The Analysis of Gender Representations in EFL Textbooks

Wachiraporn Kijpoonphol
Ubon Ratchathani University
E-mail: Wachiraporn.k@ubu.ac.th)

****

Abstract

Students, both males and females, typically express interest in traditionally gender-typed occupations, roles, and responsibilities, females tend to display more variability in the role of their occupational preferences than males. Maleness is associate with strength, power, and authority. Most of them perceive their thought from their surroundings in school. The objectives of this study were: 1) to investigate the patterns of gender representations in Grade 6 EFL textbooks and 2) to examine how gender bias was portrayed in the textbooks. Three EFL textbooks were chosen as research materials. A mixed methods research design was used to examine the following categories: 1) gender visibility in texts and illustrations, 2) firstness, and 3) domestic roles and occupational roles. A check sheet was used as a research instrument to collect quantitative data; a content analysis method was used to gather qualitative data. The research results found the following details. First, the textbooks seemed to feature both genders. However, the males appeared more frequently than females in the texts and illustrations. Second, the firstness issued that males were mentioned first was much more than females. Third, for the domestic roles, the two textbooks showed contrary results. For the occupational roles, females' occupations were less diverse than males' and were restricted to stereotypical types.

Keywords: Gender Representations; Gender Bias; EFL Textbooks

Introduction

Gender has remained a focal point of interest for researchers in language education, with evolving conceptualizations shaping the discourse. Notably, within the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, concerns arise regarding the perpetuation of gender stereotypes in textbooks. That is, both children and adult's English language education materials provide students with sexist attitudes and values (Ansary & Babaii, 2003). EFL textbooks serve as vital instructional tools utilized by teachers and students worldwide, facilitating the acquisition and exchange of information in English. They play a pivotal role in foreign language education, aiding students in navigating real-life communication scenarios while fostering an understanding of cultural distinctions and gender roles within diverse contexts. Recognizing the importance of cultural awareness and gender sensitivity, educators in Thailand have tried to enhance students' English proficiency by addressing cultural differences and gender dynamics present in instructional materials.

Results from previous studies on gender representations in textbooks and in EFL textbooks showed a bias against female characters. This bias is reflected in the texts used to describe the characters (Sunderland, 2000). There have been research studies on this issue from the past until present. The empirical research was a content analysis conducted by Ansara and Babaii (2003). It investigated EFL textbooks and found that sexist and unfair pictures of women

were portrayed. Another research was also a content analysis conducted by Svien (2018). It looked into an EFL textbook in terms of lexical items and visual illustrations and revealed that the EFL textbook showed more equal of gender than older textbooks, but it was not fully comfortable providing females the equality and individuality.

In the Thai context, a variety of EFL textbooks can be found. Some were produced by Thai publishers; others were written by ESL scholars and published by Thai publishing companies. Most of the EFL textbooks used in schools are approved by the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE). For schools, after approval, the textbooks have been drawn up to let school directors, heads of foreign languages departments, and EFL teachers select textbooks. Hence, to allow the students to study the target language cultures and values, the suitable EFL textbooks should be chosen.

Knowing about cultures can broaden the students' perspective. It helps them appreciate differences and similarities. One of the differences between Thai culture and other cultures is related to gender stereotypes. Admittedly, most Thai men hold primary power and predominate in roles of some traits. These traits appear in some areas, such as families and communities, especially in the countryside. Hence, some Thai scholars and authors may unintentionally put them in the textbooks. Gender schema theory suggests that limited and stereotyped images for girls may disallow them from thinking about different alternatives in life (Fitzpatrick & McPherson, 2010 as cited in Lindsey, 2015). It means that Thai students who learn content from Thai textbooks can perceive gender schema and gender stereotypes unintentionally. However, the differences may appear to some degree.

Roles of textbook in EFL teaching and learning

Ansary and Babaii (2002) stated that using an English textbook is a framework that controls and times the courses. Textbooks are a major component in most language programs. They can serve as a course syllabus since the authors and writers offered content, activities, and measurements. They may provide the balance of skills taught and the language practices (Richards, 2001). In other situations, the textbook may serve as a supplement to the teacher's instruction. From the students' perspective, without a textbook, they think their learning may not be taken seriously. For EFL students, the textbook may provide the major source of contact with the language apart from input provided by the teacher (Stein, 2017).

Textbooks offer both positive and negative aspects based on how they deliver and how teachers and students make use of them. One of the most important universal aspects of EFL textbooks is that they may be appropriate for local situations. Ansary and Babaii (2002) mentioned that according to this aspect, EFL writers, authors, and textbook evaluators should be concerned about culture, religion, and gender when they compose or look for good textbooks. Since textbooks are the main teaching and learning materials in the classroom, the language contents, language use, illustrations, and activities in the textbooks need to be analyzed to see how effective they can be as tools for teaching and learning, especially in terms of avoiding the students from learning gender stereotypes.

Gender Schema Theory

Gender refers to social and cultural beliefs, behaviors, and roles that separate males from females (Ekowati, Noni, & Atmowardoyo, 2021). A schema is a cognitive structure, a link of associations that categorizes and guides an individual's perception (Bem, 1981). It functions as an anticipatory structure. The readiness with which each person appeals to one

schema rather than another is called the cognitive availability of the schema (Nisbett & Bett, 1980 as cited in Bem, 1981). Bem also introduced a gender schema theory to explain how individuals become gendered in society. It is the phenomenon of sex typing derived from gender-based schematic processing. As children learn the contents of society's gender schema, they perceive attributes which link to their gender. Children learn about male and female roles from the culture in which they live (Bem, 1994). That is, they can adjust their behavior to align with the gender norms of their culture from the earliest stages of social development. Gender schemas are limiting for males, females, and society. They affect not only how people process information but also the attitudes and beliefs that direct gender-appropriate behavior. These gender schemas are thought to produce gender stereotyping and influence gender-related information. Therefore, raising children free from these stereotypes and limitations will lead to more freedom and fewer limitations of free will (Bem, 1994).

Gender roles, responsibilities, and occupations

Gender roles are not natural but are acquired to fulfill society's standards of gender identities (Ekowati et al., 2021). Gender roles, responsibilities, and occupations are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, and other locally relevant factors. Expectations for each gender differ between societies based on that society's needs and social hierarchy. Most people associate maleness with strength, power, and authority and associate femaleness with delicate personalities. Preschool children often have unrealistic expectations for their careers. Moreover, some careers are based on gender stereotypes. To illustrate, employers may say that females cannot perform some duties because they are not as strong as males or because females are too emotional.

OECD (2024) concluded from the research conducted in Thailand that discriminatory social institutions continue to weaken females' rights and opportunities in specific spheres of their lives. Discriminatory attitudes and traditional gender roles further weaken their economic empowerment. For example, when a mother works, the children suffer, and women spend three times more on unpaid care and domestic work than men do. Teig and Susskind (2008) mentioned that if the social status of nurses and teachers is promoted during the elementary school years, it may improve boys' perceptions of these occupations. The percentage of boys entering these occupations in the future may increase. However, as the occupations highest in prestige are more likely to be stereotypically masculine than feminine, future demographic changes in the workforce are likely to continue in masculine fields.

Gender Bias

The term gender bias means when males and females are treated differently. In other words, one gender is preferred over the other. Gender bias is more inclusive than the term sexism, as it includes both prejudice and discrimination. Gender bias also exists in classroom materials and textbooks. Sunderland (2000) stated that linguistic analyses of language textbooks also revealed gender bias. Students' interpretation and understanding of the content of the textbooks is grounded in personal identity. Students may notice that females are often underrepresented in materials and textbooks and presented in stereotypical roles. When compared to males, females are more likely to occupy statuses inside and outside their homes with less power, less prestige, and less pay or no pay (Lindsey, 2015). The issue can be a problem that results in students' attitudes to career choice, selection of subjects, or willingness to pursue a college education (Lindsey, 2015).

Gender bias in textbooks can also negatively affect students in long-term development. Biased representations of females and males appearing in textbooks lead the students to a sense of what is normal for females and males in society. In other words, the content of the textbooks helps reinforce gender as a social division and perpetuate inequalities between males and females. Education experts believe that students' health and mental, social, cultural, and scientific growth depends on a balanced and appropriate system of education (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012). Considering the significant impacts that books have on students' futures, there is no benefit to unequal representations. While today's society may not be equal, textbook publishers should strive to remove lines of gender and promote full equality as they help fulfill student ambitions (Svien, 2018).

Gender bias was found in the content of some EFL textbooks. It is biased against females and is divided into three categories (Sunderland, 2000). The first is exclusion. In this category, male characters were over-represented. The second is subordination and distortion. In this category, males tended to be more powerful and hold a greater range of occupational roles than females. The last is degradation. To explain this, female characters tended to be stereotypically emotional and be the target of ridicule. In the study of ELT materials, the result revealed discrimination in favor of males who were dominant as characters, represented in a wider variety of social and occupational roles, and described as strong both physically and emotionally (Porreca, 1984).

Visibility and Visual Discourses

Many researchers claim that the ability to understand how visual literacy influences and constitutes one's cultural and linguistic experiences must be part of the school's everyday literacy practices (Albers, 2000). However, the idea that literacy instruction should help students develop settings to mention visuals is new. Albers (2000) stated that in classrooms, students can speak from the perspectives offered by the discourses that are available to them. These ways of doing and acting are demonstrated in attitudes, actions, learning processes, and everyday life.

Visual information is figured as one dimension of meaning. Khalid and Ghania (2019) suggested that in the process of making EFL textbooks, it is common practice to entrust the task of inserting visuals to publishers, who may unintentionally pay little need to the guidelines of avoiding gender bias among their preoccupations with the book's space limitations. Moreover, meaning is conveyed through images, photos, cartoons, and illustrations; any visual misrepresentations of females and males might spoil the bias-free texts or distort the high values preached to student's learning experiences (Khalid & Ghania, 2019).

Previous Studies on Gender Representations in EFL Textbooks

Various research studies investigated gender representations in EFL textbooks. However, the following researchers studying gender representations and gender bias used slightly different frameworks.

One of the most interesting studies was conducted by Ansara and Babaii (2003). The study aimed to examine the manifestations of sexist attitudes and values in two EFL textbooks locally designed to cater to the English language needs of Iranian secondary school students. There were two types of analysis. First, a systematic quantitative content analysis was carried out regarding (a) sex visibility in both texts and illustrations and (b) female/male topic presentation in dialogs and reading passages. Second, a qualitative inquiry was made into (a)

sex-linked job possibilities, (b) sex-based activity types, (c) stereotyped sex roles, (d) firstness, and (e) masculine generic conception. Results revealed that the two EFL textbooks could be considered sexist textbooks that present students with an unfair and inexcusable picture of females.

Tarrayo (2014) studied gendered words and sexism in six Philippine preschool English language textbooks. The study aimed to examine gender visibility in illustrations, firstness, occupational role representations, character attributes, and interests and lifestyles. The results showed that the textbooks featured both genders. The males appeared more frequently than females in the illustrations. In terms of firstness, males appeared before females more often. Moreover, females are less visible than males in occupational roles. The occupational roles for females were less diverse and were restricted to stereotypical types of occupation. The females were more particularly represented in indoor activities.

Another research that investigated only pictures and illustrations was conducted by Abdelhay and Benhaddouche (2015). They looked in Spotlight on English I where male and female characters were illustrated. The result showed that male illustrations outnumbered female illustrations. In addition, in terms of occupations, the female occupations were less diverse and inferior to those of male occupations. According to the roles in the family, the result showed that females did and had roles in the family without males. In contrast, several male characters appeared in sports activities, while only one female character appeared.

In 2018, Svien studied gender representations in a contemporary EFL textbook. For the lexical features, speaking time and linguistic diversity, word selection, gender representations within and firstness of dialogues, dialogue topics, and gender firstness of pronoun presentation were analyzed. For the visual depictions of characters and illustrations, counts of male and female depictions, recurring characters, occupations, and norm-breaking/humorous depictions were analyzed. The results showed that while the text presented more equality of gender than older textbooks, defining lines between the sexes have to be eliminated, and latent biases within the count of visual depictions, occupations, and norm-breaking.

The next study differed from the previously mentioned studies. Santoma (2020) aimed to examine gender representations in the electronic EFL textbook for high school. The research focused only on the text. The designation of the gender representations comprised: first name, family relationships, other relationships, and occupational status. The result showed that male characters dominated in all designation categories strengthening the position of the male as dominant characters. The domination of the male characters conveyed that there is no gender equality in the textbook.

In the same year as Santoma, Suchana (2020) conducted a study that differed from previous studies. The purpose was to examine the representations of females in English textbooks of Bangladesh. The study explored whether or not females were projected appropriately in textbooks for young students. The results revealed that females were devalued in their unpaid domestic jobs. In addition, they occupied fewer challenging occupations while males were shown in an extensive range of professions. From the results, the researcher mentioned that whereas in contemporary Bangladesh, females have engaged in diverse professions, their contribution to society is often disregarded in the textbooks. Such a biased representation of females may affect the young students adversely.

In 2021, Ekowati et al. explored the representations of gender in the Cambridge Checkpoint English Coursebook. The findings revealed that the textbook represented gender stereotypes in many Gender Analysis Pathway (GAP) areas, such as gender GAP in culture

areas, especially a stereotype of emotionally expressive females and the stereotype that females must be married at a certain age, GAP in political areas, economic, health area and GAP in the education area. Some gender discourses are expressed by female characters and social actors. The result found that the textbooks support the continuation of gender biases and stereotypes.

Previous studies showed that there was still a gender bias in EFL textbooks (Ansara & Babaii, 2003; Abdelhay & Benhaddouche, 2015; Svien, 2018; and Santoma, 2020). When reviewing research studies on the topic of gender representations in both EFL textbooks and Thai textbooks, it is found that visibility, generic pronouns, firstness, and occupational roles seem to be widely used devices to investigate the aspect of language (Ansara and Babaii, 2003; Svien, 2018). These studies proved that gender bias persisted in EFL textbooks and textbooks used in other subject areas. While some EFL textbooks available for lower levels of Thai students were published by Thai experts, EFL teachers in Thailand also have a chance to use EFL textbooks written by foreign experts. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate gender representations as portrayed in the EFL textbooks for Grade 6 students.

Research Objectives

To analyze the patterns of gender representations in three EFL textbooks (i.e. New Express English 6, Merry Team 6, and Happy Campers 6).

1. To compare how gender representations were portrayed in the three EFL textbooks based on: (1) gender visibility in texts and illustrations, (2) firstness, and (3) domestic and occupational roles.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The mixed methods were used as a research design to collect and analyze data within the study. The frameworks of Ansara and Babaii (2003), Svien (2018), and Kijpoonphol, Trinan, Seelaboot, & Witoon, 2019) were adapted.

Research Instrument

A check sheet was used as a research instrument to collect quantitative data. The following categories (gender visibility in texts and illustrations, gender firstness, and domestic roles and occupational roles) drawn from previous studies were put into the check sheet. Once the check sheet was created, it was sent to three experts in the educational field to help check it. It then was tried out and adjusted. A content analysis method was also used to analyze the data.

Research Materials

The three English textbooks for Grade 6 students were chosen to serve as the corpus of this research study. These EFL textbooks were selected because of the following reasons. First, they were considered appropriate for high proficiency students were chosen. Second, they were written be authors from different backgrounds. One of them was written by Thai authors; the other two books were written by foreign authors. Moreover, they match with students' standard and quality for Grade 6 as approved by the Ministry of Education. The three English textbooks in this study were:

1. New Express English 6: Activity Book, written by scholars at Institute of Academic Development (IAD), published by Institute of Academic Development.

2. Merry Team 6, written by Mady Musiol and Magaly Villarroel, published by Srangsansuephuakarnrianruu (SSR.) Co., Ltd.

3. Happy Campers 6, written by Angela Llanas and Libby Williams, published by Suksapanpanit.

Data Collection

To collect the data, both texts and illustrations indicating genders were counted in the check sheet. It focused on the following categories.

The first is gender visibility in texts and illustrations. Both male and female visibilities in texts and illustrations were counted. To identify a sex of the characters, their appearances of the characters were primarily examined. For the visibility in texts, first, pronouns used to call males and females were counted. Second, the characters were considered in terms of their proper noun usage (e.g., first names and titles). Then, generic nouns which represented male and female characters were also counted. Moreover, illustrations including pictures, or cartoons were investigated. However, the characters mentioned repeatedly in the same page were counted only once. If the gender was ambiguous or unidentified, they were excluded from this analysis. Even though some illustrations showed animal characters which were similar to some genders, they were not counted.

The second is gender firstness. First-mentioned males and females in texts were noted. Common noun pairs (e.g., uncles and aunts) and pronoun pairs were noted if they were in the same sentence or they were in sentences with parallel structures in the same reading paragraph, dialogue, or sentence structure. That is, some grammatical structures which showed both male and female in the same sentence were also counted.

The third is domestic and occupational roles. To collect the data in this category, first of all, domestic roles of both males and females were counted. In case of the role appeared together with its illustration, they were counted only once. The description which mentioned about duties and details of domestic roles was interpreted as a domestic role and counted. Then, occupational roles were also counted. The types of occupations for females and males were investigated.

Data Analysis

From the check sheet, the quantitative data was analyzed based on frequency of occurrence. Based on the conceptual framework mentioned, gender visibilities in texts and illustrations, gender firstness, and domestic and occupational roles in which males and females displayed were analyzed. Content analysis was used in both categorizing of the data and its interpretation. The results were then compared qualitatively and quantitatively.

Research Results
1. The patterns of gender representations in the three EFL textbooks

From the first objective of the study, i.e., to analyze the patterns of gender representations in three EFL textbooks, the gender representations in New Express English 6 were analyzed first as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Gender representations in New Express English 6

Categories	Visibility in texts		Visibility in illustrations		Firstness		Domestic roles		Occupational roles	
Gender Unit	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	29	19	13	24	4	3	1	3	4	4
2	18	15	80	73	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	32	11	41	15	-	-	1	-	1	-
4	5	7	6	11	-	-	1	2	-	-
5	21	20	33	18	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	17	26	16	15	9	-	-	-	-	-
7	4	13	32	46	-	-	-	2	-	4
8	6	-	19	8	-	-	-	-	3	1
Total	132	111	240	210	13	3	3	7	8	9
%	54.32	45.68	53.33	46.67	81.25	18.75	30	70	47.06	52.94

From Table 2, it was found that New Express English 6 portrayed visibility in texts and illustrations nearly equal. However, the proportions of other categories were totally different. The highest level of male representation appeared in the firstness category and the second was male occupational roles. In contrast, female domestic roles were more than male domestic roles.

Table 3 illustrated the gender representations in Merry Team 6 EFL textbook.

Table 3: Gender representations in Merry Team 6

Categories	Visibility in texts		Visibility in illustrations		Firstness		Domestic roles		Occupational roles	
Gender Unit	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	6	10	34	27	4	-	3	3	5	-
2	3	1	31	24	-	-	-	-	2	-
3	5	-	29	19	-	-	-	-	1	-
4	1	2	76	45	-	-	-	-	2	-
5	21	4	47	20	-	-	-	-	30	4
6	14	2	49	18	-	-	2	-	3	-
7	3	3	27	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
8	12	11	65	65	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	65	34	358	240	4	-	5	3	45	4
%	65.66	34.34	59.87	40.13	100	0	62.5	37.5	91.84	8.16

From Table 3, it was found that Merry Team 6 which was written by Thai authors showed male representations much more than female representations in every category. The highest level of male representation was the firstness. The second highest percentage was male occupational roles. It could be concluded that Merry Team 6 emphasized on male representations. Males appeared at least 20% more than females in every category.
Table 4 illustrated the gender representations in Happy Campers 6 EFL textbook.

Table 4: Gender representations in Happy Campers 6

Categories	Visibility in texts		Visibility in illustrations		Firstness		Domestic roles		Occupational roles	
Gender Unit	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	4	4	3	3					1	1
1	2	-	21	14	-	-	-	-	5	8
2	7	4	34	19	-	1	-	-	14	1
3	4	6	11	16	-	-	-	-	3	-
4	16	10	12	11	2	-	-	-	1	1
5	8	1	13	5	1	-	-	-	3	-
6	7	3	15	6	-	-	-	-	2	-
7	16	2	17	11	-	-	-	-	2	-
8	7	7	21	17	-	-	-	-	3	1
Total	71	37	147	102	3	1	-	-	37	12
%	65.74	34.26	59.04	40.96	75	25	-	-	75.51	24.49

From Table 4, it was found that Happy Camper 6 presented male representations much more than female representations in every category. The highest percentage of male was in the domestic roles. The second highest was male occupational roles.
To conclude, the patterns in the three EFL textbooks in visibility in texts, visibility in illustrations, and firstness were similar in that males appeared more frequently than females. However, for domestic roles and occupational roles, the patterns were different. Merry Team 6 and Happy Camper 6 showed similar patterns that emphasized on a variety of male occupational roles and numbers of them.

2) How gender representations were portrayed in the three English textbooks
From the second objective of the study, i.e., to compare how gender representations were portrayed in the three EFL textbooks based on: (1) gender visibility in texts and illustrations, (2) firstness, and (3) domestic and occupational roles, each category was portrayed.
1) Gender representations in both texts and illustrations
Regarding to the visibility in texts, these three EFL textbooks seemed to represent more male characters than female characters. To clarify this, the frequency of male and female visibility in texts of each EFL textbook was mentioned.

Table 5: Frequency and percentage of male and female visibility in texts

Textbooks	Males	Females	Total
New Express English 6	132 (54.32%)	111 (45.68%)	243 (100%)
Merry Team 6	65 (65.66%)	34 (34.34%)	99 (100%)
Happy Campers 6	71 (65.74%)	37 (34.26%)	108 (100%)
Total	**268 (59.56%)**	**182 (40.44%)**	**450 (100%)**

As indicated in Table 5, it was found that Merry Team 6 and Happy Campers 6 had similar percentage of male and female visibilities in texts. In addition, out of 450 visibility in texts, 268 (59.56%) was males and 182 (40.44%) concerned females.

Moreover, the frequency of male and female visibilities in texts was counted from the representations of male and female nouns (e.g. mom, dad, my uncle), male and female pronouns (e.g. he, she), and proper nouns (e.g. Peter, Catty, Freddy). The names were counted according to their appearances in the texts. Table 5 also helped conclude that there were more males mentioned in texts than females.

Regarding to the visibility in illustrations, the textbooks seemed to have more male characters than female characters. Therefore, the frequency and percentage of male and female visibilities in illustrations of EFL textbooks were portrayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Frequency and percentage of male and female visibilities in illustrations

Textbooks	Male	Females	Total
New Express English 6	240 (53.33%)	210 (46.67%)	450 (100%)
Merry Team 6	358 (59.87%)	240 (40.13%)	598 (100%)
Happy Campers 6	147 (59.04%)	102 (40.96%)	249 (100%)
Total	**745 (57.44%)**	**552 (42.56%)**	**1,297 (100%)**

As indicated in Table 6, it was found that male visibility in illustrations dominated in the three EFL textbooks. In addition, both Merry Team 6 and Happy Campers 6 seemed to have similar percentage between male and female visibilities in illustrations. The total percentage of illustrated male characters was 57.44 and for the illustrated female characters was 42.56. The general trend of illustrations in the EFL textbooks indicated that the number of males illustrated in illustrations surpassed that of female by 193 characters (14.88%).

Moreover, there were some illustrations where female characters were absent. For example, as appeared in New Express English 6, an illustration of playing sport also called 50-meter run, there was no female athletes, and as appeared in Merry Team 6, an illustration of job occupations, there was also no female representations. However, the absence of some gender in illustrations was not appeared in Happy Campers 6.

2) Gender representations in the firstness

Firstness or masculine-words first found were pairs of nouns and pronouns such as he/she (New Express English 6), his/her (Merry Team 6), and Gary and Andrea (Happy Campers 6). However, a few feminine-words first appeared were: mom and dad, Pat and Jack

(New Express English 6), and Patty and Adam (Happy Campers 6). For better understanding, the results were illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Frequency and percentage of gender firstness

Textbooks	Male	Females	Total
New Express English 6	13 (81.25%)	3 (18.75%)	16 (100%)
Merry Team 6	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
Happy Campers 6	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	4 (100%)
Total	**20 (83.33%)**	**4 (16.67%)**	**24 (100%)**

From Table 7, New Express English 6 had the highest frequency of male firstness (13). As indicated, it was found that males appeared before females more often (M=20: F=4), with a difference of 66.66%. The total percentage of male first mentions was 83.33; the total percentage of female first mentions was 16.67. This implies that the textbooks seem to be biased with males; thus, appearing to be gender bias.

3) Domestic and occupational roles

The results of the domestic roles were first presented in Table 8 together with some explanations.

Table 8: Frequency and percentage of domestic roles

Textbooks	Male	Females	Total
New Express English 6	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	10 (100%)
Merry Team 6	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	8 (100%)
Happy Campers 6	0	0	0
Total	**8 (44.44%)**	**10 (55.56%)**	**18 (100%)**

Table 8 showed that New Express English 6 portrayed female domestic roles much more than male domestic roles. However, Merry Team 6 showed a contrary result. It had more male domestic roles than female domestic roles.

The results of the occupational roles were presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Frequency and percentage of occupational roles

Textbooks	Male	Female	Total
New Express English 6	8 (47.06%)	9 (52.94%)	17 (100%)
Merry Team 6	45 (91.8%)	4 (8.2%)	49 (100%)
Happy Campers 6	37 (75.51%)	12 (24.49%)	49 (100%)
Total	**90 (78.26%)**	**25 (21.74%)**	**115 (100%)**

As indicated in Table 9, it was found that Merry Team 6 had the highest frequency of male representations in the occupational roles (45 roles). Interestingly, it showed that male occupational roles accounted for 78.26%; while female occupational roles accounted for only 21.74% of the occupational roles in the three textbooks.

Some examples of occupational roles in each EFL textbook were as follows.

In New Express English 6, male occupational roles were more than female occupational roles. The male occupational roles were various (6 roles); the female occupational roles were restricted to three roles. Examples of male occupational roles included president (11.76%), doctor (11.76%), toymaker, teacher, pianist, and scientist. Examples of female occupational roles were teacher (23.53%), seller (23.53%), and nurse. The result showed that female teachers could be found more frequently than male.

In Merry Team 6, most of the roles were male characters. The male occupational roles were various (19 roles); while the female occupational roles were very restricted (3 roles). Examples of male occupational roles included scientist (20.41%), architect (12.25%), painter (10.21%), firefighter, police officer, pilot, dentist, butcher, chemist, hunter, juggler, acrobat, musician, writer, teacher, inventor, businessman, MC or emcee, and beekeeper. Examples of female occupational roles were teacher (4.08%), scientist, and inventor.

In Happy Campers 6, most of the roles were also restricted to male characters. The male occupational roles were numerous (19 roles); while the female occupational roles were more restricted (6 roles). However, some occupational roles of males and females were different. Examples of male roles included director (11.63%), cameraman (11.63%), actor (9.30%), astronomer (6.97%), teacher, seller, doctor, president, dentist, flight attendant, firefighter, pilot, engineer, producer, movie star, ringmaster, trapeze artist, acrobat, and juggler. Examples of female occupational roles included actress (4.65%), personal assistant (4.65%), acrobat (4.65%), flight attendant, unicyclist, and tightrope walker.

To conclude, the three EFL textbooks were considered sexist textbooks that presented an unfair visibility in texts, visibility in illustrations, firstness of females.

Discussion

According to the framework and categories, there was evidence that gender bias was vividly practiced in the three textbooks. Each category was portrayed in detail based on the research findings.

Gender representations and gender bias as appeared in texts

For portraying both genders to appear in texts, all textbooks showed more male representations than female representations. Research by Santoma (2020) supports this result. The results were also similar to Bahman and Rahimi (2010) in that the gender representations in the books were not fair. The presence of males was more highlighted than that of women regarding nouns, proper nouns, and pronouns. When females do not appear more often than males in the texts, this implies that women seem not important enough to be included (Tarrayo, 2014).

However, the results were in contrast to Kijpoonphol et al. (2019) in that three Thai health and physical education textbooks provided similar numbers of female and male characters.

Gender representations and gender bias as appeared in illustrations

Male visibility in illustrations dominated female visibility. Research by Abdelhay and Benhaddouche (2015) that found that male illustrations outnumbered female illustrated characters, and Ansara and Babaii (2003), that found that the frequency of male visibility in the pictures is higher than female visibility support the result. The EFL textbooks presented students with an unfair and inexcusable picture of women were considered sexist textbooks (Ansara & Babaii, 2003). Khalid and Ghania (2019) also noted that meaning is conveyed through images, photos, cartoons, and illustrations. Any misrepresentation of males and females might spoil the bias-free texts.

In some illustrations, e.g., job occupations in Merry Team 6, female characters were absent. This finding was the same as Ansary and Babaii (2003). They mentioned that the roles represented by females in EFL textbooks were stereotypical, and females were less visible than males. Research by Kijpoonphol, et al. (2019) that noted that many illustrations in the four textbooks portrayed only a group of males supports this result. While the authors attempted to reach a balance, especially in language use, there was still much to achieve, especially in the use of illustrations.

Gender representations and gender bias as appeared in firstness

The third point that showed gender inequality was the order of mentions of gender terms. One textbook showed that the male was put first (male firstness), followed by females. It implies that the three textbooks favor males, thus appearing to be gender bias. Research by Bahman and Rahimi (2010) that revealed that male terms came first more frequently than females support this result. Because textbooks are the main teaching materials in Grade 6 classrooms, they should be composed to prevent the students from learning gender stereotypes (Ansary & Babaii, 2002).

Another interesting issue was that Merry Team 6, written by foreign authors, had the highest percentage of male firstness. It contained 100 percent male firstness with four examples in different situations. As Sunderland (2000) mentioned, gender bias was biased against females mainly.

Gender representations and gender bias as appeared in domestic roles

In the domestic roles, people in each family were family members. When looking through the units' titles, no topics like "Family" or "My Parents" appear. So, domestic roles might not be mentioned.

From the one textbook, 70 percent of female domestic roles were illustrated. Some examples of the roles were doing house chores, nurturing children, cooking food, and other in-house activities. These activities were solely for mothers in the family. Research by Abdelhay and Benhaddouche (2015) who concluded that females had roles in the family without males supports the result of the study. According to Tarrayo (2014), females were more represented in indoor activities. That is, the textbooks locally produced in countries that have norms still present those norms intentionally or unintentionally. According to OECD (2024), in Southeast Asia, data from 2014 and 2022 showed that attitudes towards gender equality and gender roles have become more restrictive.

However, the other textbook showed a contrary result which differed from previous studies. The textbook, written by foreign authors, presented male domestic roles much more than female domestic roles. This may be a good sign to eliminate some gender bias of the students.

Gender representations and gender bias as appeared in occupational roles

From the analysis, it was noticeable that males outnumbered females in illustrated occupations. Moreover, males occupied a higher and varied range of occupational roles. Even though females comprise a high percentage of the workplace and a lot of females are involved in highly skillful professionals, the two textbooks written by ESL scholars illustrated more males were in various occupational roles than females. Research by Suchana (2020) supports this analysis in that females were in less challenging occupations while males were in an extensive range of professions.

Moreover, the representations attributed to females were inferior to males. For example, New Express 6 portrayed female occupational roles as only nurse, seller, and teacher while showing male occupational roles as president, doctor, scientist, pianist, and teacher. Occupational roles and proportions in Happy Campers 6 were similar to New Express 6. Teig and Susskind (2008) noted that if the social statuses of nurses and teachers are promoted to students while studying at elementary levels, it may improve male perceptions of these occupations. Likewise, the percentage of males entering these occupations may surge in the future. However, as occupations highest in prestige are more likely to be stereotypically masculine than feminine, future demographic changes in the workforce are likely to continue in masculine fields (Teig & Susskind, 2008).

Considering many occupations such as doctor, dentist, pilot, architect, chemist, cameraman, astronomer, butcher, firefighter, police officer, astronaut, and beekeeper found in the three EFL textbooks, males were the monopoly who portrayed them. When inequality in diversity occurs, the students may notice that females are underrepresented in textbooks or are presented in stereotypical roles (Sunderland, 2000). In other words, different structures of male domination were bound to result in different forms of female subordination and to generate different types of resistance by females (Nader, 1986). To conclude, in many countries, gender norms still determine suitable professions and occupations for females and males. Social norms are key determinants of gender equality (OCED, 2024).

Conclusion

The study aimed to analyze the gender representations in the three EFL textbooks, i.e., New Express English 6, Merry Team 6, and Happy Campers 6, and compare the gender bias portrayed in these EFL textbooks. The framework was related to these three categories: 1) gender visibility in texts and illustrations, 2) firstness, and 3) domestic roles and occupational roles. The results were similar to previous studies in that male texts and illustrations were more dominant than females. It is important to note that these textbooks did not have a balance between male and female representations.

Pedagogical implications

Some pedagogical implications are as follows. First, promoting equality between the two genders should be taken into consideration during the process of selecting EFL textbooks. That is, EFL textbooks selected should be sufficiently gender-balanced if teachers and administrators are to realize equality between males and females. As Bem (1981) suggested, gender representations can adjust students' behavior to align with the gender norms from the earliest stages of social development. When teachers know how much gender bias appears in some textbooks, they should avoid using those textbooks. Then, when teachers cannot avoid

using textbooks that contain sexism or gender bias, EFL teachers should discuss, instruct, and remedy the inadequate representations of the two genders, especially about females' occupational roles.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The two important suggestions for further studies are as follows.

First, the present study collected data from EFL textbooks for Grade 6 students; further studies may look into EFL textbooks for higher-level students. The authors may provide a better balance between male and female representations.

Last but not least, when the research is conducted with EFL textbooks with a higher level, other frameworks may be more suitable. As mentioned earlier, some important categories were also interesting. However, they were not matched with the data gained from the EFL textbooks of lower levels.

References

Abdelhay, B. & Benhaddouche, W. (2015). Gender Stereotyping through Textbook Illustrations: A Case Study of Algerian Middle School Textbook-Spotlight on English 1. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 6 (5), 435-440.

Albers, P. (2000). Visual Discourse Analysis. In pp. 85-98. P. Albers, T. Holbrook, and A. S. Flint (Eds.), *New Methods of Literacy Research*. UK: Routledge.

Ansary, H. & Babaii, E. (2002). Universal Characteristics of EFL/ESL Textbooks: A Steps towards Systematic Textbook Evaluation. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 3 (2). RetrievedOctober 17, 2021 from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Ansary-Textbooks/

Ansary, H. & Babaii, E. (2003). *Subliminal Sexism in Current EFL/ESL Textbooks.*https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310604379_Subliminal_sexism_in_current_EFLESL_textbooks

Bem, S. (1981). Gender Schema Theory: A Cognitive Account of Sex Typing. *PsychologicalReview*, 88, 354-364. Retrieved on September 3rd, 2021 from https://ahcaf.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/gender_schema_theory.pdf

Bem S. (1994). *Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Ekowati, D. M., Noni, N. & Atmowardoyo, H. (2021). An Analysis on Gender Representation in Cambridge Checkpoint English Coursebook. *Celebes Journal of Language Studies,* 1 (1), 88-101. Retrieved on October 20, 2021 from http://www.harpressid.com/index.php/CJLS/article/view/40

Gharbavi, A. & Mousavi, S. A. (2012). A Content Analysis of Textbooks: Investigating Gender Bias as a Social Prominence in Iranian High School English Textbooks. *English Linguistics Research*, 1 (1), 42-49. Retrieved on October 13, 2021 from http://www.sciedupress.com/journal/index.php/elr/article/view/1234/681

Kijpoonphol, W., Trinan, K., Seelaboot, S. & Witoon, S. (2019). An Analysis of GenderRepresentation in Thai Primary School Health and Physical Education Textbooks. Inthe *Proceedings of 15th International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences 2019 (IC-HUSO 2019),* Khon Kaen University. 49-65.

Khalid, Z. & Ghania, O. (2019). Gender Positioning in the Visual Discourse of Algerian Secondary Education EFL Textbooks: Critical Image Analysis VS Teachers' Perceptions. In *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies,* 15 (3), 773-793. Retrieved on October 1, 2021 from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1230242.pdf

Lindsey, L. L. (2015). *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective.* New York: Routledge.

Nader, L. (1986). The Subordination of Women in Comparative Perspective. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development: Women in the Americas: Relationships, Work and Power*, 15 (3/4), 377 – 397. Retrieved on February 2, 2022 from https://www.jstor.org/stable/40553088

OECD (2024). SIGI 2024 Regional Report for Southeast Asia: Time to Care. *Social Institutions and Gender Index*. OECD iLibrary. https://doi.org/10.1787/7fc15e1c-en

Porreca, K. L. (1984). Sexism in Current ESL Textbooks. *TESOL Quarterly*, 18(4), 705-724. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586584

Richards, J. C. (2001). *The Role of Textbooks in a Language Program*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Santoma, I. (2020). Designation of Gender on Electronic EFL Textbook for Senior High School. *Indonesian EFL Journal (IEFLJ)*, 6(2), 127-138, Retrieved on October 13, 2021 from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c464/1cc9e5c8a612b6b421c86d21724e49dc5865.pdf?_ga=2.155323004.612589407.1634700394-885412573.1634700394

Stein, N. (2017). *Basic Education Rights Handbook*. N.p.: Education Rights in South Africa.

Suchana, A. A. (2020). Representation of Women in Occupational and Domestic Roles in EfT Textbooks. *International Journal of English*, 8(4), 43-48. Retrieved on February 2,2022 from http://www.shanlaxjournals.comb

Sunderland, J. (2000). New understandings of gender and language classroom research:Texts, teacher talk and student talk. *Language Teaching Research*, 4(2), 149-173.

Svien, J. (2018). Toward 21st Century Egalitarianism: Gender Representation in a Contemporary EFL Textbook. *Journal and Proceedings of GALE 2018*, 10, 5-33.

Tarrayo, V. N. (2014). Gendered word (or world): Sexism in Philippine preschool Englishlanguage textbooks. *I-manager's Journal on English Language Teaching*, 4(2),April – June, 25-32. Retrieved on February 2, 2022 fromhttps://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1068440

Teig, S. & Susskind, J. E. (2008). Truck Driver or Nurse? The Impact of Gender Roles and Occupational Status on Children's Occupational Preferences. *Sex Roles*, (58), 848-863. Retrieved on October 17, 2021 from https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11199-008-9410-x.pdf