

Gender Representations in an EFL Textbook

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The present study is an attempt to investigate how an EFL textbook currently used in upper secondary English classes portrays the two genders. The investigation was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of gender visibility, character attributes, and picture representations. The results revealed that throughout the text finely balanced appearances of both genders were observed in the numbers of male and female characters, their utterances and their first appearances. Furthermore, both genders are assigned with approximately the same number of school subjects, occupations, interests and family roles. In picture representations as well, they are treated almost equally. Although gender imbalance was observed in the number of pictorial and the quality of textual professions, all in all, there seems to be ample evidence to suggest that the textbook examined exhibits fairly egalitarian representations of the two genders.

Key Words: language sexism, female invisibility, gender stereotyping

1. Introduction

1.1 Language and Sexism

It goes without saying that it is through language that we conceptualize our ideas and feelings about the world around us. We think in language and take it for granted. However, the relationship between language, thought and ‘reality’ may not be so straightforward. Sapir (1949, in Montgomery 1995:223^[1]) argues that:

[w]e see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

If this is true, language is influencing, if not determining, our perceptions, thought, and, potentially, behavior without our noticing it. According to Frank and Treichler (1989:110)^[2], this theory is supported by a great deal of sociolinguistic research that demonstrates correlations among language, attitudes, and behavior. Thus, in Homes’ (2008:339)^[3] words, ‘[s]peakers of different languages and cultures may ‘filter or cut-up reality differently’.

It would be worthwhile to consider what implications this theory bears in pedagogy. Although language plays a central role in socialization of children, it can also be ‘a primary factor through which gender biases are explicitly and implicitly perpetuate’ (McClure, 1992:39)^[4]. Porreca (1984:705)^[5] theorizes that:

[t]he role played by language in maintaining and strengthening sexist values...is less widely understood or acknowledged [than economic gender inequality]... probably because linguistic sexism is much more deeply rooted and far more subtle than other forms of sexism’.

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If sexism or gender biases are present in the learners' text, therefore, that harmful information could also be conveyed to them without their knowing it. Gershuny (1977:150)^[6] warns that textbooks purporting to teach the specifics of academic discipline have concomitantly taught secondary information – gender roles and social values.

1.2 Purpose and Overview of this Study

This study attempts to examine an EFL textbook to investigate whether it exhibits any elements of sexism, explicit or implicit. Regarding foreign language learning and textbooks, Rifkin (1998:218)^[7] has the following to say: 'the exclusion of girls and women from FL textbooks may seriously impair their abilities to understand the target language and its culture'. If he is right, this current investigation could potentially be of some importance. The focus of the investigation will primarily be on its linguistic representations of males and females, but their visual portrays will also be discussed where necessary because 'pictures may also serve to reinforce the traditional images [of the genders]' (Hartman and Judd, 1978:387)^[8].

In the following section (Section 2), a brief synopsis of the literature will be presented. Section 3 explains the textbook analyzed and procedures adopted in this research. Section 4 will be the results and discussion of the investigation, followed by Section 5 that includes the summary, pedagogic implications, limitations of this study, and future developments.

2. Previous Studies

Many researchers have investigated sexism in different types of reading materials (see Kingston and Lovelace, 1978:138-143^[9]; Rifkin, 1998:235^[7]) and it has become clear, as shall be shown soon, that the two genders have been treated quite differently (or discriminately, some would say) much in favor of males. They have discussed various aspects of sexism observed in their investigations, and this section will look over some of them in the hope of gaining a better historical perspective on this issue and also presenting justification for the two main focuses of the investigation of this study – female invisibility and gender stereotyping.

2.1 Female Invisibility in Literature

Probably one of the most frequently discussed aspects of sexism is female invisibility in literature. Weitzman et al. (1972: 1128)^[10], for example, examined prize-winning picture books for preschool children and reached the conclusion that women were 'simply invisible...they were underrepresented in the titles, central roles, pictures, and stories of every sample...'. Similar findings of scarcity of females were also reported by, among many, Kyle (1978)^[11] on preprimers and six-grade readers, by Scott (1981)^[12] on two elementary basal reading series, and by Abraham (1989)^[13] on three mathematics course books.

It would not be too difficult to imagine that these materials in which males far outnumber females in many respects would affect learners (especially females) negatively in their long-term development. Sadker et al (1991: 315)^[14] assert that '[i]nvisibility is one of the most pernicious forms of bias... [And] gender equity will need to become a mainstream issue in educational research and efforts to reform and restructure schools'. Female invisibility, which hence must be of primary concern to all educators, should naturally be the main focus of investigation in any research of linguist sexism, including this paper.

2.2 Gender Stereotyping

Another form of linguistic sexism researchers have inspected is gender stereotyping, explicitly and implicitly promoted by various kinds of media. Mischel (1970, cited in Flerx et al., 1976: 999^[15]) argues that exposure to traditional gender-typed symbolic models in children's books, television, and movies play a role in the vicarious learning of such traditional gender role standards. Although it can serve for children's socialization, the problem is that it could also 'restrict children's role behavior' (Scott, 1981:136)^[12] and 'shortchang[e] girls by limiting their horizons and expectations' (Macaulay and Brice, 1997:821)^[16].

The following is an example of gender stereotyping that has crept into language learning. The sentences are from an English composition book written by Alt and Kirkland (1973:2) cited in Hartman and Judd (1978:387)^[8] intended to teach learners the SVC construction.

Dogs are animals.
Tadpoles become frogs.
Boys become men.
Girls become ().

The missing word in the last sentence is not *women* but *housewives*. Obviously girls were expected to become housewives just as much as boys were expected to become men. This kind of implicit conditioning of learners toward gender-role stereotyping is dangerous because, as Porreca (1984: 723)^[5] warns, children can quickly and easily integrate such gender biases into their own value systems. (See Appendix 1 for the famous 'surgeon' riddle that can be used to test to what extent one is conditioned to be gender-stereotyped (Nilsen, 1977: 9)^[17].)

Hence, this present research will investigate gender stereotyping as well as female invisibility, if there is any, in a selected EFL textbook. Inspections of the roles and personalities assigned to the female and male characters in the book would provide clues as to how the textbook writers perceive each gender (Sections 4.2-4.4).

2.3 Sexism in English Grammar

Sexism can be found in English grammar as well. Macaulay and Brice (1997: 800-15)^[16], for instance, analyzed a grammar reference book and discovered that females appeared slightly more often as direct objects (43%) than as subjects (41%), while males appeared much more often as subjects (84%), hence concluding that 'gender bias and stereotyping are widespread in syntax textbooks'.

One particularly controversial area of English grammar is the use of generic masculine of *man* and *he*, which can denote not just males but the whole human race as well. Here is an example which is grammatically correct but obviously funny: 'Man, being a mammal, breast-feeds his young' (Martyna, 1980:489)^[18]. Many researchers have attacked this masculine-as-the-human-norm usage because it 'reflects and maintains social sexism' (ibid.:483), 'significantly distorts children's understanding of events' (Scott, 1980:50^[19]), and 'may selectively proscribe female interest in subjects they might otherwise seek out' (Briere and Lanktree 1983, cited in Macaulay and Brice 1997: 820^[16]). Rovano (1991:60)^[20] takes a similarly critical attitude toward words ending in the generic "-man".

Although the author has long taught such a sentence as ‘everyone should do his duty’, ‘his’ may need to be changed to ‘their’ or ‘his or her’. (In fact, the textbook examined has these sentences: ‘...ask *a classmate* about *his/her* favorite...subject. Then, present *their* answers to the class’ (p.19) (italics added).

2.4 Sexism and Teacher Ideology

Abraham (1989:48)^[13], who explored the relationship between teachers’ general beliefs on sexism in society and their views on sexism in school materials, concludes that ‘[o]nly the teachers who feel committed to challenging traditional sex roles seem likely to implement changes in their own curriculum materials’. Although this aspect of sexism cannot be pursued in this study, it reminds us, nonetheless, of the importance of conscious efforts on the part of all the teachers to fight against sexism in society (see Rovano, 1991^[20], and Carpenter, 1981^[21], for suggestions of practical classroom activities to combat linguistic sexism).

3. Method

3.1 Material

The textbook examined in this study is *Birdland Oral Communication I* (Yoshida et al., 2007)^[22], a Japanese high school English textbook for the subject of Oral Communication I. The book was written by two native speakers of English and seven Japanese (eight males and one female) and consists of twelve lessons, each of which has a different theme and consists of five sections. Its main purpose is the development of learner listening skills, so the *Dialogue* section each lesson has at the beginning, for example, is for the learners not to converse but to listen to recorded dialogues. (The text analyzed by this research is thus from the scripts in the Teacher’s Manual^[23].)

The book was chosen for its originality. It is not a compilation of various texts from different sources written by other authors, which is usually the case with English course books in Japan. This textbook is in a sense a universe of its own in which all the characters created by the authors talk about a variety of topics, expressing ‘their’ feelings and opinions, through the investigation of which, it is hoped, the writers’ views of gender roles in society would become apparent.

3.2 Procedure

Many researchers have used different criteria for the analysis of sexism in language (see Appendix 2 for the criteria of Oliver (1974: 255)^[24] and Porreca (1984: 713-8)^[5]). The current study conducts both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the textbook, with its main focus on language but on pictures as well where appropriate.

4. Results and Discussion

Quantitative Analysis

4.1 Gender Visibility

The first aspect of sexism to be examined in the textbook is gender visibility (or historically female invisibility), and this study is to conduct a quantitative analysis of the gender representation in terms of 1) the number of female/male characters, 2) the number of their utterances, and 3) the

order of the two genders, or firstness.

4.1.1 Number of Female/Male Characters in the Textbook

Table 1 shows the number of female and male characters who appear in the textbook at least once. This study defines ‘characters’ as those who make at least one utterance of their own.

Table 1: Number of Female/Male Characters in the Textbook

gender	number of characters	total	%
Female	29	62	46.8
Male	33		53.2
difference	-4		-6.4

The total number of female and male characters is 62, 29 of whom are female (46.8%) and 33 are male (53.2%) with a difference of four characters (6.4%). The textbook thus seems to feature both genders almost equally.

4.1.2 Number of Female/Male Characters in Each Lesson

One problem of totaling is the possibility of hidden confinement. Porreca (1984: 713)^[5] cites one textbook in which almost a third of all the females in the entire book were presented in one paragraph. Table 2 below summarizes the number of female (F) and male (M) characters in each lesson

Table 2: Number of Female/Male Characters in Each Lesson

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7	L8	L9	L10	L11	L12	Total	%
F	7	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	2	5	6	55	47.4
M	7	7	5	4	3	5	6	3	7	3	5	6	61	52.6
diff	0	-2	-1	1	1	0	-2	0	-2	-1	0	0	-6	-5.2

[Note: F = female; M = male; diff = difference]

Although the difference of the numbers of females and males varies with each lesson, the largest is two (L2, 7, 9). *Birdland* thus can be said to maintain an even distribution of the two genders throughout the textbook. (See Appendix 3 for the parallel analysis of characters in pictures in each lesson.)

4.1.3 Number of Utterances of Female/Male Characters in Each Lesson

Next, all the utterances of female and male characters were counted (Table 3) to determine the allocation of speaking opportunities on the assumption that the more chances to speak, the more visible the character is. This study defines an ‘utterance’ as a sequence of words within a single person’s turn at talk including monologues; thus even a one-word reply like ‘Sure’ constitutes one utterance and so does a lengthy monologue lasting a whole paragraph.

Table 3: Number of Utterances of Female/Male Characters in Each Lesson

	Female	Male	difference
Lesson 1	25	21	4
Lesson 2	18	21	-3
Lesson 3	17	17	0
Lesson 4	13	16	-3
Lesson 5	14	30	-16
Lesson 6	22	16	6
Lesson 7	24	23	1
Lesson 8	10	7	3
Lesson 9	31	30	1
Lesson 10	23	27	-4
Lesson 11	18	15	3
Lesson 12	30	24	6
Total	245	247	-2

The differences in the number of opportunities for the two genders to speak vary with each lesson (the largest being 16 of Lesson 5, where a male waiter spoke eight times to take an order), but the overall difference is no more than two, with female characters uttering 245 times and male 247. The textbook guarantees both genders equal opportunities to speak. Females and males are evenly heard.

4.1.4 Firstness

Hartman and Judd (1978: 390)^[8] investigated the order of mentioning of two nouns paired for sex, such as *Mr.* and *Mrs.*, *brother* and *sister*, and *husband* and *wife*, and discovered that (except *ladies* and *gentlemen*) the masculine word always comes first. They argue that ‘such automatic ordering reinforces the second-place status of women...’.

To further pursue this issue, this study examined all the instances in the textbook in which the two genders are mentioned together in tandem and checked which appears first. The following is a sample from Lesson 6 (Table 4).

Table 4: Gender Firstness in Lesson 6

1) Dialogue Situation:	[Lisa and Shin are talking in the classroom.]
2) Dialogue	: Lisa : <i>You look a bit pale, don't you? What's the matter?</i> Shin : <i>Actually, I have a slight fever. I played soccer in the rain yesterday.</i>

Lisa is mentioned first in the Dialogue Situation and then initiates a conversation in the Dialogue, so she has had two opportunities to be presented first. Although it may seem natural that the first person in 1) will automatically be the first in 2), it is not necessarily the case. Table 5 summarizes the frequencies of female and male appearances at the initial positions of various sections where the two genders show one behind the other.

Table 5: Occupations of Initial Positions by Females and Males

	Section	Female	Male
1	Dialogue Situation	9	3
2	Dialogue	8	4
3	Expression 1 Situation	2	2
4	Expression 1	4	5
5	Expression 2 Situation	1	1
6	Expression 2	4	3
7	Expression 3	1	0
8	Conversation	1	0
9	Let's Compare Situation	1	1
10	Let's Compare	3	3
11	Let's Try 1	1	0
12	Let's Try 2 Situation	1	0
13	Let's Try 2	2	3
14	Life Abroad	1	1
15	Let's Practice 1	4	0
16	Let's Practice 2 Situation	2	8
17	Let's Practice 2	2	9
	Total	47	43

Females appear before males four occasions more often (F:M=47:43). This demonstrates that both genders are provided with almost the same chances to be the first if slightly in favor of females, which could be interpreted as another indication of equal treatment of the genders by this textbook.

4.2 Personality/Character Traits

Scott (1981:139)^[12] believes that

‘[b]oth men and women should be shown cooking, cleaning, making household repairs, doing laundry, washing the car, and taking care of children... Males as well females can be fearful, weak, mechanically inept, and illogical....Male can be polite, cooperative, inactive, or neat. Because such characteristics are shared by males and females in reality, textbooks that classify them as “masculine” or “feminine” are misrepresenting reality’.

In order to check what reality this textbook depicts through the behaviors of the two genders, this research now examines the female and male characters in their assignments of studies, occupations, interests and lifestyles, and roles in the family.

4.2.1 Studies

Table 6 shows a list of school subjects that the characters in the textbook pursue.

Table 6: Studies

Female		Male	
1	English	1	English
2	Japanese	2	Japanese
3	biology	3	biology
4	calligraphy	4	social studies
5	computers	5	law

Some females are studying abroad as exchange students (in Japan, Australia and Britain) and so are some males (in Japan, U.S., and Denmark). The same number of subjects (5) is studied by both genders.

4.2.2 Occupations

Porreca (1984:706-7)^[5] argues that '[a]nother reflection of sexism is in the portrayal of males and females in occupational roles', quoting Arnold-Gerrity (1978), who found that 'men were portrayed in four times as many paying occupations as women and that the females were most frequently portrayed in a housewife-mother capacity...'

Table 7 shows various occupations the female and male characters engage in or are planning to.

Table 7: Occupations of Female and Male Characters

Female		Male	
1	baker	1	baker
2	doctor	2	doctor
3	teacher	3	teacher
4	translator	4	lawyer
5	tour guide	5	journalist
6	food-writer	6	salesperson
7	part-time worker	7	company boss
8	full-time worker	8	teacher at a university
9	fairly-tale translator	9	chef/restaurant owner
		10	president of international trading company

About the same number of occupations is allocated to both genders (F:M=9:10) though males seem associated with more paying and higher status jobs than females. (See Appendix 4 for the other professions mentioned in the textbook but not attributed to either gender, and Appendix 5 for occupations shown in pictures.)

4.2.3 Interests and Lifestyles

Obviously in order to interest the learners, there appear in the textbook many different types of high school students with a variety of interests and lifestyles (Tables 8 and 9).

Table 8: Interests

genre	Female		Male	
Sports	1	enjoy skiing	1	enjoy skiing
	2	play volleyball	2	play baseball
	3	play basketball	3	play basketball
			4	play soccer
Outdoor	4	love fishing	5	crazy about fishing
	5	want to try scuba diving		
	6	love camping, fresh air, nature		
Music	7	like rock music	6	like hard rock
	8	like classical music		
	9	listen to songs		
	10	good at singing karaoke		
Books	11	like reading	7	like fantasy (Harry Potter)
	12	read magazines		
	13	like historically-based fiction		
Hobbies	14	collect stamps	8	play <i>shogi</i>
	15	love taking photos	9	take photos
	16	want to try the photography club	10	paint pictures
	17	watch movies	11	enjoy shopping
	18	love sauna	12	buy new clothes
	19	love sea-weed bath	13	like to cook
	20	like speaking English	14	want to make <i>soba</i> (Japanese buck-wheat noodle) himself
	21	like meeting new people	15	play video games
	22	keep tropical fish	16	make model planes
			17	interested in magic
			18	visit historical sites
			19	in the newspaper club
			20	want to join the cinema club
			21	have an American pen-pal

Table 9: Lifestyles

Female		Male	
1	make a lot of friends	1	enjoy exploring something new
2	go to bed before midnight	2	go to bed around 2 a.m.
3	feel comfortable in quiet atmosphere	3	teach basketball to children
4	want to see the bigger world	4	play soccer in the rain
		5	*rarely cook or clean
		6	*never helped cooking in Japan
		7	*come home late
		8	*sleep late on weekends

[Note] * indicates negative connotation

Although the number of items in each genre varies, the total numbers of interests of females and males are almost the same (F:M=22:21). Furthermore, female activities 4-6 (henceforth F4-6) (*fishing, scuba diving, camping*) and F21 (*meeting new people*) serve to depict very active, outgoing females. Character traits such as F7 (*rock music*), F13 (*like historically-based fiction*), F14 (*collect stamps*) and F22 (*keep tropical fish*) may also help deconstruct stereotypical images of female hobbies. Similarly, M11-14 (*enjoy shopping, buy new clothes, like to cook, make soba himself*) are probably not typical male pastimes and hence may serve to modify learners' ideas of conventional male interests. On the other hand, there are some male behaviors which are evaluated negatively (items of T9:M5-8) whose counterparts cannot be found in female characteristics. They are all signs of inadequate contribution by males in household chores. On the whole, however, it seems that the authors have succeeded in portraying characters, female and male, with diverse interests and personalities.

4.2.4 Family Roles

Table 10 summarizes female and male characters' roles in the family.

Table 10: Family Roles

Female		Male	
1	cook	1	cook 3 days a week
2	cook 4 days a week	2	wash a car
3	take out the garbage	3	take out the garbage
4	clean the house	4	clean the house weekends
5	do the laundry	5	clean his room every weekend
6	do the dishes	6	put dishes in the dishwasher
7	put dishes in the dishwasher	7	walk a dog
8	take care of his mother-in-law	8	take care of the dog
9	baby-sit her little brother	9	take their baby to the day care center every morning
10	do most of the chores		

The numbers of household chores for females and males are almost the same (F:M=22:21), but a close inspection reveals that the workloads for each are obviously not: females *cook* more often (F2-M1), *clean* more often and wider areas (F4-M4,5), *do the laundry* (F5) (which males do not), do what males do (F3-M3), *do the dishes* (F6) (which males only put in the machine (M6)), take care of humans (*the mother-in-law* [husband's mother] and *little brother* (F8,9))(while males look after a *dog* (M7,8) and leave the baby in the care of others (M9)). In short, although females and males seem to share about the same number of domestic chores, females in fact carry heavier burdens than males. The images described here by the textbook writers are those of females who are overburdened and of males who should be more cooperative.

Qualitative Analysis

This study now proceeds to qualitative analyses of the textbook to further probe the images of

females and males the textbook writers portray. It is hoped that it would supplement the statistical observations discussed thus far and serve to provide another dimension or depth for a better understanding of the gender representation by this textbook.

4.3 Dialogues

Five cross-gender dialogues, which seem to illustrate most clearly the authors' perceptions about gender roles and characteristics, will be examined.

4.3.1 Lesson 7: *Let's Begin*

The dialogue (p.50) proceeds as follows:

Yuko : Oh, you are taking out the garbage! You're a good boy!

Bill : That's my job at home. Don't you share the household chores in your family?

Yuko : Yes and no. Dad takes out the garbage and I sometimes do the dishes, but Mom does most of the chores, though she has another job...

Bill : Isn't that unfair?

Yuko : I couldn't imagine my father cooking or cleaning.

Bill : Then what about you? Don't you cook or clean?

Yuko : Well, I do sometimes. I clean my room every weekend.

Bill : And how often do you cook?

Yuko : Occasionally. I'm usually too tired from the [sic] basketball practice.

Although this conversation starts with Yuko lightheartedly complimenting Bill on taking out garbage (*You are a good boy!*), she soon finds herself on the defensive. Bill almost sounds as if he is blaming her for her mother's excessive workloads. (*Then what about you? Don't you cook or clean? And how often do you cook?*) Readers may almost feel sorry for her.

The picture portrayed here is that of a boy insisting on the importance of family members sharing household chores and of a girl making excuses for her inadequate contribution. For Bill to be able to claim '*Isn't that unfair?*' so self-assuredly, he must be doing much more than his fair share of the housework. The textbook writers may have wished to present what the family life should be like, not what it really is, because male students like Bill are probably in a decided minority in Japan.

4.3.2 Lesson 7: *Let's Compare*

The writers, however, immediately describe the reality of lopsided allocation of household chores in *Let's Compare* of L7 (p.52). It uses a colorful graph (Appendix 6) illustrating the percentages of various domestic chores performed by husbands of seven different countries. The script reads:

The graph shows how much husbands share household chores in comparison to their wives. Overall, the percentage of chores done by husbands is less than 30% of those done by wives. The only exception is "washing the dishes." Swedish husbands do that the most. Husbands in the United States prepare meals as much as those in Sweden and Britain, but they don't seem to help out as much as after meals. Asian husbands help their wives less than European or Americans. Japanese husbands seem to depend most heavily on their wives.

The writers describe husbands' contribution as 'less than 30%' of their wives, and with Japanese

husbands ranked lowest in all the four categories of the chore (cleaning, laundry, preparation for meals, and clearing of the table) making virtually zero contribution to all. By comparing with other more cooperative husbands of different nationality, the textbook writers have succeeded in depicting exceptionally unsupportive Japanese husbands/males as they are.

4.3.3 Lesson 7: *Let's Try*

The dialogue of *Let's Try* in L7 (p.53) also seems to reflect the current Japanese household/marital situation quite accurately. The conversation is between a female (Beth) and a male (Shin) about the graph just shown in the previous section^{*1}. (The sentences are numbered for later reference.)

Beth: (1) I'm surprised to know that Japanese husbands depend so much on their wives to do the household chores.

Shin: (2) Come to think of it, I rarely see my father doing the cooking or cleaning. (3) On weekdays he comes back home late at night, and on weekends he sleeps late.

Beth: (4) Does your mother have a job as well?

Shin: (5) Yes, she works part time three days a week from 9:00 in the morning to 4:00 in the afternoon. (6) She also has to take care of my father's mother, who cannot walk very well.

Beth: (7) That's unfair. (8) Do you think you will be like your father in the future?

Shin: (9) Things are changing. (10) Actually my brother, who has a family, does a lot more. (11) His wife works full time and he takes their baby to the day care center every morning. (12) He cleans his house on weekends, too.

Beth: (13) That's great. (14) I hope my future husband will share half of the household chores.

Shin: (15) In the future we might have robots that would do the cooking and cleaning for us.

True to the graph, Shin paints a picture of an irresponsible husband (his father) who shares no housework (S2-3) and an overworking wife (his mother) who does a part-time job, domestic chores, and cares for her mother-in-law (S5-6). S7 (*That's unfair*) resonates with what Bill said to Yuko in Section 4.3.1 (*Isn't that unfair?*), only this time it is more appropriately a female who says that. It is probably not a coincidence that it was again a non-Japanese (Beth) who denounces the gender inequity. The textbook writers seem eager to underscore the current gender imbalance in the household chores.

4.3.4 L12 *Let's Try*

Hiroko, a female student, is talking with a teacher about her future career (p.87).

Teacher : Hi, Hiroko! What's wrong?

Hiroko : Actually, I need your advice.

Teacher : What is it?

Hiroko : Well, I want to ask you about my career choice

Teacher : Okay.

Hiroko : (A) My parents run a bakery. They want me to take over it when I become adult [sic], but I'm not so sure if I want to do so. I want to see the bigger world and think for myself.

Teacher : I see. You don't like bakeries?

Hiroko : Well, I don't mean it. Actually, I like thinking of how to make good bread, or delicious sweets. (B) The thing is I don't want to decide without trying any other possibilities.

Teacher : I see. Are there any subjects you are especially interested in?

Hiroko : I like Japanese and English. I like reading. I like watching movies and listening to songs. I like biology, too.

Teacher : I see. Do you like speaking English?

Hiroko : Yes, I hope I can talk with foreigners in English someday.

Teacher : Now, do you like meeting with new people?

Hiroko : Yes, I do.

Teacher : (C) Listen, you'll have many possibilities to choose from. If you can speak English well, your possibilities become bigger: You [sic] can travel around the world, or you may study how to make delicious bread in Europe. You may become a food-writer or translator, and many others. Study English, make good friends and widen your view.

Hiroko : I see.

Teacher : Have you visited our career guidance room? Have a look at the information there. You'll find there are so many jobs in the world.

Hiroko : Okay, I'll visit the room first, then. Thank you so much.

Although Hiroko is expected by her parents to take over their bakery shop, she also wishes to explore the world (A) and try other possibilities (B) before settling down. The teacher encourages her to study English, which would lead to many more career options (C). The authors are portraying a female who is serious about her future, unsatisfied with merely following her parents' wishes and footsteps. Students, especially females, may be encouraged by this conversation and pursue their own possibilities.

4.3.5 Lesson 12: *Listening Practice*

Cathy and Steve, both high school students, are talking about their course of life after graduation (p.94).

Cathy : Do you want to attend a university, Steve?

Steve : Yes, I do. I want to study social science to be a journalist.

Cathy : I see. I hope to attend a university, but I intend to work for a while after I graduate.

Steve : Why is that?

Cathy : I want to save money to go to university on my own.

Most Japanese high school students, female or male, would not follow the course of Cathy since in Japan it would be either the parents pay for their children's college education, or the children start their own career after graduation. The independent-minded Cathy might encourage some students, though, who wish for a higher education but are suffering from financial difficulties. The textbook writers have assigned this courageous role to a female.

4.4 Pictures

Pictures can certainly convey some messages to the readers, whether it is to 'reinforce the traditional images' (Hartman and Judd, 1978:387)^[8] or 'to provide...models...so that there is room for selection and individual differences' (Nilsen, 1971: 921)^[26]. It is hoped that qualitative analysis of some visual images of the two genders would clarify the messages from the authors.

4.4.1 Male Nurse and Rich Female

There is a picture of a male nurse in L12: *Career* (p.84) pushing a wheelchair with an elderly man in it (Appendix 7). Since a male nurse probably does not belong to conventional 'masculine' vocations, the textbook writers may have wished to introduce that new career option to male students. Likewise, there is also an interesting illustration of a female in the same lesson

(p.85)(Appendix 8). She is gaudily dressed and drinking a cocktail contentedly with big diamond rings on her fingers. She is surrounded by bags of money and rolls of bills. She could be an inspiration to female students who aspire to be rich.

It seems obvious that the textbook writers are attempting to include many non-traditional models for the learners regardless of the gender, providing more room for selection and individual differences.

4.4.2 Females and Males in Aprons

Nilsen (1971: 981)^[26], who examined 58 picture books, discovered that 25 of them had a picture of a woman somewhere in them and that all but four books out of these 25 (i.e. 84% of them) had a picture of a woman wearing an apron. It seems that an apron has been closely associated not only with motherhood but also with womanhood. Table 11 summarizes the occasions where characters wear aprons.

Table 11: Females and Males in Aprons

Female			Male		
	lesson	situation		lesson	situation
1	L2 (p.22)	A female with an apron (next to another without) is serving a student a hamburger at the school cafeteria.	1	L5 (p.38)	A male with an apron is looking into the fridge in the kitchen.
2	L5 (p.40)	A female in an apron is chatting with children from the canteen counter.	2	L11 (p.78)	Bill in an apron and with an oven glove is in the doorway welcoming Yuko.
3	L5 (p.43)	A female waiter with an apron is serving a male customer steak.	3	L11 (p.82)	A British man wearing an apron is barbecuing in the yard.
4	L7 (p.50)	A mother in an apron is preparing for a meal in the kitchen.	* 4	L2 (p.22)	Without an apron, two male students are serving a female student with ladles.
5	L11 (p.82)	A British woman wearing an apron is barbecuing in the yard.	* 5	L5 (p.42)	Without an apron, a man is grating something in the kitchen for a meal.
* 6	L5 (p.42)	In five separate pictures, women from China, Kenya, Egypt, Senegal, and Turkey are each cooking in the kitchen without an apron.	* 6	L7 (p.52)	Without an apron, Mr. Kroner, a lawyer, is cooking in the kitchen.

[Note] * indicates a picture without an apron

There are five female and three male figures (in photos and illustrations) who wear aprons. As has been shown in Appendix 3, the total numbers of females and males in pictures are 188 and 187 respectively, so the overall percentages of apron-clad females and males are a mere 2.6% and 1.6%. If the females and males who are without an apron but engaged in cooking or serving are also

included, the numbers increase to 11 females and 7 males, or 5.9% and 3.7% each (Table 12).

Table 12: Females and Males Cooking and/or Serving with or without Aprons

	female		male	
total number of figures	188	%	187	%
with an apron	5	2.7%	3	1.6%
without an apron but cooking/serving	6	3.2%	4	2.1%
total	11	5.9%	7	3.7%

Although the ratio of females to males who wear aprons is 1.6:1, the overall percentages of these figures do not seem statistically significant (2.7% and 1.6%). It could be argued that though in the textbook more females still wear aprons than males, the gender-biased stereotypical association of the female and the apron seems no longer applicable.

Finally, the male in an apron (T11-M1) may be worth a comment (Appendix 9). He stands alone with arms akimbo in front of an open refrigerator in the kitchen on the very first page of a new lesson (L5: *Food*). Even though he is no more than one sample of a male in an apron statistically, the strong impact of this man cannot be measured the same way. The textbook writers may have intended to present him as a new role model for males just like the male nurse in the previous section (S4.4.1). In this sense, they may be adopting more of a prescriptive than descriptive approach in their representations of males.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary

The present study examined the EFL textbook *Birdland Oral Communication I* to investigate how it portrays the two genders and discovered the following. There were about the same numbers of female and male characters in the textbook (F:M=29:33) with more or less balanced appearances of either gender in each lesson. The numbers of utterances of females and males are again quite close (F:M=245:247) and so are the numbers of their first appearances (F:M=47:43). Both genders are also assigned with approximately the same numbers of occupations (F:M=9:10), interests (F:M=22:21), family roles (F:M=10:9) and school subjects (F:M=5:5). In pictures, too, the two genders are provided with almost equal appearances of 188 females and 187 males. The number of interests in pictures for each was identical (F:M=4:4). However, gender imbalance was observed in the numbers of pictorial professions (F:M=4:8) and in the quality of textual ones (i.e. some male occupations are obviously more highly paid and prestigious than those of females (see Table 7)).

Qualitative analysis of the textbook, on the other hand, revealed some of the writers' basic attitudes toward gender roles. One theme that appeared repeatedly was the gender inequity in terms of domestic chores: females carry much greater burden than males. Bill (S4.3.1) and Cathy (S4.3.3), who denounced gender unfairness, and three males who are cooking in aprons (S4.4.2), may be symbolic manifestations of the authors' prescriptive approach to gender roles. Another image the writers seemed eager to depict was that of courageous females who are willing to face the life's challenges. Among them are a female student who is serious about her career and eager to explore the world before making the crucial decision (S4.3.4) and another who is ready to work her way

through college (S4.3.5).

In conclusion, there seems to be ample evidence to suggest that the textbook examined in this study exhibits fairly egalitarian representations of the two genders. It has succeeded in maintaining a generally well-balanced proportion of females to males in text and pictures, and in describing both genders in a variety of personalities and interests, emphasizing multiformity of individuals regardless of their gender. As well, it seems to take more of a prescriptive than descriptive approach to gender roles, emphasizing especially the importance of male contribution to the household chores.

5.2 Pedagogic Implications

Two pedagogic implications might be suggested from the present study. One is the vital role of the teacher in preventing gender discrimination from sneaking into the classroom. Even if some form of biased description of either gender were to be found in the textbook, as long as the teacher is well aware of such likelihood beforehand, he or she could deal with it more appropriately, or even turn it into a valuable educational opportunity to raise learners' consciousness of gender issues. The second is the importance of not attributing any specific roles, domestic or societal, to either gender so as not to inculcate any preconceptions in the learners. Hence, when one gender in a model dialogue in the textbook, for example, is taking somewhat a leading (or dominant) role and the other responding to it (as in Section 4.3), it is always safe and beneficial for the learners to practice not one but both parts alternatively.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that it could not adequately conduct qualitative analysis of the picture representations of both sexes except for a few. With more samples analyzed, this textbook could have been more accurately evaluated. Second, the findings are not suitable for generalization since this investigation concerns only one textbook. It cannot be determined whether this course book is exceptional or representative in terms of its portrayals of females and males among the current EFL textbooks used in Japan.

5.4 Future Developments

However, it is hoped that, by providing some criteria of analysis in the examination of gender representations of a textbook, i.e., visibility, firstness, character traits, and so on, this study might be able to serve language teachers in their choice of teaching materials. Although linguistic contents would naturally be of primary concern, the potential effect of explicit and implicit sexism in the textbook should not be underestimated because it can affect the long-term development of the learners. If a goal of the teaching of English is to help students not merely to gain more personal power over the language but also to fulfill their human potential eventually, the teachers should always be cautious of sexism and gender bias in their teaching environment. By sharing the results of analyses of other EFL textbooks, language instructors can further pursue more gender sensitive and fair materials suitable for the development of learners as individual humans.

*Note

1. Tannen (1990: 76-77)^[25] takes not the dominance but the difference approach to the analysis of the 'genderlects'. She argues that '[f]or most women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport' whereas '[f]or most men, talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order'. The dialogue could be analyzed from this rapport-report perspective. Interestingly, it is always Beth who asks questions (S4, 8), uses emotive words and comments (*surprised* (S1), *unfair* (S7), *Do you think you will be like your father?* (S8), *great* (S13), *my future husband* (S14)), all of which could serve for 'establishing connections and negotiating relationships' (ibid.: 77) with Shin, who on the contrary imparts one piece of information after another, committing himself to no particular stance of his own as if to avoid involvement in Beth's emotional argument. To Beth's straightforward question S8 (*Do you think you will be like your father in the future?*), Shin tactfully evades answering it by citing his brother as a good role model (S10-12). Even to Beth's last comment (S14), which could be her sounding out Shin's personal view on the domestic gender roles, or his possible candidacy of her future husband, Shin merely responded with a suggestion of possible future house-robots, which was probably the last answer Beth had expected. Therefore, as long as the latter part of this conversation is concerned, the two genders seem to be talking at cross purposes, the female talking for rapport and connection whereas the male talking for report and independence, just as Tannen (1990) theorizes.

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Appendix 1: 'Who is the surgeon?' Riddle

'Ann and her father are both seriously injured in a highway collision. An ambulance took Ann to one hospital; her father to another. When Ann is wheeled into the operating room, the shocked surgeon says, "I cannot operate on this girl. She's my daughter." Who is the surgeon?' (Nilsen, 1977: 9)

Appendix 2-1: Criteria of Oliver (1974: 255)

- 1) frequency of occurrence
- 2) personality or character traits
- 3) interests and activities
- 4) profession or career options
- 5) physical appearance
- 6) role in the family

Appendix 2-2: Criteria of Porreca (1984: 713-8)

- 1) omission in text and illustrations
- 2) firstness
- 3) occupational visibility in text and illustrations
- 4) nouns used to describe women and men
- 5) masculine generic constructions
- 6) adjectives

Appendix 3: Number of Pictorial Females and Males in Each Lesson

	Female	Male	difference
Lesson 1	25	18	7
Lesson 2	19	21	-2
Lesson 3	13	26	-13
Lesson 4	15	19	-4
Lesson 5	15	8	7
Lesson 6	16	11	5
Lesson 7	5	7	-2
Lesson 8	11	7	4
Lesson 9	8	7	1
Lesson 10	10	8	2
Lesson 11	41	38	3
Lesson 12	10	17	-7
Total	188	187	1

[Note]: Nilsen (1971: 919)^[26] in her examination of 80 children's picture books discovered a total of 386 female and 579 male figures, or the ratio of females to males being 2:3. The table above shows the numbers of females and males in photographs and illustrations in each lesson. (Those people in photos who are obviously not the intended focus of attention were excluded from the tally.) The number of figures naturally varies with each lesson depending on its topic. Lesson 11: *Party*, for example, has the greatest number of picture presentations of 41 females and 38 males, totaling 79, whereas Lesson 7: *Household chores* has the smallest of 5 females and 7 males. Despite the uneven appearances of both genders in lessons, the ratio of pictorial presence of females to males throughout the book is an impressive 1:1 (F:M=188:187).

Appendix 4: Other Professions in the Textbook

nurse, pharmacist, government employee, athlete, corporation employee, computer engineer, self-employee, international organization employee, performer or entertainer, artist (novelist etc), social worker, medical doctor, mass media profession, entrepreneur, high-tech scientist, politician, legal profession, academic (professor).

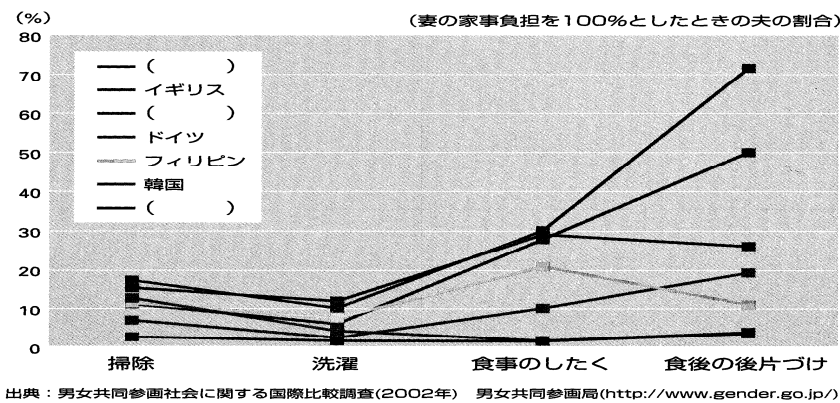
[Note]: Instead of allocating particular occupations to either gender, this textbook uses the results of an international survey about young people's favorite jobs. In this way, the textbook seems successful in offering a wide range of career possibilities to all the students regardless of their gender.

Appendix 5: Occupations of Females and Males in Pictures

Female		Male	
1	actor	1	nurse
2	lawyer	2	monk
3	tea picker	3	judge
4	TV announcer	4	singer
		5	prince
		6	fisherman
		7	woodcutter
		8	shiatsu acupressure doctor

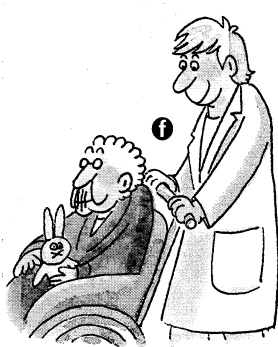
[Note]: It has already been observed in this study (S4.3.2) that about the same number of occupations is assigned to either gender (F:M=9:10). In pictures, both genders are allocated with additional jobs as the table illustrates (F:M=4:8). The total numbers of female and male occupations are now 13 and 18, respectively (regarding *prince* as a job). As far as professions are concerned, the textbook seems to favor males over females in diversity and probably in financial reward (S4.2.2) (see the qualitative analysis of pictures in S4.4.1, though).

Appendix 6



Yoshida, et al. (2007) *Birdland Oral Communication I* (p.84)

Appendix 7



Yoshida, et al. (2007)
Birdland Oral Communication I (p.84)

Appendix 8



(ibid.: 85)

Appendix 9



(ibid.: 38)