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Evaluating an Instructional Textbook: A Critical Discourse Perspective

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Abstract

A critical discourse analysis (CDA) of English language teaching (ELT) textbooks can provide a theoretical description of existing ideological effects in the texts and a means to link linguistic and social practices. This study, thus, seeks to evaluate *Summit 2B* (i.e., the advanced book of *Top Notch* series) with a focus on the representation of male and female social actors. In so doing, this study drew on van Leeuwen's (1996) social actor framework and Halliday's (2004) transitivity model. To achieve the purpose of this study, content analysis was first carried out in the corpora obtained from the aforementioned textbook to find out the frequency and proportion of various social actors. The results obtained from the tests of significance (i.e., chi-square tests) and the qualitative data analyses revealed that there were some significant differences between males and females concerning role allocation (i.e., activation, subjection, and beneficialization), substitution (personalization/impersonalizaton), and personal pronouns. Compared with females, males were represented as more active, energetic, independent, and assertive forces; males were represented more frequently and placed in high-status positions; they were also individualized more frequently. The results indicated that though females and males were almost equally informalized and indetermined, there was not much serious attempt to eliminate the gender bias in *Summit*, used as a substitute for other ELT textbooks used in private language institutes in Iran. The findings suggest that textbook writers and publishers should be more cautious about the gender discourse, along with other criteria making ELT textbooks work, because gender bias can affect language learners' perception and preference for the choice of language in second or foreign (L2) communication.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, evaluation, gender, textbooks, social actors, *Summit*

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INTRODUCTION

Textbooks, as Richards (2001) states, form the kernel of most language programs, present the core for lessons, and complement teachers' instructions. They can "serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom" (p. 1). Many scholars maintain that textbooks are principal means of socialization that may influence students' opinions and propensity concerning themselves, other people, and society (Ndura, 2004). Textbooks can also affect learners' attitudes, viewpoints, and their choice of language in second/foreign language (L2) communication. As Otlowski (2003) points out, the various ways in which people are displayed in communication may affect students' viewpoints. Moreover, textbooks are considered as one of the media in the curriculum where social dominance is implicitly exerted (Moughrabi, 2001), so our curriculum is not merely a means of transferring knowledge, and "the text [*comprising*] curriculum is not simply a text; it is the text of power" (Da Silva, 1999, p. 7). In fact, curriculum is an empowered representation which implicitly authorizes and circulates a specific ideology (Da Silva, 1999).

As van Dijk (2001) states, models of routine discourse (i.e., textbooks, news reports, and daily conversations) shape our knowledge of the world, our socially shared attitudes, our ideologies, and main norms and values. Thus, textbooks as a model of routine discourse can reproduce the values of a specific culture. Moreover, despite the significant role of English language teaching (ELT) textbooks as a means of socialization and forming students' worldviews, they are sometimes replete with social and cultural biases. In addition, some instructional textbooks are dominated by the

unnoticed and stereotypic role of male or female social actors and biases, which might not have desired pedagogical outcomes for males or females. Given the above issues, it is worth being aware of social aspects and discursive structures of textbooks. At the same time, critical discourse analysis (CDA) can provide researchers with effective analytical tools to analyze texts to uncover social, cultural and ideological structures. This kind of discourse analysis is in charge of the different forms of social cognition that are shared by knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, and values. It can reveal the existence of ideological effects in various texts and has been useful in associating linguistic and social practices (van Dijk, 1995). According to Pennycook (2004), approaches to CDA are concerned with understanding "texts and practices of reading and writing in relationship to questions of social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement" (p. 787).

Thus, it is important for second or foreign (L2) learners and teachers to regard textbooks as more than only linguistic devices. Besides, more attention should be paid to how ELT textbooks can affect certain agendas. Given that CDA and gender studies are related in that both can aim to uncover ideological and social discursive patterns, this study is an attempt to investigate the way social actors (i.e., males and females) and potential discursive structures are represented in one of the ELT textbooks commonly taught to EFL learners at advanced level in many language teaching institutes in Iran. It is hoped that with a focus on gender bias and the means of critical reading, the current study helps both teachers and students to consider other features such as the representation of female and male social actors when they evaluate their ELT textbooks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because language is obviously connected to the members of the society in which it is spoken, social aspects are inexorably mirrored in their speech and culture (Downes, 1998; Jourdan & Tuite, 2006). That is, the context of situation dictates the kind language for specific situations. In light of this view, CDA has become one of the most predominant approaches to discourse and culture. Its goal is to identify societal problems, particularly discrimination and inequality (Renkema, 2004). In fact, this type of analysis considers discourse as a "social phenomenon" and attempts to reform the "social-theoretical foundations for practicing discourse analysis as well as for situating discourse in society" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 27). Trying to explain the relationship between linguistic practice and social structure, it is possible, as Fairclough (1992) argues, to give a linguistic translation to the concepts of power and ideology. That is, this approach appertains to transparent and nontransparent "structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in language" (Wodak, 2001, p. 2) and tries to disclose what is implied. In other words, CDA pinpoints the "strategies of *manipulation*, *legitimation*, *the manufacture of consent*, and other discursive ways" to control the minds of people in furtherance of authorities (van Dijk, 1995, p. 18).

Lakoff (1973), one of the pioneers of using critical analysis to show discrimination, several decades ago explored the manners in which women were represented in spoken and written English. She found out that women were considered as powerless and marginal in both the ways in which they spoke and the ways in which they were addressed. In Recent years, textbooks have been the target of extensive research from the CDA point of

view (e.g., Chafiaa, 2011; Kirkgöz, 2009; Otlowsky, 2003; Sahragard & Davatgarzadeh, 2010; Yaghoubi-Notash & Nariman-Jahan, 2012). Generally, the literature on the CDA and textbooks has demonstrated that some instructional textbooks are dominated by the unnoticed and stereotypic role of female social actors, the sexist depiction of both males and females, and biases.

Investigating gender bias in EFL textbooks has recently brought much enthusiasm among researchers. Several researchers (e.g., Ansary & Babaii, 2003; Litz, 2005) have demonstrated that textbooks can contain and transfer social and cultural biases. Ansary and Babaii (2003) investigated the status of sexism in two English language teaching textbooks: *Right Path to English I* and *Right Path to English II* (Birjandi & Soheili, 1999) taught to Iranian students at secondary schools. They concluded that these two textbooks could be regarded as sexist ones that would expose Iranian EFL students to a partial and unjustifiable representation of women. Also, Amal Saleh, Sajjadi, and Yarmohammadi (2006) scrutinized how language was used in the EFL high school textbooks in Iran. They used van Leeuwen's (1996) framework and Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) transitivity model. Results showed that females were ignored in these EFL textbooks. Moreover, the occurrence and the kind of activities, which males and females were involved in, were significantly different in the sense that females were mostly associated with the traditional roles of doing household chores and care giving.

Similar results were found on other contexts too. For instance, Tietz (2007) studied 19 textbooks (i.e., eight financial accounting textbooks, eight managerial accounting textbooks, and three principles textbooks) taught at

the college level in the US with respect to gender representation. The study adopted a transformative concurrent mixed methods research design. She found that males outnumbered females in the textbooks. Whereas women were passive and depicted most frequently in home setting, men were active and had more occupational positions. Furthermore, in Malaysian context, Mukundan and Nimehchisalem (2008) explored the representation of gender in several English textbooks taught in Malaysian secondary schools. They, along with Tietz (2007), reported that there was an obvious gender bias in that males were more presented than females as aggressive, banished, disorganized, and naughty. However, males presided over female in the sense that they spoke more frequently.

Also, in Jordanian context, Hamdan (2008) conducted a study to scrutinize the nine major aspects of gender: visibility in photos and illustrations, visibility in the text at the level of word and sentence, topic domination, jobs and occupations, firstness, grammatical function (e.g., subject), attributed personal traits (e.g., adjectives), leisure-activity types, and masculine generic conception in *Action Pack Series* from Grade One to Nine taught in the basic stage schools in Jordan. Like Tietz (2007) and Mukundan and Nimehchisalem (2008), Hamdan discovered that males outnumbered females in the nine explored facets.

Recently, Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010) examined the linguistic representation of male and female social actors and construction of gender identities in the reading texts of *Interchange* (*Third Edition*) from a CDA viewpoint. Results showed that women were depicted as powerful social actors and were not mostly associated with house chores. In the same line, Yaghoubi-Notash and Nariman-Jahan (2012) investigated the

conversations of the four volumes of the *Interchange* (*Third Edition*) series. Interestingly, their results were different from those obtained by Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010). They reported that conversations would portray a balanced gender representation with respect to the ratio of conversations, conversation initiation, number of words per turn, and complexity of speech across male and female participants in the conversations. Finally, the extent and kinds of gender bias in two of the EFL high school textbooks in Iran was studied by Amini and Birjandi (2012). They examined sexism in five classifications of visibility, firstness, generic masculine vocabulary, sex-linked occupations. They concluded that sexism was strikingly present in Iranian high school English textbooks.

The above studies are important. However, some (e.g., Amini & Birjandi, 2012) did not take a CDA perspective; some (e.g., Yaghoubi-Notash & Nariman-Jahan, 2012) were concerned with just quantitative analysis as regards gender representation; some (e.g., Tietz, 2007) focused on non-ELT textbooks; some (e.g., Sahragard & Davatgarzadeh, 2010; Yaghoubi-Notash & Nariman-Jahan, 2012) had a limited scope (i.e. limited to reading passages or conversations). Besides, their results were sometimes inconsistent. By drawing on CDA, assumed to be an effective tool, and by employing both qualitative and quantitative data, and widening the scope of research, the current study develops a critique of a more recently published ELT textbook, a new substitute to the *Interchange* series (Richards, Hull, & Proctor, 2005a, 2005b & 2005c) used in Iran. More specifically, using van Leeuwen's (1996) framework (see below), this study aims at exploring the manner of representing social actors and analyzing the potential discursive structures in the *Summit 2B* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006), which is the

advanced book of *Top Notch* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006). Van Leeuwen's model derives from the premise that "all discourses recontextualize social practices" (van Leeuwen, 2006, p. vii), and recontextualizating principles are associated with the basic units of social practice such as actors and their representations and identities. The rationale for choosing this model, thus, is that it is one of the most comprehensive models for analyzing the representation of social actors from a social perspective. To further explore the kind of activity associated with male and female social actors and make the study more comprehensive, Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) transitivity model, which is a practical linguistic framework for discovering the features of a particular discourse, was also adopted.

Theoretical Model of the Study

Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) draws upon a sociosemantic inventory in order to explicate the ways in which social actors can be represented and mentions two reasons for representing this inventory. Firstly, he claims that language lacks biuniqueness. Secondly, he argues that "meaning belongs to culture rather than to language and cannot be tied to any specific semiotic [*system*]" (p. 24). Contrary to other completely linguistically-oriented models of CDA, which draw on just linguistic operations and linguistic categories, van Leeuwen's (1996) model pays attention to social aspects of language and considers the representation of social actors. Table 1 is a brief description of several elements in van Leeuwen's (1996, pp. 38-61) model:

Table 1: Van Leeuwen's (1996) framework

Deletion (Social actors may be included or excluded to adjust specific purposes with regard to the intended readers)	
Inclusion	***Activation***: Social actors are presented as active individuals.
	Passivation: Social actors are the receivers of the activity.
Exclusion	***Suppressed***: Social actors may not be cited anywhere in the text.
	Backgrounded: Social actors may be excluded only in connection to specific activities.
Role Allocation **(**Roles are allocated to social actors to play in representations)	
Activation	***Participation***: The active role of the social actors is foregounded.
	Possessivation: A possessive pronoun can activate a social actor.
	Circumstantialization: Activation can also be realized through prepositional circumstantials such as *by* or *from*.
Passivation	***Subjection***: Subjected social actors are treated as objects in the representation.
	Beneficialization: Beneficialized social actors form a third party, which positively or negatively, benefits from the action.
Substitution (The included social actors can be either personalized or impersonalized)	
Personalization	***Functionalisation:*** It occurs when social actors are mentioned in relation to an activity, but identification occurs when social actors are described in terms of what they are.
	Classification: It occurs when the social actors are referred in terms of the major categories by mean of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people.
	Relational identification: It illustrates social actors in relation to their personal, kinship, or work relation to each other.
	Nomination: It is generally recognized by proper nouns, which can be formal, semi-formal or informal.
	Indetermination: It occurs when social actors are represented as unspecified, anonymous individuals or groups.
Impersonalization	***Abstraction:*** It occurs when social actors are indicated by means of a quality attributed to them.
	Objectivation: It occurs when social actors are represented with reference to a place or thing closely connected either with their person or with the activity.
Generecization	***Generecization:*** It occurs when social actors can be represented as classes or as specific, identifiable individuals.
Specification	***Individualization***: It occurs when social actors can be represented as individuals.
	Collectivization: It may be realized by a mass noun or a noun denoting a group of people.

Another model, which has been used for materials analysis, is Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) transitivity model. According to Halliday (1985), transitivity is a module of the ideational function of the clause that attempts to represent processes or experiences. Processes exhibit the individuals' perception of the world and can be conveyed by means of verbs. In fact, the transitivity model "construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 170). In this model, there is a fundamental distinction between the inner and outer experience. Whereas the outer experience refers to actions and events, and people or other actors who make things happen, the inner experience is "partly a kind of replay of the outer, recording it, reacting to it, reflecting on it, and partly a separate awareness of our states of being" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 170). The model differentiates between material process (inner experience) and mental process (outer experience) by means of grammar. For example, "you produce so much money" is a material clause, but "I was fascinated by it" is a mental one. The third types of processes in this model are the processes of recognizing and categorizing which are called relational process clauses like "usually means mostly" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 170).

In transitivity system, material, mental, and relational processes are three principal kinds of processes. However, there are further classifications situated at these three boundaries (i.e., behavioral, verbal, and existential). According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 171), behavioral processes, located on the borderline of material and mental processes, describe the outer manifestations of inner workings (e.g., "people are laughing") and physiological states (e.g., "people were sleeping") . Verbal processes are on

the borderline between mental and relational processes. They are symbolic relationships formulated in human consciousness and appear in the form of language as in sayings and meanings (e.g., "we say that every fourth African is a Nigerian"). Finally, existential processes, recognizing all kinds of phenomena to exist or happen, are on the borderline between relational and material processes. Halliday's model offers an effective framework for discovering the central linguistic features of a particular discourse.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Textbooks form the kernel of most educational programs and teachers, in general, devote approximately 70 to 90 per cent of classroom time using them (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1992). As Thomas (1983) argues, if textbooks do not portray society properly or depict inappropriate language for specific situations, learners may be faced with an unsuitable language and experience a cross-cultural pragmatic failure. In the context of Iran, English is formally taught to students for seven years during junior and senior high schools. EFL teaching at Iranian schools seems to be oriented towards the students' future needs to read academic English texts in the textbooks, papers, journals, the Internet, magazines, and newspapers. Furthermore, many students attend private language institutes in the hope that they can improve their English proficiency and be able to use English in authentic contexts. However, in such institutes, ELT textbooks are the main medium of instruction and students' access to teaching materials. They can construct, naturalize, and legitimize ideologies and formulate language learners' worldviews (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2001). Therefore, it is important to provide a critique of ELT textbooks used in Iran. That is to say, this study

seeks to demonstrate ways through which social actors (i.e., males and females) are represented in one of ELT textbooks used in Iran and uncover the possible discursive structures. More specifically, this study aims to analyze *Summit 2B* (2006), the advanced book of *Top Notch* series (Saslow & Ascher, 2006) from a CDA perspective by drawing on van Leeuwen's (1996) social actor framework and Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) transitivity model. The reason for choosing this textbook is that the *Top Notch* series are new ELT instructional textbooks taught in Iran and many language schools have recently replaced the *New Interchange* series (Richards, Hull & Proctor, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c) with them. If other primary criteria are satisfied, to see whether these ELT textbooks are better alternatives to the other commonly-used ELT textbooks from sexism points of views is worth consideration. As Florent and Walter (1989) point out, sexism has existed for a long time in our culture, our language, and our subconscious that it is difficult to uncover or avoid it in the production of language-teaching materials. Perhaps textbooks writers create sexist situations and show gender bias unconsciously. Moreover, there are so many other criteria and issues in making a textbook work such as types of syllabuses, methodology, and interest of subjects that there is a temptation to let attempts against gender bias slide. Resisting the temptation produces fruitful results since bias towards the role of male and female social actors in teaching materials and insensitivity to the needs of users of materials through presenting language and examples which are too much against their expectations makes it hard for them to understand, given that language involves everything in its use and gender "is continually produced, reproduced, and indeed changed through people's performance of gendered

acts" (Eckret & McConnell, 2003, p. 4). This study is a step towards the better recognition of the role of male and female social actors to avoid possible bias lapses in ELT materials and the better understanding of linguistic practices which support particular gender ideologies and coerces certain views. Accordingly, the following research question was addressed:

- Are male and female social actors represented differently in *Summit 2B*, and, if so, what linguistic and ideological assumptions can account for the difference?

METHOD

Setting CDA as a framework, this study collected data from *Summit 2B,* along with its accompanying workbook, as regards the gender representation. This textbook is designed for the advanced-level students and includes five lessons, each of which is comprised of several sections such as Topic Preview, Sound Bites, Grammar Snapshots, Conversation Snapshot, Vocabulary, Listening Comprehension, and Reading. In this study, Grammar Snapshots, Sound Bites, Conversation Snapshots, Discussion Builders, and Readings were considered in the analysis since the representation of males and females in *context* was important.

First, two raters carried out content analysis to find out the frequency and proportion of the social actors, using van Leeuwen's (1996) social actor framework and Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) transitivity model. The raters of the present study (one with an MA and the other with a PhD degree in TEFL) had good knowledge of these frameworks. Second, to increase dependability of the main data, two training sessions were held to do content analysis on one lesson from

the *Passages* (Richards & Sandy, 2008), using the aforementioned frameworks. The social actors, parts of the book, and the elements of the frameworks to be studied were decided. Third, content analysis on all the lessons from *Summit 2B* was done in 2012. Fourth, Kappa measure of agreement was run through SPSS (version 17) on the frequencies of the males and female social actors with regard to the selected elements to ensure inter-rater reliability of the collected data. The Kappa value was found to be 0.74. As Peat (2001) states, a Kappa value above 0.70 indicates a good agreement, hence a good measure of inter-rater consistency. Fifth, two weeks later, the remaining discrepancies were discussed and consensus on the data was reached whenever possible. For example, it was agreed that "I just heard he is a CEO of MagaStar Foods" (Saslow & Ascher, 2006, p. 74), would represent a mental process. That is, it was agreed that the verb 'heard' would be part of an inner experience in the mind of the speaker in the clause. However, there were areas of disagreement. For example, disagreement existed over whether the verb 'insist' in "Mark Rodgers, the hotel's general manager, insists your complaints was handled properly" (Saslow & Ascher, 2006, p. 68), would represent a mental or behavioral process. The average of frequencies from the two raters was reported where agreement was not reached.

RESULTS

A triangular approach employing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies was employed in this study. After the frequencies and proportions of the social actors were obtained in the corpus, a series of chi-square tests of significance were run to explore the significant differences

between the observed frequencies of the selected categories depicted in the van Leeuwen's (1996) and Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) models. The following are the results of tests of significance, together with the percentages of data on the major elements of deletion (including inclusion and exclusion), role allocation (including activation and passivization), transitivity (including material, mental, verbal, relational, and behavioral processes) and substitution (personalization and impersonalization) with respect to male and female actors.

Deletion

Representations include or exclude social actors to "suit their interests and purposes in relation to readers for whom they are intended" (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 38). Table 2 summarizes the results of the inclusion and exclusion of males and females, classified under the deletion category, and displays chi square results.

Table 2: The chi-square results for inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion/Exclusion	**Male**	**Female**	χ^2	***Sig.***
Inclusion (Total = 227)	141 (62.1%)	86 (37.9%)	1.14	.285
Exclusion (Total = 21)	10 (47.6%)	11 (52.4%)		

As Table 2 shows, 227 cases of 'inclusion' were observed; males were more represented than females. The difference between males (62.1%) and females (37.9%) concerning inclusion was noticeable, but examining the frequencies showed that males (47.6%) and females (52.4) were rather equally excluded in *Summit*. When the test of significance was run, the results of chi-square test revealed no statistically significant difference

between male and female social actors with regard to inclusion and exclusion since the *p* value was great (χ^2=1.14, *p*=.285). That is, females were not likely to be excluded more than males in the textbook. The above finding was further supported by the qualitative analysis. The reading parts in the textbook were mostly neutral in the sense that in some cases both males and females were excluded; for example, there were reading texts on laughing and globalization, excluding both genders, but in other parts of the textbook (such as conversations and grammar snapshot), males were included much more than females. For example, out of five Grammar Snapshots, two were about successful males (i.e., *Norman Cousins* and *Jules Verne*), and out of five Discussion Builders, one was about a famous male (i.e., *Sigmund Freud*).

Role Allocation (Rearrangement)

Role allocation is also of great significance in CDA and has constituted an important part of the work of many critical linguists (e.g., Fowler, 1991; van Dijk, 1991). Table 3 shows the results for role allocation in *Summit 2B*.

Table 3: The chi-square results for role allocation

Role allocation		**Male**	**Female**	χ^2	***Sig.***
Activation	(Total = 331)	215 (64.9%)	116 (35.1)		
Passivation	Subjection (Total = 27)	23 (85.2%)	4 (14.8%)	6.99	.030
	Beneficialization (Total = 22)	13 (59.1%)	9 (40.9%)		

According to Table 3, 'activation' (n=331) received a higher frequency than 'passivation' (n=49). Also, in all role allocations, males outnumbered females. Besides, in 'subjection', males received the highest

role allocations. When the test of significance was conducted, as depicted in Table 3, the difference between male and female social actors was great enough to be statistically significant as regards all activation, subjection, and beneficialization categories (χ^2=6.99, $*p \leq .05$).

Qualitative analyses also backed up the above findings. The texts in *Summit 2B* which showed males as more effective and genius were more than the ones for women. For example, three texts were about three genius males (i.e., *Sigmund Freud*, *Norman Cousin*, and *Jules Verne*), and only one text, which was in the workbook, was related to a female mathematician genius (i.e., *Shakuntala Devi*). The male social actors were also presented as objects in the representations and beneficialized from the actions more often than females. As Examples 1 and 2 illustrate, it was the males who were shown to be more active, genius, and effective. These examples show the passivation of males by means of subjection and beneficialization.

> **Example 1:** *Selye's theory later* ***caused Cousins*** *to advise his doctors never to tell their patients that they couldn't survive an illness (Summit 2B*, p. 88)**.**
> **Example 2:** ***Verne*** *will always be* ***credited*** *with having foreseen the invention of many modern machines and technologies (Summit 2B*, p. 100)*.*

To investigate the issue more, another chi-square was also run to see if the difference between males and females was significant regarding the subgroups of activation category (i.e., participation, possessivation, and circumstantialization). The results are depicted in Table 4.

Table 4: The chi-square results for activation

Activation	**Male**	**Female**	χ^2	***Sig.***
Participation (Total = 300)	200 (66.7%)	100 (33.3%)	4.12	.042

Possessivation (Total = 31)	15 (48.4%)	16 (51.6%)		
Circumstantialization	0	0		

According to Table 4, social actors were most frequently activated with 'participation' (n=300) rather than with possessivation (n=31) or circumstantialization (n=0). In fact, neither males nor females were circumstantialized. In addition, males (66.7%) had a higher level of participation in the social activities represented in *Summit* than females (33.3%), but males (48.4%) and females (51.6%) were almost equally possessivated. When the test of significance was run, results showed that the difference between males and females concerning participation was statistically significant (χ^2=4.12, $*p < .05$).

As to the qualitative analyses, the followings are several examples of the 'participation' and 'possessivation' of the male and female social actors, giving support to the above findings.

> **Example 3**: *According to **Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi**, author of Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, one of the best ways to engage your attention on a dull task is to make it harder. (Summit 2B*, p. 80).
> **Example 4**: *No offense, **Eva**, but don't you think you're talking out of both sides of your mouth? I mean, you've got your Brazilian shoes, your Chilean wine, your German car. How can you be against globalization? (Summit 2B*, p. 111).
> **Example 5**: ***Norman Cousin's** 1979 work 'Anatomy of an Illness' recounts his recovery from a painful illness that doctors told him he would never survive. Cousins undertook an original program of self-healing, based on, among other things, laughter. (Summit 2B*, p. 88).
> **Example 6**: *A man at a grocery store witnessed a **woman** shopping with **her three-year-old daughter**. (Summit 2B*, *Workbook*, p. 91).

The above examples demonstrate that the textbook writers had a positive attitude towards males. In example 3, a male writer was presented

positively while, in example 4, a female social actor was presented somehow negatively. Similarly, in example 5, a male social actor was possessivated as being the writer or owner of a creative book, while, in example 6, a female was possessivated as being a mother, not as possessing an active social role.

Transitivity

Drawing on Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) model, the verbs were analyzed to see the type of activity males and females were represented with. The results of the difference between males and females in relation to material, mental, verbal, relational, and behavioral processes are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: The chi-square results for transitivity

Transitivity	**Male**	**Female**	χ^2	***Sig.***
Material process (Total = 144)	86 (59.7%)	58 (40.3%)		
Mental process (Total = 77)	43 (55.8%)	34 (44.2%)		
Verbal process (Total = 71)	42 (59.2%)	29 (40.8%)	1.03	.904
Relational process (Total = 53)	33 (62.3%)	20 (37.7%)		
Behavioral process (Total = 29)	19 (65.5%)	10 (34.5%)		

Table 5 demonstrates that among the four types of the processes, 'material process' (n=144) and 'behavioral process' (n=29) received the highest and lowest frequencies. Also, a close look at the frequencies reveals that males were represented in all types of the processes more than females. In addition, the data in Table 5 showed no *statistically significant* difference between males and females with regard to transitivity, that is, all four processes (i.e., material, mental, verbal, relational, and behavioral processes). But, males were activated in relation to material, mental, verbal,

relational, and behavioral processes more than females, though not significantly. The qualitative analyses also revealed that males were sometimes represented more frequently than females in clauses of doing, happening, and creating; seeing and thinking; saying and behaving; and clauses of having identity. Example 7 below describes a famous U.S. male industrialist who was the inventor of automobile, but example 8 describes a woman who was a work-at-home mom.

> **Example 7**: *U.S. industrialist Henry Ford* ***built*** *an early gasoline engine and one of the first automobiles (Summit 2B,* p. 76).
> **Example 8**: *From 12:00 to 3:00 each day, a work-at-home mom* ***keeps*** *the door at her home office* ***closed*** *and* ***turns*** *her cell phone* ***off*** *(Summit 2B,* p. 81).

Both examples above show the presence of male and female social actors concerning the material processes. The verb 'built', associated with the male (i.e., *Henry Ford*), reflects power, representing the male as more involved in high-status social activities. In contrast, the female (i.e., mom) was associated mostly with home activities. The claim that males are activated more positively is supported by examples 9 and 10. Both examples below show the presence of male and female social actors concerning the verbal and mental processes. In example 9, it was the female (i.e., mother) who was considered as a braggart disapprovingly, but the male celebrated the sense of accomplishment. In example 10, it was a male genius who was represented positively through the mental process (i.e., amazing others greatly).

Example 9: *They listened to their mother **brag about** his accomplishments so often that they came to know her stories by heart* (*Summit 2B*, p. 83).
Example 10: *Indian genius Srinivasa Ramanujan **astonished** people by solving complex numerical problems instantly in his head (Summit 2B*, p. 76).

As already mentioned, males were activated more positively. However, in several cases, females were positively represented through the verb processes. In example 11, a female social actor (*i.e., Valerie Hueso)* was activated in relation to material processes and in example 12, a female social actor was positively activated in relation to verbal process.

Example 11: *Valerie Hueso **spends** much of her free time **painting**, **drawing**, and **creating** sculptures (Summit 2B, Workbook,* p. 73).
Example 12: *She **taught** herself to read and write (Summit 2B, Workbook,* p. 83).

Substitution

Substitution is a principal type of transformation in which the elements of the real social practice are substituted with semiotic elements (van Leeuwen, 2006). Table 6 exhibits the results of personalization and impersonalization categorized under the heading substitution. As demonstrated in Table 6, both males and females were almost always personalized. As for impersonalization, there were no instances of abstraction and only one instance of objectivation for both males and females (i.e., a man was represented as "a would-be traveler" [*Workbook*, p. 66] and a woman was represented as "the human calculator" [*Workbook*, p. 83]).

Table 6: The chi-square results for substitution

	Substitution	**Male**	**Female**	χ^2	***Sig.***
Personalization	Functionalization (Total = 47)	35 (74.5%)	12 (25.5%)		
	Classification (Total = 30)	21 (70%)	9 (30%)		
	Relational identification (Total = 32)	14 (43.8%)	18 (56.3%)		
	Formalization (Total = 46)	41 (89.1%)	5 (10.9%)		
	Semiformalization (Total = 77)	50 (64.9%)	27 (35.1%)	32.73	.000
	Informalization (Total = 103)	50 (48.5%)	53 (51.5%)		
	Indetermanation (Total = 35)	18 (51.4%)	17 (48.6%)		
Impersonalization	Objectivation (Total = 2)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)		
	Abstraction	0	0		

From the seven subcategories of personalization, 'informalization' (n=103) received the highest frequency. In addition, the interaction of gender variable and substitution (personalization/impersonalization) was statistically significant (χ^2=32.73, **p*<.05). In fact, males outnumbered females in classification, formalization, semiformalization, informalization, and indetermination significantly. The percentage of males' presence in social activities was 74.5% and that of females was 25.5%. Meanwhile, nomination is typically realized by proper nouns, which can be *formalization*, *semiformalization,* or *informalization*. There were significant differences between males and females concerning nomination. Males (89.1%) and females (10.9%) were strikingly different concerning formalization. Also, males (64.9%) were semiformalized more frequently than females (35.1%), meaning that males were most often referred to with 'surnames only', 'with or without honorifics', and 'with both names and

surnames'. However, females and males were almost equally informalized (51.5% and 48.5% respectively) and indetermined (48.6% and 51.4% respectively). That is, they were equally referred to by only names or they were equally unspecified. In addition, in support of the quantitative data, the qualitative data revealed that males had prestigious and high-stakes positions (e.g., hotel's general manager, Harvard psychologist, head of a million-dollar company, U.S. industrialist, political scientist, great philosopher, great mathematician, secretary general of the United Nations, and project manager).

However, as examples 13 and 14 below demonstrate, females were referred to as sculptors, pianists, writers, chemists, and activists that had a lower status, compared with the activities attributed to males. A female social actor (*Louise Nevelson*) was identified as a U.S. sculptor, but a male social actor (*Sigmund Freud*) was identified as the founder of psychoanalysis.

> **Example 13**: *U.S.* ***sculptor Louise Nevelson****'s abstract arrangements of wood, metal, and other materials demonstrated her artistic vision. (Summit 2B,* p. 76).
> **Example 14**: ***Austrian physician Sigmund Freud****, the founder of psychoanalysis, showed an immense capacity for understanding human behavior and feelings.* (p. 76)

It was also important to see if the males or females were shown specifically or generically. Table 7 shows the chi-square results for the difference between males and females with respect to the major classification of genericization and specification (i.e., individualization and collectivization).

Table 7: The chi-square results for genericization and specification

Genericization/Specification		Male	Female	χ^2	*Sig.*
Genericization		0	0		
Specification	Individualization (Total = 249)	161 (64.7%)	88 (35.3%)	5.37	.020
	Collectivization (Total = 3)	0 (.0%)	3 (100%)		

The above results show that there were no instances of genericization for either females or males, and they were represented through specification. As to the subgroups of the specification, 'individualization' (n=249) received a higher frequency and there were only three cases of collectivization. Furthermore, the difference between males and females in relation to specification reached a statistical significance (χ^2=5.37, **p*< .020). Males (64.7%) were individualized more often than females (35.3%). This was because male social actors were nominated more through proper nouns and represented as individuals than groups and types. The frequencies regarding the collectivization of females (100%) and males (0%) also support this finding.

Table 8 shows the chi-square results for the difference between males and females with regard to the personal pronouns used to represent them.

Table 8: The chi-square results for personal pronouns

Personal pronouns	Male	Female	χ^2	*Sig.*
1st person pronoun (Total = 161)	86 (53.4%)	75 (46.6%)		
2nd person pronoun (Total = 65)	41 (63.1%)	24 (36.9%)	6.59	.037
3rd person pronoun (Total = 131)	89 (67.9%)	42 (32.1%)		

According to Table 8, first person pronouns (n=161) were more frequently used than second (n=65) and third person (n=131) pronouns. A

close scrutiny revealed that males were represented with first, second, and third person pronouns more than females. In the test of significance, the difference between males and females concerning the personal pronouns was also statistically significant (χ^2=6.59, **p*<.037), indicating the significant role of gender variable in the use of personal pronouns. The following examples support the above issue, that is, the presentation of *male* social actor with the third personal pronoun. In example 15, the male social actor was represented as a successful person in business and associated with a high-status activity while in example 16, the female social actor was associated with a daily household task.

> **Example 15**: *Well, he's apparently turned his life around. I just heard he's the CEO of Mega Star Food.* (*Summit 2B*, p. 75)
> **Example 16**: *She took it to the cleaners*. … *When she* ***told*** *us this story, we all laughed.* (*Summit 2B*, p. 69)

Example 17 and 18 demonstrate the presentation of male and female social actors in first person pronouns. In example 17, the male social actor was represented positively as a lucky person whereas in example 18, the female social actor was represented as a careless person or perhaps unlucky person.

> **Example 17**: *It was very easy. I only needed my passport. I'm lucky. If I weren't Japanese, I probably would have needed a visa. (Summit 2B, p. 64)*
> **Example 18**: *I could just kick myself! If only I'd put some of my essentials in my purse! ... If I'd taken a few simple precautions, I would not be in this predicament now.* (*Summit 2B,* p. 64)

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to investigate the representation of male and female social actors in *Summit 2B* textbook, the advanced book of *Top Notch* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006), by drawing on van Leeuwen's (1996) social actor framework and Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) transitivity model. The overall results indicated that there were biased attitudes towards the role of females in the social activities. The findings related to the exclusion and inclusion of the males and females revealed that they were almost equally excluded, but males were included slightly more than females. Besides, males were included and represented as more independent, successful, active, and powerful people than females in the textbook. One reason for different representations of social actors might be that ELT textbook writers think stereotypes represent some kind of norm that they probably ought to fit. For instance, in many societies, men are seen as more interested in autonomy or, according to Eckret and McConnell (2003), there is a powerful normative view in western industrial societies that "men have powerful motives to appear strong and impassive" (p. 141). It is possible that these stereotypes are resonated in some ELT textbooks like *Summit*, resulting in gender bias. In addition, Lakoff (1975) argues that women tend to position themselves as powerless in society, so they reject positions of authority from which they may successfully launch their meanings into discourse with a hope for their success. This can be another reason for the above finding of this study.

The above findings indicate that a little bias crept in through the textbook though it was not significant enough to provoke serious alarm as the interaction of gender variable and the inclusion/exclusion social actors

was not *statistically* significant. When compared with the *Interchange* series, *Top Notch* textbooks can get more positive evaluation against including/excluding a specific gender. According to Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010), in the *Interchange* series, females are included strikingly more than males with positive attitudes toward females and negative ones toward males. It should be noted that unfair inclusion and exclusion of social actors can exert specific ideologies on students (Otlowski, 2003). Besides, textbooks are the main stimuli in paving the ground for having conspicuous impact on students' views. Thus, the dominant presence of a specific gender is not pedagogically justified in the ELT textbooks such as *Summit 2B* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006), which is still far from the ideal situation in which each gender is represented equally.

The results concerning the role allocation of males and females manifested that males were both more activated and passivated than females, and there was a positive attitude towards them. A detailed inspection of the examples confirms the idea that male social actors in *Summit* were regarded as clever and creative as they were, for instance, associated with the words (e.g., verbs such as *advis*e and *credit),* demonstrating ingenuity and creativity. Moreover, males were activated more frequently through participation; that is, they were displayed as more active forces than females. One reason might be due to the perception that men should have the leading active role in the society. Eckret and McConnell (2003) state that females often appreciate books which feature males and "can frequently identify with the male protagonists, whereas the reverse happens far less often" (p. 209). Referring to such asymmetries in school textbooks, Macaulay and Brice (1997) also found a tendency in

1990s syntax texts to cast males as the active doers, whereas females were more often the passive recipients of males' actions.

However, the above findings are different from the ones obtained by Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010), who evaluated the *Interchange* series. They reported that, in the *Interchange* series, females were represented as active and dynamic forces in the society more than males. The *Summit* textbook would favor males, but the *Interchange* series would favor females with respect to their roles in the society. In general, in *Summit 2B*, the active roles of the male social actors were most often foregrounded in relation to positive activities. On the contrary, as Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010) have reported, in the *Interchange* series, female activation is realized by participation more frequently than males.

As to the types of activities males and females were associated with, the findings showed that males were represented in material, mental, verbal, relational, and behavioral processes more frequently than females, though not very significantly. Furthermore, the nature of the actions in relation to which males were activated was more powerful, linking the males to high social activities. However, females were mostly associated with home activities and low status jobs. Their presence was more palpable in indoor static activities, such as helping and care-giving roles. One reason is that females have still been less successful breaking into skilled and nontraditional jobs and this experience of gendered divisions of labor are still ensconced in the discourse in teaching materials such as *Summit 2B*. This issue might have negative consequences. Marginalization of females and associating them mostly with home activities may exert certain ideologies on L2 students. Perhaps, this action will inculcate the students

with the idea that males (including male students) are more powerful and genius than females. As Lee and Collins (2008) argue, this type of presentation might reinforce stereotyped views of male and female roles and their abilities among students, which is detrimental to L2 Learning.

The findings related to the substitution category revealed that both males and females were, in general, almost always personalized. However, males outnumbered females in classification, formalization, and semiformalization remarkably. Also, they were typically represented in high-status activities. But, females were represented more in terms of their kinship relations, which would be indicative of informal activities. Perhaps, given gendered norms in industrialized western societies and many other countries, the textbook writers tended to characterize females as more interested in promoting *intimacy* with others, in strengthening affiliative bonds among people, and in promoting warm feelings all way around. In addition, the textbook implicitly encourages us to assume that females are regarded as more dependent on others, perhaps because men are observed as most interested in establishing independence in society and women are generally raised in a discourse of female subordination and material dependence on men. The above results stand in contrast to the personalization of males and females in the *Interchange* series. According to Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010), both males and females were functionalized and classified in terms of their age and provenance almost equally in the *Interchange* series. However, both textbooks are similar in terms of the relational identification; females in both textbooks were more frequently identified in terms of their kinship and personal relationships. In contrast, females and males in the *Interchange* series were almost equally

formalized and semiformalized. Also, females were more often informalized than males in the *Interchange* series (Sahragard & Davatgarzadeh, 2010). It appears that the *Interchange* writers were less gender-biased with respect to the above categories of personalization (i.e., functionalization, formalization, and semiformalization).

The findings of the present study further demonstrated that males were individualized more frequently than females, but females were collectivized more than males. Perhaps this is a reflection of different values given to each gender in many spheres of society. According to Eckret and McConnell (2003), men are said to be more individualistic and competitive and women are said to be more cooperative and other-oriented. These categories are of great importance from CDA points of views since, as van Leeuwen (2006) states, elite persons are often individualized, and ordinary people are often collectivized. Thus, their imbalance representation might make a specific gender more visible or impose negative or positive attitudes towards that gender. Meanwhile, the finding that collectivism is less marked, that 'individualization' has outnumbered 'collectivism', can be due to the western culture which favors individuality more than collectivity. The findings obtained from the analysis of the *Interchange* series run counter to the finding of the current study because, as Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010) have reported, females were shown as independent individuals more frequently in the *Interchange* series. Finally, the above findings in the present study are in line with the results on the presentation of personal pronouns too. In the present study, males were represented with first, second, and third person pronouns more than females; that is, they were more frequently referred to by these pronouns than females. This finding is

not against expectation since males were more personalized. Besides, they were more represented as social actors through grammatical role of agents. This issue further reinforces men's visibility in the textbook. In sum, some of the above findings indicating asymmetry can be partially a function of the cultural valuation and devaluation of specific gender and may not be taken positively since they suggest gender bias in the textbook.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was an attempt to explore the way male and female social actors were represented in *Summit 2B*, the advanced book of *Top Notch* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006), using van Leeuwen's (1996) social actor framework and Halliday's (2004, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) transitivity model. The findings indicated that the textbook writers were biased to some extent with regard to the representation of male and female social actors in that males were presented as more active, independent, successful, and famous than females; males were presented more and associated with activities highly valued; they were individualized more than females, who were more spectators of male achievements. Generally, *Summit* does not represent males and females quite neutrally; there is a more positive attitude towards males and the role of the male social actors is most often foregrounded. Also, it appears that *Summit* is biased with respect to the several categories of male and female personalization. Given that ideologies can be disseminated through the medium of language in ELT textbooks, these findings may not be promising because the *Top Notch* instructional textbooks are currently taught in many language learning institutes in Iran and might be considered by many to be a good substitute for other less

recent ELT textbooks. However, on the positive side, the results showed that there was not a *statistically significant* difference between male and female social actors in relation to material, mental, and relational processes. Besides, there was not a *statistically significant* difference between them with regard to the 'exclusion' part. In addition, females and males were equally informalized and indetermined in the above textbook. All these tend to reduce likelihood of a negative impact on the part of females and facilitate their language learning in L2 contexts.

By implication, some traces of gender stereotypes and bias in the above instructional textbook should not go unnoticed. As Ellis (2002) states, the gender bias available in the textbooks brings about these sources to be unacceptable to be used. The findings of this study imply that L2 Learners be made aware of particular ideologies in the current ELT textbooks and encouraged to read the instructional English textbooks analytically. Textbook writers might reconstruct a particular culture to impose certain ideologies in favor a certain gender. In plain English, when L2 learners are unaware of gender bias and stereotyping, certain ideologies can be exerted and prevailed unconsciously. Therefore, Iranian EFL learners should be engaged in a critical discussion of language, power, ideologies, and the inclusion and exclusion as well as functionalization of males and females in their ELT textbooks.

In addition, ELT textbook writers need to be more attentive of the gender bias than before. Teaching a language is not restricted to teaching its phonology, syntax, and semantics. Materials developers in L2 can be in charge of the gender bias, stereotypes, and inequality in textbooks, which all affect students' minds and motivation as well as their preference for the kind

of language in L2 communication; they should not marginalize a particular gender or infuse negative attitudes towards either males or females.

Bio-data

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