Gender Representation under Critical Image Analysis: The Case of Iranian ELT Textbooks

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to identify and reveal gender positioning in the images used in the recent ELT nation-wide text books, i.e. *Prospects 1, 2 & 3*. To do so, the dimensions in Goffman (1976) were mixed with the image semiotic category of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to analyze the images in terms of determining active participant, gaze direction, visual techniques, body display, and the space in which the participants were shown. In order to elicit the hidden patterns, the data went over a thorough content analysis which revealed the following: First, males were presented more than females as active, looking at the viewer, and framed in a close–up format which signified their prominence and power in relation to females. Second, while both men and women were represented as fully clothed, no female character in the images were depicted in sparsely and lightly clothed. Third, a balanced representation was shown regarding the location in which males or females were present in the images, portraying at both home and workplace spaces despite not showing females in images related to open spaces such as streets and neighborhoods. Results promise implications for language teachers and teacher educators as to raise their awareness of gender bias, though in some aspects and not in others, in images of the text books. In addition, results have clear message for material developers not to selectively represent a gender-unbiased picture of males and females in only some limited aspects.

1. Introduction

There has been a surge of interest in studies on gender and its interaction with a variety of issues such as identity, power, work and politics (see e.g. Cameron, 1998; Kendall, 2004; Kuo, 2003; Ohara & Saft, 2003; Pizzini, 1991; Tanaka & Fukushima, 2002; Visser, 2002). The outcome of these studies revealed that gender affects our self-image either consciously or unconsciously. This is reflected in our "architecture, socialization, economics, psychological credentials, body identification, clothes, etc." (Felderer, 1997, p. 374). In this regard, gender makes people's identity and, in other words, the society assign certain expectations regarding social and verbal behaviors to its male and female members (Christie, 2000). This leads to gender bias in the discourse of different layers of life including family, workplace, as well as education.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p.275) define 'school discourse' as "particular ways

of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation". Therefore, whatever involved in education and school discourse might be looked upon as cradle of social power and inequality. One of the main elements in any educational system in general and English education in particular, which can practice gender bias, is language teaching and learning text books.

Text books in language education are seen as an important channel of both input and ideology for language learners (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) which affect students' success or failure (Mukundan, Nimechisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011). In addition, text books can significantly influence, positively or negatively, adolescent learners' viewpoint towards people and society (Ndure, 2004). According to Riazi (2003,p. 52) "because of the high exposure to text books that students experience, care should be taken with regards to any kind of bias or possible destructive elements that might be found". Dominguez (2003) firmly believes that language learners can absorb the cultural prejudice and personal biases reflected in EFL / ESL text books. More specifically, text books play a leading role in making a mental image of males and females in the society (Greshuny, 1977; Kobia, 2009). Consequently, it is possible that the way in which EFL / ESL text books represent males and females in the society will influence the mental image that language learners create about gender differences.

Closely related to this, some of the ELT certified teachers at schools may not be committed to their career in a way to be concerned deeply in social issues in materials. In other words, they may not see themselves as the mediators for ideologies integrated in materials provided for them.

As put forward by Giaschi (2000, p.35) "it seems opportune to make clear and available to ESL teachers how ideologies are being packed and presented to them [teachers] and how they themselves may be positioned". Fairclough (1989, p.24) agreed with this view and pointed out that "people internalize what is socially produced and made available to them, and use this to engage in their social practice".

Such socially produced ideas can be heard in pictures louder than words and cannot be challenged so easily due to the non-rational logic laid in them. This was highlighted by Fairclough (Ibid, p.52) stating that "not all photographs are equal: any photograph gives one image of a scene or person from among the many possible images. The choice is important, because different images convey different meanings". Therefore, it can be said that images, particularly EFL / ESL text book images, can transfer different ideologies to the people being exposed to them, including teachers. In addition, with the revolutionary interest in visual presentation in materials (Hill, 2003; Tiemensma, 2009), transmission of cultural ideologies, including gender bias, can be easily accessible for language learners (see e.g. Fatemi, Pishghadam & Heidarian, 2011; Giaschi, 2000; Healy, 2009; Nakamura, 2002; Paivandi, 2008). This is signified when it comes to nation-wide text books prepared systematically for a large number of language learner readers around a country.

There exist few studies focusing on gender positioning taking different national and international EFL /ESL text books into account, such as *Headway* and *4th Dimension* (Giaschi, 2000), five series of high school English text books (Sano, Iida & Hardy, 2001), and literary stories of Japanese high school EFL text books

(Nakamura, 2002). Such analysis has also been done on Iranian EFL text books including Ansary and Babaii (2003), Bahman and Rahimi (2010), and Fatemi et al. (2011) none of which focused on gender representation in the *images* placed in the English text books. In addition, any new text book, especially the nation-wide ones, should go under thorough evaluation while it is being used in language learning/teaching centers (Tomlinson, 2010) and the recently published EFL text books, i.e. *Prospect 1, 2, & 3,* in Iran are not exceptions. This gains significance bearing in mind the fact that in Iranian educational context, unlike some other ones, teachers are required to teach a book provided to them and they have no opportunity to select the books themselves (Razmjoo, 2010). Therefore, creating channels of feedback, analysis and criticism on the ideologies hidden in the books they are teaching seems to be necessary. Accordingly, the current study is an attempt to contribute to this line of research by unveiling the hidden viewpoints on male and female characters in the images used in recently published EFL text books in the Ministry of Education of Iran entitled 'Prospect' for the first, second and third grade of high school.

2. Literature Review

As McDonough and Show (1993) stated, the content of ELT materials may cause offense to some language learners which can affect their motivation and learning outcomes. One such content is gender representation and sexism in ELT materials. Sexism deals with two fundamental issues: The first one deals with women positioning in social life. Stated differently, sexism tries to describe the place of women, i.e. their presence or absence, in a variety of situations in society. The second question, nevertheless, requires an explication of that phenomenon. These two questions can be investigated in ELT materials regarding positioning of gender via language or image treatment proposed by Berger's (1972) *Way of Seeing*, and Fairclough's (1989) *Language and Power* which can make ELT text books a source of cultural prejudice and bias. In other words, gender positioning in ELT text books may affect the reality shown to language learners regarding the role of males and females in society. In this regard, researchers like Schau and Scott (1984) and Sadker and Klein (1991) reported that materials with sex-fair positioning may improve learners' motivation and widen their attitudes towards gender roles in society. This is highlighted by Swam (1992) emphasizing that it is near to impossible for males and females to have equal learning opportunities in gender-bias learning environments. However, given that the opposite occurs, "EFL students will be led to identify themselves with gender bias" (Liao & Huang, 2003, p.124). The problem with this, as Porreca (1984) explained, is that when females do not appear as often as males in the text (as well as in the illustrations which serve to reinforce the text), the implicit message is that women's accomplishments, or that they themselves as human beings, are not important enough to be included. (p.706)

2.1. Gender positioning in non-Iranian ELT text books

Most of studies on gender positioning in ELT instructional materials during 1970s to 1990s revealed favoring males to females in character roles and social positions (Hartman & Judd, 1978; Kalia, 1980; Porreca, 1984; Poulou, 1997). Things are no better in public school materials prepared in recent years in different parts of the world. In Japan, Sano et al. (2001) studied five series of high school English text books in terms of gender positioning. They

concluded that although linguistic features showed no evidence, some text books presented gender biased messages, such that male characters were engaged in action and decision making while females do not.

In another study in China, Liao and Huang (2003) investigated gender equality in primary school children EFL text books. The results of dialogue content analysis revealed that except for the use of third-person singular pronouns which supports favoritism towards male party, gender was equally treated in other aspects, i.e. turn initiation and conversation dominance.

In Turkey, an exploration of gender dominance in the 7th and 8th grade Turkish EFL text books by Sivasligi (2006) revealed that males monopolized the dialogue turns in the 7th grade text book while that was vice versa in the 8th grade one. Similarly, investigating dialogues and reading passages through content analysis in *Action Pack Series* in Jordan, Hamdan and Jalabneh (2009) concluded that mostly males were presented as the main character. Similar results were obtained by Kobia (2009) investigating school text books of primary level in Kenya where women were underrepresented, whereas men outnumbered women in character usage.

Gender representation was also examined from different perspectives in some international text books. Giaschi (2000) in a critical image analysis on *Headway* series and *4th Dimension* focused on the seven main questions of image activity, active and passive person, the gesture, the status and clothing, and finally the gaze direction of participants in the image. His analysis revealed a more active, more superior and stronger roles and status for men in the images than women.

Gholami and Arashlou (2014) revealed gender imbalance throughout the text related to interests, activities and family

roles in *Top Notch 2 B*, and in occupational roles of both genders in *Interchange Intro*. Despite this unequal gender imaging in EFL text books, Healy (2009), applying Sinclair and Culthard's analysis of discourse, found fairly even presentation of males and females regarding the amount of talk, moves and firstness in *Touchstone Book 2*.

Another internationally published text book which went under investigation was *Impact Values* by Stockdale (2006) in terms of visibility (including characters, appearance in photographs, text book themes), firstness (in dialogues, points of view opinion, common noun pairs and pronoun pairs, proper name pairs), nouns, and discourse (including amount and type of talk). Her thorough analysis revealed that although *Impact Values* showed a significant improvement in depicting a gender-bias image of males and females, there still exists gender favoring toward men.

As it can be seen from the studies reviewed, gender positioning is still against women in ELT materials despite different arguments regarding gender equality worldwide. This becomes evident when considering results of a study in Hong Kong comparing 20 ELT text books used by the Education Department of Hong Kong with their previous counterparts published in late 1980s and early 1990s (Lee & Collins, 2006). Their result revealed that although attempts were made to avoid biased representation of women in the text books, still they are associated with home duties and passive roles with fewer frequencies than men in both written and visual modalities.

2.2. Gender positioning in Iranian ELT text books

There have been few studies investigating the positioning of gender in Iranian EFL text books. The pioneering

study was that of Ansary and Babaii (2003) analyzing two Iranian nation-wide text books, *Right Path to English I&II*. They utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods analyzing (a) sex-linked job possibilities, (b) sex-related activities, (c) stereotyped sex roles, (d) firstness, and (e) masculine generic conception. The results revealed that the two text books could be regarded as sexist ones which exposed language learners to an unfair picture of women in their early days of English learning. More specifically, their analysis revealed that English was taught mainly via men-oriented topics and females were present mostly in indoor inactive tasks.

A similar study was carried out by Hall (2014) on the 2012 version of the same text books. Results showed the increase of 6.5% in male-referenced text and no change in male-referenced illustrations of *book I*, both of which reflected women invisibility even after eleven years. On the contrary, analysis of *book II* revealed a positive, if not satisfying, 2% increase in female-referenced images. Other improvement observed in the new edition of the book includes more outdoor women leisure activities and more varied women occupational possibilities. However, use of generic pronoun and distribution of household chores remained the same compared to the previous edition.

Furthermore, investigating gender representation in the previous Iranian high school EFL text book series using linguistic and content analysis, Bahman and Rahimi (2010) found that women were mostly invisible in English text books taught in Iran. The reported findings were later confirmed by Fatemi et al. (2011) doing both qualitative and quantitative analyses on verbal and pictorial elements of the Iranian ELT high school and pre-university text books using Rifkin's (1998) model.

Their results revealed that males outnumbered females in images used in the text books significantly. More specifically, women were mostly absent from the book and "their weak presence […] is the result of the subordinate status given to women in context of instructional materials" (Fatemi et al., p.42). In all the four books analyzed, women were not assigned professional roles. The analysis based on the verbal sections of Rifkin's model reflected women in their traditional and stereotypical roles with weak and secondary nature sometimes even with no name. This is while men were put in the foreground, with best kinds of adjectives, adverbs, and occupation names.

In a more recent study, Roohani and Zarei (2013) examined the potential areas of bias in gender representation in Iranian pre-university English text books. Using content analysis and chi-square statistical analysis, they found significant traces of sexism regarding the use of linguistics male-oriented features in names, nouns, and firstness, but not in pronouns. Despite this, the presence of numerous gender-neutral nouns and pronouns reflects the efforts made by the authors of the books to prevent sexism and provide an unbiased view to male and female. The aforementioned discrimination was also observed in pictures significantly with males being present in 100 % and 70.58% in comparison with female presence in 0% and 29.41% of pictures in volume 1 and 2 of the textbook, respectively.

Gender-based text book evaluation in Iran was not limited to ELT text books. In a comprehensive study on text books in ELT and other fields such as literature and Islamic Culture and Religious Studies, Paivandi (2008) concluded that there is a scarcity of women in images related to work and other social environments which reflected the male-oriented nature of Iranian

primary and high school text books. More specifically, in the text books under analysis, women were present only in 10% of work-related images while this figure was 71% for men and 19% for men and women together. Also, the percent of women presence in images related to social activities were only 5% for women, but 60% for men and 35% for images containing both men and women. His comparison of male/female images regarding the topic of lesson revealed that women were present mostly in family issues whereas men were in images related to social activities. This highlights the fact that Iranian text books do not show an opposing ideology to women's activity outside the house, but considers it as secondary compared to their family and maternal duties. What's more, analyzing images related to the three aspects of workplace, education, and family showed the limited scope of women presence. While men were depicted as breadwinner, women were shown as dependent bread takers, *men*'s wife, sister, or daughter.

The more recent nationwide ELT text books in Iran, i.e. *Prospect Series*, seem to inculcate a neutral image on stakeholders regarding gender representation. In a study on teachers' view on the new Iranian pre-university level English text book, Jamalvandi (2014) reported that 36.7% of teachers believed that gender representation was dealt equally and only 13.3% of them thought the contrary.

The aforementioned evaluative studies focused on text book published by the Ministry of Education in Iran. Another line of study was evaluating ELT text books prepared and published by Iran Language Institute (ILI), a semi-private center for teaching language in Iran. In a multimodal analysis, Marefat and Marzban (2014) investigated the way verbal and visual discourses interact to identify gender in ILI text books applying Halliday' (1994) social semiotics framework and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) model of reading images. Results showed that verbal and visual elements in the discourse complementarily interact with each other to depict females as invisible and underrepresented.

3. Methodology
3.1. Corpus

The images selected for analysis of this study were selected from the *Prospect1, 2, & 3* packages which are recently published by the Ministry of Education in Iran in 2013. The text books are written by a group of expert in applied linguistic. They have been used nation-wide in Iranian high schools within the last 3 years. These books include student books, workbooks, teacher's books, Audio CDs and teacher's flashcards. The reason to choose these text books is that they are rather recent and are considered as a radical permutation of the previous series. Therefore, they deserve more attention and evaluation.

3.2. Analytical Framework

In order to investigate gender positioning, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiological analysis which focuses on objective formal relationships and provides a rich analysis of texts and, consequently, accounts for differences in what and how images mean and Goffman's (1979) content analysis of gender display are combined following Bell and Milic (2002). This converged framework includes narrative role, gaze direction, distance, body display, and space. The following is the detailed description of the framework.

In order to analyze the representation of males and females in interaction with each other as well as the situation (i.e. narrative representation), four values are identified to reflect the role of each

participant. Participants may get the 'actor role' in which they actually do something to another participant. In 'goal role', they become the receiver of another participant's action. Participants can become 'behavers' where they perform non-transitive actions such as smiling or feeling. Finally, participants can become 'reactor' to an object or a situation.

There are two kinds of Gaze (eye-direction) in this model: one which participants gaze at the viewer, and one which the participants gaze away from the viewer. In addition, three values are identified under the element of Distance to code visual techniques: first, close-up, in which the camera provides the magnified view of the represented males and females; second, medium-shot, in which there is an equality between the participants and the space around them in the image; and third, a long-shot, where the image provides a picture of the participants from a public distance.

The apparent clothing of males and females in the images is rated under Body Display which consists of sparsely clothed (e.g. shorts), lightly clothed (T-shirt or tops), and fully clothed (business suit, scarf and chador).

The last element in the framework is that of Space. Three values are set for the space, namely home, workplace, street and neighborhood, leisure areas, and shop.

3.3. Procedure

The present study benefits from content analysis in which frequency of the aforementioned categories for male and female individuals in the images of *Prospect Series* were examined. According to Elo and Kyngas (2008, p.107), "content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal, or visual communication messages", which can be used for textual as well as visual elements. All the images of the textbooks (excluding the workbook) were thoroughly investigated to tabulate the frequencies which were then converted to percentages. To improve the inter-rater reliability of the collected data, another rater tabulate the frequencies with regard to selected categories. The resulting Kappa measure of agreement was 0.91 using SPSS, version 20, which was above the minimum acceptable level of 0.70 suggested by Peat (2001).

4. Results and Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to critically analyze the images used in the newly designed nation-wide ELT text books, i.e. *Prospect Series*, regarding gender bias. In this section, analysis of the data related to the research questions raised at the beginning of the study is presented. Then, for each research question, the results are interpreted and discussed in light of the previous research findings.

4.1. Who is active in the image?

Table 1 represents the narrative representation of the participants in the images of the *Prospect Series*. This analysis shows the active participants of the images in light of the role of each gender.

The Table shows that the percentage of males' role as active participants is around 1.5 times as many as that of females in all of the text books. This is so especially in *Prospect 1* where in 50.88% of the cases males were presented as the active participants while females were active in only 27.28% of the cases. In addition, females were depicted as the goals of the other participants' actions around four times the size of males'. However, the percentage of gender role as performing non-transitive actions was mostly the same in males and females except for *Prospect 3* in which females (54.29%) were given the behaver role more than males (46.15%). Furthermore, the cases in which female

participants were presented as reacting to other participants' actions were 1.5 times and 2.5 times the size of males' in *Prospect 1* and *Prospect 2*, respectively, while no cases were observed in *Prospect 3* in which female participants was represented as reactors. To put it in a nutshell, as is tabulated in Table 1, the *Prospect Series* shows the dominant power of males and represent females as submissive and in weak positions. This is in line with most of the studies on critical image analysis on ELT text books which reflect a subsidiary role for females (Ansary & Babaii, 2003; Fatemi et al., 2011; Giaschi, 2000; Hall, 2014; Kobia, 2009; Marefat & Marzban, 2014; Paivandi, 2008; Roohani & Zarei, 2013; Santo et al., 2001).

Table 1. Narrative role and gender of the represented participants (N/%)

Text book Factor	Prospect 1		Prospect 2		Prospect 3	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Actor	29(50.88)	9 (27.28)	33 (52.38)	5 (35.71)	38 (48.71)	10 (28.57)
Goal	3 (5.27)	6 (18.18)	4 (6.35)	3 (21.43)	3 (3.85)	6 (17.14)
Behaver	23(40.35)	15 (45.45)	23 (36.50)	5 (35.71)	36 (46.15)	19 (54.29)
Reactor	2 (3.50)	3 (9.1)	3 (4.76)	1 (7.15)	1 (1.28)	0 (0)
Total	57 (100)	33 (100)	63 (100)	14 (100)	78 (100)	35 (100)

4.2. Where is the gaze directed?

One of the key features that can unveil the ideology behind gender representation in images is gaze/eye direction of the participants. The participants in the images can look at or away from the viewer. Table 2 shows the angle of eye direction in the images for each gender in the images of three text books. As it is evident in the Table, in all the three text books, females gazed away from the viewer more than males while women looked at the viewer fewer than men.

According to Dyer (1992), men do not have the tendency to gaze at the viewer and consider it as an indicator of being inactive, passive and weak. However, the data of the present study revealed that males did the contrary to what Dyer postulated. This is mainly because of the religious atmosphere dominant in the Iranian educational system in which female, rather than male, Muslims are strongly encouraged to lower their gaze in social contexts. This is reflected in 5, 0, and 3 cases of females against 23, 9, and 18 males gazing at the viewer in *Prospect 1*, *2*, and *3*, respectively. Furthermore, as the gaze were accompanied normally by smiles which indicates intimacy and social affinity (Goffman, 1976; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), it seems the authors of the book consider such female gaze at the viewer opposite to the Islamic regulations dominant in the country and consequently not appropriate to be put in a nation-wide text book. This occurs in sacrifice of putting men in a passive situation of an active gaze instead of having a female looking directly at the viewer.

Table 2. Gaze and gender of the represented participants (N/%)

Text book Factor	Prospect 1		Prospect 2		Prospect 3	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
At the viewer	23(41.81)	5(20.84)	9(16.07)	0(0)	18(20.69)	3(10.35)
Away from the viewer	32(58.18)	19(79.17)	47(83.93)	12(100)	69(73.31)	26(89.66)
Total	55 (100)	24 (100)	56(100)	12(100)	87(100)	29(100)

4.3. What is the role of visual technique in positioning gender?

Another point that can reflect gender positioning is the frame of the image which can be divided into close–up, long shot, and medium shot. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) stated, the distance between the participants in the frame and the situation of the image can affect the social distance between the viewer and the participants of the image. Table 3 shows that the percentages of males imaged in close–up frame are much more than those of females who were depicted mostly in medium shot frame except for *Prospect 3* with few

percentages fewer than that of males (33.34% < 3715%). This brings facial prominence for males and put them in more power in comparison with females (Chandler, 1998). This is highlighted when one considers the long shot frame percentage data in which females were shown in more cases than those for males (50% > 23.53% in *Prospect 2* and 60.6% > 44.29% in *Prospect 3*). Only in *Prospect 1* males were present in long shot frame a bit more than females, with 17.54% and 13.64% of cases respectively. This brings to the core the hidden ideology of Iranian educational system which has a tendency to make the social distance between the viewers and the female characters in the images as far as possible by showing females in more long shot cases.

Table 3. Distance and gender of the represented participants (N/%)

Text book Factor	Prospect 1		Prospect 2		Prospect 3	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Close-up	18(31.58)	6(27.28)	24(35.3)	0(0)	13(18.57)	2(6.06)
Medium Shot	29(50.88)	13(59.1)	28(41.18)	5(50)	26(37.15)	11(33.34)
Long Shot	10(17.54)	3(13.64)	16(23.53)	5(50)	31(44.29)	20(60.6)
Total	57(100)	22(100)	68(100)	10(100)	70(100)	33(100)

4.4. What does the clothing communicate?

Clothing of a participant in an image can convey messages about his/her beliefs (van Leeuwen, 2005) occupation, religion and values (Danesi, 2004). Put it differently, clothing can communicate one's personality, social statues, stereotypes, and cultural beliefs. People are depicted in different clothing types, namely sparsely clothed, lightly clothed and fully clothed. Table 4 represents the frequency of clothing types in males and females in the three text books of *Prospect Series*. The results of Table 4 indicated that both men and women were presented in almost all of the cases as fully clothed. This is while women were not at all depicted in sparsely and lightly clothed. This is due to the

clothing norm named *hijab* in religious countries like Iran in which women are supposed to fully cover their hair and bodies (Paivandi, 2008). This norm can be observed even for males who were shown hardly ever with sparsely clothed format. Accordingly, it can be claimed that the authors of the text books were aware of the fact that presenting females in lightly/sparsely clothed ways which shows their body parts place women as objects to be observed, desired and possessed (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) which is totally in opposition to Islamic rules and Iranian culture. Their approach was just against the results of the previous studies such as Giaschi (2000) which revealed that women were positioned as objects to be observed. This shows the high efforts done to develop ELT text books based on the local culture of the material users which was suggested by Tomlinson (2012).

Table 4. Body display and gender of the represented participants (N/%)

Text book Factor	Prospect 1		Prospect 2		Prospect 3	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Sparsely clothed	1(2)	0(0)	3(6)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Lightly clothed	17(34)	0(0)	19(38)	0(0)	13(17.34)	0(0)
Fully Clothed	32(64)	23(100)	28(56)	11(100)	62(83.67)	35(100)
Total	50(100)	23(100)	50(100)	11(100)	75(100)	35(100)

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

Space is the last element in analyzing gender positioning in images. By space it is meant the location people are presented in daily life which can be indoor and outdoor ones. Table 5 shows the spread of males and females in different spaces depicted in the images of the three text books.

As the Table reveals, women were presented in more indoor spaces such as home in all the three text books with 20%, 15.38%, and 12.9% of occurrences for

Prospect 1, *2*, and *3*, respectively. On the other hand, males were presented at home in only 9.75%, 2.04%, and 10.71% of the cases. In addition, men appeared more in outdoor spaces such as street and neighborhood than females did. However, women outperformed men in workplace spaces in *Prospect 1* (60% > 51.21%) and *Prospect 2* (46.15% > 28.57%) and appeared about equally in *Prospect 3* (51.6% ~ 51.79%). As far as leisure and shopping spaces are concerned, the data reveals contradictory results. In terms of leisure spaces, women were depicted more than men in *Prospect 1 & 3* (6.67% > 4.87%; 9.67% > 7.14%) but not in *Prospect 2* (15.38% < 44.9%). What's more, women were presented in shopping spaces more than men in *Prospect 1*, but men outperformed women in *Prospect 3*, while no men and women were depicted in such spaces in *Prospect 2*.

The findings indicate that the authors of the text books presented a balanced image of women in that they are more likely to be appeared in both less important places such as home and leisure spaces and also in places which have more power and social statues such as workplace. In other words, women are both bread winners and bread takers. This is in contrast to most of the previous studies which portrayed a scarcity of women presence in work and leisure-related images (Ansary & Babaii, 2003; Bahman & Rahimi, 2010; Fatemi et al., 2011; Paivandi, 2008). This balanced representation of women in the images regarding indoor and outdoor roles has been highlighted by depicting them as holding high-status social position such as teacher, researcher, and sportswoman. This is in line with Freeman and McElminny's (1996) proposal in terms of providing equal social opportunities for both genders in ELT text books. However, as the data revealed

female appearance on streets and in neighborhoods were less than males. This might be due to the Iranian culture which inculcates the idea that it is preferred for women to stay at homes or closed spaces such as workplace or shops and be less present at open spaces such as streets and neighborhoods. As Holmes (2009, p.18) stated "gender describes the social expectations, rules and norms attached to femininity and masculinity".

Table 5. Space and gender of the represented participants (N / %)

Text book Factor	Prospect 1		Prospect 2		Prospect 3	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Home	4(9.75)	3(20)	1(2.04)	2(15.38)	6(10.71)	4(12.9)
Workplace	21(51.21)	9(60)	14(28.57)	6(46.15)	29(51.79)	16(51.61)
Street / Neighborhood	11(26.83)	0(0)	12(24.48)	3(23.07)	16(28.57)	8(25.8)
Leisure	2(4.87)	1(6.67)	22(44.9)	2(15.38)	4(7.14)	3(9.67)
Shop	3(7.32)	2(13.34)	0 (0)	0(0)	1(1.78)	0(0)
Total	41(100)	15(100)	49 (100)	13(100)	56(100)	31(100)

5. Conclusion

The current study aimed at investigating gender positioning in *Prospect 1*, *2*, *&3*, as newly designed and published nation-wide ELT text books in Iran. Drawing on a blend of the identified categories in the framework developed in Goffman's *Gender Advertise*ments (1979) and image semiotic categories proposed by Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) *Reading Images*, the roles of gender in terms of active role, gaze direction, visual techniques, body display, and spaces were evaluated.

Results revealed that males were represented as playing a more active role and females are frequently shown as the reactive and goal participants in the images. In addition, analysis of gaze direction phase showed that males were depicted mostly as looking at the viewer while females as looking more away from the viewer. This is while men were portrayed frequently in close–up frame which signified their facial prominence. On the contrary, women were

represented mostly in long–shot frame which enlarge the social distance between them and the viewers of the images. In terms of clothing, both males and females were shown as fully clothed in almost all the pictures except for men who wore lightly clothed in some images. On the other hand, women were not at all depicted in sparsely or even lightly clothed. This was discussed to highlight the Islamic ideology and beliefs that monopolized the education system in Iran. However, this does not have a sharp contrast to what Iranian language learners might observe in the society. In other words, the image represented of females and males in the *Prospect Series* as a nation–wide ELT text book were in line with the religious and national culture and beliefs of Iranian language learners. In terms of the space in which the two genders were presented in the images, it was shown that the authors presented a balanced view towards males and females. More specifically, females were present in images of both home and workplace though not in images related to streets and outdoor activities in which men were mostly depicted.

Based on the results reported above, a couple of pedagogical implications can be made. First, The government can lead a movement in promoting gender equality in education through designing sex-fair and unbiased ELT materials in terms of presenting females not only as characters in different spaces in the society, but also as active participants in those spaces so that schools can perform as a domain which develops individual active social roles both for men and women. Second, an important task for teacher educators is to raise future teachers' awareness of the nature of materials and to develop the skills to identify and evaluate how gender-related issues are dealt with in the materials they

may choose or be directed to use in their future classes.

Apparently, interesting issues have been awaited to be investigated about gender representation in the images used in language learning test books. First of all, other studies can be done with the same objectives and aims in other material factors such as textual language (i.e. dialogues and reading passages). Second, to clarify things better another critical image analysis study can be performed comparing gender roles in *Prospect Series* and in that of another country's nation-wide ELT text book. Such a comparison can highlight different culture's importance give to gender representation in images of the text books in search for the degree of localization in material development.

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