratio: 310 males to 96 females (Porreca, 1978, pp. 708-709).

Hoomes (1978) conducted a systematic examination of 28 high school literature anthologies for grades 9 through 12 and found that the overall ratio of total female characters to total male characters in the books was 1:3.5.

Hellinger (1980), a native West German, conducted a thorough study of 131 passages from three English language textbooks used in German schools. She found that men participated in over 93 percent of the passages, while not even 30 percent of the texts included women. In addition, it was noted that 80 percent of the speakers were male.

Hamdan (2010) also examined gender bias in English-Language school textbooks used in public schools in Jordan. The aim of the study was to explore the authors' treatment of jobs attributed to male and female characters. The results indicated that the textbooks reflect the culturally-prevalent gender bias. While males practice a variety of jobs and are portrayed as effective and dominant characters in the labor market, females practice traditional jobs such as teachers and nurses.

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 foregrounded 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 consists 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 may be 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, and also 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; the issue of firstness; occupations, and the use of masculine generic. 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. The categories have been analyzed were:

Firstness:

Another area in textbooks in which can provide evidence of gender imbalance is "the order of mention, termed *firstness*" (Porreca, 1984, p. 706). When two gender-specific nouns or pronouns appear as a pair in a text, like *mother and father* or *he/she*, the one appearing in the first position can be interpreted as having a higher status. In previous studies (Hartman & Judd, 1978; Porreca, 1984) nearly all the textbooks examined have been found to favor a male-first order. Such a bias, according to Hartman and Judd, reinforces the second-place status of women and could, with only a little effort, be avoided by mixing the order (1978, P. 390).

Masculine generic construction:

Textbooks can be inadvertently sexist through the use of the masculine generic. This issue arises because English does not have an epicene third-person singular pronoun, which leads to pedagogical problems (Cochran 1996, p. 160). Often in these situations, *he* or *man* is used as a stopgap. Holmes (2013) claimed that "generic structures provide further evidence to support the claim that the English language marginalizes women and treat them as abnormal (Holmes, 2013, P. 326).

Overuse of the masculine generic puts females at a disadvantage in recalling information. A study conducted on recognition and recall by Crawford and English (cited in Porreca 1984, P. 710) showed that females recalled less information when the masculine generic was used instead of the feminine version. Textbooks that repeatedly use the masculine generic are therefore disempowering female students.

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 firstness and masculine generic construction.

The researcher used a way to study the firstness in the textbooks, counting the common and proper paired words, and paired pronouns. It was to find the instances of sex firstness -cases where male or females were presented first in texts, examples, and exercises, and then tabulating the collected data.

Another aspect of sexism that was investigated by the researcher was the generic masculine construction, again she counted the number of times masculine generic construction was used throughout the texts., investigated how and where masculine nouns and pronouns existed, It was done through investigating the association between all pronouns and their antecedents.

Data Analysis:

The researcher used quantitative data analysis. By utilizing the quantitative analysis, she focused on the presence or absence of target categories in the

text/content of this study:the issue of firstness and the use of masculine generic. To analyze the quantitative data, the following descriptive statistics is used: frequency and percentage.

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 order and firstness of each gender in English grammar textbooks?
- 2) Is there any significant difference regarding the use of generic constructions?

Quantitative Analysis:

Investigating Question 1 (Firstness)

Is there any significant difference regarding the order and firstness of each gender in English grammar textbooks?

Hartman and Judd (1978, p. 390) investigated the order of mentioning of two nouns paired for sex, such as *Mr.* and *Mrs.*, *brother* and *sister*, and *husband* and *wife*, and found out that (except *ladies* and *gentlemen*) the masculine word always comes first. They argue that „such automatic ordering reinforces the second-place status of women“. To further pursue this issue, this study examined all the instances in the textbooks in which the two genders are mentioned together and checked which appears first. It has been done through counting the noun and pronoun pairs. The raw numbers show the number of occurrences and the numbers in parentheses indicate the percentage of men and women order of mentioning in texts. The findings are presented in below tables:

Table 4.1. Firstness (An advanced learners’ Grammar , by Mark Foley and Diane Hall).

The name of the textbook	woman first pairs	Man first pairs
An advanced Learners’ Grammar	Mum and dad(3) Ladies and gentleman(2) My wife and I Alicia and Charles Ann and peter	My husband and I He/she(2) Father and mother Tom Cruise and Julia Roberts Mike and Sara
	Jane and Bob My mother and father	Brothers or sisters My brother and sister Bill and Suzy Him and his wife Him/her(3) His/her Alan and Margaret John and Karol King and queen Dave and Maria Steve and Elaine James and Sally Armando and Josepha Ben and Alice Gerry and Louisa Dad and mum
The total number	10(29%)	24(71%)

Table 4.2. Firstness (*Modern English by Marcella Frank*).

The name of the textbook	Man first pairs	Woman first pairs
Modern English	Adam and Eve His and her King or queen Host and hostess Males and females	Aunt and uncle
The total number	5(83%)	1(17%)

Table 4.3. Firstness in *English Grammar Digest* by Trudy Aronson.

The name of the textbook	woman first pairs	man first pairs
English Grammar Digest	Alice and Max Ruth and Jordan Seven sisters and one brother Marry and John Marry or John Fedora and Harry	He or she(6) Marvin and Hal Sidney and Perle John and Marry Peter and Suzan Eric and Ida
	My sisters and my brothers Mother and father Your mother and father Bea and Mark Her and him	Nabil and Belen Ming and Yang My husband and I Man and woman(3) Neither the boys nor Marry Boy and girl His or her(5)
The total number	11(31%)	24(69%)

Table 4.4 The total number of man first mention pairs and woman first mention pairs in three textbooks.

Man first mention pairs in textbooks	Woman first mention pairs through the textbooks	The total number of pairs in the textbooks
53(71%)	22(29%)	75

In *An advanced learners' Grammar Book*, as presented in table 4.5, for 24 (71%) first mentions of males, there were only 10 (29%) first mentions of females. It suggested a male dominance over female in term of the order of representing each gender in texts.

In *Modern English* as presented in table 4.6 , for 5 (83%) first mentions of males, there were only 1 (17 %) first mentions of females, As indicated in table 4.7,

In *English Grammar Digest* book for 24 (69%) first mentions of males, there were only 11 (31%) first mentions of females, as presented in table 4.8, the number and percentage of men and women first mention pairs through the whole textbooks was respectively 53(71%) for men, and 22(29%) for women. The findings showed a high tendency for

males to be appeared and mentioned first in whole textbooks.

Investigating Question 4 (Masculine generic constructions)

Is there any significant difference regarding the use of generic constructions?

The deeply rooted use of masculine generic reference in the grammar of the English language is another manifestation of sexism in the EFL textbooks. Textbooks can be inadvertently sexist through the use of the masculine generic. This creates a problem, since as Holmes (2008) points out, when masculine words are used generically, they are still associated with male images (Holmes, 2008, p.320). Overuse of the masculine generic puts females at a disadvantage in recalling information. A study conducted on recognition and recall by Crawford and English (cited in Porecca 1984, p. 710) showed that females recalled less information when the masculine generic was used instead of the feminine version. Textbooks that repeatedly use the masculine generic are therefore disempowering female students.

An additional issue related to the use of the masculine generic is the use of masculine language in job titles such as *policeman* or *chairman*. Hartman

and Judd (1978) argue that instead of relieving the problem, this merely exacerbates it (1978, p. 388). By creating titles that are feminine, without opposing masculine titles marks the female positions as something apart from the normal.

Another aspect of sexism based on Porreca, is the use of masculine as a generic. She believes that the problem here stems from the grammar of English language itself. It is assumed that the masculine generic constructions, words such as *man* and *mankind*, and pronouns such as *he* when the referent sex is not known, refer to people in general and that the distinction between a sexspecific word (e.g., man as a male) and its generic equivalent (man as a human being) is clear from the context. However, many studies have shown that people, including textbook writers, rarely conceptualize females when hearing or reading masculine generic nouns and pronouns (Porreca, 1978, p.708).

And finally according to Lee and Collins (2006, p. 19) use of generic constructions strengthens the notion of male domination so having negative effects on the female readers. The language of the selected texts was investigated to see how and where masculine nouns and pronouns existed.

Table 4.16. The frequency of masculine generic constructions in *An advanced learners' Grammar*, by Mark Foley and Diane Hall

The name of the textbook	In terms of occupation	Generic noun and pronoun	The total number
An Advanced Learners' Grammar	Chairman(7) Repairman(1) Salesman(1) Fisherman(1)	Men(2) Man(1) His(1) Mankind (1)	22
	Postman(2) Fisherman(1) Businessman(2) Policeman(1) Salesmen (1)		

Table 4.17. The masculine generic constructions presented in *Modern English, part 1*, by Marcella Frank.

The name of the textbook	In terms of occupation	Masculine nouns and pronouns	The total number
Modern English	Mailman(3) Salesman(2) Salesmen(1) Businessman(1) Laundry man(1) Milkman(1) Watchman(1)	He(2) Fellowmen(2) Men(3) Man(2) His(5) Himself(1)	25

Table 4.18. The frequency of using masculine generic construction in *English Grammar Digest* by Trudy Aronson.

The name of the textbook	In terms of occupation	masculine nouns and pronouns	The total number
English Grammar Digest	Postman(3) Policeman(1) Policemen(1) Salesman(2) Workmen(1) Chairman(3) Fisherman(1) Milkman(1) Repairman(1) Fireman (1)	Men(1) He(1) Man(1) His(3) Mankind(1) Snowman(1)	23

The total number of using masculine generic construction through the textbooks:70

Conclusions and Implications:

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 firstness, and masculine generic construction.

Summary of the findings:

Firstness

Another area in textbooks in which can provide evidence of gender imbalance or gender discrimination is “the order of mention, termed firstness” When two gender-specific nouns or pronouns appear as a pair in a text, like *mother and father* or *he/she*, the one appearing in the first position can be interpreted as having a higher status (Porreca, 1984, p. 706). In regard to firstness, males occurred more than females in the first places of instructions, exercises and sentences. In *An advanced learners’ Grammar Book* as mentioned in table 4.5, results show a male dominance over female in term of the order of representing each gender in texts.

In *Modern English* as presented in table 4.6, findings revealed a male dominance over female. As indicated in table 4.7, *In English Grammar Digest* book, findings show a high tendency for males to be appeared and mentioned first. The number and percentage of men and women first mention pairs through the whole textbooks indicated that, while

current EFL/ESL textbook writers are conscious in representing females in the works, they often don’t care about the importance of the order mention in order to reverse the second-place status of females.

Hartman and Judd (1978) reviewed several then–current TESOL textbooks. They examined the images of women and men, firstness (the order of female-male mention) Women were underrepresented in the textbooks; the worst ratio of males to females was 73 percent to 27 percent. Hartman and Judd's analysis of the use of firstness in the textbooks also revealed that with only one exception-the noun pair ladies/gentlemen-every female/male noun pair had been ordered with the male counterpart first

Stokdale (2006) investigated the gender representation in an EFL textbook. She examines the Impact Values book by Day te.al.(2003) in two aspects of visibility and firstness. The result showed that there is a gender imbalance in the number of female and male characters in the textbook, there was also an a gender inequality in the favor of men in the images that were used to represent the characters .in the firstness issue ,there was another gender imbalance in the favor of men again.

Bahman and Rahimi (2010) in their research, *Gender Representation in EFL materials*, concluded that In regard to firstness, male-attributed terms came first more frequently than those of females.

In their research, Amini and Birjandi(2011) found out that in the issue of firstness, in the majority of cases men were mentioned before women.

Masculine generic construction:

One other manifestation of sexism is the use of the masculine as generic rooted in the grammar of the English language itself. In most cases where words like *man, person*, etc. and pronouns such as *everybody, somebody*, etc. are used in EFL textbooks, people hardly ever conceptualize females when reading such

constructions (Porreca ,1984). Quite recently, however, masculine generics are being avoided in EFL/ ESL textbooks. One strategy is to use paired pronoun expressions such as *he/she*, *him/her*, *his/her*, and *s/he*, another strategy will be using *they* and *their*, and in terms of occupation Wardhugh (2010) suggests that there must be some neutral words in describing both gender, for example neutral words that can be seen in occupation, *chairperson* instead of *chairman*, *letter carrier* instead of *postman*, and *salesclerk* instead of *salesman*.

To investigate this issue, all occurrences of generic constructions were identified and analyzed to see whether masculine generic constructions were truly generics (including both females and males) or exclusively male referenced. The analysis of the three English grammar textbooks specified the fact that in majority of texts, the use of masculine generic constructions was noticeable.

In Book *Modern English*, 16 generic occupations were observed. For example: *businessman*, *mailman*, *salesman*, *laundryman*, *milkman*, *watchman*, in all cases the referent gender was unknown. The dominant instances of generic nouns and pronouns included "men" "man", "mankind", "he", "his". These generic terms can be found in the following sentences.

Male referenced masculine terms:

- 1) A teacher must be sure that all of *his* students understand the point *he* is making.
- 2) Each student is bringing *his* lunch.
- 3) Everyone is expected to do *his* best.
- 4) Everybody should always be careful when *he* is crossing the street.
- 5) Everyone enjoy *himself* at the party.
- 6) Everyone who plots against *his* own country is a betrayer.

Truly generic terms:

- 1) For *man* to land a spaceship on the moon is now possible.
- 2) We may be able to send a *man* to mars 3) *He* has great sympathy for his *fellowmen*.
- 4) 4 - *Men* have often had to fight for freedom.
- 5) Many of the *men* died in the war.
- 6) 6) All of the *men* are created equal.

And in *English Grammar Digest* , there were 23 instances of masculine generic constructions recorded among them 16 cases for occupations such as ,*chairman* , *postman*, *policeman*, *salesman*, *fireman* , and *fisherman*.

Male referenced masculine terms:

- 1) If a person should observe someone acting violently toward another person, *he* doesn't need become directly involved.
- 2) One should confidence of *his* own ability.
- 3) If one uses *his* time well, one can find time for many activities.
- 4) Truly generic terms:

- 5) Every boy and girl in the school remembered to bring *his* note.
- 6) The Ascent of *Man*.
- 7) The contractor should have been supervising his *men*.
- 8) *mankind*

And finally in *Advanced Learners Grammar* textbook, there were 22 instances of masculine construction, again 17 times for occupations, such as, *Chairman*, *Repairman*, *Salesman*, *Fisherman*, *Postman*, *Fisherman*, *Businessman*, *Policeman*, and *Salesmen*.

Male referenced masculine terms:

- 1) No man has the right to rob another of *his* freedom.

Truly masculine generic construction:

- 1) No *man* has the right to rob another of his freedom.
- 2) Since wars had begun in the minds of *men*, it was in the minds of *men* the defense of peace had to be constructed.
- 3) That's the view of Sheila Davidson, *chairman* of the institute.
- 4) *Mankind*

A total of 70 instances of masculine generic usage was found throughout the textbooks, it can be a noticeable number.

In Porreca's research (1984), a total of 383 instances of masculine generic usage was found, averaging 25 instances per textbook. Reader's Choice and Developing Reading Skills: Advanced have the highest number of masculine generic occurrences-97 and 95, respectively. React/Interact uses masculine generic constructions only 3 times, Side by Side only 2 times, and the Oxford Picture Dictionary of American English contains no occurrences at all of the masculine generic. Hartman & Judd also found that masculine generic construction were used more often than feminine generic constructions in the textbooks.

In a research by Birjandiand and Amini (2010) two of the Iranian mostly used EFL textbooks at the high school level were investigated, they found that in Book II there was only one case of a masculine generic construction that was definitely male referenced, in Book III, there were four instances of masculine generic constructions which were all male-referenced.

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 Sunerland (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*, Bruegilles 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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