Evaluation of ELT Materials: A CDA Approach to Gender Representation in *Prospect Series*

Omid Tabatabaei[1]

English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Najafabad, Iran

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the way English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks portray males and females based on their social roles and subject positions. To this end, *Prospect Series*, the locally-designed English textbooks currently taught in Iranian high schools, were selected to examine to what extent equality of gender representation has been observed in the series. The study analyzed the s*eries* in terms of major gender-related issues: Female and male's characters, pictorial representations, titles, social roles, activities and firstness in mixed-gender dialogues, gender focus of textbook themes/content as well as gender relations. To describe and analyze genders in conversations and pictorial representations, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach was applied. Thus, to extract the ideology behind gender representation in the series, Fairclough's (2001) three dimensional model was utilized. The results indicated that the series did not equally display males and females. It was also revealed that only *Prospect 2* included sexism. In fact, in this study, a more comprehensive description of textbook evaluation with ideological basis was presented. The findings of the study offer some guidelines to second language (L2) teachers and materials developers to select and design textbooks based on not only the appropriateness of content, but also various other aspects like the textbook characters' social roles and subject positions in terms of gender.

1. Introduction

Textbooks are an indispensable part of English as foreign language (EFL)

education since it is generally through textbooks that learners get acquainted

with the target language culture and values (Alemi & Sadehvandi, 2012). In

Iran, textbooks serve as the basis for much of the language input learners

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[1] Corresponding author: tabatabaeiomid@yahoo.com

receive. They could be considered as the major source of activities and practice that take place in the classroom.

Yarmohammadi (2002) evaluated the previously-used senior high school textbooks based on a revised version of Tucker's (1975) model. He came to the conclusion that these textbooks suffer from plenty of shortcomings: (a) they are not authentic; (b) English and Persian names are used interchangeably; and (c) oral skills are ignored. Similarly, Jahangard (2007) evaluated EFL textbooks used in the Iranian high schools supervised by the Ministry of Education. He discussed the merits and demerits of the textbooks with reference to 13 common criteria extracted from different materials evaluation checklists. The criteria were as follows: explicitness of objectives, good vocabulary explanation and practice, educationally and socially acceptable approaches to the target language community, periodic reviews and test sections, clear attractive layout, easiness of print, appropriate visual materials, interesting topics and tasks, clear instructions, clearly organized and graded content, plenty of authentic language, good grammar presentation and practice, fluency practice in all four skills, and independent learning situations. It was concluded that students were mainly dealing with meanings of individual words and not with how words were used with other words or in what combinations.

Based on these studies and criticisms, the Ministry of Education changed the books and replaced them with new ones, *the Prospect* series. Despite the fact that, many studies focused on old books for many years (Azizfar, 2009; Jahangard, 2007; Rahimpour & Hashemi, 2011; Riazi, 2003; Riazi & Aryashokouh, 2007); only a few studies have focused on the evaluation of the newly-developed books of high schools, namely Prospect Series. For example, Alavi et al. (2013) stated that *Prospect* 1, 2 and 3 have been designed to help students learn second language (L2) English for

communicative purposes using all four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing based on the communicative language teaching approach. Alternatively, it is believed that the previous textbooks suffered from lack of communicative skills, and students were unable to use language in the real situation.

Alemi and Hesami (2013) indicated that previous junior high school textbooks were not acceptable from the teachers' point of view and did not meet their expectations. Prospects are a prominent part of the English language teaching (ELT) high school program in Iran and they play a crucial role in teaching and learning the foreign language. They are used in all high schools of the country as a medium of instruction. Therefore, evaluating and selecting them seem to be of great importance.

Gender is one of the issues which is shaped by textbooks and influences them. Additionally, most ELT textbooks have represented gender in a biased way which might affect students negatively. In the light of the aforesaid issues, the purpose of this study was to consider sexism in Prospect series through the scheme of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study specifically aimed to explore how *Prospect series* portray men and women according to their social roles and subject positions. An attempt was also made in to uncover the role of gender in terms of discourse features in conversations of Prospect Series. Picture representation of sexism was another important objective pursued in this study.

2. Review of the Literature

Since the 1970s, researchers have demonstrated immense interest in the study of gender bias in ESL/EFL materials (e.g., Alemi & Sadehvandi, 2012; Ansary & Babaii, 2002; Azizifar et al., 2010; Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Graham, 1975; Hartman & Judd, 1978; Mineshima, 2008; Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2008; Porreca, 1984; Rahimpour & Hashemi, 2011; Tok,

2010; Vogli, 2009). For example, Graham (1975) was among the first to investigate sexism in a school children's dictionary. She found that the nouns used to describe male activities were seven times more than the nouns used for female activities. In addition, the visibility of males to females was four to one.

Mukundan and Nimehchisalem (2008) studied the representation of gender in some English language textbooks in Malaysia. The results indicated significant gender bias against both sexes with males outnumbering females in texts and illustrations and males were mainly associated with negative traits. However, discourse wise, males dominated females. They spoke more, talked first, and were more visible.

Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) evaluated the three English language textbooks used in Iranian high schools from EFL teachers' point of view. They believed that the textbooks were not acceptable considering their five sections, their physical make-up, and the practical concerns. Therefore, the results of this study were extended the existent research in the area of textbook selection and evaluation in our country.

Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012) evaluated *Pacesetter Series*, an EFL course book series, in four levels of starter, elementary, prentermediate, and intermediate, being currently instructed at several language institutes in Iran. The results of descriptive statistics revealed that there was an overall agreement among the teachers. However, two prominent points were worth further addressing. The first issue was that the series did not sufficiently underline the speaking skill. The other concern involved the incorporation of the western culture in every skill and skill-related activities as it caused frustration and bafflement on the part of Iranian young foreign language learners since they were unfamiliar with certain aspects of the target language culture.

CDA, which presents studying and analyzing both written and spoken forms of language, displays diffuse sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias (Van Dijk, 2001). CDA examines the way these diffuse sources are described and recreated within specific social, political and historical contexts.

According to Wodak and Meyer (2008), CDA tends to analyze both clear and unclear structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as they are shown in language. Using language, it attempts to explore critically social inequality as it is described, constituted, and legalized. He also stated that language is used as a medium of control and social force. In addition, it legalizes the relations of efficient power. Language is also ideological but not articulated.

Fairclough (1995) maintained that the capitalist society is made for critical theory and the features of discursive practices within the capitalist society are made for CDA. He also believed that CDA is a framework for studying language based on its relation to power and ideology. Hence, to him, CDA is a framework which seeks to study associations among language, power and ideology. Similarly, van Dijk (1996) pointed out that CDA is a sort of discourse analysis that explains language in use as conditioned by, but also constitutive of, social practices. The main goal of CDA is to explain how the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions enact, reproduce or legalize power abuse.

Janks (2005) stated that the emergence of CDA is caused by critical theory of language which shows the use of language as a form of social practice. It is a sort of practice which is connected to the particular historical contexts and extant social relations called social practice that are consequently reproduced or contested.

3. The Study

The purpose of the study was to explore how *Prospect series* portray men and women according to their social roles and subject positions. In order to carry out this research, the following questions were posed:

1. Are there any significant differences between representation of female and male characters in terms of discourse features in the conversations of Prospect series?

2. Are there any significant differences between the representation of female and male characters in terms of social roles and subject positions in the conversations of prospect series?

3. Are there any significant differences between the picture representation of male and female in Prospect Series?

3. Methodology
3.1 Materials (Textbook)

An attempt was made to evaluate *Prospect series* as the research material. They were introduced by the *Ministry of Education* in 2013 for Iranian junior high school students. This study evaluated these new textbooks considered as a fundamental shift in the English language schoolbooks in Iran. *Prospect series* include *Prospect 1, 2 and 3*. They also have workbooks, CDs, teacher's guides, and flash cards.

Prospect 1 consists of 8 main units and four review units. Each main unit is divided into three parts: the first part is listening and speaking starting with a dialogue and continues with pair/group practices; the second part is writing. In this part, alphabet letters and the relationship among the sounds of the letters, their forms and different allophones of one sound are presented; the third part consists of role plays and students' conversation. This section is designed to review the previous parts and provides the learners with enough opportunity to practice what they have learned. In addition, a workbook, a

CD, flash cards and teacher's guide come with the textbook. At the end of the book, there is a photo dictionary related to new words in each lesson.

In *Prospect 2*, there are seven lessons in the student book along with the workbook, CD, teacher's guide, and flash cards. Each lesson contains conversation, exercises, spelling and pronunciation, listening and writing, reading, speaking, writing and role plays. After every two lessons, there is a review and at the end of the book, there is a photo dictionary based on new words in each lesson.

Prospect 3 consists of a student book with six lessons, the workbook, CD, teacher's guide, and flash cards. Each lesson consists of a conversation, exercises, language melody and grammar, listening, reading and writing, and role plays. After every two lessons, there is a review, and at the end of the book, there is a photo dictionary for new words in each lesson.

3.2 Model of Analysis

The model of analysis used in the study was that of Fairclough's (2001). It consists of three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse. These three dimensions are:

1- The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts).

2- The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects.

3- The socio-historical conditions which govern these processes.

According to Fairclough, each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis:

1- Text analysis (description),
2- Processing analysis (interpretation),
3- Social analysis (explanation).
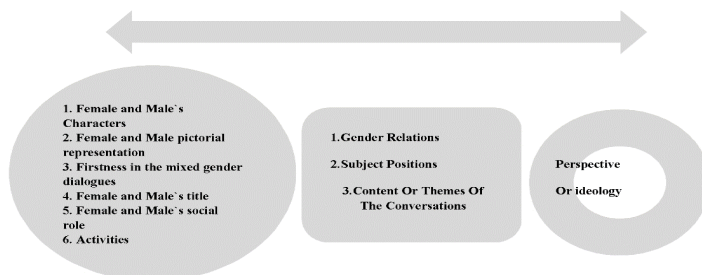
Evaluation of …

Figure 1. Model of analysis based on Faiclough (2001)

The factors which were examined in *Prospect* series are as follows:

3.2.1 Visibility. This part consisted of the number of females and males presented in the textbook. It could be considered an easy way of examining gender balance. Therefore, in order to make sure whether male and female representations were equal, the number of females and males was counted.

Deletion is one of the most obvious factors which is routinely examined. For determining the sexism or sex bias in various textbooks, deletion is investigated (Esmaili, 2011), which indicates that one gender, female or male, is not presented or omitted in the textbook. According to Esmaili (2011), gender bias affects students negatively. Thus, reality is failed to be shown in textbooks.

The pictorial representation of female and male in Prospect series was counted. To figure out their appearance in photographs, individual people and the total numbers of photos for each gender were counted as well.

In this section, the interaction between female and male in conversations was recognized. In fact, the themes of the conversations were considered in the light of some basic groups like appearance, fashion, clothing, and so on.

3.2.2 Firstness. When two gender nouns and pronouns play a role as partners in a text like the role of father and mother or he/she, the one who comes first implies a higher position. In order to find out whether in the

prospect series there was an acceptable gender balance or not the following issues were analyzed and discussed.

3.2.3 Mixed gender dialogues. Mixed gender refers to the presentation of two genders in a text. Therefore, in each conversation and listening activity, both female and male characters were checked out to examine which one appeared in the first position with a higher status.

3.2.4 Social roles. Through sex stereotyping, bias distribution of both genders may be preserved. The general ideas about female and male and about their status were presented.

3.2.5 Subject position. Subject position indicates the interaction of both genders in social roles and social identities. In fact, it illustrates social activities and social roles which female and male represent.

3.2.6 Female and male titles. Another factor which shows the differences between female and male's character is titles. In fact, another important issue in English which causes differences between female and male is their marital status affecting both genders' title. According to Esmaili (2011), when the marital status of female is not revealed the term Ms. is used, which is the same as Mr., to decrease gender bias.

3.2.7 Activities. As mentioned before, this section involves the social roles and social activities in which both female and male have participated.

3.3 Procedure

As it was mentioned, to achieve the goals of the study, six categories were chosen: visibility, firstness, mixed gender dialogues, social roles, subject positions, and female and male titles to determine if *Prospect* series are sufficiently gender-balanced or not. To provide answers to the research questions of the study, Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model was utilized and its three stages were conducted to extract and analyze the data. In

Evaluation of …

so doing, six-factors related to gender were taken into consideration. These factors were: 1) female and male characters, 2) female and male`s pictorial representation, 3) female and male`s title, 4) female and male`s social roles, and 5) activities in order to identify the existence and lack of sexual discrimination. Moreover, this study considered one more issue (i.e., firstness of female & male in mixed-gender dialogues). These factors were considered in order to uncover female and male`s subject position, gender focus of textbook themes or content as well as gender relations.

4. Results
4.1 Female and Male Characters in Prospect Series
4.1.1 Prospect 1. The total number of female and male characters, in the form of proper nouns and pronouns, yielded the following frequencies.

Table 1
Frequencies of Female and Male Characters in Prospect 1

	Parts of *Prospect 1*										
	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	L 7	L 8	Review	Picture Dictionary	Total
Male	8	8	2	15	11	6	10	3	4	7	74
Female	8	6	3	13	8	7	3	4	5	7	64
Total	16	14	5	28	19	13	13	7	9	14	138

Note. L1 = Lesson 1, L2 = Lesson 2, … Ln = Lesson n.

The frequencies of female and male characters in different parts of *Prospect 1* (i.e. Lessons 1-8, Review Unit, and Picture Dictionary) were presented in Table 1. Except for Lesson 1 ($M = 8$; $F = 8$) and Picture Dictionary ($M = 7$; $F = 7$), the frequencies of female and male characters were unequal in all other parts of the book. This is also graphically represented in Figure 1.
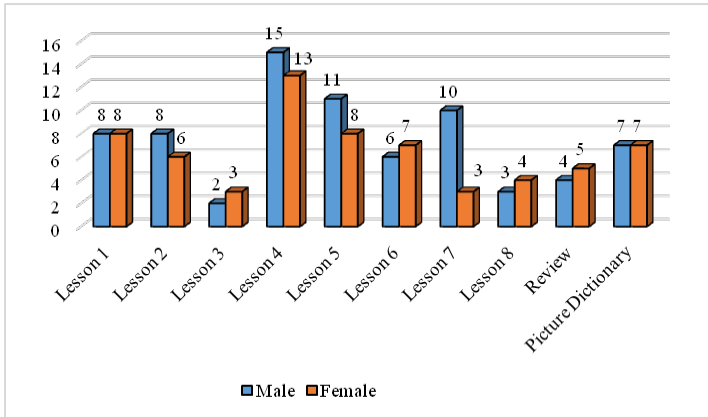
Figure 1. Frequencies of female and male characters in *Prospect 1*

As it could be seen (except for the equal number of female & male characters in Lesson 1 & Picture Dictionary), there were differences between the frequency of use of female and male characters. More specifically, male characters were more frequently used in Lesson 2 ($M = 8$; $F = 6$), Lesson 4 ($M = 15$; $F = 13$), Lesson 5 ($M = 11$; $F = 8$), and Lesson 7 ($M = 10$; $F = 3$). On the other hand, female characters were more frequently used in Lesson 3 ($M = 2$; $F = 3$), Lesson 6 ($M = 6$; $F = 7$), Lesson 8 ($M = 3$; $F = 4$), and Review Unit ($M = 4$; $F = 5$). In order to find out whether the differences between female and male characters in these different parts of *Prospect 1* were statistically significant or not, chi-square was employed:

Table 2
Chi-Square Results for Comparing Female and Male Characters in Prospect 1

		Value	*df*	Asymp. *Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pearson	Chi-Square	4.50	9	.87
Likelihood	Ratio	4.69	9	.86
Linear-by-Linear	Association	.002	1	.96
N of Valid Cases		138		

Evaluation of …

In Table 2, the *p* value under the Asymp. *Sig.* (2-tailed) column in front of Pearson chi-square was larger than the specified level of significance (i.e., .87 > .05), indicating that the difference between the frequencies of female and male characters in *Prospect 1* was not statistically significant. In other words, *Prospect 1* could be said to be gender-balanced.

4.1.2 Prospect 2. The frequency of occurrence for female and male characters in each part of *Prospect 2* yielded the following results:

Table 3
Frequencies of Female and Male Characters in Prospect 2

	Parts of *Prospect 2*									Total
	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7	Review	Picture Dictionary	
Male	12	4	5	12	6	4	0	0	0	43
Female	7	7	12	3	2	4	10	0	0	45
Total	19	11	17	15	8	8	10	0	0	88

Note. L1 = Lesson 1, L2 = Lesson 2, … Ln = Lesson n.

Table 3 displays the frequencies of female and male characters in different parts of *Prospect 2*. It was only in Lesson 6 ($M = 4$; $F = 4$) where an equal number of female and male characters were used. Moreover, no mention of male or female characters was made in Review Unit or Picture Dictionary parts of the book. The frequencies of female and male characters were not the same in all other parts of the book. Figure 2 attests the foregoing findings.
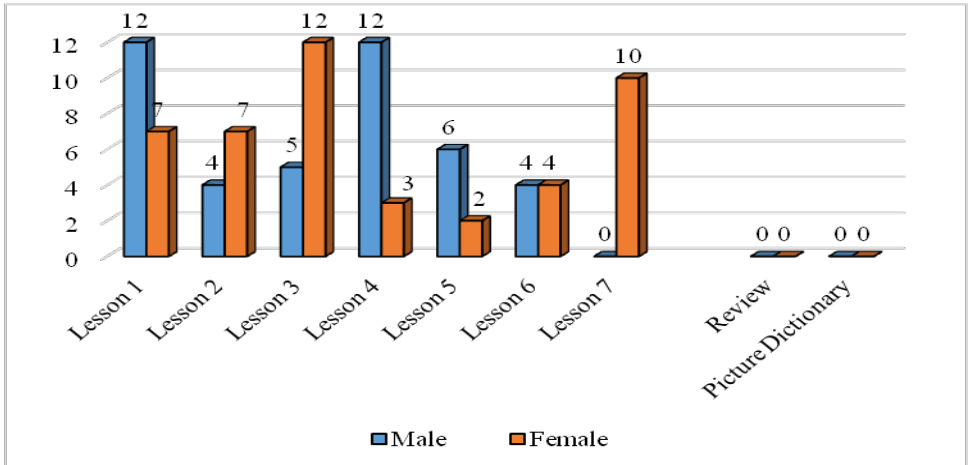
Figure 2. Frequencies of female and male characters in *Prospect 2*

The most striking difference between the frequency of use of female and male characters was observed in Lesson 7 ($M = 0$; $F = 10$). This was followed by Lesson 4 ($M = 12$; $F = 3$), Lesson 3 ($M = 5$; $F = 12$), Lesson 1 ($M = 12$; $F = 7$), Lesson 5 ($M = 6$; $F = 2$), and Lesson 2 ($M = 4$; $F = 7$), respectively. To see whether the differences between female and male characters in these different parts of Prospect 2 were statistically significant or not, chi-square was used again. Review Unit and Picture Dictionary were excluded from analysis since the frequencies of female and male characters for these two parts equaled zero.

Table 4
Chi-Square Results for Comparing Female and Male Characters in Prospect 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. *Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.38	6	.001
Likelihood Ratio	26.82	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.42	1	.119
N of Valid Cases	88		

Evaluation of …

Although Table 3 showed that the total difference between the frequency of use of male ($f = 45$) and female ($f = 43$) characters in *Prospect 2* was minimal, Table 4., indicates that the difference between female and male characters in with regards to their frequency of use in different parts of the book was in fact statistically significant since the *p* value under the *Asymp. Sig.* (2-tailed) was less than the specified level of significance. In other words, in some parts of the book (e.g., Lesson 7), females were overused to the neglect and exclusion of males, while in other parts (e.g., Lesson 4), the majority of characters were males. Thus, *Prospect 2* could not be said to be gender-balanced in all its parts.

4.1.3 Prospect 3. Calculating the frequency of occurrence of female and male characters in each part of *Prospect 3* yielded the following results:

Table 5
Frequencies of Female and Male Characters in Prospect 3

	Parts of *Prospect 3*								Total
	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Review	Picture Dictionary	
Male	16	12	13	13	10	15	12	10	101
Female	11	14	14	6	13	11	13	5	87
Total	27	26	27	19	23	26	25	15	188

Table 5 shows the frequencies of female and male characters in different parts of *Prospect 3*. Male characters were more used in Lesson 1 ($M = 16$; $F = 11$), Lesson 6 ($M = 15$; $F = 11$). On the other hand, female characters were more frequently used in Lesson 2 ($M = 12$; $F = 14$), Lesson 3 ($M = 13$; $F = 14$), Lesson 5 ($M = 10$; $F = 13$), and Review Unit ($M = 12$; $F = 13$). In order to find out whether the differences between female and male characters in these different parts of *Prospect 3* were statistically significant, a chi-square was employed: The frequencies of female and male characters were not the same in all other parts of the book. Figure 3 presents the foregoing findings.
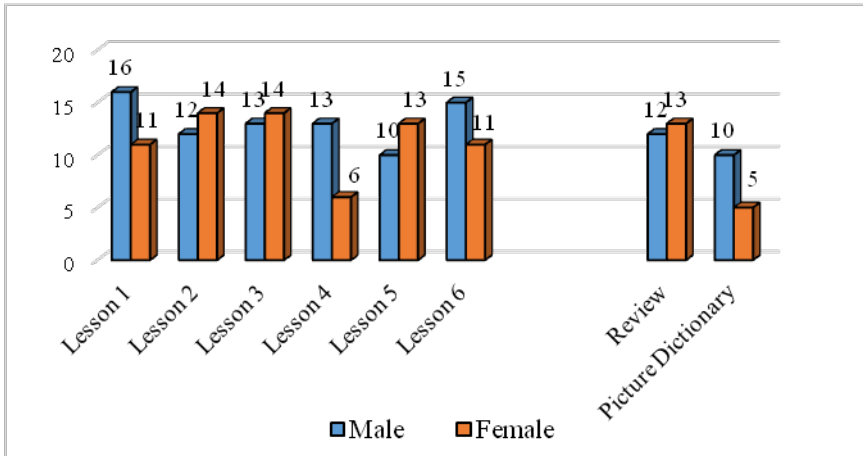
Figure 3. Frequencies of female and male characters in *Prospect 3*

The most striking difference between the frequency of use of female and male characters was observed in Lesson 4 ($M = 13$; $F = 6$). This was followed by the Picture Dictionary ($M = 10$; $F = 5$), respectively. To see whether the differences between female and male characters in these different parts of *Prospect 3* were statistically significant, a chi-square was used again.

Table 6
Chi-Square Results for Comparing Female and Male Characters in Prospect 3

	Value	*df*	Asymp. *Sig.* (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.39	7	.61
Likelihood Ratio	5.46	7	.60
Linear-by-Linear	.07	1	.78
Association	188		
N of Valid Cases			

Although the rightmost column in Table 5 showed that the total difference between frequency of use of male ($f = 101$) and female ($f = 87$) characters in *Prospect 3* was considerable, Table 6., indicates that the difference between female and male characters in this book with regards to their frequency of use

Evaluation of …

in different parts of the book was not statistically significant due to the fact that the *p* value was greater than the specified level of significance. Hence, *Prospect 3* could be claimed to be gender-balanced in all its parts.

4.1.4 Overall Female and Male Characters in Prospect Series

Results in Table 7 indicate that 52.65% of the characters in *Prospect* series belong to male characters and 47.35% belong to female characters.

Table 7
Frequencies of Female and Male Characters in Prospect Series

Textbooks	Prospect 1		Prospect 2		Prospect 3		Total	
Gender	male	Female	male	Female	male	Female	male	Female
Frequency	74	64	43	45	101	87	218	196
Percentage	%53	%46.	%48	%51	%53.	%46.	%52	%47.3

To see whether the differences between female and male characters in different parts of *Prospect series* were statistically significant, a chi-square was used.

Table 8
Chi-Square Results for Comparing Female and Male Characters in Prospect series

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.645(a)	2	.724
Likelihood Ratio	.645	2	.724
Linear-by-Linear Association	.006	1	.940
N of Valid Cases	414		

Table 8 indicates that the difference between female and male characters in these books with regards to their frequency of use in different parts of the book was not statistically significant due to the fact that the *p* value was greater than the specified level of significance.

4.2 Pictorial Representation of Female and Male Characters

4.2.1 Prospect 1. In different parts of *Prospect 1* (Lessons 1-8 and Picture Dictionary), the frequencies of male only pictures (f = 55), more males (f =

13), female only (f = 18), more females (f = 8), equal share (f = 6), and not-identified (f = 87) were obtained. The percentage for each of these categories is represented in the following pie chart (Figure 4).
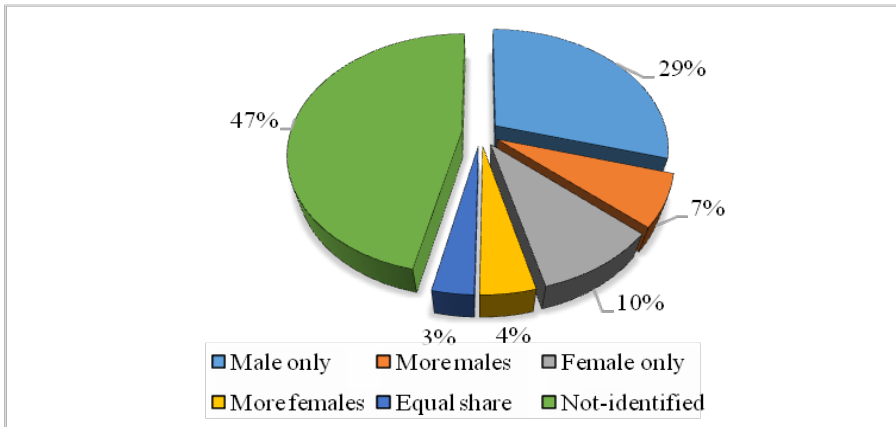

Figure 4. Pictorial representation of female and male characters in *Prospect 1*

As it can be seen in Figure 4, almost half (47%) of the pictorial representations regarding female and male characters were categorized as not-identified. Except for this class of pictures, the highest proportion of pictures (29%) were male only pictures. This was followed by female only pictures (10%), more males (7%), more females (4%), and equal share (3%). Thus, male-containing pictures were found to be used relatively more in *Prospect 1*.

4.2.2. Prospect 2. The composing parts of *Prospect 2* (Lessons 1-7 and Picture Dictionary) contained the following frequencies for female and male pictorial representations: male only pictures (f = 59), more males (f = 12), female only (f = 0), more females (f = 7), equal share (f = 7), and not-identified (f = 113) were obtained. The percentage for each of these categories is represented in the following pie chart (Figure 5).
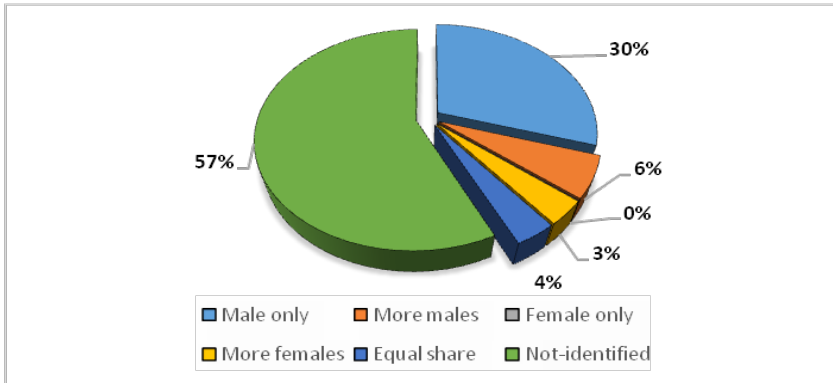
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Figure 5. Pictorial representation of female and male characters in *Prospect 2*

It can be seen in Figure 5 that (like what was true for *Prospect 1* in Figure 4) the largest proportion (57%) of the pictorial representations regarding female and male characters were labeled not-identified. Save for this class of pictures, the highest proportion of pictures (30%) belonged to male only pictures. Surprisingly, there were no female only pictures (0%) in the book. More males (6%), equal share (4%), and more females (3%), were the categories which followed. Females appeared to have been put at a disadvantage in *Prospect 2,* and therefore male-containing pictures were found to be used relatively more in this book.

4.2.3. Prospect 3. In *Prospect 3,* the six lessons and the supplemented Picture Dictionary contained the following frequencies for female and male pictorial representations: male only pictures ($f = 83$), more males ($f = 24$), female only ($f = 17$), more females ($f = 10$), equal share ($f = 35$), and not-identified ($f = 74$) were obtained. Figure 6 shows the percentage of the abovementioned categories.
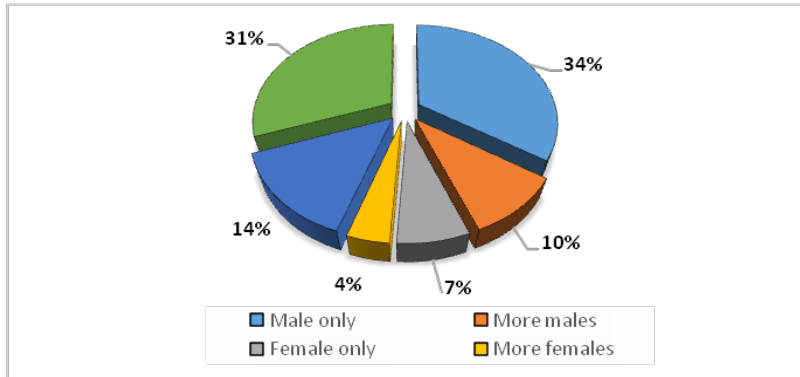
Figure 6. Pictorial representation of female and male characters in *Prospect 3*

In Figure 6, one can notice that male only pictures constituted the highest proportion of pictures (34%) in *Prospect 3*, and about one-third of the pictures (31%) were placed in the category of not-identified. The percentage of equal share pictures was 14, and 10% of the pictures featured more males. Female only pictures (7%) and more female pictures (4%) had the lowest percentages in *Prospect 3*. Similar to the other two books, males were more widely represented in pictures than were females.

4.2.4 Overall pictorial representation of females and males in ***Prospect***. Adding up the obtained frequencies for different parts of *Prospect 1, 2,* and *3* yielded the following results: male only (f = 197), more males (f = 49), female only (f = 35), more females (f = 25), equal share (f = 48), and not-identified (f = 247). These frequencies are turned into percentages and shown in Figure 7.
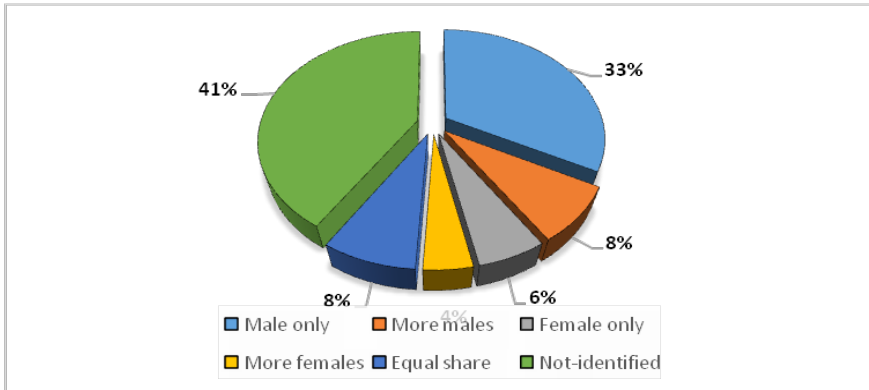
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Figure 7. Pictorial representation of female and male characters in *Prospect*

   Figure 7 shows that 41% of the pictures in *Prospect* series were placed in the not-identified category with respect to female/male representation. Except for this category, male only pictures had the highest percentage (33%) of the pictures in these books. More male (8%) and equal share (8%) were ranked second in this regard; female only (6%) and more females (4%) were the least frequently used pictures in *Prospect* series. These results clearly demonstrated the dominance of males over females in the pictures used in these books. A chi-square was conducted to see if the difference between the pictorial representation of females and males in *Prospect* series was statistically significant (Table 9).

Table 9
Chi-Square Results for Comparing Female and Male pictorial representation in Prospect Series

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	62.788(a)	10	.000
Likelihood Ratio	72.568	10	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.878	1	.049
N of Valid Cases	628		

In Table 9, the *Sig.* value for the pictorial representation of female and male characters in *Prospect* was .0001, which is less than .05; this means that there was a statistically significant difference between females and males in this books with regards to pictorial representation of female and male characters.

4.3 Firstness in Mixed-Gender Dialogues

One of the issues which can shed light on gender inequality, according to Porreca (1984) is "the order of mention, termed firstness" (p.706). Calculating the frequency of firstness in mixed-gender dialogues in these books yielded the following results:

Table 10
Frequencies of Firstness in Mixed-Gender Dialogues

Firstness	Total Mixed Gender dialogue	Male Started	Female Started
prospect 1	1	1	0
prospect 2	0	0	0
prospect 3	2	0	2
Total	3	1	2

The total number of dialogues in which both genders were used were 3, one of which occurred in *Prospect 1*; in this dialogue, a male character started the dialogue. The two remaining mixed-gender dialogues were in *Prospect 3*; in these two dialogues, females started the dialogue (Figure 8).
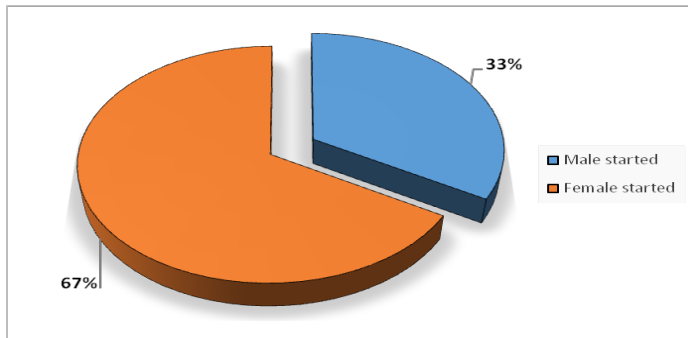

Figure 8. Percentage of female/male firstness in mixed gender dialogues

Evaluation of …

Although there were not a large number of mixed-gender dialogues in *Prospect* series and conclusions could be hard to be drawn from a scant sample, firstness in mixed-gender dialogues was twice as frequent for females (66%) as it was for male characters (33%). As Table 10 shows, there were no mixed-gender dialogues in *Prospect 2*, so the chi-square and Fisher's Exact Test were conducted to see if the difference between the firstness in mixed-gender dialogues of females and males in *Prospect* series was statistically significant; the results of these tests are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Chi-Square Results for Comparing Firstness in Mixed Gender Dialogues in Prospect Series

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.000	1	.083		
Continuity Correction(a)	.188	1	.665		
Likelihood Ratio	3.819	1	.051		
Fisher's Exact Test				.333	.333
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.000	1	.157		
N of Valid Cases	3				

Table 11, indicates that the difference between firstness in mixed gender dialogues in the series was not statistically significant due to the fact that the p value was greater than the specified level of significance (i.e., .083 > .05).

4.4 Female and Male Social Roles

This section deals with the social roles gender plays in *Prospect* series. Following Law and Chan (2004), five main categories of male monopolized (performed by men only), male dominated (largely performed by men), female monopolized (performed by women only), female dominated (largely performed by women) and gender-shared (performed by both gender equally) are determined. As to the social roles of the female and male in *Prospect* series, gender-shared roles equaled 40 in the three books, while the frequencies for male dominated social roles and male monopolized social

roles were 12 and 6, respectively. The frequency for female monopolized social roles could not exceed 2, and there was no instance of female dominated social role (Figure 9).
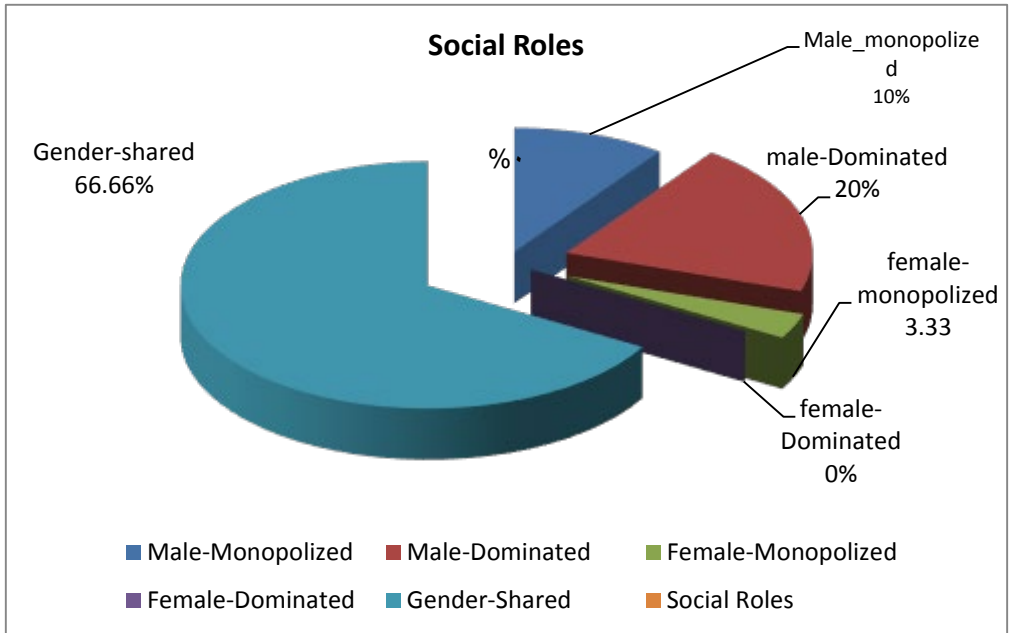

Figure 9. Percentage of female and male social roles

As it is shown in Figure 9, 55% of the social roles in *Prospect* series were gender shared. On the other hand, there were no female dominated social roles (0%), and only 6% of the social roles in this series were female monopolized. In fact, 23% of the roles were male dominated, and 16% of the roles were male monopolized.

Figure 10 demonstrates that in *Prospect 1,* most social roles ($f = 17$) were gender shared, and then there were male dominated roles ($f = 7$), followed by male monopolized roles ($f = 5$), and then female monopolized roles ($f = 2$). Regarding *Prospect 2,* there were only 18 gender shared social roles and the frequencies for other types of roles were nought. Finally, in *Prospect 3,* there

Evaluation of …

was an equal number of gender shared and male dominated social roles ($f =$ 5), and only one instance of male monopolized social role.
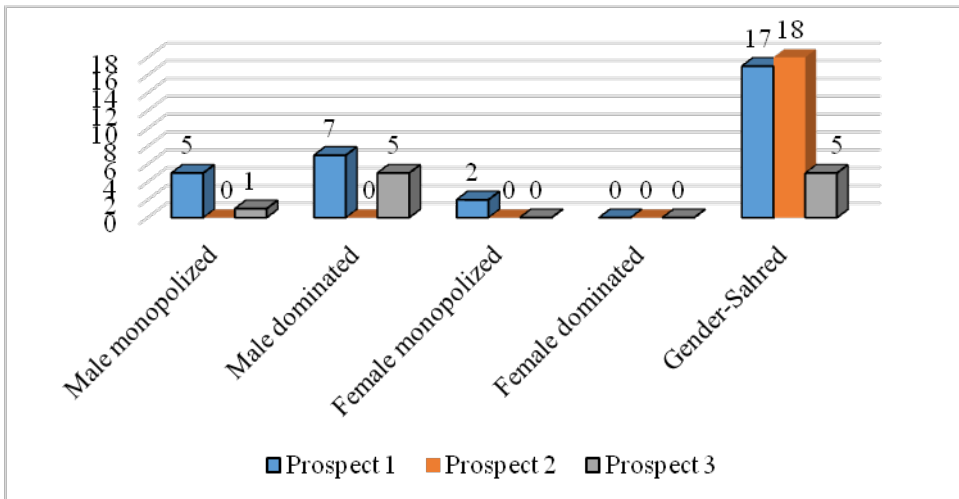

Figure 10. Frequencies of female and male social roles

To see whether the differences between female and male social roles in Prospect series were statistically significant, a chi-square was used.

Table 12

Chi-Square Results for Comparing social roles in Prospect Series

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.504	6	.011
Likelihood Ratio	21.266	6	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	.253	1	.615
N of Valid Cases	60		

In Table 12, the *Sig.* value for female and male social roles in *Prospect Series* was.011 indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between females and males' social roles in these books.

4.5 Female and Male Titles

In *Prospect* series, the total number of the title *Mr.* was 3; *Mrs.* was the second most frequent title ($f = 5$). This was followed by *Miss.* ($f = 3$), and *Sir* ($f = 2$). No instance of *Ms.* was found in the series (Figure 11).
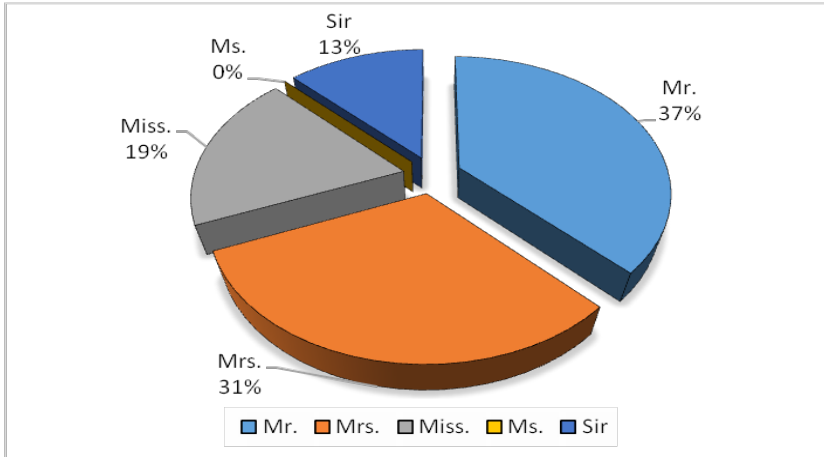

Figure 11. Percentages of female and male titles

The title *Mr.* had the highest percentage (37%) among all the titles used for males and females. The title *Mrs.* ranked second (31%), followed by *Miss.* (19%), and *Sir* (13%). In order to find out whether the differences between female and male titles in the series were statistically significant or not, a chi-square was employed:

Table 13
Chi-Square Results for Comparing Frequencies of Female and Male titles in Prospect series

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.455(a)	6	.150
Likelihood Ratio	7.876	6	.247
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.873	1	.027
N of Valid Cases	16		

Evaluation of …

Table 13 indicates that the difference between female and male titles was not statistically significant due to the fact that the p value was greater than the specified level of significance (i.e., .15 > .05).

4.6. Representation of Females and Males in Different Activities

The different activities delineated in the series included greeting and introducing ($M = 3$, $F = 2$), talking about family members ($M = 2$, $F = 2$), talking about address ($M = 2$, $F = 0$), eating food ($M = 0$, $F = 1$), studying ($M = 0$, $F = 1$), playing sports ($M = 0$, $F = 1$), drawing TV ($M = 0$, $F = 1$), seeing a doctor ($M = 2$, $F = 1$), watching movies ($M = 0$, $F = 1$), reading ($M = 0$, $F = 1$), travelling ($M = 2$, $F = 2$), working with computer ($M = 1$, $F = 3$), holding a ceremony ($M = 2$, $F = 1$), and doing services ($M = 2$, $F = 1$). These frequencies are displayed in Figure 12.
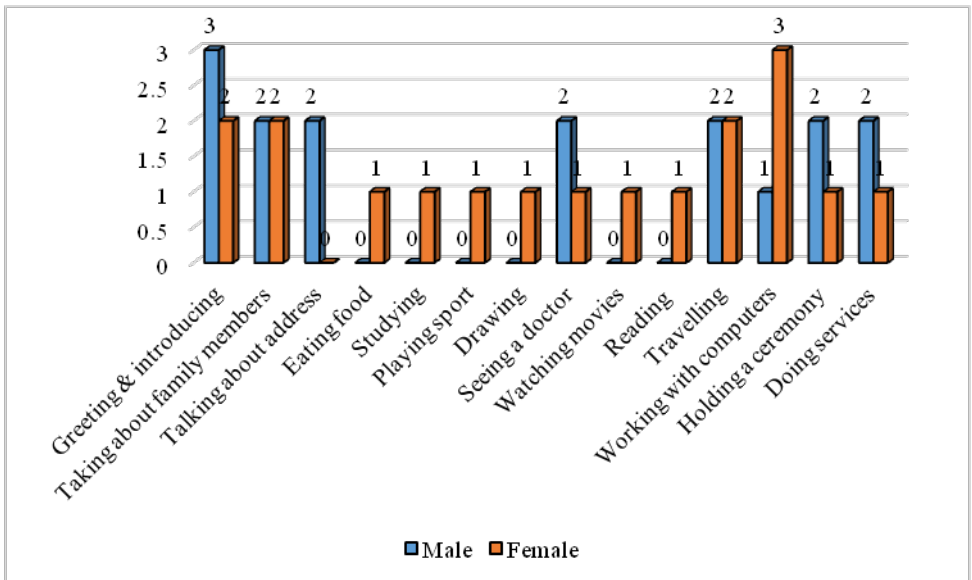

Figure 12. Frequencies of females and males in different activities

As Figure 12 shows, the biggest difference between females and males related to talking about address, and working with computers ($D = 2.00$); in

activities talking about family members and travelling, the numbers for females and males were equal; and the difference between females and males for other activities did not exceed 1.00. A chi-square was conducted to see if the difference between the frequencies of females and males with respect to different activities of the books was statistically significant (Table 14).

Table 14
Chi-Square Results for Comparing Female and Male Characters in Different Activities

	Prospect 1	Prospect 2	Prospect 3	Total
Pearson Chi-Square	4.00	6.00	1.66	10.11
Likelihood Ratio	5.40	7.63	1.72	13.24
Linear-by-Linear Association	.45	1.60	.16	.08
N of Valid Cases	12	6	16	34
df	4	5	4	13
Sig. (2-tailed)	.40	.30	.79	.68

In Table 14, the *Sig.* value for *prospect 1* was .40, which means that there was not a statistically significant difference between females and males in this book with regards to the activities in which they were represented. For *Prospect 2,* the p value was also larger than .05, giving rise to the conclusion that in this book, the difference between females and males in the activities of the book was not statistically significant. Regarding *Prospect 3,* there was not a statistically significant difference between females and males ($p = .79$). Finally, an overall comparison of females and males with respect to the activities in these books revealed that there was no significant difference between them ($p = .68$).

4.7 Subject Position of Females and Males

Subject positions were divided into family, social, commercial, and other positions. The frequencies of both females and males in different subject positions are shown in Figure 13 for the whole series and in Figure 14 for the separate books in this series.
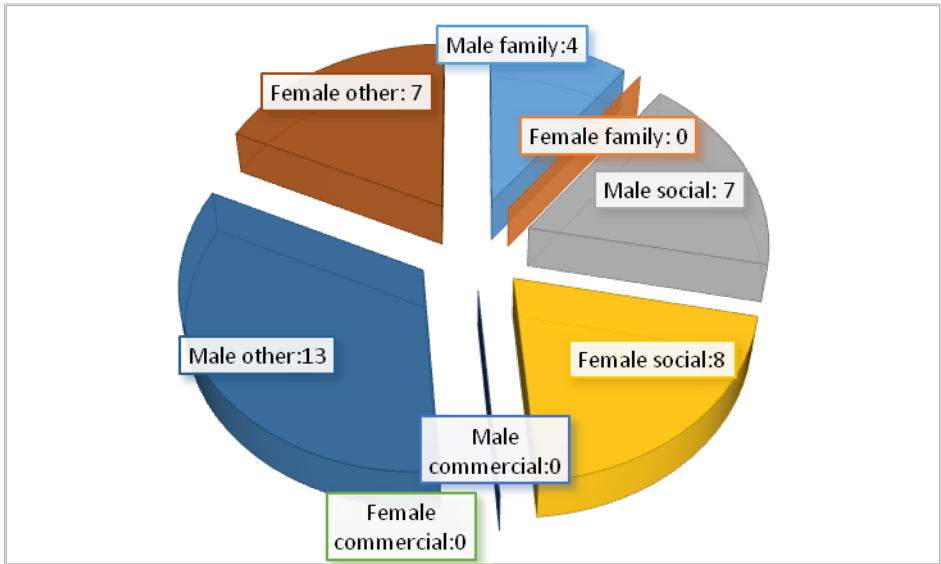
Evaluation of …

Figure 13. Frequencies of female and male subject positions

The category male other had the largest frequency (f = 13), followed by 'female social' (f = 8), both male social and female other (f = 7), and male family (f = 4). More specific information regarding these subject positions in different books is provided in Figure 14.
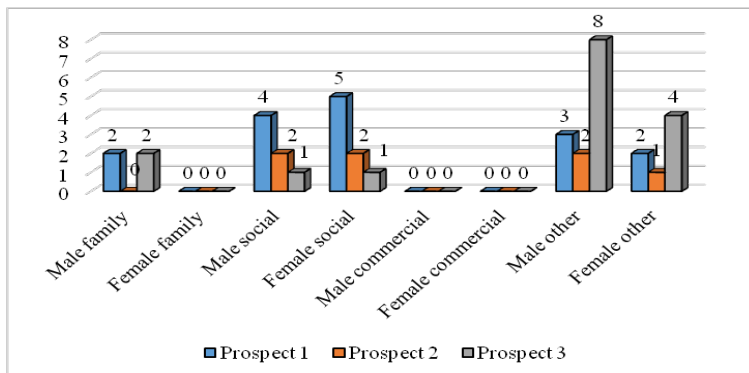

Figure 14. Frequencies of female and male subject positions in *Prospect* series

The difference between the frequencies of females and males with respect to different subject positions of the books are displayed in Table 15.

Table 15
Chi-Square Results for Comparing Female and Male Characters in Different Subject Positions

	Prospect 1	*Prospect 2*	*Prospect 3*	Total
Pearson Chi-Square	2.09	.19	1.26	4.00
Likelihood Ratio	2.83	.19	1.82	5.34
Linear-by-Linear Association	.05	.16	.28	.002
N of Valid Cases	16	7	16	39
df	2	1	2	2
Sig. (2-tailed)	.35	.65	.53	.13

In Table15, the *Sig.* value for *prospect 1,* was.35, which is larger than .05, indicating no statistically significant difference between females and males with regards to different subject positions. This was also true for *Prospect 2* ($p = .65$), *Prospect 3* ($p = .53$), and the whole series ($p = .13$).

4.8 Contents

The following figure shows the content or theme of conversations in *Prospect* series:

Figure 15. Content or themes of the conversations in Prospect 1
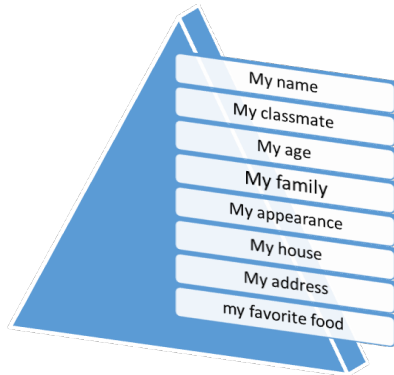
Evaluation of …

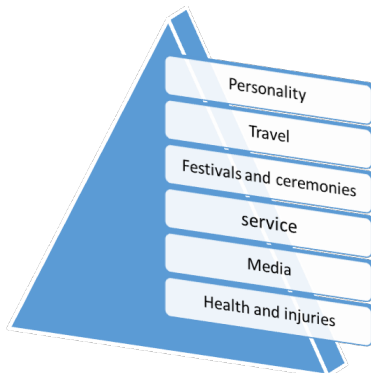*Figure 16*. Content or themes of the conversations in Prospect 2

Figure 17. Content or themes of the conversations in Prospect 3

The topics were presented in relation to both males and females and they were based on communicative purposes. It seemed that these series tried to show both genders equally through their roles and conversations.

5. Discussion
5.1 Discourse Features
To answer the first research question, four factors were considered in the conversation of the series, namely gender characters, titles, activities and

firstness. The results showed that gender characters in *Prospect 1* and *3* were balanced but *Prospect 2* was not gender balanced in all its aspects. The total number of females and males' titles was equal in *Prospect* series. Similarly, and as long as titles were concerned, activities had the same distribution and it showed that both males and females were equal, but firstness in mixed-gender dialogues was twice as frequent for females in series.

This study revealed that there was sexism in the conversations of the *Prospect* series. The findings of this study were similar to the findings of previous comparative studies such as Piavandi (2008), as well as Johanson (2009) and Esmaili (2011). For example, Paivandi (2008) reported a study of 95 compulsory school textbooks including TEFL materials published between 2006-2007 under the supervision of the Iranian Ministry of Education at elementary, junior high, and high school levels. He mentioned how gender inequality can be linked to factors such as the labor market, family, education, culture, the human body, and individuality.

Johanson (2009) conducted a quantitative study of dialogues and speaking exercises in twelve EFL textbooks used in secondary schools in Sweden. The chosen textbooks were from the four textbook series *Happy Time*, *What's Up?* and *Wings Base*. He intended to investigate if there was any overrepresentation of female or male characters in the textbook dialogues. The findings showed that overrepresentation existed in all the textbook series in various aspects of both female and male characters. Esmaili (2011) investigated gender representation in some English Language Teaching textbooks of high schools in Iran, namely, *English Book 1*, *English Book 2*, and *English Book 3* that were published in 2009 by the Ministry of Education. To this end, Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional model was utilized. Results revealed that these textbooks presented a "sexist attitude"

regarding gender in favor of men, in which the men were presented more than females.

5.2 Social Roles, Subject Positions and Contents (Themes)

Analyzing the data in *Prospect* series in terms of gender-related items revealed that there was no sexism attitude in social roles. Both genders had active roles without any limitation in social activities and both males and females behaved equally in terms of social roles. This study disclosed that both genders participated in three categories of family, society, and commerce equally. In effect, the results of the study demonstrated that there was equality between both genders in terms of subject positions. The ideology behind these series seems to be socially oriented. Apparently, the aim of these series is to teach a particular way of living to the learners. The results indicated that gender representation in these series reflected the ideology behind the series. The series take a cultural-oriented position in depicting the issue of gender. In other words, the gender inequality observed in the series is rooted in Iranian culture.

The results of the study pointed to a significant difference between females and males in terms of social roles, subject position, and content. The findings differed from those of Hall (2014) who demonstrated that women's roles were stereotypical. He investigated gender representation in current EFL textbooks (*Right Path to English I* and *II*) that were designed locally and taught as an obligatory subject in Iranian secondary schools. Two methods of analysis were performed. First, these textbooks were subjected to a systematic quantitative analysis with reference to: (1) gender visibility in both text and illustrations and (2) female/male-oriented topic presentation in dialogues and reading passages. Second, a qualitative analysis was undertaken by concentrating on four components of gender-role modeling: (1) male-centered language including: (a) firstness and (b) masculine generic

construction; (2) gender-linked occupation possibilities; (3) distribution of household responsibilities, and (4) distribution of spare time and leisure activities. The findings revealed the degree of imbalance in gender representation in these textbooks.

5.3 Discussion of Pictorial Representation

Regarding the third research question, the results demonstrated the dominance of males over females in the pictures used in these books. In fact, the series had a biased perspective toward both genders in terms of pictorial representation. The study supported the arguments raised by other researchers such as Nazeri (2010), Esmaili (2011), Taki and Shahbazi (2012). Taki and Shahbazi, for example, carried out an investigation of gender aspects that represented in one of the currently used English language series in Iran, namely, *Top Notch*. In effect, the study analyzed the series in terms of nine major aspects of gender: female and male's characters, female and male's pictorial representations, female and male's titles, activities, firstness of female and male in the mixed gender dialogues. To this end, Fairclough's (2001) three dimensional model was adopted in order to extract the ideology behind these textbooks. The results revealed that the series tended to favor a certain gender. The findings showed that the series did not have a neutral perspective toward gender representation pictorially.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to indicate that gender representation plays a vital role in the process of learning English. To fulfill the aims of the study, *Prospect* series were selected to investigate the representation of gender and describe to what extent the textbooks show equality between genders. The main aim was to illustrate how women and men were portrayed in terms of characters, social roles and subject positions, and pictorial representation. The results revealed that only *Prospect 2* included sexism and there was inequality

Evaluation of …

between males and females in prospect series. It was unraveled that gender characters in *Prospect 1* and *3* were balanced, but *Prospect 2* was not gender balanced in all its parts.

Subject positions and activities were equal between both genders. However, the series had a biased-perspective toward both genders in terms of pictorial representation and title. These results demonstrated the dominance of males over females in the pictures and titles used in these books. In mixed-gender dialogues, firstness was twice as frequent for females as it was for male characters, and 55% of the social roles in Prospect series were gender-shared. Prospect series followed a cultural-based ideology. In effect; the series have been designed and developed based on a blending of Islamic and cultural ideology suitable for Iranian society. Textbooks are instruments to reflect the social, cultural, political or religious ideologies of any society that are molded by the writers in general and ministry of education in particular. Accordingly, the series followed a sexist attitude deeply ingrained in culture, language, and religion of the current society of Iran.

The findings of this study are beneficial for language teachers, learners, peers, textbook designers, and textbook publishers. Teachers can create an opportunity in which students and teacher discuss gender related issues with a critical point of view. Teachers should be familiar with social and ideological background of learners for teaching the second language. Therefore, they should be aware of selecting good textbooks. Additionally, the findings imply that teachers can improve their knowledge and proficiency through reflection and self-analysis. Teachers may also be aware of different events which are taking place in the classroom with critical outlook. Moreover, it is suggested that educational programs provide teachers with strategies whereby they can contrive the shortcomings and ideology behind the gender representation in ELT materials. The findings are also beneficial

for textbook designers, because textbooks as instruments of teaching and learning play a crucial role in social improvement of the society. Students have perspectives toward the role of genders in society and textbooks can help them have a neutral attitude towards gender roles in the society.

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