Awareness of Gender Stereotypes and Sexist Pronouns

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Abstract

Gender inequality is firmly entrenched in every society. We learn how each person should be treated through language socialization. Early in life, one is implanted with ideas that women and men are different and should be treated differently. Stereotypic characteristics are baselessly assigned to women who, as a consequence, are constrained from attaining their maximum potential. Language in textbooks, without our realization, turns out to be the channel through which wrong ideas get passed on to our young. This study investigates language in textbooks which are loaded with gender stereotypes and sexist language to find out if the students are aware of them. It also interviews the instructors to see if they consider gender stereotypes and sexist language detrimental to the mind of their learners. Through questionnaire administration and interviews, the findings revealed that learners were indeed aware of the existence of gender biases. However, a notable inclination among lecturers can be observed whereby they tended to downplay the issue as relatively inconsequential and disconnected from the learning materials.

Keywords: Gender Stereotypes, Bias, Equality, Textbook, Pronoun

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บทคัดย่อ

    เป็นที่ทราบกันดีว่าความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศได้หยั่งรากลึกในทุกสังคม มนุษย์ล้วนปฏิบัติต่อกันผ่านการขัดเกลาทางสังคมโดยใช้ภาษาเป็นเครื่องมือ เมื่อครั้งเยาว์วัยเราต่างถูกปลูกฝังว่าความเป็นหญิงชายนั้นแสนแตกต่างกัน ด้วยเหตุนี้ผู้หญิงและผู้ชายก็ควรได้รับการปฏิบัติที่แตกต่างกันโดยปริยาย อย่างไรก็ตาม ลักษณะตายตัวแบบเหมารวมอันไร้เหตุผลนี้กำหนดให้ผู้หญิงไม่อาจแสดงศักยภาพสูงสุดของตนได้ ภาษาในตำราเรียนก็เป็นเครื่องมือกีดกันอย่างหนึ่ง เราอาจมิได้ระแวดระวังเลยว่าภาษาเป็นช่องทางถ่ายทอดมโนทัศน์ที่ผิดมากมายต่อไปยังเยาวชน ด้วยสาเหตุดังกล่าวงานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อตรวจสอบการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในตำราเรียนที่อาจมีข้อความและประเภททางไวยากรณ์ที่แสดงการเหมารวมและความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศ และมุ่งสำรวจว่าผู้เรียนตระหนักรู้ถึงประเด็นเหล่านี้มากน้อยเพียงใด นอกจากนี้ ยังสัมภาษณ์ผู้สอนเกี่ยวกับความเห็นว่าการใช้ภาษาในตำราดังกล่าวมีผลกระทบต่อผู้เรียนหรือไม่ ผลการวิจัย พบว่า ทั้งในแบบสอบถาม เนื้อหาในตำรา และการสัมภาษณ์ ผู้เรียนตระหนักถึงการเหมารวมและความไม่เท่าเทียมทางเพศในขณะที่ผู้สอนเห็นว่าอาจไม่ได้เป็นประเด็นหลักที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการเรียนการสอนมากนัก

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Introduction

Gender Stereotypes in Our Lives

Nowadays, gender equality is something that the international community is interested in (United Nations, 2022). All sectors of society strive to make their society a society in which all genders receive equality. In academic circles, numerous studies have attempted to shed light on the factors contributing to gender inequality. Different cultures have different attitudes about gender. What they have in common is that all cultures view women as not equal to men. We are all classified from the first moments of life. Arranging everything around us into categories allows humans to manage their lives systematically. Each culture creates rules for its members to treat each type of person and thing. The bases for classification are numerous. We are classified into various categories according to our economic status, ethnicity, skin color, profession, and gender, to name just a few. Often, there are presumed ideas about each type of people and things we classified. So-called stereotypes, these presumptions are drawn from a few cases and are made continuous by generations of people. While some stereotypes are positive (e.g., Germans are industrious), many are false statements which can damage the ones being labelled. Among the many negative stereotypes, gender stereotypes are present in all cultures. Being stereotypes implies that there typically is a great deal of consensus about them, and such consensus gets propagated by socialization (most of the times by means of language). Young boys and girls learn about gender stereotypes from their immediate environment and the media, and they learn how to behave in gender-appropriate ways (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998). These socialization experiences no doubt continue to exert influence later in life and, indeed, research has shown that men's and women's self-characterizations differ in ways that are stereotype-consistent (Bem, 1974; Spence & Buckner, 2000). So, whether they are true or false, stereotypes touch and affect all lives. Growing up with them, we take them as natural and never doubt their validity. As to where gender stereotypes came from, social role theory proposes that gender stereotypes derive from the discrepant distribution of men and women into social roles both in the home and at work (Eagly, 1987). Engrained in our lives, gender stereotypes, if negative, can cause damage. United Nations Office of The High Commissioner and Women's human rights and gender equality (2020) reminds us:

"Wrongful gender stereotyping is a frequent cause of discrimination against women. It is a contributing factor in violations of a vast array of rights such as the right to health, adequate standard of living, education, marriage and family relations, work, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, political participation and representation, effective remedy, and freedom from gender-based violence".
(United Nations, 2020)

Literature Review

Being Aware of Gender Stereotypes

Being social animals, we have been socialized to get on well with our physical and social-cultural environment. Not all ideas (including stereotypes) implanted in us are bad. Devine and Sharp (2009) indicate that stereotypes can serve an adaptive function. They at least enable us allowing people to simplify what they observe and to make prediction about others. Devine and Sharp (2009), however, warn that stereotypes also can (and often) lead us to induce faulty assessments of people. We presumptuously make generalization from just one known case. As far as gender stereotypes are concerned, Heilman (2012) reminds us that gender stereotypes can lead us to make bias expectations about performance of others. This, in turn, will lead us to make unfair decision which will impact opportunities of the person being evaluated by us. Warning that gender stereotypes are especially influential, Fiske et al. (1991) state that as gender is an aspect of a person that is readily noticed and remembered, it is prone to stereotypic thinking.

But we should keep in mind that gender stereotypes are beliefs that affect the believers themselves also. According to Wood and Eagly (2015), self-stereotyping can occur that will make a person have a special view about oneself. Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (2021) finds out that endorsing the stereotype that Malaysian women, endorsing gender stereotype that women belong at home to take care of their families, feel compelled to put their families before their careers. These women, without any doubt, identify themselves according to the stereotype. Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (2021) points out that the harm caused by stereotypes goes beyond the individual. To them, women are stigmatized and have been deprived of educational training and sufficient healthcare in societies which consider them equal to men. Likewise, Gerdeman (2019) indicates that one reason women might be shying away from certain

professions (namely careers in STEM) because they lack confidence in their ability to compete in fields that stereotypically belong to men. Coffman (cited in Gerdeman, 2019) attributes that this lack of confidence leads women to think that they cannot excel in these professions despite their competence.

When people are taught gender stereotypes since childhood, those stereotypes are deeply rooted in us. Not realizing that they are wrong, we fail to doubt and challenge them. We do not recognize that they lead us to have wrong attitudes about ourselves and others. As such, being aware that we are cultivated by false stereotypes is the first step toward correcting our attitudes resulting from them. We need to know what gender stereotypes are and what forms they take. This awareness will prompt us to question what we consider to be natural (such as the assumption that women are indecisive). As being aware of gender stereotypes and endorsing them affect lives of women, awareness that they are false can prompt women to change their mindset which will, in turn, leads them to fight for equality. In other words, people need to be aware that these gender stereotypes are not based on facts. Being passed from generation to generation does not mean that they are true. And if they negatively affect someone, it is our job to debunk them. In short, if we want to correct wrong attitudes, we must be aware of them.

European Institute for Gender Equality (2015), stressing that Gender awareness raising plays an important role in informing women and men about gender equality, emphasizes that "Awareness raising is a process which helps to facilitate the exchange of ideas, improve mutual understanding and develop competencies and skills necessary for societal change." Finding that in ASEAN countries are too few women leasers and role models, Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (2019) reiterates that campaign to make people aware of gender inequality needs to be put forth to encourage girls to participate actively in activities and careers which gender stereotypes restrain them from doing.

Creating awareness on gender stereotypes requires knowing where they originated and how they are transmitted to the mind of people. Early in life, all of us are socialized into many ideologies. According to Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society (2019), socialization is an element inseparable from culture which provides content for the socialization process. The very tool for socializing is language which is an integral part of our lives. Through language, we learn about what our society values, how we should

feel, think, and behave. Embedded in language are various (gender) stereotypes. Gender stereotypes subtly disguise in language. As such, they sound so natural that we fail to doubt them. Worse yet is the language in textbooks which students unquestioningly absorb. As this study focuses on investigating the students' awareness of gender stereotypes present in their English textbook, the section that follows will discuss different types of gender stereotypes found in them.

Gender Stereotypes in Textbooks

As indicated above, no channel for perpetuating stereotypes is more subtle than language, particularly language in textbooks. We now turn to investigate the language forms in which gender stereotypes are embedded. Discussing gender stereotypes in textbooks in Armenia, Ghazaryan (2022) states that they come in the form of underrepresentation. According to Ghazaryan (2022), women are underrepresented in textbooks of all subjects. Similarly, in Indonesia, research reveals that in English textbooks males are more frequently presented in the selected readings than female (Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, 2019). Another form of stereotyping women in textbooks is the stereotypic portrayal of women. Lee & Collins (2008) find that such portrayals (being weak, having domestic roles, suitable to specific careers) of women still exist in recently published English textbooks. As far as language use is concerned, Jasmani et al. (2011) analyzing secondary school textbooks in Malaysia, find that men are more associated with action verbs while women with passive verbs. Another potent form of gender stereotype lies in language rules or grammar. Internalizing grammar, we seldom scrutinize its logic. Given that language is arbitrary, we let go of many nonsensical things (generic male and specific female). We never question why the terms denoting female must have an additional morpheme (e.g., male lion vs. female lioness). Often, the terms denoting males do not have bad connotation. A single man is called a bachelor while a single woman is known as a spinster. And the most illogical of all is the use of pronouns. In English, noun-pronoun agreement is important. We are taught to use male singular pronoun "he" with the singular noun of which the gender is unspecified. Thus, we see a sentence "The guest should bring his own chair." While one might think that generic masculine pronoun use has done no harm, Sniezek and Jazwinski (1986) find in their study that "the use of "generic" masculine and even other grammatically neutral terms in effect serves to exclude women from the English language. The resulting masculine bias in our language reflects and reinforces

the pattern of male dominance in society." Attempting to find out whether our graduate students are aware of gender stereotypes that are present in their textbooks, this study focuses on the use of masculine generic pronouns (henceforth sexist pronouns), which is the most subtle forms in which gender stereotype is embedded. The section that follows provides detail on the structure of the textbook under investigation.

Structure of the English Textbook

The target textbook entitled "Reading Skills Development in English for Graduate Students" in question has been used in English for Graduate Studies at the National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand for decades; however, as of 2023, this in-house textbook is no longer in use. Any students who are not exempted from the English entrance examination are required to enroll in this course. Essentially, contents in the textbook revolve around reading skills development, in particular academic English. Given this emphasis, the course is intended to equip students with the ability to read textbooks, research and academic articles in their respective fields of studies. The textbook consists of three units. The content ranges from sentence structures, vocabulary, sentence paraphrases, paragraph readings and article reading. Not a commercial textbook, it consists of sentences (examples) and reading passages taken from authentic sources (newspaper, articles, etc.). As such, the language in it is original in the sense that the compilers did not screen out what they considered inappropriate (e.g., gender insensitive language).

Given the underrepresented gender issues and observations arising from such English textbook, it is intriguing to examine the textbook's characteristics, overviews of perceptions, and gender awareness as reflected by both students and lecturers in charge of this course. With the aforementioned emphasis, research questions that this study attempts to answer are as follows.

Research Questions

(1) To what extent are learners aware of gender stereotypes that may emerge in the textbook?

(2) Does the textbook contain any examples or terms of gender stereotypes? In terms of what characteristics?

(3) Given the textbook's content, are instructors aware of gender stereotypes?

Research Methodology

This study utilized a triangulation methodology. This method was designed to maximize the validity and dependability of the data analysis (Noble & Heale, 2019). It encouraged cross-checking and balancing of data and results from multiple perspectives and devices. Consequently, based on the research questions, this study included 3 major sections, (3.1) an online survey, (3.2) a text analysis, and (3.3) an instructors' interview, as the figure shows below. After analyzing all these steps, all results were synthesized and interpreted accordingly.
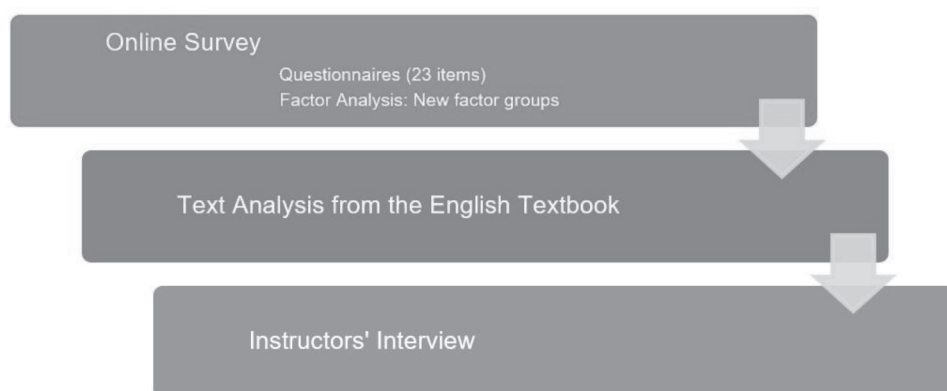

Figure 1: Research Methods

An Online Survey and Related Analyses

In the first phase, students who used the target English textbook were invited to participate, with their approval, to complete an online survey. It consists of two major analyses: the questionnaires section pertaining to students' viewpoints on gender inequality in the textbook, and the factor analysis section for reducing the number of questionnaire items, conflating them, and interpreting how these question items can make sense to us. These two sub-sections are explained below.

Questionaries section

The questionnaires specifically featured gender stereotypes and bias observation. Based on the evidence from the textbook, most questions stressed attributes of masculinity,

with a few highlighting the inferiority domains of femininity. Various socio-economic and cultural aspects of gender issues, including gender stereotypes and linguistic referents to gender discrimination and stigma, were reflected in the question items. The following questionnaires (in Table 1.) were subjected to a reliability test using the Index of item objective congruence (IOC) from 2 inter-raters; the resulting score is 0.90 (acceptable). Inter-raters noted that these questionnaires were sufficient for the task since they were detail-oriented and mainly focused on linguistic forms, as opposed to asking inquiring too broad questions, which may cause difficulties in data elicitation from participants.

There were 23 question items which employed a 5-point Likert scale in this study. Respondents were required to assign a degree of agreement to each statement. A stimulus question of all questionnaires was, *"To what extent do you agree with the following textbook-related statements?"* The Likert scale spans from 1 to 5, namely, 1 = "Strongly disagree", 2 = "Disagree", 3 = "Neither agree nor disagree", 4 = "Agree", and 5 = "Strongly agree", respectively. By carrying out this sub-section, the research question no. 1 can be falsified.

Factor analysis section

Hypothetically, the number of questionnaire items (23 items in table 1) would be overwhelming and challenging to comprehend as a whole. By lowering the number of questionnaire items, factor analysis will play a crucial role in understanding the findings. Creating new, smaller factor/ varible groupings can help us comprehend the significance of such questionnaire items. Instead of examining each question individually, we can screen and bundle similar questions (based on their semantic relations/senses and statistical evidence) into the same group. In practice, factor analysis (using IBM SPSS version 21) can be done following the completion of the regular surveys. In order to answer the first research question, this sub-section can promote a more understanding explanation.

A Text Analysis in the Target Textbook

This part sought to respond to the second research question from the text book entitled "Reading Skills Development in English for Graduate Students." Analyzing, decoding, and interpreting the meaning of written or spoken linguistic data is a text-analytical process. The analysis included essential phrases and highlighted linguistic signals indicating

gender disparity. It may also involve qualitative techniques such as contextualizing language use and sociocultural factors, which were salient and deserved to scrutinize. Text analysis also investigates linguistic variation, change, and social identity (Widdowson, 2000).

Instructors' Interview

This part was used to maintain a balance among research questions 1 and 2. To elaborate, sections 3.1 and 3.2 largely depended on quantitative analysis and the data retrieved from students and the textbook itself empirically, whereas section 3.3 utilized qualitative methods from the other stakeholders. We conducted a casual interview with 3 professional instructors with decades of experience who use this target material. The conversational topics ranged from an overview of the course to thoughts on gender stereotyping observation in the textbook. Consequently, by conducting this section, the third research question can be examined.

Findings

Demographic Data

This study's samples comprised students who participated in the foundational English reading skill course for graduate students at NIDA, Thailand. The ages of the 47 responders spanned from 19 to 28 years old (minimum = 19 years old and maximum = 28 years old). The average age was 23.8 years. The ratio of male to female participants was proportional. Males accounted for 48.94% (23 persons), while females totaled 51.06% (24 persons). Only 3 of the samples obtained MA degrees. 28 students were enrolled in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, while the remaining 19 were in the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. The sample size is considered reliable as far as this study is concerned. Out of 210 students, approximately 31% (65 students) were included, exceeding the minimum requirement of around 20% to ensure the robustness of the analysis. However, a caveat is in order here: since the textbook was used the last time during the previous academic year, it was only reasonable to collect the data that were available at the time.

Questionnaires: Descriptive Statistic Reports

RQ1: To what extent are learners aware of gender stereotypes that may emerge in the textbook?

47 persons voluntarily submitted 23 questions via an online GOOGLE FORM. The 5-point Likert scale ranges from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree", accordingly. The average score ($\bar{x}$) was 3.11. This indicates that the amount of gender stereotypes in such English textbook can range between moderate and high. The S.D. score is extremely low (S.D. = 0.3376), suggesting that the score distribution across all 23 items is converged, and not well-distributed.

Question: To what extent do you agree with the following textbook-related statements?

Table 1: Questionnaire Items and Score Reports (n = 47)

No.	Questionnaire Items (Variables)	Average Score (Out of 5)
1	The likelihood of referring to generic things is disproportionately higher for men than for women. "He", "his", "male(s)," and "man/men" are the male-gendered pronominal pronouns and related referents can be found in the textbook.	3.23*
2	In the textbook, male images, icons, or figures are favored over female ones when presenting images, icons, or figures.	2.57
3	In the textbook, males are depicted as public figures or play essential roles in events or histories.	3.81*
4	When referring to men in the textbook, they are described as outstanding, high leadership, decisive, and uncompromising.	3.43*
5	In the textbook, outdoor activities are recommended for men, while interior hobbies are reserved for women.	3.02*
6	In the textbook, vocations associated with women are limited and gender-stereotyped, such as nurses, midwives, teachers, and maids, but diverse and challenging careers, such as physicians, firefighters, prime ministers, information technology officers, and presidents, are exclusive to men.	3.55*

Table 1: Questionnaire Items and Score Reports (n = 47) (cont.)

No.	Questionnaire Items (Variables)	Average Score (Out of 5)
7	Most of the textbook's exemplary achievers and idealized role models are men.	3.43*
8	The textbook relates female daily activities to household responsibilities and domestic lives.	3.32*
9	In the textbook, males play more critical roles as writers or orators than their counterparts.	2.79
10	In the textbook, males are portrayed as having higher education levels than females.	2.79
11	In the textbook, males' socio-economic status is likely higher than their female counterparts.	3.17*
12	In the textbook, males are primarily cast as heroes or have more prominent roles in narratives. Males receive more space and content compared to their counterparts.	3.49*
13	In the textbook, men are shown as speaking less frequently than women.	2.77
14	According to the textbook, males are less empathetic than females.	2.79
15	Males are less likely to take things personally, overthink, and be worried, according to the textbook.	2.7
16	In the textbook, females are portrayed as inferior to males.	2.79
17	An illocutionary speech act of matrimony as "Man and Wife" are mentioned in the textbook.	3.06*
18	When referring to children in general, the word "boy(s)" appears more frequently in the textbook than "girl(s)."	2.79
19	The textbook uses blue or darker hue spectrums, which indicate masculinity, more often than soft or pastel-like hue spectrums, conveying femininity.	2.85
20	According to the textbook, men are more likely to be involved in political matters.	3.57*
21	Males are more inclined to be initiative and creative in the textbook.	3.11*

Table 1: Questionnaire items and score reports (n = 47) (cont.)

No.	Questionnaire Items (Variables)	Average Score (Out of 5)
22	Males exhibit higher bravery than their textbook counterparts.	3.49*
23	Men's names/ last-names appear before females' names as a basis, regardless of alphabetical orders.	3.06*

Remarks: The scores marked by (*) are above 3 out of 5, denoting a moderate to a high level of agreement.

According to table 1., the 3 question items out of 23 items with the highest scores include variable no. 3 "according to the textbook, men are more likely to be involved in political matters" ($\overline{x}$ = 3.57); variable no. 20 "in the textbook, males are depicted as public figures or play a critical role in histories" ($\overline{x}$ = 3.81); and variable no. 6 "in the textbook, vocations associated with women are limited and gender-stereotyped, such as teachers, housewives, and secretaries ($\overline{x}$ = 3.55). Observable interdependence and congruency exist between these 3 variables in nature found in this textbook usage. Interestingly, male agents were inclined to tackle political matters and have domineering roles for men probably involved in important history events. By contrast, females' responsibilities were stereotypically based on their respective suppressive social positions.

Factor Analysis: New Factor/ Variable Groups

Due to the 23 dispersed questionnaire items as seen in table 1, we could refine them into new smaller conflated groups with less number. Factor analysis enabled us to get more comprehensible result's senses and led to appropriate interpretation (IBM SPSS, version 21).

The Cronbach's alpha for the internal content reliability was found to be excellent ($\alpha \leq$ .938). The KMO and Bartlett's Test accounted for 0.765, df = 253, and p<0.0001 in the subsequent stage. Thus, these preliminary test operations were appropriate to proceed to the Varimax rotation axis in the Factor Analysis.

All 23 items (shown in Table 1) passed the factor analysis test, resulting in creating the new four groups of factors to explain the trend; however, this study removed those irrelevant questions according to the statistical analysis result, as seen below:

1) *Due to their socioeconomic advantage, males might be portrayed as less empathetic and take things personally.* Factor 1 was conflated from 6 items taken from questionnaires no. 14, 15, 16, 10, 13, and 11.

2) *Men are potentially portrayed intellectually and socially idealistic or as public figures.* Factor 2 included 5 items retrieved from questionnaires no. 7, 20, 21, 12, and 3.

3) *Males are considered trailblazers associated with risk-taking/leadership positions to some extent, while females are associated with domestic life and stereotypically feminine/risk-averse careers.* Factor 3 was comprised of 4 items from questionnaires no. 4, 5, 8, and 6.

4) *Masculine pronouns and referents relating to generic items can predominate throughout the textbook.* Factor 4 was consisted of only 2 items based on questionnaires no. 1 and 9.
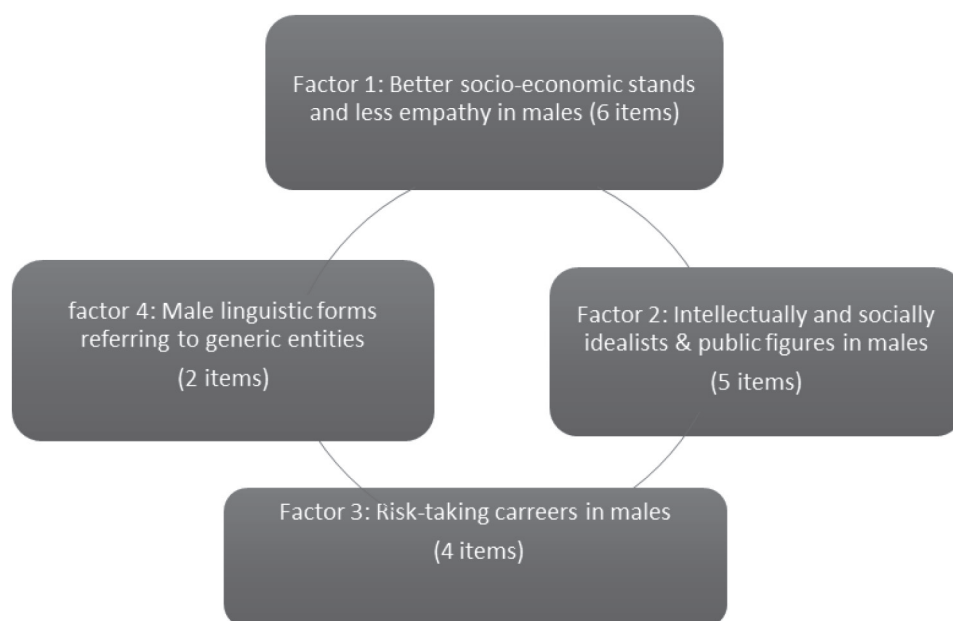

Figure 2: Four Major Factor Groups Reveal the Interrelation among All Variables

It should be noted that the reliability of the data analysis might suffer as a result of time constraints and the relatively small size of the student sample. Although a sufficiently large number of respondents (n = 100) is typically required to augment

reliability, only 47 respondents took part in this factor analysis study. This is because this group was the only intact group available at the time. Readers are cautioned against this limitation in terms of interpretation of the data and the analytical robustness.

Some Observations from the Textbook's Excerpts

RQ2: Does the textbook contain any examples or terms of gender stereotypes? In terms of what characteristics?

This section of the analysis focuses on pronoun usage in the textbook, specifically examining the usage of the generic masculine pronoun, such as "he" or "him." In linguistics, pronouns are words or groups of words that replace nouns or phrases in sentences. They prevent repetitive use of the head noun and facilitate anaphora (referring back to a preceding entity) and cataphora (referring forward to a subsequent entity) within the context. Pronouns play a crucial role in referring to entities without relying on gender-specific pronouns such as "she," "he," or "it," etc.

Regarding the generic masculine pronoun, pronouns "he" or "him" have been used as a generic or gender-neutral pronoun in certain contexts, serving as a default pronoun. However, the use of "he" has faced criticism due to its inherent gender bias and exclusion of non-male individuals and others (Gastil, 1990). As a result, the prevalent use of this pronoun in the textbook has been observed and warrants investigation.

According to the textbook's content, it comprised 3 units, based on the 2019 edition. There were 37,073 words total in the document. This textbook aimed to empower their academic English reading skills. The subject matter embraced a variety of academic contexts and genres based on the context of applied sciences and social sciences, which corresponded to the NIDA's interdisciplinary contexts. The learning topics included immediate constituent analysis (IC-analysis), core-part (head and modifier), which were extracted from sentences or discourses, how to use context clues, useful vocabularies and their components (related affixes and stems), how to consult dictionaries, understanding forms of writing, reading comprehension mechanics, writer's movements of thought and purposes, and reading passage drills.

This English textbook comprised 173 pages with 37,037 words. There were 15 pages containing 1,350 words associated with gender issues which we could observe, accounting

for 3.64%. These evidentiary supports were taken from their key terms/ phrases, and their contexts found. The contexts referred to the co-occurrence between key terms adjacent by their co-texts, namely, the sentences preceding the key terms, the sentences following the key terms, and the entire paragraphs that elaborated gender inequality likelihood and their linguistic forms in use. We found a few data of both overt and covert linguistic forms of gender imbalance, particularly pronominal assignments, namely, "he", "his", "she" and "her" and other terms "man" and "woman" to indicate generic characters and entities across the textbook as shown in the following excerpts.

(1)

*"A secretary must know how to type; furthermore, **she** should have some knowledge of shorthand." (Page 4)*

The author employed the pronoun "she" for specific jobs and tasks associated with women. For example, knowing shorthand and being a secretary were linked with stereotypical feminine employment rather than their male counterparts. This was in accordance with Garg et al. (2017), which demonstrate a substantial corpus of beliefs and occupation's history related to gender. For decades, the study discovers that the secretary is closely associated with female occupations.

(2)

*"When a person can read and write **his** own language, we say that **he** is literate." (Page 13)*

The pronominal pronoun "he" and the possessive adjective "his" could correlate with a greater degree of education, knowledge, and literacy. Furthermore, men could serve as examples of generic entities.

(3)

*"The Prime Minister had received the details of the disaster. **He** ordered that assistance be sent immediately." (Page 31)*

Referring to excerpt (3), students were expected to analyze and combine an adjectival clause in a complex sentence, consisting of a matrix clause and its subordinate clause. "He" referred to the generic noun "Prime Minister." It could be deduced that the likelihood of success, high-ranking careers, and a high social position was tied to

males. Men were frequently referred to political power or holding significant positions in the state. Furthermore, this article discussed the decisiveness of men in positions of authority.

(4)

*"Susan is a hypocrite because **she** never tells us what **she** really believes in."* *(Page 74)*

In this regard, a woman known as "Susan" was represented negatively as hypocritical, deceitful, and inclined to conceal her beliefs and convictions. The author used the word "she" and the feminine name "Susan," which could be perceived as favoring women in this context.

Instructors' Interviews

RQ3: Given the textbook's content, are instructors aware of gender stereotypes?

In the third section, data collection through interviews with lecturers was considered as one aspects of the triangulation process. The researcher interviewed instructors who had used this textbook for at least a decade. First, the lecturers offered an overview of the material and methods utilized to teach English following the course outline and the textbook. The lecturers then commented on the book's nature as follows.

"First of all, this course aims to help NIDA students to develop their English reading skills. It's like helping them to be able to dissect sentence elements. When they study at NIDA, they will be assigned to read texts and journal articles in English. Most of the time, the English language they get to read in those stuff tends to be complicated. In fact, they must read long sentences—up to five lines at a time sometimes. Therefore, the ability to break apart those long sentences is important. Analyzing sentences is the first part of the textbook though. The second part deals with academic vocabulary development. The third part has to do with reading at paragraph and multi-paragraph levels. In a way, it's a bottom-up approach whereby students work their way up from phrases, clauses, and sentences up to paragraphs and long passages."

(Lecturer Tanjiro)

Next, the instructor clarified the challenging teaching technique in the following paragraph. Utilizing this reading material and operationalizing such training may be difficult and demanding for some graduate students who need to enhance their English skills a great deal, as shown in the interview below.

"Many students are not ready to read English texts and articles due to their limited English proficiency. One of the initial difficulties I've encountered over the years is to convince them that it is necessary to first understand the sentence mechanisms—to be able to identify types of sentences, of subordinate clauses, of phrases and whatnot. Another difficulty is how to get them to guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. And when it comes to sentence interpretation, where they are supposed to read between the lines, I think giving them lots of exercises and explicit explanation from the teacher could help. As for the reading section, certain techniques help e.g., skimming and scanning."

(Lecturer Chang-Right)

The final point in the study inquired whether any issues with pronoun usage were connected to gender bias and stereotypes which might be present in the textbook. As indicated below, the interviewee mentioned this.

"As far as I'm concerned, the use of pronouns has never been a problem in teaching reading. I think there is a passage where a country is referred to by the pronoun "she" but that doesn't really bother me or my students. I mean they have not complained about the gender issue that might have been involved here. Some of the complaints I've heard from students are that the vocabulary is difficult, that reading passages contain information that is not relevant to their fields of study. In all honesty, I don't see any problems teaching those passages, especially as regards sexist language."

(Lecturer Triceratops)

To sum up, while the pronominal pronouns "he" or "she" were sporadically assigned in the sentences and narratives, they should not be blatantly presupposed to be

sexist, gender-biased, or stereotyped. This textbook's contents were challenging because they required advanced academic reading skills and linguistic analytical skills. As a result, the main objective of teaching and using this textbook was independent of any agenda. The intention was not to provoke any concerns about such sensitive issues.

Conclusions and Discussions

To date, our society is far from being a brave new world for women. With the effort to achieve gender equality, we all agree that people need to de-learn what have been taught to them and relearn the idea that men and women are created equal. Education, for this reason, becomes an important platform on which people, especially the young, can be taught the right thing. We need to look at the place where our students obtain their knowledge and ideas. We need to ensure that our teachers come to class with gender sensitivity so that they can teach and treat their students well. Additionally, we must make sure that our textbooks are free from gender biases and stereotypes so that our students do not absorb the wrong ideas.

In this study, triangulation was employed in this research to maximize the validity and reliability of the analyses. This study included a questionnaire, a text analysis, and an instructor interview pertaining to issues of gender stereotypes. According to the findings, most questionnaire agreement scores were moderate to high (x = 3.11). Thus, respondents commonly accepted that gender imbalance appeared in the target textbook, particularly males were more concerned with political vocations, superiority, and political issues and events.

When the researcher minimized the size of all 23 variables/questionnaire items and conducted a factor analysis, there were four new factor groups, namely, 1) Males could be portrayed as having less empathy and associated with higher socioeconomic standing. 2) Males were viewed as social and intellectual idealists or as public figures. 3) Males were considered trailblazers associated with risk-taking/ leadership positions to some extent, whereas females were involved in domestic lives and stereotypically feminine/risk-aversive professions. And finally, 4) pronominal pronouns and referents relating to males referring to generic entities could be predominantly utilized across the textbook.

A good consistency was observed between questionnaires, factor analysis, and text analysis (key terms and gender linguistic forms). However, the findings of the interviews with the lecturers were not in line with the previous questionnaire and text analysis sections. Given the examples of gender stereotype evidences, the lecturers in charge of this course did not believe that using such linguistic forms could trigger undesirable consequences leading to gender stereotypes, bias, or anything else. Sadly, the textbook's creators had no intention of revising textbooks to eliminate sexist language and gender stereotypes.

As the result indicates, our students are aware and appear to be informed by the social climate that women are not treated as equally as men. Our result shows that they agreed that women are underrepresented and not justly portrayed. Instances of sexist pronouns in the text caught their attention. But should we be satisfied with this level of awareness among our students? We need to be remined again that being aware of something and believing that it is not right are two separate issues. One can be aware of a problem without intending to rectify it. The interview with the instructors in this study reminds us that there are those who view gender issues in textbooks as secondary. As one teacher points out that the aim of the book is to teach English, so the gender issues are not important. Implicit in this thinking is that it is not essential for the instructor to spend time discussing it with the students. The result of this study, therefore, delighting and disheartening. It is delighting that the students are aware of the existing unfairness, while it is disheartening that the instructors still do not deem the issue a serious one that needs to be fixed. Ultimately, we still have a long rocky road to go before we make people see the importance of making our textbooks free of gender biases.

Acknowledgements

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