

Gendered Hegemony in the Visual Discourse of Moroccan EFL Textbooks: A Quantitative Content Analysis

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Abstract

This study analyzes the portrayal of women and men in the visual discourse of Moroccan English as a Foreign Language (MEFL, henceforth). Nine of these textbooks have been sampled to serve this purpose. Although past research has been extensively undertaken to examine the textual discourse of school textbooks, there is up to now a dearth of research geared to analyze their visual contents. This research adopts the analytical techniques of quantitative content analysis to examine the numerical distribution of the two sex groups throughout their pictorial representations. Mapping the visual content of the sampled textbooks, it has been shown that, unlike men, women have been misrepresented both in terms of their visibility (frequency of appearance) as well as in terms of the occupational roles assigned to them. The use of frequency counts, percentages, ratios and chi-square tests have helped unveil imbalanced gender disparities favoring men. The paper ends up presenting the conclusion of this study along with some recommendations.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the increasing progress in modern technology, visual images have become a fundamental feature permeating the contents of most textbooks. They are meant to consolidate the understanding of the reading passages they accompany as well as serve their pedagogical goal of raising students' interest in reading (Lee, & Collins, 2010; Yassin, Razak, & Maasum, 2019).

The present study undertakes the exploration of a body of visual data featuring female characters, male characters, or both in nine MEFL textbooks. Much work has been geared to address the issue of gender imbalances with respect to the written discourse of textbooks, yet little consideration is directed to their visual messages. The prevailing literature pertaining to the field of gender studies concentrated merely on the textual analysis of school textbooks. Scant attention; however, has been made to address women and men's pictorial representations. The major aim of this study therefore is to investigate the visual discourse of these textbooks focusing on their parity in representing both women and men.

My research concerns with the pictorial representation of the two sex groups in MEFL textbooks emanates essentially from two major considerations. Firstly, there is still up to now not enough research on the visual portrayal of women and men in textbooks. Secondly, visual images seem to be the most accessible sources of information that support the written texts. As such, teachers may promote students' visual literacy skills through helping them see in pictures what is written in print.

This paper encompasses four sections. Section one sets out to review the literature on gender bias in the visual discourse of school textbooks. Section two delineates the

methodological procedures undertaken to conduct this research. The findings which crop up from this inquiry are described in section three. This section consists of two sub-sections. Sub-section one is devoted to a review of the findings drawn from this study using a quantitative analysis of the frequency of occurrence of women and men. Sub-section two outlines the findings which crop up from the examination of the distribution and the type of occupational roles women and men have been assigned in the visual discourse of the textbooks under study. The last section is geared to present a general discussion of the results. This study ends up with a conclusion along with some recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The fact that language teaching materials tend to project the ideological attitudes, and the cultural beliefs and values of the community in which they operate can hardly be denied. Sexism is reported to be an instance among a host of many other dimensions of these ideological attitudes. Sex-stereotyping has often been the concern of a substantial body of research studies. Much of the existing literature on gender bias in school textbooks was concerned merely with the study of their textual discourses.

The literature surveying the portrayal of women and men in the visual discourse of school textbooks is scarce. There is however a burgeoning concern in research targeting the analysis of visual images. Thus, this section seeks to make an overview of past research which utilized quantitative content analysis in its examination of the visual depictions of women and men in textbooks.

Early research on sex stereotypes in visual studies can be traced back to Courtney and Lockeretz's (1971) first study of the representation of women and men in media advertising. The results seem to indicate four major conclusions, all of which suggest strong patterns of stereotyping deployed to misrepresent women, namely that (1) their ideal context is the house setting as they are identified either as housewives, baby-sitters, cleaners, tutors, or mothers; (2) they are far more often associated with peripheral and unimportant activities; (3) they are visually depicted subordinate to men, and being in dire need of their help and protection; (4) Women are also presented as sex objects to be looked at to please the male gaze.

Since Courtney and Lokeretz's (1971) early study on the issue of sex stereotyping, a stream of similar research has continued to emerge analysing the portrayal of women and men in a plethora of social domains including, but not limited to, magazines, newspapers, TV programmes, books, advertising tools and language teaching materials.

Weitzman et al.'s (1972) analysis of prize-winning picture books reports roughly the same patterns of results. This study examined the portrayal of women and men on the basis of three criteria, particularly their visibility in titles, as main characters, and the frequency count of their distribution in illustrations. The presence of sexism is found to exist as female characters, compared to males, are substantially underrepresented along the three categories, namely in titles, as central characters and in pictures.

This pattern of results seems to be consonant with Venkatesan and losco's (1975) finding that women are far more often anchored to domestic life, and being thoroughly dependent on men. They are also considered as mere sex objects, mainly because of their physical attractiveness and the way they look, but not because of what they do in real life.

Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) have come to similar conclusions. Women have been found to be showcased merely as accessories in decorative roles. There is a tendency to represent women visually as mere sex objects. They are also portrayed being socially and economically inferior to men.

Potter and Rosser's (1992) investigation of a sample of science textbooks indicates that there are several features of stereotypes both in text and pictorial images. Women's actual contributions in science have been reduced to a strict minimum. Their visual portrayal in these textbooks is far less frequent than that of men.

In a similar fashion, additional evidence in support for this biasness in the visual discourse of textbooks emanates from Davoodi's (1999) study. He analysed the pictorial representation of women and men in Iranian high school EFL textbooks. The findings seem to indicate that there is a strong pattern of sex stereotyping tipped in men's favour. Men are visually depicted 59.48%, while women seem to figure in merely 40.52% (Davoodi, 1999).

Analysing a sample of Iranian T.V advertisements, Babii and Ansary (2001) report the use of more stereotypes which discriminate against women. According to them, the misrepresentation of women is but only a reflection of a number of patriarchal attitudes which continue to look at women as mere housewives. They are reported to be responsible merely for the running of domestic life cooking, washing and being subservient to men.

Similar results have been echoed in Gooden and Gooden's (2001) research examining the portrayal of female and male characters in eighty-one books for children. The focus has been placed on the gender of the main characters and the representation of women and men both in titles and illustrations. The results of this investigation show that although there is an increase in the portrayal of women as main characters in these books, there is still a noticeable preponderance of male characters in the pictorial depictions of the sampled books.

With respect to the pictorial representation of women and men, Miroiu's (2004) large scale analysis of 106 textbooks used for educational purposes in Romanian schools is worth reviewing here. Men's predominance in visual images seems to be superior to that of women. Out of a photographic corpus of 4318 pictures, females were portrayed merely in 33.2% while male figures average a percentage of 64.8%. Additionally, more leadership roles and prestigious occupations are assigned to male characters.

Omran's (2006) research study of Syrian textbooks of basic education points to almost the same results in discrimination of females. The portrayal of men in pictures and drawings outnumbers quantitatively those of women in literary and historical textbooks. Such an exclusion of women from the visual discourse of history textbooks seems to resonate well with Sadker and Sadker's (1994) findings.

Almost the same conclusions have been documented in Anderson et al.'s (2006) research. 200 children's books have been analysed to assess their parity with respect to the pictorial depiction of female and male characters. Using the quantitative analytical techniques of content analysis, the findings of the study indicate that the sampled books display almost twice as many male characters than females. Even worse, women continue to be strongly anchored merely to domestic activities.

Lee and Collins' (2008) investigation comparing the presence of gender bias in previous and currently published English Language textbooks used in Hong Kong secondary schools documents the same biased trends in discrimination of female characters. Male characters seem to take more prominent roles, maintaining thereby the same privilege along the early and more recent textbooks with a ratio of male to female characters averaging 1.48:1 and 1.14:1, respectively.

In parallel with previous studies, in this research women continue to preserve the same stereotypical social roles of mere housewives, and seem to be confined to such 'feminine' occupations as a secretary, a receptionist, or male assistant in both earlier and new textbooks. To explain this continuous biasness in discrimination of women, Lee and Collins (2008) summarize their findings arguing that "the conclusion is inescapable that women have been under-represented in visual images in the secondary English language textbooks in Hong Kong over the last 20 years" (p. 133).

Employing the quantitative and qualitative techniques of content analysis, Amini and Birjandi (2012) studied the issue of gender imbalances in texts and illustrations in two EFL textbooks currently used in second and third year high schools in Iran. Drawing on Porreca's (1987) coding categories, their study analysed four research questions: (1) visibility (omission) of women and men in texts as well as in illustrations; (2) who is mentioned first in text? (3) What occupational roles are assigned to women and men? (4) What is the

distribution of masculine generic terms? And (5) what type of actions are undertaken by the two sex groups in the selected textbooks?

The findings of this study seem to point towards the same trends of results. Women maintain the same position being more invisible compared to men. Their numerical distribution in the visual discourse of these two EFL textbooks is lower than that of men. It has also been observed that women and men seem to conserve the same traditional roles and activities being often tipped in men's favour. This pattern of results seems to be, according to Amini and Birjandi (2012), not surprising as it is strongly reflective of the patriarchal values of "the Islamic Iranian culture (which) tends to leave no room for female visibility" (2012, p. 135).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. The Research Questions and Hypotheses

Basing our study on previous research germane to sex stereotypes in school textbooks, and revisiting the last improvements regarding the status of women in the most recent legal texts of the Moroccan Family Code, and the revised version of the Moroccan constitution, the present investigation formulates two research questions to be addressed:

1. Visibility/ Omission: What is the frequency count of the physical appearance of both women and men in the visual discourse of these textbooks?

2. Women and men's occupational roles: What are the types of vocational roles assigned to both women and men outdoors in the job market?

For the purposes of this study, two hypotheses can be devised:

1. The pictorial representation of women and men in the visual discourse of the sampled textbooks is expected to be well balanced.

2. The visual portrayal of women in occupational and managerial roles outside the home context is expected to be almost the same as that of men.

3.2. The Sampled data for visual analysis and sampling procedures

The general objective of this paper is to explore how women and men are represented in the visual discourse of Moroccan English as foreign language textbooks. Nine MEFL textbooks have been sampled to serve the particular purposes of this study. They represent almost 100 per cent of the total number of textbooks currently still in use for educational purposes in the Moroccan public schools. They have been selected depending on the criteria of purposive sampling. Firstly, the sampled textbooks were designed and written by Moroccan textbook writers. Secondly, they were published between 2008 and 2010, almost five years after Sabir's report on gender-bias free guidelines recommended and implemented in 2005. As a matter of fact, these textbooks are expected to abide by the general directives for the production and design of language teaching materials devoid of any biased practices. Their corresponding new editions published in 2014-2015 have also been considered to determine if they include any modifications or improvements. Surprisingly enough, it has been found that they are copycats of their previous editions containing the same textual and visual contents without any slight amendments.

The nine sampled textbooks cover the following levels:

English Textbooks for Level 1:

(1) Focus (2008). Nadia Edition, Rabat.

English Textbooks for Level 2: Common Core Classes:

(2) *Window on the World* (2008). Rabat, Nadia Edition.

(3) *Outlook* (2010). Inter Graph, Rabat.

(4) *Visa to the World* (2010). Dar Nachr Almaarifa, Rabat.

English Textbooks for First Year Baccalaureate:

(5) *Gateway to English. Book 1* (2010). Nadia Edition, Rabat.

(6) *Ticket to English. Book 1* (2009). Casa Blanca, DIO.El Hadita.

English Textbooks for Second Year Baccalaureate:

(7) *Gateway to English. Book 2* (2010). Rabat, Nadia Edition.

(8) *Ticket to English. Book 2* (2009). Casa Blanca, DIO.El Hadita.

(9) *Insights into English* (2008). Rabat, Nadia Edition.

For the purposes of this inquiry, a bulky sample of 2712 images was culled to be analyzed quantitatively. The number of male and female characters were counted depending on their visibility in pictures which may include either one or groups of people. Additionally, to answer the second question, a purposive sample of 306 pictures has been selected as a set of photographic data to analyze the different types of occupational roles assigned to the two sex groups.-

3.3. Procedures of Analysis

This study attempts to adopt the analytical techniques of quantitative content analysis. It sets out to analyze the numerical distribution of the pictorial representation of women and men throughout the contents of the sampled textbooks. The use of frequency counts, percentages, ratios and chi-square tests may surely help uncover if there are any imbalanced disparities in the use of visual images.

The representation of women will include all female characters of any age group: young, adult or old, and of any social role be it a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister or a grand-mother. The same process will be applicable for male characters involving all age groups and being a father, husband, son, brother or grand-father.

The quantification of the number of times male or female characters figure in the visual discourse of these textbooks will be achieved depending on the frequency count of their physical appearance. This will answer how often men and women appear in images; which of the two sex groups is given more prominence, and which of them is rendered almost imperceptible. However, to make a tally of the number of times each of the two sex groups is distributed in the visual discourse of textbooks, though highly compelling, can in no way solely by itself explain the problem of sexism in their visual contents.

For that reason, the second section of this paper is concerned with the examination of the different categories of occupations assigned to the two sex groups. Mapping the contents of the sampled textbooks, a total of 306 images featuring women and men in different occupational roles have been found.

To avoid subjectivity, the analysis of visual images was undertaken along three separate periods of time lasting for forty days with a period of seven days as an interval between them. This means that the analyses were carried out independently from each other and without consulting or checking their previous findings. Employing Holsti's (1969) formula, the coefficients of agreement between the three analyses yielded high levels of consistency averaging an intra-reliability index of .97.

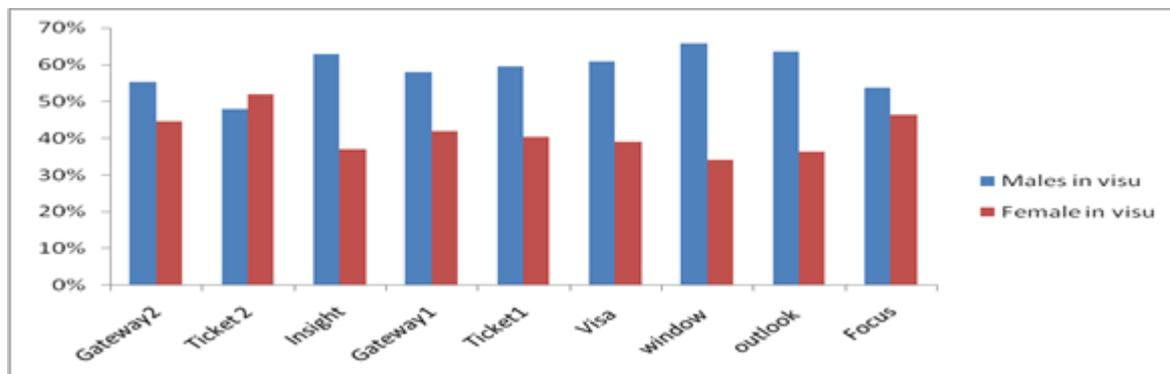
4. THE RESULTS

The following table summarizes the distribution of the two genders throughout the nine textbooks.

4.1. Male-female Distribution in Pictures

The pictorial images of the contents of Moroccan EFL textbooks have been analyzed to determine the distribution of women and men through their visibility and frequency of appearance. As may be gleaned from graph 1 below, there are stark differences in the frequency distribution of women and men’s visibility in the pictures understudy.

Graph 1: Female-male visual portrayals in the textbooks:



The visual representation of the two sex groups indicates significant cases of hidden gender stereotypes and prejudices against women. Examining the visual contents of the selected textbooks, a total of 2712 visual portrayals of women and men have been collected. Male characters are more often identified than the corresponding female pictures. There are on the whole 1602 pictures portraying male figures representing 59.07%, while those reserved for women comprise 1110 averaging merely 40.93%.

Table 1: The visual distribution of women and men in textbooks

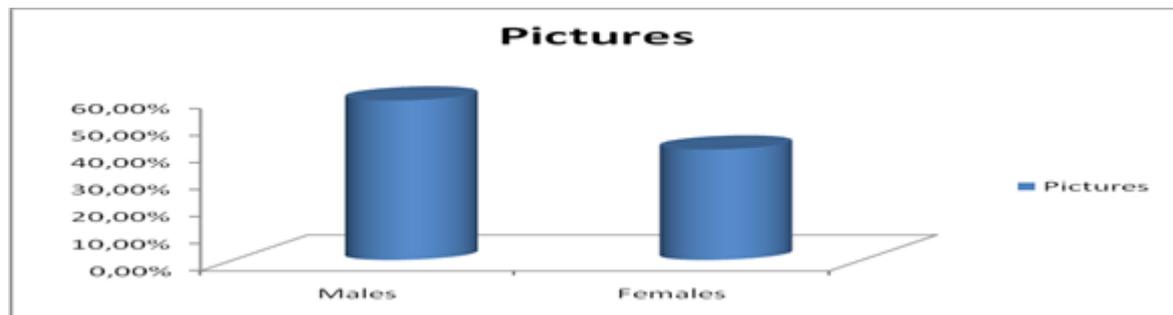
The visual distribution of women and men	Males	Females	Total
Pictures	1602	1110	2712
Frequency	59.07%	40.93%	100%

$\chi^2 (1) = 89.25, p < .05$

To compute the statistical difference in the distribution of the visibility of male and female characters in the images of the sampled textbooks, the following result has been obtained: $\chi^2 (1) = 89.25, p < .05$. This implies that the difference in the visual representation of women and men in these textbooks is statistically significant.

The result of this quantitative analysis indicates that the distribution of male-centered characters is one of the prevailing and predominant features characterizing the visual discourse of MEFL textbooks. This substantiates to a greater extent and lends further credence to prior research studies documenting similar results (Benattabou, 2020 c; Benattabou, 2020 e). The frequency counts of female-centered and male-centered images are summed across the whole textbooks. The resulting female-to-male ratio of pictures is 1:1.44.

Graph 2: The overall pictorial representation of women and men.



As may be observed from the bar graph presented above (graph 1), Except for Ticket2, where the number of female-male visual portrayals is slightly reversed, in all textbooks male figures outnumber females. Surprisingly enough, when women appear in visual images, they are oftentimes shown associated merely with domestic activities like cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, worrying about family problems; or occupying such stereotypically traditional jobs like being a secretary, a nurse, a receptionist and an assistant; or undertaking menial activities like selling food in traditional markets or attending courses for illiterate people. It is not unlikely that women may feel alienated, excluded and trivialized, thereby highlighting their stereotypical identity as ‘second-class citizens’.

Although the quantitative analysis of the contents of the sampled textbooks indicates a clear imbalance in terms of the numerical weighing regarding the pictorial depictions of women and men, a wide range of other discursive practices remain unaccounted for. This paves the way for the importance of approaching quantitatively the photographic data targeting the type of occupational roles and activities assigned to the two sex groups.

In what follows are the results elicited from the second processing of the data to assess whether there is any gender parity regarding the different job opportunities assigned to the two sex groups.

4.2. Women and men’s Occupational Roles

The second parameter pertaining to the findings of this study indicate that the visual discourse of MEFL textbooks is over stuffed with a multitude of pictorial representations displaying a wide range of occupational roles allotted to women and men. There are by and large 306 occupational roles ranging from less paid and less rewarding jobs to highly ranked professions.

Male characters seem to permeate the visual discourse of the sampled textbooks through 217 images representing a larger proportion of the pie related to job opportunities (70.92%). Conversely, female characters are under-represented as they are seen only in a very limited range of occupations depicted in 89 images with a frequency distribution averaging merely 29.08%.

Table 2: The pictorial representation of women and men’s occupational roles

Male-female occupational roles	Males	Females	Total
Total	217	89	306
Frequency	70,92%	29,08%	100%

$$\chi^2 (1) = 53.54, p < .05$$

The chi-square test result obtained for this category in the visual contents of the sampled textbooks is: $\chi^2 (1) = 53.54, p < .05$. The difference in the pictorial distribution of

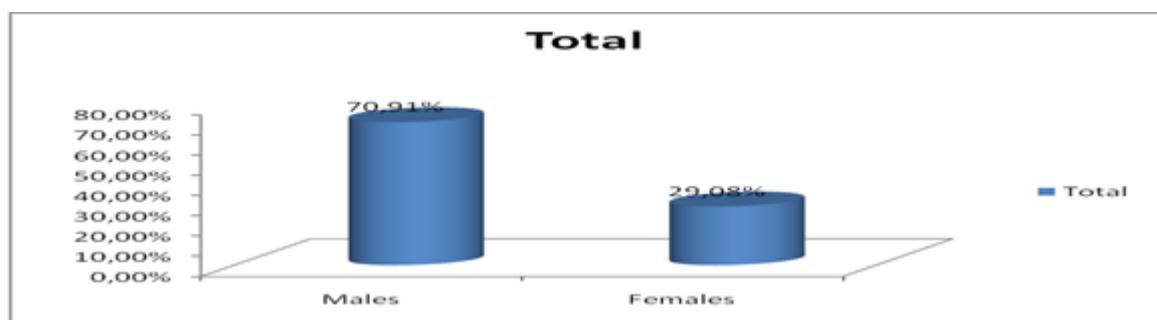
women and men with regard the occupational roles assigned to them with a critical value set at 3.84 implies that the difference is statistically far more significant.

An analysis of the majority of the pictorial images understudy seems to suggest that they purport to exude the message that a woman’s primordial concern is the home context, or with menial roles in the job market. They suggest also that the share of female characters in leadership roles and top positions in society is considerably very low.

The discrepancy between the social roles of women and men is well accentuated particularly when they are visually portrayed in the vicinity of each other. The re-occurring pattern is that women take on secondary roles, implicitly over-emphasizing their stereotypical status as second-class citizens. Men, on the other hand, are consistently showcased as central figures taking a leadership role.

A closer scrutiny of the data reveals that female characters have been excluded from a plethora of occupations in the workforce. Although women seem to figure in some occupational roles as men, they are still connected with low status and less rewarding jobs.

Graph 3: The pictorial distribution of women and men’s occupational roles.



This graph displays the overall occupational roles allocated to men and women. For convenience and for more clarity of the examination of the images under study, the findings have been roughly categorized into five ranks.

The first category has been devoted to presidents, kings, queens, policy-makers, leaders and emperors. The second category has been reserved for high social ranked jobs including doctors, dentists, pilots, pharmacists, university professors, chemists and engineers. Category three subsumes such roles as artists, film-makers, TV programmers, and journalists. The fourth category encompasses medium ranked jobs like teachers, police persons, soldiers, employers, secretaries, post persons, and nurses. The last scale of the categorization includes low-status jobs like street cleaners, fishermen, drivers, shop assistants and farmers.

4.2.1. The distribution of women and men according to the first occupational category

Table 3: The distribution of women and men along the first occupational category

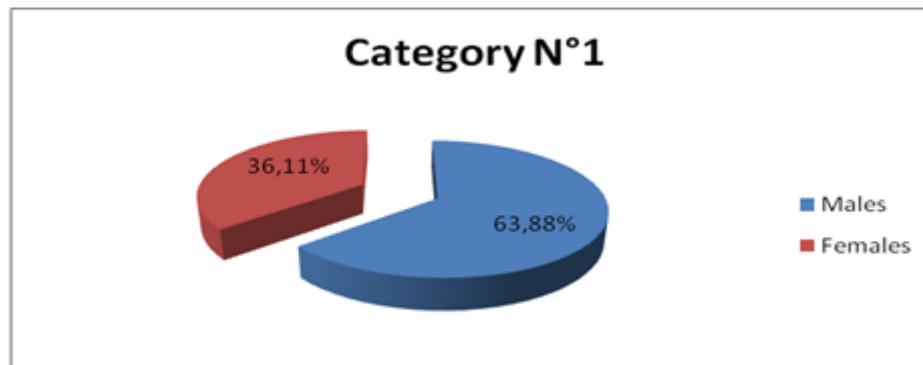
Category N°	Males	Females	Total
Category N°1	23	13	36
Frequency	63,89%	36,11%	100%

$$\chi^2 (1) = 2.77, p < .05$$

The analysis of the data provides evidence for a conspicuous discrepancy regarding the distribution of women and men as kings, presidents, politicians, policy makers and leaders. Men seem to enjoy more occupational opportunities as decision makers.

However, although there is a difference in the distribution of women and men along this first category, the chi-square test result obtained ($\chi^2(1) = 2.77, p < .05$) seems to suggest that the difference is slightly higher than the critical value of 2.71 set at the .10 level, but lower than the critical value of 3.84 set at the .05 as a criterion selected for this study. Therefore, the difference seems to be slightly below its statistical significance.

Graph4: Gender bias regarding the pictorial representation of women and men along the first occupational category.



As may be observed from table 3 and graph 4 above, there are 23 visual depictions representing male characters in this category averaging 63.89%. By contrast, women seem to be still subject to discrimination as their share in decision making averages merely 36.11% (13 images). Examples of cases clearly illustrating such findings are in images N° 1 (Insights, p. 142), N° 2 (Insights, p. 105), and N° 3 (Ticket 2, p. 46).

Image N° 1:



Image N° 2:



Image N° 3:



Image N°1 (Insights, p. 142), for instance, depicts the textbooks' unconscious institutionalization of two binary divisions at this level. There are apparently four renowned speakers on a panel, the overwhelming majority of whom are male representatives compared to a very tiny minority of female panelists. This male monopolization of the visual discourse of this picture may send one single message that women are not as important as men in being eminent public speakers.

The average ratio of female to male participants is 1: 3. This imbalance in the visual representation of the two sex groups may be convincingly more ironical and surprising given that the theme of this conference is 'Sustainable Development', the ultimate objective of which is the building up of a more egalitarian society where such values as equality of opportunity, women empowerment, tolerance and acceptance of the other should most prevail. According to Sadiqi and Ennaji (2006), this 'masculinization' of public life is but only a microscopic embodiment of the Moroccan patriarchal system which prioritizes male dominance and seems more inclined to render the image of females barely perceptible.

4.2.2. The distribution of women and men along the second occupational category

Additionally, as may be elicited from Table 4, the visual discourse of MEFL textbooks seems to be highly stereotypical as men seem to take once more a larger proportion of the pie regarding the most prestigious positions in the job market. They are depicted far more often as doctors, scientists, engineers, pilots, pharmacists, surgeons and chemists.

Table 4: The distribution of women and men along the second occupational category

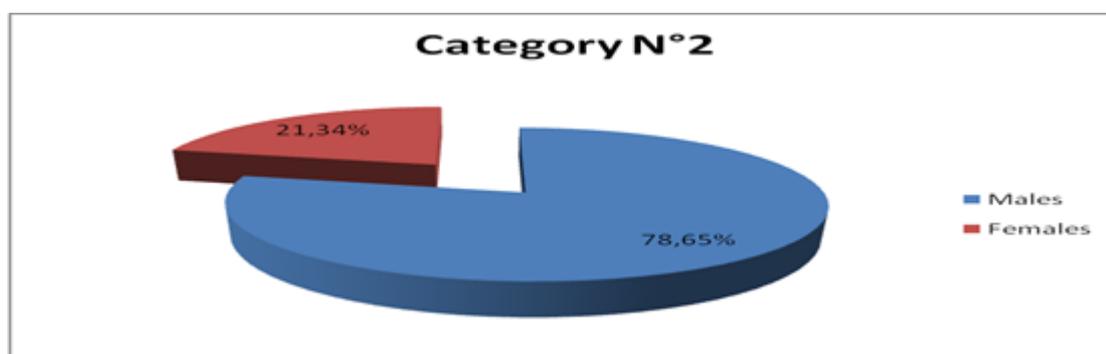
Category N°	Males	Females	Total
Category N°2	70	19	89
Frequency	78,65%	21,35%	100%

$$\chi^2(1) = 29.22, p < .05$$

To compute the statistical difference in the visual distribution of women and men along this second category, the following result has been obtained: $\chi^2(1) = 29.22, p < .05$. This seems to suggest that the difference in the visual representation of women and men in highly-ranked jobs is statistically significant.

There are by and large 89 visual images illustrating this tendency with male characters being more frequently represented (70 pictures) averaging a frequency distribution of 78.65%. Female characters; however, are almost marginalized from these occupational roles. They are seen in only 19 visual depictions displaying them in these high status jobs representing a distribution frequency of merely 21.35% (See pie graph 5).

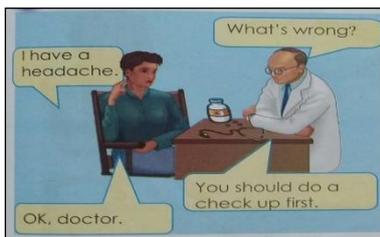
Graph 5: Gender bias regarding the pictorial representation of women and men along the second occupational category.



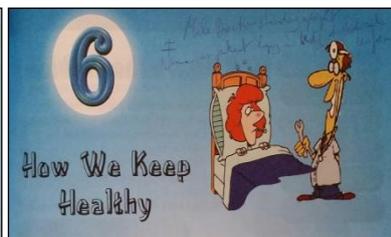
This finding seems to indicate also that there is absence of any picture displaying women as surgeons or pilots or highly-ranked military officers. Even within the category of university professors, women seem to be utterly put in the margin with a female-to-male ratio of 1:3.5. Stated differently, there are only two pictures of women as university professors (22.22%) compared to seven images reserved for men (77.78%).

What is very impressive about this data is the pictorial representation of women and men as doctors. There are in total six images featuring male doctors with female patients, but only one where a female doctor is observed with a male patient (Image N°4 in *Focus*, p.99; Image N° 5 in *Outlook*, p.67; Image N° 6 in *Gateway 2*, p. 86; Image N° 7 in *Gateway 2*, p. 117; and image N° 8 in *Outlook*, p. 70). The presence of a female patient in all of these five images seems to perpetuate women's victimization and their psychological vulnerability.

Picture N°4:



PictureN°5:



PictureN°6:



Picture N°7:

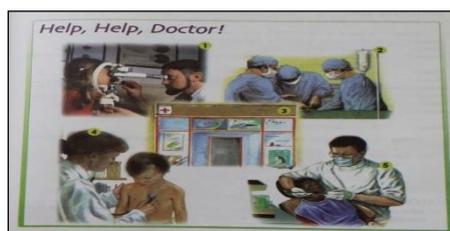


Picture N°8:

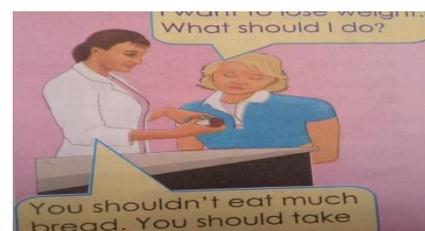


Surprisingly enough, where female doctors do appear, they are merely depicted as pediatricians taking care of babies and children (picture N° 9), or as nutritionists (picture N° 10), but never as surgeons as is the case with male doctors (Window, p.109, N° 9, and Focus, p.99, N° 10).

Picture N°9:



Picture N°10:



Picture N° 11 in (Outlook, p. 68), for instance, illustrates the setting of a health care hospital. The male character is dressed in a white blouse with a telescope around his neck standing in a patronizing stature playing the role of the doctor, a position of authority in full control of the situation. He seems to be taking an active role checking his patient's eyes. The woman, however, is positioned behind him in back stage acting as a nurse whose primary duty is to be a source of help and assistance to the male doctor.

Picture N°11:



4.2.3. The distribution of women and men along to the third occupational category

In view of the results of the visual distribution of women and men in the category of artists, authors, film makers, and journalists, male characters seem also to take more advantages of the statistical pie. There are plenty of pictorial images featuring men and women in this cast (94 pictures). Image N° 12 ((Window, p. 17), for instance, delineates unmistakably this biased tendency among the sampled textbooks.

Picture N°12:



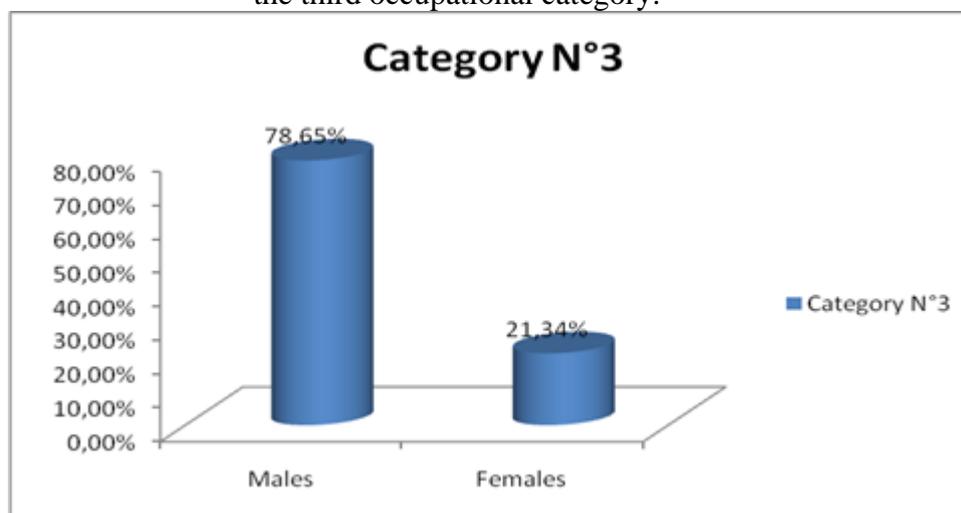
Table 5: The distribution of women and men along the third occupational category

Category N°	Males	Females	Total
Category N°3	67	27	94
Frequency	71,27%	28,73%	100%

$\chi^2 (1) = 17.02, p < .05$

The chi-square test result obtained for this category in the visual contents of the sampled textbooks is: $\chi^2 (1) = 17.02, p < .05$. The difference in the pictorial distribution of women and men with respect to this third category with a critical value set at 3.84 implies that the difference is statistically far more significant. The male frequency of occurrence averages 71.28% (67 pictures). Women seem to get less of their share in this regard as they are portrayed in 27 images with a frequency count of merely 28.73%.

Graph 6: Gender bias regarding the pictorial representation of women and men along the third occupational category.



As may be elicited from this bar graph, there is a general tendency among the sampled textbooks to be highly stereotypical with regard to this category. Men are more inclined to be cast as film makers and journalists. There are many instances in this photographic data depicting male characters discussing and debating current political and social issues or taking a more authoritative role as public speech makers (see pictures N°1, N°2, and N°3, referred to earlier).

4.2.4. The distribution of women and men according to the fourth occupational category

The fourth category of medium ranked jobs seems to cast more light on the problem of sex stereotypes in MEFL textbooks. There are 49 visual images representing women and

men as teachers, office employers, secretaries, police persons, nurses and soldiers. In consonance with gender stereotypes and cultural expectations, women seem to predominate in this category through 28 images (57.14%). Male characters are underrepresented with respect to this class of images as they are depicted only in 21 pictures (42.86%).

Table 6: The distribution of women and men along the fourth occupational category

Category N°	Males	Females	Total
Category N°4	21	28	49
Frequency	42,86%	57,14%	100%

$\chi^2(1) = 1, p < .05$

To calculate the statistical difference in the visual distribution of male and female characters with respect to medium-ranked jobs, the following result has been obtained: $\chi^2(1) = 1, p < .05$. The chi-square test result indicates that the difference in the frequency count of male and female visual depictions is not statistically significant.

Despite this finding, one is legitimately led to contend that women are still regarded as nurses and staff assistants in the medical sphere (6 images). Likewise, female characters continue to be visually showcased as secretaries and receptionists (3 pictures). There is, however, no picture featuring men in these occupations. Females are also more likely cast as primary school teachers in 11 pictures (58.89%) more than men (8 pictures, 42.11%). There is no female character being visually presented as a soldier or a warrior. There are two pictures displaying men with a uniform and weapons in their hands.

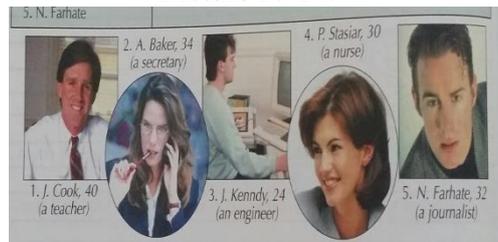
Additionally, an examination of picture N° 13 in *Insights* (p.74) provides a straightforward example of how the sampled textbooks represent women and men in the workforce of a company. The predominant and common pattern is suggestive of the hierarchical structure of the workforce, in which the man is usually the boss, a position of power and dominance, while the woman takes a subaltern function that of a secretary or an assistant.

Picture N°13:



More interesting perhaps is Picture N° 14 (*Ticket 1*, p. 26) perpetuating this biased and dualistic trend among the sampled textbooks. There are three images of men playing such roles as an engineer, a teacher and a journalist. Conversely, there are only two females occupying such traditional jobs as a secretary and a nurse.

Picture N° 14:

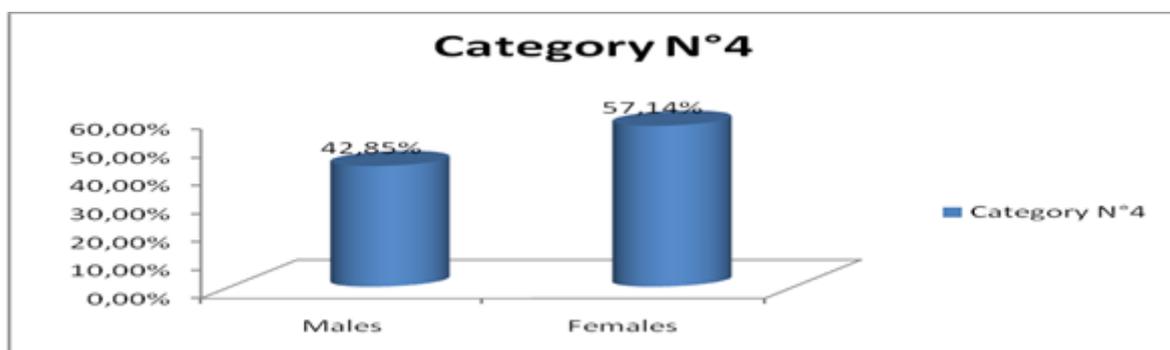


There are also four male employers as compared to only two females in our photographic data. Of further importance is picture N° 15 in *Outlook* (p. 112) presenting three occupational roles that of a policewoman, a female teacher and a housewife. Surprisingly enough, women seem to predominate as police women (3 pictures), which stands in sharp contrast with only one picture for a policeman. However, although there are three images of police women, one of these pictures features a police woman holding a baby in her hands. This may suggest at least in part that although women are gaining grounds in the job market as men, they are still seen as mothers and child bearers (image N° 15 in *Outlook*, p. 112).

Picture N° 15:



Graph 7: Gender bias regarding the pictorial representation of women and men along the fourth category



Briefly stated, the visual discourse of MEFL textbooks is more inclined to downsize the presence of women in the above categories of high status jobs (graph 4 and 5); it tends however to over represent them only in such medium-ranked jobs as nurses, primary school teachers and receptionists (see graph 7 above).

4.2.5. The distribution of women and men along to the fifth occupational category

At a more lower scale particularly with less privileged jobs including farmers, street cleaners, fishermen, shop assistants, mechanics, butchers and plumbers, there is an over representation of male characters. There is no single picture featuring women in these working conditions. Visual depictions in this category are exclusively reserved for men. There are in total 38 images, 36 of which display male characters representing a frequency count of 97.74% (See picture N° 16, *Visa*, p. 27). Women in this category are almost non-existent with only 2 pictures representing a frequency count of merely 5.26%.

Picture N°16:



Table7: The distribution of women and men along the fifth category.

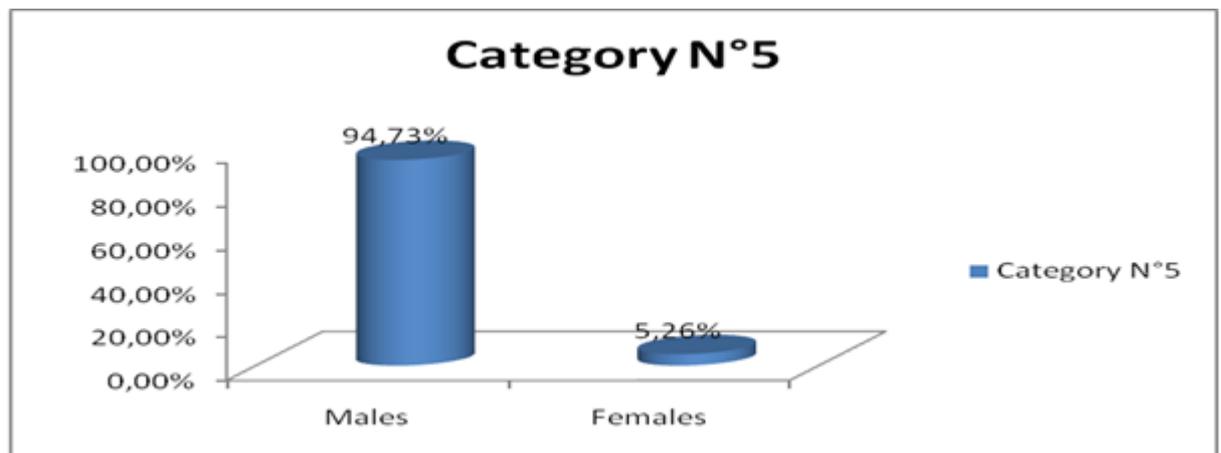
Category N°	Males	Females	Total
Category N°5	36	2	38
Frequency	94,74%	5,26%	100%

$\chi^2 (1) = 30.42, p < .05$

The chi-square test result obtained for this fifth category in the visual discourse of the sampled textbooks is: $\chi^2 (1) = 30.42, p < .05$. The difference in the frequency count of images displaying male and female characters in this category with a critical value set at 3.84 is statistically far more significant.

As can be gleaned from graph 8 below, there is a general inclination among the sampled textbooks to portray men far more often than females in this class. This is perhaps reflective of the continuous perpetuation of the stereotypical view that men are breadwinners, while women are just housewives and homemakers.

Graph 8: Gender bias regarding the pictorial representation of women and men along the fifth occupational category.



More intriguing perhaps is the way women and men are dressed in these pictorial images. Female characters are more often depicted in casual clothes. Women dressed in professional attire are disproportionately underrepresented except in very few instances (see image N° 17 in *Insights*, p. 75). They are shown being engaged merely doing ordinary clerical work, especially as shop assistants, receptionists, airhostesses, or secretaries in a doctor or a lawyer’s office.

Picture N°17:



Men; by contrast, are far more likely to be visually portrayed with professional clothes. They are usually showcased wearing a suit and a tie, crafting an image of a gentleman or a businessman. The pictorial images featuring men in professional and business attire outnumber those of women in these textbooks. Such a visual tendency seems to connect men with wealth, vocational prosperity, and more social dominance (See images N° 18 in Ticket 2, p.40; N° 19 in Insights, p. 119; and N° 20 in Ticket 1, p. 133).

Picture N°18:



Picture N°19:



Picture N°20



5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The findings of this research show very convincingly that Moroccan EFL textbooks are replete with myriad instances of sex-stereotyping. This quantitative analysis of the visual discourse of the sampled textbooks has tried to highlight some cases of gender imbalances which continue to shape in a subtle way the pictorial representation of women and men in these textbooks. This lends more credence and substantiates to a greater extent our textual analysis of the same issue reviewed in a different paper (Benattabou, 2014).

The pictorial images of MEFL textbooks have been analyzed to determine the distribution of women and men through their frequency of appearance, the activities they are involved in, and the occupational roles they play. Inside the family context, women and men have been assigned different roles either among each other or in relation to their children both boys and girls.

The overall results of this research seem to indicate that the difference in the pictorial representation of women and men is statistically significant ($\chi^2 (1) = 89.25, p < .05$). A recurrent pattern specific to the majority of these textbooks is that they seem to be disproportionately stereotyped in favor of male characters being visually portrayed as the norm. It is not unwise to contend in this respect that if the index of equal rights and equal opportunities, as basic prerequisites of human rights acts, is 50% of equal distribution, then women's visibility is significantly underrepresented.

In view of this finding, men's physical appearance seems to be predominant as their pictures outnumber those of their female partners which tend to accentuate the invisibility of women. More evidence that female characters are substantially underrepresented and imperceptible altogether comes from several studies (e.g. Porecca, 1984; Florent et al. 1994; Lee and Collins, 2009).

The numerical weighing of both female and male characters in the visual discourse of these textbooks seems to display a biased trend tipped in favor of men to the detriment of their female partners. Men are visually showcased more often than women. Porecca (1984) reports in this regard that "when females do not appear as males in the text, the implicit

memorandum is that women's accomplishments are not important enough to be included" (p.706).

There is also a paradoxical correlation in that the visual representation of female characters in the home context is disproportionately very high, while that of their portrayal with respect to the job market is rendered almost invisible particularly when it is related to managerial roles. By contrast, a relatively smaller percentage of these illustrations feature male characters in domestic settings; they seem however to be more predominant taking the lion's share of almost all leadership roles.

The study of the way school textbooks exploit visual images seems to reflect a host of misconceptions privileging and prioritizing male characters at the expense of their female partners. The distribution of women and men's occupational roles was analyzed yielding the following patterns of results. There is a tendency among male figures to predominate the majority of occupations mentioned in the visual discourse of these textbooks.

Female characters; on the other hand, are showcased either with a stereotypical occupation or with no occupation at all. It is very unfortunate that despite the substantial contributions of a large percentage of women in the workforce (see Sadiqi and Ennaji, 2006), such a colossal endeavor from the part of women has not been translated and projected through these textbooks.

With respect to the type of activities and social roles assigned to women and men, more asymmetrical patterns of results have been detected. Women are more anchored to domestic activities as mothers and housewives. The range of occupational roles they are involved in is very limited. They are often seen in low status and less rewarding occupations such as teachers, nurses, secretaries and receptionists. Their contribution as leaders and in high-paid jobs is very restricted. Men, by contrast, are more often seen as emperors, leaders, public speakers, surgeons, and presidents or kings. This is once again consonant with similar findings echoed in Venkatesan and Josco (1975), Hoomes (1978), and Sunderland (2000).

These findings seem also to suggest that given the statistical differences between women and men, and given female fewer number with respect to occupations, one can safely argue that there is almost absence of any positive role models among women. They have been muted and marginalized particularly from managerial roles, and have hardly any forceful contribution in decision-making positions.

Throughout many instances women are portrayed at home preparing meals, washing the dishes and nursing their babies, or shopping or even accompanying their children to schools (Benattabou, 2015). Apart from very few exceptions, male figures are substantially excluded from all such domestic contexts. Instead, they are portrayed doing more outdoor activities. Females; however, are shown to fit only the household chores, a traditional and a stereotypical setting exclusively reserved for them.

It is very surprising to note that even in Window which is authored by an equal number of textbook writers comprising two males and two females, gender bias in the representation of women and men continuous to persist. This may explain at least in part that the sex of the author is perhaps not a significant factor determining the use of sex stereotypes in textbooks.

By the same token, although this textbook has been designed by two female designers in addition to two males, sex stereotyping maintains its biased pattern and seems to present strong resistance. This proves the subtlety of the problem as it subsists lurking beneath the surface, and without conscious awareness any attempts to combat it will undoubtedly be pointless and of no avail.

The overall findings of the analysis of the pictorial images which form the data in question provide strong evidence in rejection of the null hypotheses put forward at the outset of this study analyzing gender bias in the visual discourse of MEFL textbooks. The use of chi-square tests offers more credence in refutation of the null hypotheses which stipulate that there might be an equal representation regarding the pictorial depictions of the two sex

groups. Statistically speaking, there are indeed significant discrepancies between males and females at almost all levels.

Another finding of this quantitative analysis is that the type of gendered messages transmitted to students through these visual representations tends to perpetuate certain attributes as being highly associated with either males or females. This pattern of representation might have been deployed, intentionally or not, as an effort to draw our attention away from looking at the actual contributions of women as professional and managerial leaders, and seems to evoke merely their indoor duties along with their feminine attributes as opposed to men's more privileged masculine traits (Sadker and sadker, 1994; Mukundan and Nimehchisale, 2008).

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of this analysis of the pictorial representation of women and men in MEFL textbooks, one is reasonably led to conclude that their contents seem to be far away from any fuller consideration of the general guidelines documented at a worldwide level of gender bias checklists against which the production of any instructional materials could be made. The textbooks seem to be fraught with a wide range of gender misconceptions favoring male characters.

The frequency of male appearance in the visual depictions of the selected textbooks is significantly higher compared to females. The statistical ratio of female to male characters averaged 1: 1.44. In view of this ratio, the pictorial portrayal of women is underrepresented, and they seem to be almost indiscernible: 1110 pictures feature women characters while 1602 are reserved for men. By the same token, the obtained chi-square test result of this dimension indicates that the difference in the visual portrayal of women and men is statistically significant: $\chi^2(1) = 89.25, p < .05$.

The range of work activities, free activities and social activities assigned to the visual representation of female characters is very limited. The only activities where they seem to be more predominant are the ones which connect them with domestic life taking care of children, preparing meals, washing the dishes, worrying about the education of children, shopping, subject to programs fighting illiteracy and poverty, and being subservient and assistants to men (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971; Lee and Collins, 2008; Benattabou, 2015).

The results of the chi-square test implemented for the analysis of visual images provide strong evidence that the difference between the distribution of women and men, in so far as their occupational roles are concerned, in the sampled visual data is statistically significant. Women continue to be seen only as nurses, secretaries, receptionists, employers and in most cases male subordinates. This finding has also been reinforced through the frequency counts and the levels of ratios alluded to in the examination of women and men's visibility in images.

The prevailing image being inflicted to Moroccan students through the lenses of these textbooks is that females' portrayal in leadership and managerial roles is significantly low. The paucity of women characters visually depicted in leadership positions or in highly-ranked jobs is therefore an issue that should in no way be taken lightly. There is a danger that female language learners may feel a great injustice should male characters continue to figure far more often, or are assigned a plethora of occupational roles than females in these visual images.

The invisibility of women in highly-paid occupational roles may impart the implicit message that women have no say in such positions, and are perhaps warned against the potential risks they may run if ever they may venture to step beyond the thresholds of the household context. The stakes may surely be very high as constant screening of these pictorial representations will indoctrinate female language learners into taking everything as normal and at face value.

These heavily biased portrayals may surely have adverse psychological and educational effects on foreign language learners as target consumers of the visual contents of these textbooks. Subsequent research indicates that repeated exposure of students to biased visual portrayals of women and men similar to the ones investigated herein may surely do more harm than good to MEFL female learners, in specific as they may affect to a greater extent their motivation to learn, which may be conducive to a degradation of their learning potentials (Good et al., 2010; Lee and Collins, 2010).

With this picture in mind, Lee and Collins (2009) make a more enhanced recommendation arguing that:

“When including authentic materials in their publications, authors should consider choosing texts written by women and texts that describe women as inventors, scientists and heroes so that the contribution that women have made to literature and our history is not overlooked.” (Lee and Collins, 2009, p. 366).

As a matter of fact, there is a need to sensitize textbook writers and publishers alike about the potential side effects of sexism, and about the type of the gendered roles assigned to women and men in the visual images of textbooks (Reza Adel and Enayat (2016). It is a must therefore that awareness should be created first among textbook designers about the issues of gender bias.

All in all, the first locomotive to begin with in the process of sensitization is through the elimination of gender bias in all its multifaceted forms. One cannot help but only join one’s voice to Mwetulundila’s (2002) cautionary remarks stating that “disadvantaging girls in education means restricting the country’s progress and holding back our development” (Mwetulundila, 2002, p. 12).

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