

Towards a Zero Tolerance on Gender Bias in the Moroccan EFL Textbooks: Innovation or Deterioration?

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Abstract

Gender discriminatory discourses and practices have been a worldwide concern. The present paper addresses a major feature of gender depiction in the Moroccan English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks officially approved by the Ministry of Education and compulsory for high school students. Adopting a feminist theoretical approach, the study has quantitatively and qualitatively processed the gendered dialogues along with the related illustrations embedded in four EFL Moroccan textbooks, in addition to the gender roles assumed throughout different contexts (occupational/family roles, interests, activities). The textbooks were selected on the basis of their common themes and the different publication dates, starting from 1990 to 2005. The main aim is to see whether the English textbook designers adopt a gender-based approach as a preliminary initiative for pedagogical innovation, or they implicitly and explicitly use them to disseminate discriminatory discourses. The study reveals that women's positive representation is persistently deteriorated in the Moroccan EFL textbooks. This stands against all steps towards pedagogical innovation and reinforces the traditional gender ideology. It suggests the urgent need for more pedagogical improvement at the level of gender representation in the Moroccan EFL textbooks. More importantly, is the need for all teacher training centres to prepare new teacher generations ready to use sexist texts constructively. The results' implication is instrumental to the learning materials' revision. It is also useful for all English language practitioners, textbook designers, and pedagogical experts addressing the challenge of adopting a gender-based approach as a way to open all avenues for pedagogical innovation.

Keywords: curriculum, deterioration, gender discriminatory discourses, Moroccan EFL textbooks, pedagogical innovation

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Introduction

1- Statement of the Problem

In many countries, today there is tremendous interest in gender approach inclusion within learning materials, yet there exists ambivalence towards the representation of gender in textbooks. Such an ambivalent position is the focal point for this investigation. To exemplify this situation, the study comprises the examination of four Common Core Moroccan English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks published between 1990 and 2005. In these textbooks, instructional designers have attempted to reject the inclusion of gender biased perceptions in the teaching of English. At the same time, many of these textbook designers, ironically, include gender discriminatory culture and stereotypes in these approved textbooks.

2- Objectives of the Study

The textbooks were selected on the basis of their common themes and the different dates of publication to answer the following questions:

- Do the English textbook designers adopt a gender-based approach as a preliminary initiative for pedagogical innovation at the micro-level of education curriculum and gender equity at the macro-level of society? Or
- Do they implicitly and explicitly use them as a medium for disseminating the gender biased discourse and deteriorating the positive image of women?

Review of the Literature

Gender Representation Areas in English Textbooks

Since the 1970's different researches in the area of language and gender studies have proliferated. The feminist movement and women's studies provided a framework for these investigations. Gender representation in English textbooks provides an important aspect, among others, that has been vastly researched (Lakoff, 1973; Cincotta, 1978; Porreca, 1984; Spender, 1985; Sakita, 1995; Rifkin, 1998; Sunderland, 2000; Zhang & Yang, 2003; Jou, 2010; Zhu, 2011).

Vettorel and Lopriore claim that in the 1990s: "studies on EFL textbooks saw a shift from content to linguistic analysis (2013, p. 140). Gharbavi (2012) and Hameed (2014) targeted vocabulary and structure as language aspects in their linguistic analyses. i.e. how gender bias is exposed through the language itself (sexist language).

Other studies of gender discrimination in textbooks included a critical discourse analysis of dialogues and visual illustrations. (e.g. Giaschi, 2000, Sano Lida & Hardy, 2001, Mustedanagic, 2010). Sano, Lida and Hardy assert that some EFL textbooks published in the late 1990s "contain gender biased implicit messages, even though no explicit linguistic features are articulated on the surface level" (2001, p. 905). This, indeed, accounts for the fact that students are more easily influenced by the messages and discourses that are implicitly or explicitly transmitted through the linguistic as well as the pedagogical illustrations within the textbooks (Lee & Collins, 2008). Such stereotypical representations of gender shape students' perceptions of their present identities and future situation. As a matter of fact, textbooks represent one of the most widely used instructional materials in the classroom. According to Sadker and Zittman (2007) books represent the basis of most teachers' instructional decisions. Since teachers spend

between 70% and 90% of their classroom time in textbooks (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1992), students constantly absorb textbooks' ideas and accord them great authority.

These studies targeted different English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks to report gender biased representation in terms of different areas:

1- Visibility

Female invisibility as an aspect of gender discrimination in textbooks brings about negative repercussions on female students' understanding and attitudes towards the foreign language and its culture (Rifkin, 1988). It also implies that women are less important than men (Porreca, 1984). In a study conducted by Porreca (1984) on 15 most widely used textbooks in America, the average ratio of females to males was 1:2.06. In another study of two sets of primary English textbooks published in 1985 in Singapore, females were found to occupy 29% and 30% respectively in the two sets. In his study of 1214 illustrations in 12 primary English textbooks published in 2005 and 2006 in Taiwan, Jou (2010) found that the number of men exceeded the number of women (Main character: F:M=442:522; All characters: F:M=1246:1539).

Sunderland (2000) identifies women's invisibility in textbooks as one of the three main tendencies of gender discrimination (exclusion, subordination, and distortion/degradation). It is described as exclusion through which males are over-represented (Hellinger, 1980).

2- Occupational Roles

Discrimination in terms of occupational roles in textbooks is identified as another dimension of bias against women. Sunderland (2000) describes this tendency as subordination. Men tend to take a greater range of more powerful jobs and occupational roles than do women (Porreca, 1984) and different stereotypical activities are performed by both males and females at the workplace (Cincotta, 1978). These occupational roles put them in a superior-inferior position, thus, allowing men to control women's lives within both the private (home) and public spheres (workplace). Consequently, students' aspirations and expectations are directly influenced by the occupational roles that serve as models in the textbooks.

Scott, Foresman and Company (1972), as cited in Sakita (1995), argue that:

Textbooks are sexist if they omit the actions and achievements of women, if they demean women by using patronizing language, or if they show women and men only in stereotyped roles with less than the full range of human interest, traits and capabilities". (p. 5).

Hellinger (1980) contends that while men were presented as performing a broad range of occupational roles, women were found to be rarely engaged in any demanding or interesting activities. This implies that women were mostly engaged in low social status occupations (Zhang and Yang 2003). According to Porreca (1984), for women, the most frequently mentioned occupations were: secretary (13), teacher (28), doctor (16), and actress (22). Men, on the other hand, were presented in other more interesting and demanding occupations: explorer (41), writer (59), policeman (41), teacher (43), and president (111). In another study conducted by Tian (2008), females were presented as being involved in jobs with low social and economic status

(service workers, housewives) while their male counterparts mainly took jobs with high social and economic rank. With the view of this point, Barot contends that males are perceived as being “more socially and economically valuable than females” (2012, p. 18).

In the two last decades, some recent researches reveal a slow improvement at the level of gender representation in textbooks. In this respect, the findings of Jones et al. (1997) seem to be more optimistic. In an analysis of dialogues taken from textbooks published in the late 1980s and mid 1990s, no significant gender bias was found. This, according to the authors, could be justified by a fair distribution of gender occupational as well as social roles. Such an egalitarian perception of males and females’ occupational roles reflects real social and economic facts. Indeed, according to the Pew Research Centre report in 2013, within approximately 40% of the United States couples, women were found to earn more than their partners and were increasingly the main breadwinners in their households (Wang, Parker & Taylor, 2013).

3- Domestic Roles

Traditional perception of gendered social and domestic roles connects women with household tasks and men with career. In most textbooks, women are shunted towards more traditional stereotyped roles such as cooking, doing the dishes, setting the dinner table (Ansary & Babit 2003). Similarly, different fixed tasks are usually allotted to women in the private space, such as preparing meals, shopping, washing, sewing, mending, taking care of the children, etc. while males are in charge of other apparently settled domestic tasks, such as gardening, repairing, taking out the garbage, painting, etc. (Hartman & Judd, 1978). Doing domestic chores or tending children are rarely undertaken by men (Zhu, 2011); rather, they are depicted as nearly doing no housework and only reading newspapers in sofa (Zhang & Yang, 2003). In an analysis of feminine and masculine noun forms, Schärer (2000) found that masculine and feminine forms were used equally only when referring to both genders as family members. In all other areas, and more particularly with profession names, masculine forms tended to prevail as they were five times more used than feminine ones.

In sum, all the values people adhere to are reflected through the language used by individuals and groups of people (Lakoff, 1973). Just as the mass media and other authoritative resources, English textbooks prove to be an authoritative medium for transmitting and, thus, preserving preconceived ideas and inherited gender bias. According to Sunderland: “TV, films, videos, computer games, newspapers, and children’s books can have an unconscious influence on audiences as agents of socialization, so presumably, can EFL materials” (1992, p. 86). Sapir (1949) claims, as cited in Montgomery (1995), that language plays a vital role in the socialization process since “the language habits of our community predisposes certain choices of interpretation” (p. 223). In the scope of the present study, it can be argued that this stands as the main reason that gender discriminatory representation at the micro level of Moroccan EFL textbooks has persistently led to a deterioration of women’ image at the macro level of society.

Methodology of the study

1- Materials

The present study examines four English textbooks which have been widely used in the Moroccan high school for Common Core English language learners namely: “English in Life” (1990), “Quick Way” (2002), “Visa to the World” (2005), and “Window on the World” (2005).

The textbooks were selected on the basis of their common themes and the different dates of publication starting from 1990 to 2005.

2- Procedure

Based on the criteria advanced by Oliver (1974) and Porreca (1984) for the analysis of sexism in language and rather than a single-way method of textbook analysis, the current study adopts a combination of quantifying data analysis and context-sensitive approach as a mixed-method of investigation to scrutinize the underlying gendered discourse embedded in the textbooks' components.

In fact, Oliver (1974) adopts the following criteria for sexism analysis in language:

- 1) Frequency of occurrence
- 2) Personality or characteristics
- 3) Interests and activities
- 4) Professions or career options
- 5) Physical appearance
- 6) Role in the family.

In the same vein, Porreca (1984) highlights the following criteria as an attempt to deconstruct sexist language:

- 1) Omission in text and illustrations
- 2) Firstness
- 3) Occupational visibility in text illustrations
- 4) Nouns used to describe women and men
- 5) Masculine generic constructions
- 6) Adjectives

Some of these criteria will be used throughout the present paper as main benchmarks to uncover gender ideology underlying all textbook dialogues as a corpus of linguistic data along with their concomitant pedagogical illustrations.

Findings: Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis and Discussion

The following discussion and analysis of gender discrimination in the Moroccan ELT textbooks will be mainly based on some criteria adopted by Oliver and Porecca in the analysis of sexism in language.

1- Professions or Career Options/Occupational Visibility in Text Illustrations/Frequency of Occurrence

Table 1: Gender representation in occupational roles

	English textbooks									
	English in Life		Quick Way		Visa to the World		Window on the World		Totals	
Occupational roles	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Police	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	2

Cook	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		1
Waiter	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	3
Mechanic	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Salesperson/Shop assistant	1	0	0	0	1	6	1	0	3	6
Nurse	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
Secretary	2	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	8	0
Teacher	7	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	8	4
Journalist/Interviewer	0	6	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	8
Doctor/Pharmacist	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	3	3	10
Engineer	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Librarian	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Film director/producer	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Businesspeople	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	7
Coach	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
Author	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TV presenter	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Office manager	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	4
Customs officer	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Receptionist	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0
Total Frequency									36	52

As it is revealed in Table 1, more visibility is given to the males than females, fifty-two against thirty-six respectively. In fact, gender discrimination in the Moroccan EFL textbooks is crystal clear in different spheres.

The quantitative inquiry into the frequency of women's visibility in some high-social ranked jobs reveals the fact that the discriminatory distribution of gender roles provides male learners with ample opportunities to identify with socially high-ranked jobs, while their female counterparts are channeled towards traditional female occupations that relegate them to a secondary position in society.

In "English in Life", "Quick Way" and "Visa to the World", there is a clear absence of female doctors. Most protagonists and secondary characters are presented as secretaries, librarians, shop assistants or teachers. Men mainly take high social and economic status jobs while women are mainly presented as service workers or housewives.

In "English in Life", men tend to occupy both more powerful and a greater range of occupational roles than women. Mr. Rich is presented as a self assertive and boastful film director and producer who all the time speaks about his successful films and future plans. Also there is more emphasis on Mr. Lynch professional profile in the field of engineering. Many dialogues depict him as a hardworking, ambitious and successful engineer.

Male characters playing the role of doctors are described as being intellectual, active and intelligent. As the main source of information and in a superior-inferior position with women, they examine their patients, prescribe treatments and perform surgeries. By contrast, female doctors are almost absent in all exchanges and interactions. They are presented as secondary characters or referred to with titles and piece of information that focus on their personal and private life.

In “Window on the World”, Diana’s female doctor, as an exception, represents a typical example of a female doctor who provides her patient with valuable information about her infected eye and advises her to consult an ophthalmologist. Mrs. Itry, another female protagonist, is introduced to the learner in the beginning of this textbook as a doctor only through a conversation between her colleagues. Astonishing enough, as a fact of traditional perception of women’s identity, is that one of her fellow doctors neglects her professional profile and focuses merely on her familial status. Her professional information, skills or competence as a doctor seem to be thoroughly absent in the following dialogue:

Dr. Brown, a new doctor at London Hospital, is asking Dr. Stone about Mrs. Itry.

Doctor Brown :	Do you know her?	
Doctor Stone :	Yes, that's Dr. Itry. She's a doctor in this hospital. You know her husband, don't you?	
Doctor Brown :	No, I don't. Who's he? What does he do?	
Doctor Stone :	He keeps a shop on Oxford Street. He sells Moroccan handicrafts. He imports things from Morocco. You know the shop, don't you?	
Doctor Brown :	No, I don't. Where is it?	
Doctor Stone :	It's not very far from here. When you get out of the hospital, walk down the street to the traffic light. Then turn right. Go straight on until you get to the restaurant. The shop is there between the restaurant and the bank.	

Figure 1: Dr. Brown and Dr. Stone’s conversation about Mrs. Itry
Source: “Window on the World”, p. 49.

The marginalization of Mrs. Itry’s professional identity is reinforced by the way the conversation about her is accompanied with a pictorial illustration depicting the two doctors in the surgery room identifying her through her husband (Dr. Itry). No visual depiction of this female character wearing the doctor’s coat is provided. Rather, most of the pictures show Mrs. Itry in her Kitchen apron.

The depiction of males and females as journalists provides another example of the polar distribution of gendered occupations. In the four textbooks, male journalists outnumber their female counterparts whose intellectual and professional competence in the dialogues is demeaned and juxtaposed with that of the male journalists.

In “Quick Way”, it is true that the female journalist is given the prominence of initiating a dialogue; still, the conversation revolves around different types of clothes and dressing styles. The interview below represents a clear illustration of the themes mostly dealt with by female journalists (social and personal affairs, fashion and ordinary lifestyle matters).

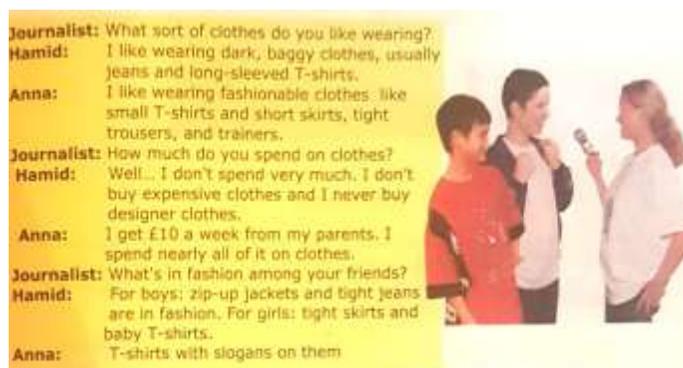


Figure 2: Female journalist and male interviewees

Source: "Quick Way", p. 49.

By contrast, these areas of females' interests in the field of journalism are recursively juxtaposed to their male counterparts' specialization. In "English in Life", male journalists are depicted as being interested in socially and intellectually higher areas. The interview between a male journalist and Mr. Lynch, the famous film director and producer, reflects an apparently typical example. In this interview, Mr. Lynch is asked about his career and future plans merely by male journalists to whom he speaks boastfully about his enchanted success and fame in the world of film making and production. The dialogue is illustrated with a picture showing Mr. Lynch surrounded only by male journalists in a press conference (p. 85).

Comparing the specific occupations of women and men, we can see from Table 1 as well as the dialogues and their illustrations that the social status of women's occupations has increased to a certain degree. Compared with "English in Life", women in "Visa" and "Window" began to serve as doctors, pharmacists, etc. In "Quick Way", women hold the posts of office managers and journalists, etc.; occupations which were absent in "English in Life".

But, generally, the social status of women's occupations is lower than that of men's who are mainly depicted in high-ranked jobs, i.e., engineer, businessman, police officer, film director, boss, etc. Other traditionally male-dominated occupations, like driver, chef, soldier, etc. are still taken by men. Similarly, the traditionally female-dominated occupations, such as nurse, waitress, shop assistant, receptionist, etc. are still hold by women. However, in the present situation, and with the social and economic development of Morocco, more and more women are participating in the labor force, with increasing occupations diversity and social status. All this entails that the representation of gender occupations in these textbooks does not accord with the actual changes of the Moroccan society.

2- Gender Roles in the Family

In addition to the fact that more females are recurrently appointed to very specific jobs such as secretaries, shop assistants and teachers, they are more frequently depicted as mothers.

In fact, biased perceptions of gender roles in terms of duties prove to be omnipresent in the targeted ELT textbooks. These textbooks use family stories depicting gender roles in the two polar spheres of the private/public, which, unfortunately, reflects the preconceived ideas that the textbooks designers intentionally or unintentionally hold about gender roles.

By contrast, in “English in Life”, where there is a conspicuous tendency towards an emulation of Western and Local cultures through the way the main characters are depicted, there is also a more tendency towards an emulation of gender roles. Examples in the following discussion demonstrate this point.

On the onset of this textbook, the learner is intended to identify with the character of an American engineer, Steve Lynch, and his family. In terms of gender roles, the family is fairly traditional because Barbara, a wife and a mother to three children represents the typical example of an independent and self-assertive woman who works as a teacher. The egalitarian depiction of gender roles is early established through the following reading passage.



After work Steve comes back home. He likes to be with his family in the evening. Usually he or Nancy cooks dinner for the family. Then they wash the plates. Barbara just likes to eat. She doesn't like to work in the kitchen. She thinks it takes a lot of time and it isn't interesting. Steve never criticises her. Do you think he's right?

Figure 3: The Lynches at home in Morocco

Source: “English in Life”, p. 41.

In this reading passage, by undertaking domestic duties, Steve, the husband, illustrates a male role that is often encouraged in Western cultures. On the other hand, the wife is not presented as a traditional housewife. Rather, she is depicted as a modern and emancipated woman who openly exhibits her reluctance to participate in the routine actions of cooking and preparing meals as a mainly female dominated role. This would bring strong prove to the assumption that the home and domestic activities are displayed in such a way that traditional gender roles are questioned if not subverted. In addition to the fact that the passage identifies the reader with the roles advocated by many Western cultures, it also ends with an open and thought provoking question which invites the reader to critically analyze and rethink the gender distribution of social roles. Hence, the question ushers a hot debate about whether or not Barbara should be criticized for not abiding by the traditional female roles.

In the following exchange with Mrs. Nasri, Barbara proceeds to complain about the routine actions of childrearing and housekeeping that are mostly allotted to women:

- Leila** : Oh of course, you don't know. Meriem's going to have twins!
- Barbara** : Oh! That's a surprise. Of course, there are often twins in your family, right?
- Leila** : Well, in Sahah's, actually. Not in mine. What about yours?
- Barbara** : No, not in mine, or Steve's. Thank God! Two babies were enough for me - one at a time. A big family means too much work, too many money problems, too much noise, not enough room in the house, not enough money in the bank, not enough time for yourself...
- Leila** : Oh, Barbara! We women can't think about ourselves, you know.
- Barbara** : Oh, no? Well, I do!

Figure 4: Barbara and Leila's conversation about family responsibilities
Source: "English in Life", p. 189.

Such a conversation would make the reader identify with a new image of women and would, certainly, inspire him/her to challenge all the ideological discourses which tend to produce a homogeneous image of women as weak social entities.

In many contexts, the same female character is depicted as challenging the traditionally gendered prescribed roles. From the very beginning, she is introduced to the learner in a way that makes him/her rethink all gender stereotypes. In a reading text, and along its illustration, she is presented in the kitchen; she is cooking a chicken for lunch, but she is described as a terrible, lazy cook (p. 48). In another reading text, she openly says:

Tuesday, May 22nd

The summer is already here in this part of the world. Time flies but today I have nothing to do and am feeling lonely. The children are at school. Steve is at work. My teaching contract with the Society for International Teachers (SIT) ends next month. It's time for me to think about my future. I don't want to be just a housewife again. I would like to study Arabic because I want to be an interpreter. I'm proud to

Figure 5: Barbara's diary
Source: "English in Life", p. 168.

The representation of the other types of women is illustrated through the personality of Meriem as a secondary character. She is presented as a typically traditional housewife who usually contends about the stinginess of her rich husband. Her identity as a feminine entity is closely bound to her husband, which represents another extreme of a fragile, docile and non-independent woman. This idea is obviously expressed when she proudly admits:

Najahi always drives me when I go out, and he enjoys the drive to Mohammedia. (He says it's more feminine if the wife asks the husband to drive her.)

Figure 6: Meriem's letter
Source: "English in Life", p.185.

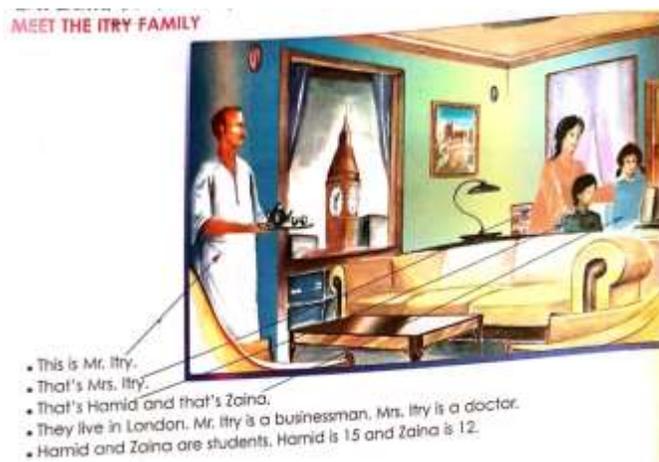


Figure 7: The Itry family at home in London

Source: “Window on the World”, p. 10.

In “Window on the World”, the learner is introduced to the Itry family through a picture that compiles all details to reflect the lifestyle of the modern Moroccan nuclear family in London as a host country (see Figure 7). All the family members are present in the picture. Both Mr. and Mrs. Itry are dressed in Moroccan traditional clothes. They are performing roles that subvert the traditional roles assigned to both genders. While using the net, the mother is supervising her children’s learning; the father is holding a tray to serve Moroccan tea to his family. The picture is intentionally presented to convey that the Itry family preserves the homeland traditions and simultaneously adapts to the host country’s values. In contrast to “English in Life”, the emulation of Western and Local culture does not imply a similar tendency in “Window on the World”. In fact, the focus on Mrs. Itry’s identity as a wife and mother as well as the emphasis on her interests, activities, domestic chores marginalize her professional profile as a career woman.

All this suggests that the unbalanced portrayal of gender occupations in “Quick Way”, “Visa” and “Window” textbooks is extended to the representation of gender roles in the family. Twenty-seven years ago in “English in Life”, the females’ professional roles were highlighted at the expense of their domestic roles. The books designers were more aware of the importance of creating a balanced image of gender responsibilities within the family. This tendency narrowed in the other three textbooks to prove women’s presence merely through their domestic and social roles.

3- Gender Interests and Activities

The stereotypical representation of gender roles in occupational, household as well as domestic duties persists to reach other social contexts. In the four textbooks, women occupy most space in shopping places throughout the textbooks’ exchanges and illustrations, thus reinforcing the stereotypical perception of women as shopping lovers thoroughly possessed by fashion and consumption. What is most striking is the fact that all learners will internalize these preconceived ideas since they have to go through all the dialogues and their concomitant illustrations which provide the cornerstones of their learning in the unit on the theme of “Shopping”.



Figure 8: A woman shopping at a supermarket

Source: “Window on the World”, p. 85.



Figure 9: Mrs. Itry and Mrs. Baker at Mr. Itry's shop

Source: “Window on the World”, p. 72.

In “Window”, two big-scaled pictures appear at the picture talk activities in two consecutive units, namely “Food and Holidays” and “Shopping”. The former (Figure 8) provides the learners with a picture in which a woman is shopping at the supermarket. They are invited to talk about the ingredients needed for dishes, express their likes and dislikes and compare prices. The latter (Figure 9) opens with a picture depicting two women immersed in their realm of shopping. The picture stands as prelude to the first dialogue in the unit between Mrs. Itry and Mrs. Baker about carpets. The fact that these female characters are immersed in the realm of shopping doesn't prevent them from thinking about their husbands and referring to them. Indeed, Mrs. Baker claims that she needs her husband's opinion about the most suitable carpet for their house even though she is offered a catalogue. The husband's existence weighs heavily on the wife's thoughts and decisions (p. 86).

The same perception of women as being hesitant and seeking their husbands' opinion and consent is expressed in an exchange between Mr. and Mrs. Brown in “Quick way” textbook (p. 65). Mrs. Brown cannot give her daughter Jimmy the permission to go on picnic with her friends. Rather, she asks her to consult her father for the final decision.

In “Visa”, as a response to Cynthia's invitation to her party, Janice should talk to Albert and the kids before deciding to attend it (p. 65). Thus, the trends reflecting men as being self-confident and assertive while depicting women as weak, less informed and, consequently, unable to make decisions or act independently of their husbands reinforce male preponderance in the decision making ambit.



Figure 10: Mary and Kate at the clothes shop

Source: “Visa to the World”, p. 54.



Figure 11: Omar and Pierre at the bookshop

Source: “Visa to the World”, p. 51.

Two main dialogues in “Visa” are used for listening and reading practice; they are followed by comprehension questions and grammar exercises. The first main dialogue is performed by Mary and Kate at a clothes shop (Figure 10). In the second one, Pierre and Omar are at the bookshop (Figure 11). Pierre is just browsing, whereas Omar is looking for a map about historical places in London and an English cookbook that he needs for his research.

The visibility of females in the shopping activity is higher than that of their male counterparts in ELT Moroccan textbooks. As mentioned above, in “Windows”, the two consecutive units, namely “Food and Holidays” and “Shopping” open up with big-scaled pictures portraying females characters involved in their shopping activities (see Figures 8-9). This idea is present in “Visa”. In one minor dialogue for language practice, Mike is looking for books to set up a reading club at the school library (p. 54). In extension of the lesson based on shopping as a theme, the students are presented with a picture reinforcing the visibility of women in the shopping activity through the use of vivid colours and through the number of female shoppers which exceeds the number of their male counterparts (three adult women, a man and a boy).



Figure 12: People in a shop clothes

Source: Taken from a grammar activity: ‘What are the people doing?’ “Visa to the World”, p. 54.

The different shopping places where the two genders congregate reflect an ensuing distribution of gender-based interests. All the Shopping Units in “Visa” and “Window on the World” are slightly more female-centred. From this point of view, the analysed dialogues and illustrations have clear manifestations of sexism. In most dialogues where people are shopping (for clothes and food), only women appear, thus consolidating the preconceived idea of women as being overwhelmed by their love for shopping. Meanwhile, when food is concerned, female characters are presented as the only person in the family in charge of the routine duties of grocery-shopping.

Conversely, in “English in Life”, Mrs. Lynch appears talking with her husband about food items for shopping (p. 128). This implies that both genders equally share the household responsibility of food shopping.

In other contexts, food shopping as a routine action is carried out by her son and daughter. They bring with them a shopping list already prepared by Mrs. Lynch who is ill and, thus, cannot do the shopping herself (p. 144).

While shopping activities are presented in “Visa” and “Window” merely as hobbies that satisfy women’s endeavour for fashion and consumption, in “English in Life” these activities are

portrayed as a household and domestic duty shared by both sexes. “Quick Way” textbook doesn’t make any reference to these activities. In fact, in this textbook there is no special unit based on the theme of shopping.

Mr. Nasri in another reading passage does the shopping. Astonishing enough is the fact that shopping is presented as only one activity among other hobbies and activities that he practices in his free time (p. 43). All this implies that twenty-seven years ago “English in Life” textbook designers were aware of the preconceived ideas ideologically held about women’s possession by their unbeatable passion for shopping and consumption, and, hence, attempted to challenge it through their main characters’ activities, behaviour and attitudes.

In addition to their passion for shopping, females are also portrayed as being immersed in indoor activities. Being sociable, they enjoy organizing social events such as parties. In “Window”, Zaina in a dialogue with her brother Hamid is planning to invite her friends for lunch and decides to have barbecue which will be made by her mother (p. 37). Kate and Cynthia in “Visa”, in separate single-sex exchanges (involving females only), are inviting Betty and Janice to attend their parties (p. 62; p. 65).

“English in Life” also introduces the learner to many situations where women organize parties as social activities in which they indulge from time to time. Still, the reasons for which they organize these parties seem to be apparently different from the ones presented in “Visa”, “Window” and “Quick Way”. Indeed, in “English in Life”, the two parties are organized to celebrate important events in the female characters’ occupational and personal lives. In an invitation letter, Mrs. Lynch invites her acquaintances for a tea party to say goodbye (p. 182). Similarly, another dialogue depicts Mrs. Sharp in a farewell party organized secretly by her colleagues to make it surprise (p. 211). The two women are going to leave their jobs and go back to their home countries with their families. This, undoubtedly, mitigates the stereotypical idea that women indulge in trivial activities which are meant just to entertain themselves and spend good times with friends and relatives.

On the other hand, all the parties in “Visa” and “Window” are organized merely for entertainment and fun. In “Quick Way”, apart from an invitation to a marriage ceremony in unit 10 on the theme of “Celebrations” (p. 91), all other invitations are more specifically made to share a drink in a café, have dinner in a restaurant or go to the movies (p. 89). The main dialogues about these parties revolve around food, drinks and guests who are expected to attend them. No reference to the reasons for organizing these parties is made anywhere in any dialogue.

Conclusion

To conclude, this diachronic study indicates that in the past twenty seven years, some efforts of gender inclusion in the Moroccan ELT textbooks have been consciously invested by book designers through different themes, characters, linguistic as well as pictorial illustrations. However, multiple gender inequalities prove to persist in the four ELT Moroccan textbooks under study. The quantifying data analysis and context-sensitive approach have been employed throughout the present paper to uncover gender imbalance in the four targeted textbooks. The double-method of investigation is also meant to demonstrate the underlying ideological system which persistently deteriorate rather than optimize the image of women in different spheres

throughout the targeted textbooks that have been published in different years. Among the main textbook components analyzed are the dialogues as a corpus of linguistic data with their concomitant pedagogical illustrations. In fact, through a close analysis and interpretation of these dialogues and illustrations, the study reveals that:

- There exist different privileges which both genders enjoy; males and females' scope of power is relatively widened or narrowed according to their prescribed-gender roles.

- Women are stereotypically depicted as being fully immersed in domestic and household roles that relegate them to a secondary, subordinate and vulnerable position in society; their occupational roles are more related to caring and social work. On the other hand, males are generally overrepresented in highly ranked occupations that reflect their visibility and supremacy in powerful walks of life.

- Other themes that are mainly related to both genders' interests and activities negatively portray women as being possessed by their passion for shopping and indulging in trivial activities that cloister them in the realm of consumption and equally marginalize them within the manly-dominated realm of production.

In spite of the progress that textbook writers have been trying to make, much space is still there for more pedagogical improvement and innovation at the level of gender representation in the EFL Moroccan textbooks. It is surprising that the unfair distribution of gender roles in textbooks does not equally correspond to the main principles underlying the Moroccan feminist discourse as well as the human rights and civic education values recommended in the National Charter for Education and Training in Morocco.

Limitations of the Study

Space constraints have been a primary reason for not adopting all criteria of sexist language analysis advanced by Oliver (1974) and Porecca (1984) so as to deeply and broadly delineate gender-discriminatory representation in different spheres within the four targeted textbooks. Another limitation related to space constraints concerns the targeted textbooks as teaching and learning materials. In fact, other ELT textbooks for intermediate students of first and second baccalaureate are to be closely analysed in order to come up with a large-scaled research that offers wider generalizations and enlarges the corpus of data.

A further limitation also relates to the methodology of research adopted in this study. Admittedly, the two-method used to analyse the linguistic corpus data and the accompanying illustrations quantitatively and qualitatively has been very instrumental in adopting Oliver and Porecca's criteria to scrutinize gender bias in textbooks. Nonetheless, to come up with a complementary study, researchers should target both teachers and students' practices and attitudes towards all dialogues and illustrations embedding biased representation of gender. Thus, the variation of methods including, questionnaire, interviews, video and audio recordings of all teaching and learning practices in the classroom represents an important component of any further research in order to broaden the scope of investigation in this topic. The suggestions as well as the implications of the findings advanced in the following section will actually attempt to narrow this gap.

Recommendations and Implications of the Study

Optimizing gender representation in textbooks as a primary step towards zero tolerance on gender bias and towards pedagogical innovation in the Moroccan curriculum seems to be a long way process which needs outstanding initiatives. Indeed, both gender biased and gender-balanced texts can be endorsed or subverted and used in a constructive way by teachers in different ways. Therefore, unless we observe how the text is actually used in class by the teacher and how its underlying discourses are perceived by the students, it is impossible to predict the pedagogical implications of any gender biased text.

All this suggests the urgent need to undertake more empirical research and target the teaching and learning practices in the classroom where both the teacher and learner are constantly exposed to different folds of gender discourse. However, this should not offer textbook designers and publishing houses alike with an excuse for not adopting a gender approach and for not considering it as an outstanding issue for deep analysis and rethinking. Regardless of teachers' use of texts or students' perceptions of their underlying content, gender balance inclusion in textbooks should still be the primary step in the textbook designers' pedagogical agendas.

More importantly, is the need for all Moroccan CRMEFs (Centres Régionaux des Métiers de l'Education et de la Formation) and all other teacher training centres to open broad avenues towards a preparation of new generations of teachers ready to face the challenge of subverting even the most gender biased and sexist text and use them constructively. In fact, teacher training in the treatment of gender biased texts could be an effective step towards a progressive and gender-balanced use of textbooks. In respect with this view, Hartman and Judd (1978) assert that whenever teachers confront any case of gender imbalance within the textbook, they may create ample opportunities to provoke students' interest and stimulate their motivation for learning. This could be effectively achieved by raising them as issues worth debate and discussion in the classroom.

Ultimately, in addition to subject experts, we suggest the integration of gender experts in the Moroccan national teaching course council so as to evaluate gender representation in textbooks. Such an evaluation will pave the way to develop formal guidelines for editors to consider gender balanced representation in the Moroccan textbooks. This would stand as a firm step towards a progressive and innovative view of pedagogy.

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