
Stereotyping Representation of women In Algerian 2nd Generation EFL Textbook: My Book of English

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Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate how women are represented in 2nd generation EFL textbook intended for 1st year middle school level. We estimate that their representation is biased. Our aim is to analyze the illustrations included in the current didactic tool in order to check whether these illustrations are stereotyping women and examine to what extent they are discriminating against women.

We will use a quantitative approach, scrutinizing pictures, photos, and drawings, on one hand, to see how female characters are belittled and a qualitative approach examining the roles or the types of occupations attributed to gender, on the other hand, to check whether the occupations assigned for female characters are traditional in comparison to those attributed to male characters. The result of this humble study reveals that male character representations outnumber female character illustrations. And men have been attributed a variety of remunerated occupations while women have only two remunerated, but traditional: nurse and teacher.

Keywords: bias, stereotype, prejudice, invisibility, discrimination

1.Introduction

Like their pairs in the world, Algerian women have been occupying various roles in social life since a decade. They worked as doctors treating diseases and injuries through surgeries. They removed and replaced decayed teeth as dentists. During the colonial period, they participated actively and intensely at the war at the side of men. As well as nowadays men and women are working hand in hand. They are practising same professions. Thus, they emancipated from the oppressive values imposed by the Algerian community during the black decade, period of terrorism and period of decadence.

However, in spite of this progress, the 2nd Generation EFL textbook authored by educators, the majority of them is masculine represents those women as teachers and nurses as if it is in their genes(Gordon Tait,2017:41)

The issue we will attempt to discuss here is the representation of women and their roles in Algerian society through the current EFL textbook to seek to what extent their occupations, or roles are stereotyped sometimes by their invisibility from the EFL textbook or the myth of inequality in labour division . Invisibility is regarded as discriminatory practice so that Ralph Ellison(1952:3) noticed “ I am invisible, understand simply because people refuse to see me”. Our hypotheses firstly presuppose that the EFL textbook intended for 1st year middle school shows racist attitudes since it rarely represents women, secondly, it discriminates against women’s occupation, and thirdly the current textbook is discriminatory. To confirm these hypotheses, three research questions have been raised to examine in-depth the current didactic tool and attempt to establish the correctness of our suppositions and have responses to our research questions.

The three questions are as follows:

1. To what extent are women visible in the current EFL textbook?
2. In what form of stereotyping occupation are women represented?
3. To what extent is EFL 2nd generation textbook, My Book of English discriminatory?

From a methodology standpoint these questions require:

- The analysis of the illustrations used like pictures, photos, and drawings. We will focus on the illustrations only, for firstly, it is an EFL textbook requiring necessary aids to assist learners to grasp the message. Secondly, this textbook is intended for learners as their first contact with this language, and finally, these learners are only ten years old and the impact of illustrations in learning at this age is consequential.

2.Literature overview

The issue about gender in EFL textbook has been researched all over the world. After having been approved by the authority for the academic year 1974-1975, the analysis of textbooks proved to be sexist in Quebec since the 68% of persons represented in the primary school textbooks were males. This rate exceeded 75% in secondary

school textbooks.(Thibaudeau, 1988:72 cited in Martel, 1993:20) . Much progress has been made towards discrimination in textbooks especially after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, as human beings were born free, they should be treated similarly whatever their differences (Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in CONFEMEN, 1993: 9). Many countries engaged in putting this report into practice and endorsed the pact concerning children (1989, too. The latter requires the respect of both children and their parents from all over the world. (In Ibid). However, the analysis of many textbooks in various countries has revealed that the great number of them contained sentences stereotyping gender. It is an issue, according to United Nations, which needed engagements particularly after the World Conference “Decade for Women ”stating that “ education should contribute to a change in attitudes by abolishing traditional stereotypes of men’s and women’s roles and stimulating the creation of new and more positive images of women’s participation in the family , the labour market and in social and public life and urged governments to take all necessary measures to eliminate stereotypes on the basis of sex from educational materials at all levels.”(Andre Michel,

We champion Enesco’s initiative because this significant issue still subsists. It concerns the representation of particular models of masculinity and femininity models “which do not always operate in women’s best interests” (Gordon Tait, 2017: 36) as we will show in our analysis of My Book of English .

The lack of public awareness of stereotyping gender in textbooks makes this issue inconsequential so that most of the representations of women’s roles are discriminatory, supporting the prejudice that women are women and men are men because nature made them like that and the myth that masculinity is a function of being a man, and men run society because biology determined they would be better at it”(Ibid)

Other examples of gender discrimination were given by Hartman and Judd (1978) and Porecca(1984) cited in Nagatomo(2010)in EFL materials including stereotyping sentences like “boys become men. Girls become housewives”. Moreover, many countries avowed that the issue of sexism in didactic tools is still in force at the international Conference on “Education for All” held in Thailand in 1990. After two decades, the problem of stereotyping representation seems out of date. In spite of all these researches which have been done all

over the world, we assume that the 2nd Generation EFL textbook My Book of English intended for 1st year middle school level does contain stereotyping representations of female characters.

Beck and Kosnik (2006:74) advised to have young students learn a foreign language through the socio-cultural context. "Community is not just a frill, it is fundamental to effective learning". Also Dewey(1916:32(cited in Ibid) championed that "we never educate directly , but indirectly by means of the environment and education is essentially a social process". Consequently, we will analyze the Algerian social context made up of male and female characters via illustrations and see how they are represented.

3.Method

We will use the method proposed by Gaston Martel in CONFEMEN ,1993:21)

The quantitative approach consists of counting the representation of both sexes through illustrations used in the present textbook as pictures, photos, and drawings. We will count the representations of :

- both sexes illustrated, one point for each person illustrated.
- anthropomorphic creatures, one point for the representation of the sex determined,
- a team, one point if the persons are not separately visible, but if on the contrary, one person associated to the team is clearly identified, it will be counted one point and the team one too.
- A person on a label used to introduce an element in the sequence, one point and once even if it is repeated in each layout of the sequences.

Martel states that If the number of the sexes illustrated is unbalanced, the textbook is discriminatory. A space of 5% is admissible.

However, the qualitative approach consists of examining the occupations assigned for each person, male or female, in the illustrations included in the current textbook.

The focus will be put on

- The occupation attributed to each sex in society,
- The gender's clothing

To determine whether that type of occupation is remunerated and traditional or not.

4.Results

For the quantitative approach, we have examined to what extent both sexes are visible in illustrated representations and the results obtained are detailed in the table below.

Table 1 Frequency of gender's visibility in My Book of English middle school year one through illustrations

Pages	Sequence	Male	Female
0-32	Pre-sequence	25	18
33-47	Sequence 1	33	33
48-70	Sequence 2	85	50
71-98	Sequence 3	39	6
99-125	Sequence 4	73	49
126-149	Sequence 5	6	5

Table 2 Rate of gender's visibility

M. Total number	F. T number
261	161
61.55%	37.97%

The results show that the textbook of English intended for first year middle school students, My Book of English is highly illustrated. This is a positive point to mention regarding their age(10). To the same token, these illustrations should be of high aesthetic quality than they are. Indeed, in spite of many recommendations emanating from educators, researchers, (CONFEMEN,1993) , colours lack brightness and clarity so that we were unable to determine which sex is represented in two pictures on page 70 .

Also, these figures reveal an unbalance concerning females visibility(**161**) in comparison to males' visibility(**261**).

Table 3 Representation of Male's types of occupations

Sequence/page	M occupation	Observation
0/16	Footballer	Remunerated /not traditional
1/47	Businessmen/teacher/	Remunerated not traditional
2/50	Doctor/mechanic/vet/electr ician/lawyer/ Carpenter/dustman/farmer/ architect	Remunerated /not traditional

2/68	Architect/carpenter/electrician/farmer/ Mechanic/painter	Remunerated / traditional
2/69	Vet	Remunerated traditional

Table 3 above indicates that male characters have been attributed 13 types of occupations (**77.77%**) while female characters (table below) have only 4 types (22.22%). These figures correspond to society's prejudice about the division of labour between male and female characters .

Table 4 Representation of females' types of occupations in My Book of English

Sequence/page	F occupation	Observation
0/13	Teacher	Remunerated /traditional
1/34	Teacher	Remunerated /traditional
2/50	Nurse	Remunerated /traditional
2/51	Nurse/teacher	Remunerated /traditional
2/54	Florist	Remunerated not Traditional
2/68	Nurse	Remunerated /traditional
2/69	Teacher	Remunerated /traditional
4/125	Canteen waitress	Remunerated not traditional

Illustrated teacher's occupation has occurred four times in the current textbook while nurse profession has appeared three times. Also, Canteen waitress and florist have been illustrated once each because they are not traditionally assigned for women in our society.

5. Discussion

The 2nd generation EFL textbook My Book of English has the same type of gender imbalance concerning visibility as noted in some previous studies of gender's representation in EFL textbook such as Hartman and Judd(1978)Alike them, there is a recognition of the extensive inequalities in the current textbook regarding the visibility of female characters through pictures. Women occurred **161** times which represents**37.97%** while males appeared **261** times that is (**61.55%**) The figures confirm the presence of imbalance and it exceeds the admissible space which proves that the current textbook is discriminatory according to Martel(1993) and shows that

male's visibility outnumbers female's one. This demonstrates a racial attitude too when a textbook uses invisibility.(ibid)

Concerning females' occupation, their representation is biased since the findings show clearly that the professions attributed to female characters are not as various as the ones attributed to males. They are limited to teacher that occurred four times in the book, nurse three times, and florist and canteen waitress each once.

6.Recommendation

- Adjust the number of women's representations and counterbalance gendered stereotypical ideals.
- Remedy the bias.
- Train designers and teachers on that issue to evade it.
- Take into account of stereotypes and try to avoid them when designing textbooks.

7.Conclusion

In this study, I endeavoured to crystal clear the bias against women through illustrations. Invisibility and occupation were the variables used. The quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection have enabled to find out that the 2nd generation EFL textbook My Book of English is discriminating against female character. Illustrated male characters outnumber female characters and moreover women's occupation are belittled as if they are not capable to do anything other than teaching and caring for patients because it's in their genes.(Tait, 2017: 41)

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