Gender representation and stereotyping in ELT textbooks: A critical image analysis

Zia Tajeddin
Associate Professor, Allameh Tabataba'i University
Mostafa Janebi Enayat
M.A. in TEFL, Tarbiat Moallem University

Abstract
The power of print media in creating stereotypical ideologies for certain groups of people is an undeniable fact (van Dijk, 1998). From a multimodal discoursal perspective, an element of high importance in every print text is the visual paratext (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Along with visuals, an important social issue which has been the focus of many studies and invoked many debates is gender and the hidden ideologies by means of which a specific gender is shown to be superior. This study was conducted to identify and reveal the positioning of gender in the images of three international and local ELT textbooks: *New Headway, Top Notch*, and *Iran Language Institute (ILI) English Textbook*. Dimensions identified in Goffman's *Gender Advertisements* (1976) were integrated with the image semiotic categories of Kress and van Leeuwen's *Reading Images* (2006) to analyze the images at the elementary level of these textbooks. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to find gender presentation in ELT textbooks. The analysis was focused on finding the active participant, gaze direction, visual techniques, body display, and space in which the participants were shown. The content analysis of the images in the three textbooks revealed that men were

represented to be more active, competent, socially important, breadwinners, and powerful. In contrast, women appeared as less active and more reactive, objects to be scrutinized, objects of desire, breadtakers, and socially less powerful. Although the findings for ILI English textbook were slightly different and apparently indicated more gender equality, the frequency of each gender representation in the images of the textbook revealed more power and better social status for men. The results have clear implications. They can raise the consciousness of materials developers, ELT instructors, and other stakeholders as to gender bias in the visual elements of ELT textbooks. They also indicate that, despite international feminist and women rights movements, locally developed and adapted ELT materials manifest comparatively less gender bias.

Keywords: gender representation, gender stereotyping, multimodal discourse, visual paratext, content analysis, image analysis

1. Introduction

In the past 30 years, feminist scientists and scholars have researched the complex interaction of gender with diverse issues such as power, politics, work, and identity (Visser, 2002). Different studies have been conducted and led to the emergence of new understandings of gender and how it may be affected by societal and cultural factors (see e.g., Cameron, 1998; Kendall, 2004; Kuo, 2003; Ohara & Saft, 2003; Pizzini, 1991; Tanaka & Fukushima, 2002). They found that gender is part of our identity which consciously and unconsciously affects our self-image and interpersonal attitudes. As Butler (1993) pointed out, gender is a pervasive social and cultural regulating mechanism that is part of our everyday life, our thinking, and speaking. This apparently biological phenomenon is in fact not just "biological" but is

"realized by means of architecture, socialization, economic, and psychological credentials, body identification, clothes, etc" (Felderer, 1997, p. 374). In other words, gender identity is seen as a social construct rather than as a "given" social category (Coates, 2007). It is thus constructed by means of social, political, cultural, and educational activities.

Gender is one of multiple meanings which construct our personal identities, which are then stabilized by social power (Skliar, 2007). People are perceived through a lens of gender polarization and assign certain norms and expectations about verbal and social behavior to males and females (Christie, 2000). There is thus a strong tendency for gender stereotyping and gender bias to set in. Gender bias manifests itself in all spheres of people's social life, such as education, family, workplace, services sector, and business field (Skliar, 2007). One of the most important spheres of the society as put forward by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) is school discourse which refers to "particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation" (p. 275). Consequently, education and whatever involved within it are deemed to be the crucial elements which are capable of maintaining social power and perpetuating inequality (Mkuchu, 2004). One of the main elements constituting the education or curriculum is that of the textbook which can manipulate social power and gender stereotypes (Kobia, 2009; Mineshima, 2008).

EFL/ESL textbooks can be one of the great influences in contributing to cultural prejudices and personal biases that learners can absorb in their learning (Dominguez, 2003). School textbooks can be powerful influential tools which construct social identities. As further explained by Kobia (2009), textbooks play a fundamental role in forming the learners' worldview of female and male gender in the society. As a result, the manner in which male and female genders are portrayed in textbooks can highly affect the images that learners develop of male and female in the society. If gender inequality appears in textbooks, "EFL students will be led to identify themselves with gender bias" (Liao & Huang, 2003, p. 124). Furthermore, Halliday (1977, cited in Skliar, 2007)

introduced textbooks as sociological and semiotic means through which the meanings that constitute the social system are exchanged. One of the elements in EFL/ESL textbooks which has gained attention and has been found to contribute to gender bias and stereotypes is the visual element (e.g. Fatemi, Pishghadam, & Heidarian, 2011; Giaschi, 2000; Good, Woodzicka, & Wingfield, 2010; Healy, 2009; Nakamura, 2002; Paivandi, 2008; Sano, Lida, & Hardy, 2001). Images have been shown to communicate beyond the expressive ability of oral or written language (Giaschi, 2000). Berger (1972) stated that a picture is often worth a thousand words.

Studies investigating gender inequality have been quite a few in the 1980s and 1990s, as van Dijk (1998) argued, but during the last decade many studies have been done concerning this issue (e.g. Cunningham, 2008; del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006; Erden, 2009; Ladegaard, 2010). Gender equality has been examined not only in ELT domain but also in other powerful media including print media and mass media (e.g. Chanzanagh & Haghpors, 2010; Danova, 2006; del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006; Goffman, 1976; Isanovic, 2006; Ohara & Saft, 2003).

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Gender positioning in mass media

The undeniable power of the media has inspired many critical studies in many disciplines: linguistics, semiotics, pragmatics, and discourse studies (van Dijk, 1998). The early works of feminist studies began to investigate the representation of women in media due to its crucial role in making ideologies out of people. The power of advertisements was among the first types of media which was analyzed by Goffman (1976). He first and foremost provided a general theory of gender difference and then applied those theories to contemporary advertising imagery. He analyzed the images of the advertisements in which women were represented in a stereotypically negative way. He used an analytical framework in which several dimensions such as gaze, body display, modality, and body display were utilized to decode the ideologies behind the use

of images in these advertisements. Women were presented as submissive and subordinate having less power than men. Women were shown to be dependent on men and had the role of bread takers while men were presented as bread winners.

In an attempt to examine the positioning of gender in the images of advertisements, Masse and Rosenblum (1988) studied the images of advertisements of six traditional magazines. A similar framework like that of Goffman was used to decode the images of these magazines. The images were analyzed for the ways they depict objects and figures, gender segregation, and gender differentiation in the posing of figures through size, stance, smile, touch, and gaze. Similar results were found in this study and a gender-segregated world of images was confirmed. It was concluded by the researchers that women were presented as much powerless and less confident than men in the images of the advertisements.

In the same decade, the presentation of women was analyzed in political cartoons by Gilmartin and Brunn (1998). The researchers studied the representation of women in the editorial cartoons about the 1995 World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China. The researchers examined how men and women who populated the cartoons were presented both individually and in relation to each other. Revealing similar results like the previous studies, the article concluded that women, who were the conference attendees, were represented as mute, weak, and powerless victims. They were defined by their relationship with the male authorities rather than as individuals in their own right.

The next domain of media which is of high significance is the TV program. TV programs are among the popular media programs which attract many people and are classified thematically. One type of these programs, i.e. phone-in consultation, was examined by Ohara and Saft (2003) in Japan. The TV program analyzed by the researchers was one which was exclusively contacted by women who consulted with the experts for problems they have with their husbands. In terms of Hutchby's reconsideration of power and membership category analysis (MCA), 15 segments of the program were decoded. The results revealed that the male panelist of the program controlled the flow of the interaction in support of the

caller's husband. Furthermore, the identity of women was presented as "pestering wives" who cannot speak rationally and always nag for trivial matters. In a similar vein, Felderer (1997) examined the representation of women in political debates. The researcher analyzed the extracts from a television discussion program which was produced for government election campaign. The aforementioned election program involved two parties (two presidential candidates), one of which was a woman trying to overcome the male-dominated speech of the opposite party. The study found that how a woman with high confidence can overcome the verbal attempts of a male and clearly indicated a highly positive ideology on the part of the woman.

The print media, though less powerful than the visual media, is capable enough to show the public sphere of the society and produce stereotypical representations. Popular media such as print media are nowadays central to the formation of multiple discourses that inform our daily acts and interactions (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006). Not surprisingly, therefore, language and gender researchers have devoted so much attention to different popular media such as newspapers (Litosseliti, 2002; Morrison, 1996), women's magazines (del-Teso-Craviotto, 2002), shopping channels (Bucholtz, 1999), or the web (Herring, 2000, as cited in del-Teso-Craviotto, 2006).

A couple of studies investigated the representation of women in South East Europe among which Isanovic (2006) examined gender representation in the daily newspapers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The author selected a few types of newspapers with different themes including world, economy and business, entertainment, culture and art, sport, and politics. The framework of analysis was a set of modes of positioning (six techniques): (1) presence/absence, (2) themes, (3) voices/sources, (4) social relations/occupations, (5) visual representation, and finally (6) gender sensitive language. The results indicated that women were presented as submissive and weak in comparison with the image of men. In a similar article, Danova (2006) studied the representation of women in politics. The researcher analyzed two political Bulgarian newspapers namely *Ataka* and *Trud*. The analysis revealed that women were presented

in stereotypical roles. They were presented as the objects of the male gaze, wives and mothers, or as violent and unruly persons. Results indicated that "even when women do have a role in the political life of a country, they are ridiculed or their achievements are negated to such an extent that they stop being positive role models for their peers" (p. 130). An Asian example of feminist studies is the one conducted by Al-Mughni and Tetreault (2004), who investigated the role of newspapers in debates on women's rights in Kuwait. Looking back over 40 years of print-press coverage, and based on field research and interviews with female activists, they argue that, with respect to women's rights, Kuwaiti newspapers are neither conservative supporters of women status nor supporters of liberalization. Results indicated that coverage appears to be even-handed with respect to women's political activism.

2.2 Gender positioning in EFL/ESL materials

As van Dijk (1998) argued, few studies have examined the phenomenon of gender representation. He believed that "if there is one vast field of critical research on discourse and language that thus far was not carried out within a CDA perspective, it is that of gender" (p. 364). CDA is the analysis of linguistic and semiotic aspects of social processes and problems (Fairclough & Wodak, 2010). It's an interdisciplinary field which makes use of other studies to deal with social and cultural problems. Consequently, the field of ELT has not remained an exception and has made use of CDA approaches to deal with its socio-cultural problems. Many social issues have been raised in the domain of ELT, one of which has been the significant issue of gender equality.

In an attempt to investigate gender positioning in ESL textbooks, Giaschi (2000) did a critical image analysis to find the stereotypical ideologies of gender. The images selected for his study were drawn from the award-winning *Headway* series and *4th Dimension*. Seven main questions were posed for the analysis of the image targeting the activity of the image, the active and passive person in the image, the status of the persons, the body language, the clothing, and finally the direction of the participants' gaze. The results of Giaschi's study revealed that men were given the active

role in the images and had a higher status. Women on the other hand, were presented as submissive and weak. Liao and Huang (2003) also examined primary EFL textbooks to see how they observe gender equality. The content analysis of the dialogs provided evidence that gender was equally treated while the analysis of third-person singular pronouns produced evidence in favor of the male party in Chinese society. As for Japanese EFL textbooks, Sano et al. (2001) investigated gender positioning in five series of high school English textbooks. While the linguistic features showed no evidence, some textbooks presented gender-biased messages. After that, Nakamura (2002) focused on the literary stories of Japanese high school EFL textbooks to examine the images of women. Using both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the results indicated that at least 80% of the stories presented women as emotional, sad, guilty, and foolish while men were shown as warm-hearted, having self-control and greatness. In a later study, Mineshima (2008) investigated how an EFL textbook used in upper secondary English classes in Japan represent the two genders. In contrast with the previous studies, the results indicated that both genders were represented equally in the number of male and female characters, their utterances, number of occupations, and family roles. In a more recent study, Levine and O'Sullivan (2010) examined gender bias and female invisibility in images and illustrations of EFL textbooks written for Japanese university students. Using quantitative and qualitative analyses, manner of dress, involvement in sports, and occupations were counted. The results of their analyses showed that males occupied the great number of social roles while females were pictured as schoolgirls in low status occupations.

The status of sexism in Iranian ESL/EFL textbooks was studied first by Ansary and Babaii (2003). The authors used both quantitative and qualitative analyses to analyze two textbooks (*Right Path to English I & II*). They used a systematic quantitative content analysis and also a qualitative inquiry was made by the researchers into (a) sex-linked job possibilities, (b) sex-based activity types, (c) stereotyped sex roles (d) firstness, and (e) masculine generic conception. The results revealed that *Right Path*

to English I & II can be considered sexist textbooks that present students, in their early exposure to the English language, with an unfair and inexcusable picture of women. The unfair sex discrimination to the disadvantage of women was found to be evident in their study. Later, Jahangard (2007) evaluated four high school EFL textbooks based on different checklists, but unfortunately gender positioning was not evaluated. However, Skliar (2007) conducted a comparative research to analyze gender bias in Iranian and Turkish ELT textbooks. Critical discourse analysis was used to examine male and female representations in both texts and images of the textbooks. Both Iranian and Turkish ELT textbooks were found to depict women as mothers and housewives and men as breadwinners. In contrast to women, men occupied more active roles in both texts and visual elements. Furthermore, Bahman and Rahimi (2010) investigated gender representation in EFL textbooks of Iranian high schools. Using linguistic and content analyses, the authors found that the representation of men and women was not fair and women were manifested as mostly invisible in the English textbooks taught in high schools of Iran. In a similar study focusing on broader issues like religion and ethnic minorities, Paivandi (2008) examined not only ELT textbooks but also other textbooks such as literature. The results concerning women representation revealed that they were not represented as independent individuals. Rather, they were a man's wife, mother, sister, or daughter. Women were shown as breadtakers while men were presented as breadwinners. A more recent study for delineating gender in high school and pre-university ELT textbooks was conducted by Fatemi et al. (2011). Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to examine verbal and pictorial elements of the textbooks. Similarly, their results produced evidence for the imbalanced representation of males and females and textbooks' failure to reflect the wide range of roles played by women in the society.

Similar studies addressed gender positioning in other contexts and countries. Hamdan and Jalabneh (2009) investigated the role of male and female characters in the conversations of EFL textbooks of Jordan public schools. Using content analysis of the dialogs, the

authors found that males were shown as the main acting characters in the dialogs and reading passages. In addition, Kobia (2009) investigated the portrayal of gender images in English primary school textbooks of Kenya. Like the previous study, women were underrepresented in the images of the textbooks while men outnumbered women in the usage of characters. A similar study was conducted by Healy (2009) to find the representation of men and women in modern EFL textbooks. Surprisingly, the overall analysis of the study revealed that gender was treated equally in the textbook and no bias was found by the researcher. Stockdale (2006) also tried to examine gender representation in the EFL textbook called *Impact values*. The overall analysis of the data revealed that men were more visible in all the categories of this study and the textbook had bias toward men and tried to overshadow the presence and voice of women. Mkuchu (2004) examined gender roles in EFL textbooks of Tanzania primary schools. Using content analysis method, the results of the data revealed that females were underrepresented compared with males. In addition, traditional masculinity was found to be still dominant. The effect of gender stereotypic and counter-stereotypic textbook images on text comprehension was a crucial element which was not examined in the literature. To fill this gap, Good et al. (2010) conducted a research project to examine how science comprehension and anxiety can be influenced by the existence of stereotypic images favoring one gender or another. Having administered several texts accompanying stereotypic and counter-stereotypic images to the participants, the authors found that female text comprehension was higher after viewing counter-stereotypic images. Males, on the other hand, had a higher comprehension after viewing stereotypic images than after viewing counter-stereotypic images.

3. The Study

In this study, the method described below was adopted to address five research questions:
1. Who is active in the image?

2.   Where is the gaze directed?
3.   What is the role of visual techniques in positioning gender?
4.   What does the clothing communicate?
5.   What are the frequent spaces in which the two genders are presented?

3.1 Corpus

The images selected for analysis were drawn from three packages of ELT textbooks widely used in and out of the country. For investigating American ELT textbooks, *Top Notch Textbook* (elementary level) was studied. *Top Notch* is an award-winning six-level communicative course for adults and young adults developed by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher (2006). Designed for international communication, it sets a new standard using the natural language that people really speak. To analyze British ELT textbooks, *New Headway Textbook* (elementary level) was examined which is again a best-selling course book revised and edited by Soars and Soars (2007). To investigate gender positioning in Iranian ELT textbooks, *Iran Language Institute Textbook* (elementary 3) was examined. It has been used nationwide during the last decade and planned, compiled, and revised by Research and Planning Department of Iran Language Institute (2004). The images of these textbooks, in which one or both of the two genders appeared, were selected and analyzed for the purpose of this study.

3.2 Analytical framework

In the present research, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) semiological analysis was converged with Goffman's (1979) content analysis to investigate gender positioning of images included in the textbooks. Semiotic analysis has the advantage of enabling a richer analysis of texts by focusing on the objective formal relationships, which can account for differences in what and how images mean (Bell & Milic, 2002). Goffman described features of gender displays in his book and provided a general theory of gender differences which was then applied to advertising imagery. Goffman's gender display categories are analytical categories which

were combined with Kress and Van Leeuwen's semiological analysis in the present study.

Four values were identified to capture the actual role of each participant under *narrative presentation* (i.e. how the males and females are represented in interaction with each other and the situation) based on Bell and Milik's (2002) study. First, participants could be actors represented as doing something to another participant; second, participants could be goals of another participant's action; third, the participants could be behavers performing a non-transitive action such as smiling or running; finally, participants could be reacting to a model, object, or situation.

Two kinds of *Gaze* (eye-direction) were coded: where the participants gaze at the viewer, and where the participants gaze away from the viewer. Three values were also identified for *Social distance (visual techniques)*: first, close-up, the camera provides the magnified view of the represented males and females; second, medium-shot in which the participants and the space occupy equal areas; third, at a long shot, the participants are shown from a public distance.

A rating was given to the apparent degree of clothing on males and females under *Body Display:* this variable is differentiated into sparsely clothed (e.g., shorts or bikini), lightly clothed (shorts with T-shirt or top), and fully clothed (business suit, long skirt and scarf). One of the variables that are very important for analyzing images is the variable of *Space.* Three values were set for the space namely: home, workplace, street and neighborhood, leisure areas, and shop.

3.3 Data analysis

The current study used both quantitative and qualitative analyses to examine the images in ELT textbooks. For quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the relative frequency of the categories mentioned above for both male and female individuals of the illustrations. To facilitate data analysis at this level, tables were used to summarize the findings. The variable of gender with two levels, i.e. male and female, was examined in the

nominal categories to evaluate images. For qualitative analysis, descriptive statistics were used along with content analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Who is active in the image?

Table 1 shows the narrative representation of the participants in the images of *New Headway Series, Top Notch,* and *ILI Textbook.* This analysis shows the active participants of the image by shedding light on the role of each gender in the images.

Table 1: Narrative role and gender of the represented participants (%)

Textbook Factor	New Headway		Top Notch		ILI Textbook	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Actor	18 (22.5)	5 (5.40)	32 (28.6)	10 (8)	19 (19.8)	5 (13.1)
Goal	3 (3.75)	8 (8.60)	11 (9.8)	20 (16)	10 (10.4)	0 (0)
Behaver	38 (47.5)	35 (37.65)	39 (34.8)	40 (32)	35 (36.4)	12 (31.6)
Reactor	21 (26.2)	45 (48.3)	30 (26.8)	55 (44)	32 (33.2)	21 (55.3)
Total	80 (100)	93 (100)	112 (100)	125 (100)	96 (100)	38 (100)

The above table shows that the percentage of male's role as active participants in the *New Headway* textbook is four times as large as that of females. In 22.5% of the cases, males were presented as active participants of the images while females were presented in only 5.4% of the cases. In addition, the percentage of gender's role as goal of other participants' actions for females is twice the size of males'. Furthermore, the cases in which female participants were presented as reacting to other participants' actions was almost twice the number of males'. To put it differently, females were more likely to react to other participants' actions that males.

In the *Top Notch* textbook, males appeared as actors almost three times more than females did. In other words, men were appeared as actors in 28.6% of the cases while females did so in only 8% of the cases. They were also represented as goals more than males, which indicate their submissive role in comparison with the picture of males. The results are further confirmed by what the percentage of reactive role of the participants revealed; women were presented more than men as playing a reactive role in the images of the textbook. The overall results of this part indicated that women appeared as reactors while men were the actors of the images (Berger, 1979). Thus, they were shown as the passive participants of the society performing executive roles.

In *ILI English* textbook, the conditions were not that much different for women. Females were presented in more than 55% of the cases as the reactor participants performing executive roles while males held fewer such roles with 33% of the cases. They were also represented as playing less actor roles in comparison with men. To put it in a nutshell, Table 1 clearly shows the dominant power of males in the images and at the same time manifests the weak and submissive position of women.

4.2 Where is the gaze directed?

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), a key features that determines the ideology behind gender presentation in the images is the gaze or eye direction of the participants. The participants may look at the viewer or look away from the viewer. Table 2 shows the angle of each gender gaze in the images in ELT textbooks.

Table 2: Gaze and gender of the represented participants (%)

Textbook Factor	New Headway		Top Notch		ILI Textbook	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
At the viewer	27 (34)	44 (47.8)	27 (30.7)	35 (38.9)	10 (9.4)	2 (4.4)
Away from the viewer	52 (66)	48 (52.2)	61 (69.3)	55 (61.1)	96 (90.6)	43 (95.6)
Total	79 (100)	92 (100)	88 (100)	90 (100)	106 (100)	45 (100)

As it is clear in the table, in the *New Headway* textbook, males gazed away from the viewer in 65.8% of the cases while females gazed away from the viewer in 52.2% of the cases. Dyer (1992) argued that men do not like the femininity of gazing at the viewer and consider it as a passive action which indicates their weakness. Women, on the other hand, looked at the viewer in 47.8% of the cases which is more than that of men which was found to be 34.2%. As a result, women were shown as more passive objects of an active gaze than men and were represented as imposed by the power of an active participant in the image.

The results for *Top Notch* indicated a weaker domination for men in comparison with what was found in *New Headway*. Women gazed at the viewer in 38% of the cases while men did so in 30% of the cases. They were also represented as gazing away from the viewer in 61% of the images while men were shown gazing away from the viewer in 69% of the images. Although differences were small, men were presented as more likely to be the active participants of the images than women.

The results for ILI English textbook indicated completely different results showing more active role for women than for men. Females gazed at the viewer less than men (with 4% for women and 9% for men). In addition, the percentage of gazing away from the viewer was more for women than for men. However, an important point to be made here is the frequency of each gender occurrence in the images of the textbook. Women were presented in only 45 images while men were shown in more than 100 images. In other words, men outperformed women in the images of ILI English textbook, which is a clear indication of power and dominance on the part of the male participants.

Women's gaze was accompanied by behaviors like a smile or head canting, which shows the subordination of women. Behaviors like smile can indicate intimacy and function as an inferior for the person who does the action (Goffman, 1976). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), smiling can ask the viewer to enter into a relation of social affinity with them and thus build a rapport and intimacy between the viewer and the participant.

4.3 What is the role of visual techniques in positioning gender?

One of the visual techniques that can create stereotyping and ideologies of gender is that of the size or frame of the image which is divided into close-up, medium shot, and long shot. The choice of distance between the situation of the image and the participants represented in the image can affect the social distance between the viewer and the participants (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Table 3 shows that the percentage of male's presentation in close-up frame are a bit more than that of females. In *New Headway*, men were presented in close-up images for 34% of the cases while women were presented in 28% of the cases. Although differences were small, females were more likely to be represented in medium and long shots and males in close-ups with high degree of facial prominence.

Table 3: Distance and gender of the represented participants (%)

Textbook Factor	New Headway		Top Notch		ILI Textbook	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Close-up	29 (34)	24 (28)	73 (48.3)	71 (47.3)	2 (2.1)	2 (4.5)
Medium shot	56 (65.9)	60 (69.8)	64 (42.4)	61 (40.7)	82 (86.3)	30 (68.2)
Long shot	0 (0)	2 (2.3)	14 (9.3)	18 (12)	11 (11.6)	12 (27.3)
Total	85 (100)	86 (100)	151 (100)	150 (100)	95 (100)	44 (100)

From the semiotic perspective, zooming into a close-up can enhance the importance of a person (Chandler, 1998). Thus, showing a single gender more in close-up images can cause more power for that gender. In Table 3, the percentage of close-ups for men is a little more than that for women who are more shown in medium shots. Furthermore, while men were not presented in long shots at all, women were presented in 2.3% of the cases in long shot images.

The same degree of difference between males and females was found in the *Top Notch* textbook. Women were shown in close-up images with the same percentage that men were represented. However, they appeared in long shot images more than men did with 9% of occurrence for men and 12% for women. The results indicated less power for men in comparison with the *New Headway* textbook.

The results for ILI English textbook were different in comparison with the other two textbooks. Women were presented in close-up images more than men. Although the number of close-up images was very low for both genders (2% for men and 4% for women), females outperformed men in close-up images. This can indicate the balance of power between males and females. In contrast, women were shown in long shot images more than twice the size which men appeared (11% for males and 27% for females). This result, coupled with a higher presence of men in medium shots, indicates a higher position and importance for men in the images of ILI textbook. In addition, the same phenomenon mentioned in the previous section is manifest in this part. In other words, men outperformed women in the images. Although differences were small, the results for the use of visual techniques like the frame of images revealed that men were more likely to be represented in close-up images. This shows a more socially important face of men in comparison with women who appeared more in long shots.

4.4 What does the clothing communicate?

One of the main features of an image that can affect the representation of the participants is that of the clothing, which shows the participant's beliefs (van Leeuwen, 2005). Clothing can communicate messages about the participants' religion, occupations, values, and attitudes (Danesi, 2004). Clothes are signs that stand for such things as the personality, socio-economic status, and the overall character of the wearer. Clothes are thus significant means by which certain stereotypes can be made out of people. There are different forms of clothing in different societies. They show people's religious and cultural beliefs. Table 4 shows the

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basic modes of presentation for clothing in which the two genders were presented in the *New Headway* textbook.

Table 4: Body display and gender of the represented participants (%)

Textbook Factor	New Headway		Top Notch		ILI Textbook	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Sparsely clothed	1 (1.4)	3 (3.3)	1 (0.8)	4 (2.9)	9 (6.6)	1 (1.8)
Lightly clothed	0 (0)	17 (17.7)	5 (4)	26 (18.9)	0 (0)	5 (9)
Fully clothed	74 (98.6)	76 (79)	118 (95.2)	108 (78.2)	128 (93.4)	49 (89.2)
Total	75 (100)	96 (100)	124 (100)	138 (100)	137 (100)	55 (100)

The results from Table 4 indicate that in *New Headway* men were presented in almost all of the cases (i.e. 98%) fully clothed. In contrast, women were presented less fully clothed in comparison with men. Women were presented fully clothed in 79% of the cases. This amount, albeit high, is less than the amount of being fully clothed for males. In 17.7% of the cases women were presented lightly clothed which portrayed some parts of their body. Men were not presented in a lightly clothed form at all.

In the *Top Notch* textbook, similar results were found as for the clothing of the participants. Men were presented as fully clothed in 95% of the images. Women, on the other hand, appeared fully clothed in 78% of the images and lightly clothed in almost 19% of the images. This portrays women as objects of desire to be seen by the viewer.

The analysis of the images in the *ILI English* textbook revealed different findings. Men were represented in 6% of the cases sparsely clothed while women hardly shown sparsely clothed. This is due to the clothing norm called *hijab* in religious countries like Iran. Women are supposed to cover their bodies fully and observe the norm of *hijab* (Paivandi, 2008). However, they appeared lightly

clothed in 9% of the images which were usually images of foreign countries not Iran.

The presentation of women in lightly clothed ways which shows parts of their body positions women as objects to be observed (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This kind of presentation may prove the claim put forward by Berger (1972) which states that women are usually portrayed as objects to be desired and possessed and men as subjects of envy. The results can also confirm the results of Giaschi (2000) which indicate that men are usually portrayed in three basic modes: casual, professional, and power-dressed.

4.5 What are the frequent spaces in which the two genders are presented?

Space or the situation in which people are presented is a key element that can affect gender positioning in images. By space we mean the different locations that people are usually presented in daily life. It can be indoor spaces (like home, shop, or work places) or outdoor spaces such as street and neighborhood. Table 5 shows the different spaces in which the participants were presented in the images of ELT textbooks.

Table 5: Space and gender of the represented participants (%)

Textbook Space	New Headway		Top Notch		ILI Textbook	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Home	10 (12.6)	22 (29.7)	6 (5.5)	15 (14.6)	20 (21.3)	9 (21.4)
Workplace	28 (35.5)	18 (24.3)	48 (44.5)	35 (34)	38 (40.4)	13 (31)
Street/Neighborhood	20 (25.4)	14 (19)	30 (27.8)	22 (21.4)	15 (16)	11 (26.2)
Leisure	17 (21.5)	20 (27)	20 (18.5)	21 (20.4)	13 (13.8)	3 (7.1)
Shop	4 (5)	0 (0)	4 (3.7)	10 (9.6)	8 (8.5)	6 (14.3)
Total	79 (100)	74 (100)	108 (100)	103 (100)	94 (100)	42 (100)

The results depicted in Table 5 revealed that in *New Headway* women were presented in more indoor spaces such as home with 29.7% of occurrence. Males, on the other hand, were presented at home for only 12.6% of the cases. In other words, women were shown in home spaces twice the number for men. The number of occurrence in workplace spaces was 35.5% for men while it was found to be 24.3% for women. In addition, the percentage of presentation in street and neighborhood was 25.4% for men and 19% for women. Women were also presented in leisure areas more than men.

In the *Top Notch* textbook, the image analysis revealed results similar to the ones found in *New Headway*. Females appeared in home spaces almost three times more than males. Similarly, men were represented in work spaces more than women (44% ⧐ 34%). Furthermore, women appeared less in outdoor spaces and more in shop and leisure areas which stereotype them as socially less powerful.

The analysis of the *ILI English* textbook's images resulted in different findings. Males and females appeared equally in home spaces with 21% of occurrence for both genders. However, men outperformed women in workplace spaces. The results were a little contradictory in comparison with what was found in the images of the previous textbooks. In other words, women outperformed men in outdoor spaces such as streets and neighborhoods (26% > 16%). They also appeared less than men in leisure areas (7% < 13%). However, the presence of women in shop spaces was still more than men in ILI English textbook with 14% for women and 8% for men.

As it was mentioned before, men outperformed women in the images of the *ILI English* textbook as far as the number of the images is concerned. Almost 94 images out of 136 images in this textbook were allocated to the presentation of men. In fact, men appeared in almost 70% of the images while women were shown in only 30% of the images. This finding can affect the merits of the results for body display on the part of women. In spite of the fact that women appeared as equally powerful in the *ILI English* textbook, the far lower percentage of their presence could

stereotype them as weak and less socially important in comparison with the image of men.

The findings indicate that women are more likely to be represented in less important and powerful spaces such as home and leisure. In contrast, they are less presented in outdoor spaces which have more power and social status such as workplace and neighborhood. Women are stereotyped as individuals who should work in the kitchen and play the role of breadtakers while men are presented as the ones who should work and manage the family affairs. The results of this part confirm the previous studies which indicated that women are mostly presented in low-status roles and as the breadtakers (Ansary & Babaii, 2003; Fatemi et al., 2011; Levine & O'Sullivan, 2010; Paivandi, 2008). Men are presented in more workplaces and outdoor areas dealing with serious jobs and business. Even in cases where women appear in workplaces, they are assigned lower-status occupations such as secretaries and typists. To sum up, the attribution of occupations is not done equally and causes stereotypical representations of women in the images in EFL textbooks.

5. Conclusion

The use of images can be used ideologically to present a group of individuals as weak and less socially powerful (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The term "ideology" is a significant aspect of creating and establishing power relations (Wodak, 2002). Images as one of the codes for communication can thus bear ideological meanings which can sustain unequal power relations. The current study was aimed at finding the positioning of gender in ELT textbooks, gender bias, and the possible gender inequalities that may be exercised in the images of these textbooks. As it was put forward before, the power of media cannot be denied. ELT textbooks as instruments used by so many people throughout the world are therefore identified as powerful means of media and their hidden ideologies are worth studying. When a group of individuals like women are portrayed as weak and socially less important in a certain types of media, this ideology is more likely to be established

in real life. That is, there is a close relationship between the presentation of individuals in media and what they are going to be thought of in the society.

The elementary level of three widely used textbooks both in and out of the country was examined: *New Headway*, *Top Notch*, and *Iran Language Institute (ILI) Textbook*. In the images of the textbooks analyzed for the purpose of this study, several categories were examined drawn from the dimensions identified in Goffman's *Gender Advertisements* (1979) and image semiotic categories developed by Kress & Leeuwen's *Reading Images* (2006). The role of both genders was evaluated by using a quantitative and qualitative analyses of the images in terms of the active role, gaze direction, visual techniques, body display, and spaces. The results indicated that women are frequently shown as the reactive participants of the image. They were more likely to be the goal of the male party than men. In contrast, men were portrayed as the active participants of the images holding more social power and prominence. The results of this part confirmed the findings of previous studies which aimed at investigating the positioning of gender in ELT textbooks (Ansary & Babaii, 2003; Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Dominguez, 2003; Fatemi et al., 2011; Giaschi, 2000; Healy, 2009; Nakamura, 2002; Paivandi, 2008; Stockdale, 2006).

In other categories of analysis, the presentation of women was again stereotypical showing a less competent image of them. In the images of *New Headway* and *Top Notch*, females were portrayed as breadtakers who should work indoors and take charge of household chores. They appeared less frequently than men in workplace and outdoor spaces. Such an image of women stereotyped them as less socially powerful and as objects to be owned and desired by the male party of the society. Men on the other hand, were shown as the powerful individuals of the society who play the role of breadtakers in the society (Kobia, 2009; Levine & O'Sullivan, 2010; Stockdale, 2006).

The content analysis of the Iran Language Institute English textbook indicated some contradictory and heterogeneous results in comparison with what were found in the other two packages.

Although some of the findings appeared to show more gender equity than the other textbooks, the higher presence of men in the images of this textbook indicated more power for men. In other words, men outperformed women in the images of this textbook as far as the number of the images was concerned. They were present in almost 70% of the images while women occupied only 30% of the images. In addition, the presentation of women as wearing *hijab* display indicates the religious beliefs in Islam that women should not appear lightly-clothed or sparsely-clothed (Paivandi, 2008). To put it in a nutshell, although the differences between the ILI English textbook and the other two packages were evident, all these ELT textbooks appeared to maintain gender inequality and portray women as weak participants of the society.

The findings of this study are expected to assist the stakeholders of ELT domain in several dimensions. The results may provide practical guide to ELT professionals and institutions involved in the production of textbooks for tracking down and eliminating gender-biased materials. If ELT textbooks as widely used materials and means of media observe gender equality, the educational system can perform as a domain which develops gender identity and individual social roles. The findings of the current study can be considered helpful in making policy makers, educators, and publishers aware of the extent of gender stereotyping in ELT textbooks so that positive actions can be performed. They need to be aware of the possible negative outcomes of gender imbalance in textbooks and the ways it may affect students' learning styles and socialization process (Skliar, 2007). Furthermore, curriculum designers can be aided in designing a gender inclusive curriculum by making efforts to assign high-status social roles to both men and women. The importance of women's social roles can be highlighted more and thus decrease gender bias and gender stereotypes in ELT materials.

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