



# Examining Gender Representation in English as a Foreign Language Textbooks Using Critical Discourse Analysis

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## المخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة، التي تتبع منهج التحليل النقدي للخطاب، تمثيلات النوع الاجتماعي في كتابي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL): Pathways Foundations (2013) و Pathways 1 لفيتنج ونجافي (2014)، في جامعة العلوم التطبيقية للشرق الأوسط (UAME). اعتمدت الدراسة نموذج فيركلاف الثلاثي الأبعاد (2015) لتحليل النصوص من خلال الوصف، والتفسير، والتأويل، كما ورد في كتب تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية. وقد تم تطبيق نموذج التحليل النقدي للخطاب من خلال تحليل التمثيل البصري، واستخدام اللغة، وتكرار وأنواع الأنشطة، والأنشطة الاجتماعية والمنزلية المعروضة في الكتابين. وقد أتاح كل من الوصف والتفسير والتأويل إجراء تحليل شامل للنصين، كاشفاً العلاقة بين المحتوى والسياقات الاجتماعية والسياسية. ومن خلال تحليل الكتب الدراسية في ضوء هذه السياقات الثلاثة، تم التوصل إلى رؤى حول مظاهر الظلم الواضحة والمخفية المرتبطة بعلاقات القوة المتعلقة بالنوع الاجتماعي. وأشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن كلا كتابي تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أظهرتا تحيزاً في تمثيل الذكور والإناث ضمن السياقات الثلاث.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التحليل النقدي للخطاب، تمثيل النوع الاجتماعي، الصور النمطية، كتب تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، الجامعات في الشرق الأوسط.

## Abstract

This critical discourse approach study examines gender representations in Chase (2013) and Fettiq and Najafi (2014) English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks, Pathways Foundations and Pathways 1, at University of Applied Sciences Middle East (UAME). The study followed Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model to deconstruct the texts via description, interpretation, and explanation found in the EFL textbooks. The model of Critical discourse

analysis was applied via pictorial representation; language use; frequency and types of activities; social and domestic activities presented within the two textbooks. Description, interpretation, and explanation allowed a complete analysis of both texts revealing the relationship between content, social, and political contexts. Analyzing the textbooks through the lenses of the three contexts provided insights to clear and hidden injustices in connection to power relations related to gender. The results of the study indicated both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks demonstrated biased regarding females and males within the three contexts.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, gender representation, stereotypes, EFL textbooks, Middle Eastern universities.

## **Introduction**

Textbooks are the main tool in many educational contexts and in language learning coursework. As a result, stakeholders such as educators, and decision makers should be aware of thoughts and concepts present in English as Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks. Hammond (2006) mentioned when choosing textbooks, it is extremely important to examine ideas included in these textbooks. Hammond emphasizes how textbooks include clear and hidden ideologies as well as stereotypes that can affect students' lives and how they perceive themselves in relation to others either in a positive or negative perception. Clear and hidden ideologies may also influence how students deal with daily issues. For instance, if textbooks contain clear and hidden stereotypes, students have a higher possibility of building false assumptions potentially leading to mistreatment of people who are oppressed. EFL students may also avoid communicating socially and academically with students who are oppressed. Furthermore, if educators and decision makers develop awareness of negative ideologies and their effects on people's lives, many students may lose self-confidence to freely express their opinions or participate in the learning process successfully. Freire (2005) stated the aim of schools is to teach students the skills that allow them to engage with other people socially, academically, and practically.

Hammond (2006) indicated language instructors need to implement more critical and analytical knowledge when discussing issues students face in their lives. It is essential for educators to be familiar with tools and resources to analyze and critique injustices that appear in textbooks. As educators, we explore social justice in relation to the values we have for ourselves, our students, and society. Searching for social justice happens by teaching students to reflect on ideologies found in

textbooks and allow students to trust themselves and their abilities to gain vital knowledge. Mirra and Morrell (2011) revealed how applying a funds-of-knowledge method (Freire, 2005) in the classrooms can help culturally responsive teachers learn more about their students, connecting new cultural knowledge to material, and realizing heterogeneity within cultural groups.

This current study analyzes two EFL textbooks Chase (2013) and Fettig and Najafi (2014) published by National Geographic Learning by Cengage in the United Kingdom. These two required EFL textbooks are part of University of Applied Sciences Middle East (UAME - pseudonym) UAME orientation program for level one and level two students. The two selected textbooks we analyzed are intended to teach listening, speaking, and critical thinking. The UAME orientation program is for students who have not passed the minimum English language requirements based on their scores from the UAME placement test. In this orientation program students learn the four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking to be prepared for their majors while attending UAME. In this paper we examine these textbooks used at and answer the following question: In what ways does critical discourse analysis (CDA) reveal how gender is represented in EFL textbooks used in a language foundations program at an institution of higher education in the Middle East? In the analysis, we consider gender representations of females and males based on different aspects such as pictorial representation; language use; frequency and types of gender activities; combined with social and domestic roles using qualitative methods in relation to the social context.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Research approaches, such as CDA, allow us to more closely examine textbooks for embedded stereotypes. Anyon et al. (2009) brought to light the most applicable theories and hypotheses to examine negative influences and social injustices. According to Dominguez (2003), hidden bias appears when females or males are not involved in the textbook or when one gender is mentioned more than the other gender in the textbook. These types of hidden bias may present as stereotypes and can be found in textbooks while projecting a negative influence on students in many aspects of their lives. The negative influences can include but are not limited to psychological, social, academic, and physiological aspects. Stereotypes restrict how people understand and communicate with each other by building negative assumptions of both genders (Dominguez, 2003). Our paper implements Fairclough's (2015) CDA to investigate gender representations in a middle eastern country with an aim to determine the influence of language and image from the

EFL textbooks as related to social and domestic roles. We focus on the frequency and types of activities in relation to gender representations.

### **Gender Representation in EFL Textbooks to all Ages**

Gender representation occurs through different ways of talking or behaving in relation to a certain gender. Gender representation in textbooks considers how females and males are displayed to readers based on the way they look or behave in connection with how perceptions will be in the learners' minds, and the effects on the learners' cultures. Parham (2013), in relation to textbooks given to children, clarified the ways children build certain ideas about their position in their society and the thoughts influencing them. According to Aguilar (2021), children in Mexico learned to behave based on their biological attributes and any unusual behavior is considered unacceptable and may incur punishment.

Unequal gender representation, also known as gender bias, may start early in childhood and affect the way one thinks and can shape possible unfair representations between females and males. The potential unfair representation may further affect their personal life in a negative way. Gender bias possibly will increase as a child continues to age. Males may believe in themselves, and their abilities to be in good positions regarding their future and the careers they may choose. Whereas females may build negative assumptions about themselves and their ability to manage their futures and may develop negative stereotypes about themselves while placing limitations on their abilities to do challenging work. When children and adults read textbooks with equalized representation between the two genders, they can recognize how they understand the world and the reason why they understand it the way they do. Aguilar (2013) emphasized the value in establishing gender balanced EFL textbooks for all ages, especially among children because they can improve their understanding of the world beyond the stereotypes presented as gender roles. As a result, teachers and students can develop an understanding of humanity and appreciate the differences amongst people.

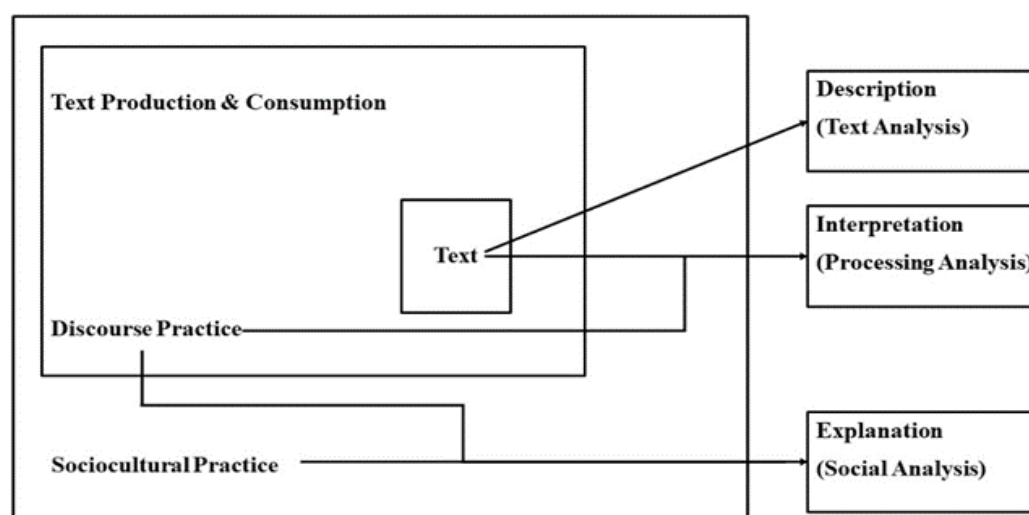
### **Theoretical Framework**

Critical discourse analysis is a well-constructed model assisting researchers to uncover ideologies embedded in different media materials. Fairclough (2015) created the three-dimensional model for CDA, with explanatory tools to assist researchers for analyzing texts in connection to social and political settings. CDA helps researchers grasp the relationship between text, culture, and community by studying social and political issues in society. By using the CDA model, we can better understand language through social and political contexts to reveal injustices

that were practiced via power relations on groups who are oppressed. Anyon et al. (2009) informs how critical social theory helps researchers by employing empirical research methods, being critical, and liberated to be able to analyze the collected data involving educational institutions, societies, and social change. Therefore, as educators, we can analyze oppressive practices, become able to alter them, liberate ourselves, and teach students pathways to emancipate themselves from such oppressions. When educators teach their students about ideologies and injustices that they face in their communities, they allow students to think critically by realizing the association between language and the social problems they face every day and teach them how to alter such injustices. Therefore, educators can help students to be socially informed, critical thinkers who can interpret ideas to be more engaged citizens and who can progress their countries toward a better future. Fairclough (2015) developed linguistic analysis tools to help researchers reveal inequalities related to injustices including those between females and males in relation to how their gender is represented. Gender roles can be presented as unnatural characteristics of women and men that distinguish between both genders by giving certain activities, social roles, and behaviors as determined by social context of a society (Aljuaythin, 2018). For instance, in many cultures people look at females as nurturers, dancers, and housewives while males are doctors, scientists, and firefighters. In addition, Chamber (2009) confirmed that “gender is a social acquisition” (p. 116). Societies form people’s social roles and activities based on being female or male and may limit ones’ abilities for active participation in community especially for those who are oppressed.

The two EFL textbooks, Chase (2013) along with Fettig and Najafi (2014), have different topics, and conversations to discuss and require students to focus on listening, speaking, and critical thinking with different activities, pictures, and classroom exercises. The data analysis process follows Fairclough’s (2015) three-dimensional model of CDA by exploring description, interpretation, and explanation of how bias can be revealed in EFL textbooks. The first stage of Fairclough’s (2015) model is description, wherein we gathered data from both textbooks. These data include pictorial representation, language use of females and males, frequency and types of activities, and social and domestic roles of female and male. Interpretation is the second stage and explanation comprises the final step of the three-dimensional CDA model (Fairclough, 2015). The results that emerge from the analysis using this CDA model occurs by linking it to the social and political contexts.

Figure 1  
Critical Discourse Analysis Dimensions (Based on Fairclough, 1995, 2015)



In this study, we used Fairclough's (2015) CDA to show how inequalities and injustices might be manifested while allowing us to investigate the connection between text, culture, and community by examining current social and political issues.

### Description Stage

Description is Fairclough's (2015) first stage in CDA and engages with spoken or written texts indicating the initial analysis and illustration of linguistic tools within a text. Description also concentrates on linguistic features of social, cultural, and historical conditions in addition to political, economic, and ideological practices, with the intention to show clear and hidden power control associated with these practices. Additionally, in texts, verbal and visual features of language are greatly related to the meaning, so the description stage helps in exposing how ideologies are revealed in texts linked to the world.

### Interpretation Stage

Interpretation is Fairclough's (2015) second stage in the CDA model, and the analysis describes the data by relating it to the social and political settings. The interpretation stage presents the connection between text and communication by analyzing discourse to explore the relationship between interpretative discursive processes and a text. The interpretation stage is a combination examining the content of text as perceived from participants' points of view while exposing embedded ideologies. Therefore, interpretation reveals the relationship between power and injustices and displays how any discourse may be socially problematic.

### **Explanation Stage**

Explanation is the third stage of Fairclough's (2015) CDA model and results become clear during analysis of the interaction related to how people are engaging with any discourse. The explanation stage is the relation between collected data and the social context. The analysis leads to a critical explanation on a large-scale of social events, referring to an ideological role of dominant groups and social challenges based on the use of language. Explanation connects to the analysis between discursive and social actions. CDA motivates researchers to deal with several fields, so they can analyze many characteristics of text, for example, language use including pronouns; titles and marriages; images; stereotypical roles; social and domestic activities; and other language aspects. Therefore, CDA connects social relations with discursive practices which exposes power of dominant groups on less powerful groups.

### **Literature Review**

CDA (Fairclough 2015) detects clear and hidden injustices that dominant groups have power through discourse and language. CDA allows researchers to work on various written and spoken materials, and they use different text characteristics such as females and males' pronouns, images, ideological roles, frequency and types of activities, and social and domestic roles. A review of the literature in this research follows.

### **Gender Representation in EFL Textbooks Using Critical Discourse Analysis**

CDA produces insights to discursive narrative of social events to explore injustices included in discourse. The basic elements of discourse are texts, interactions, and social contexts. CDA can combine social and linguistic analysis of discourse which means supporting analysis at macro level of social structure with analysis at micro

level of social context. Therefore, CDA helps in exposing how language is used by dominant groups on groups who are oppressed.

Iran. Amerian and Esmaili (2015) evaluated social and political contexts to liberate dominance and social power hidden in language. The finding from their analysis of a textbook series has two types of inequality, an overt one that is biased against females and a covert one displaying females as objects for advertising to promote selling. Amerian and Esmaili displayed capitalism economy as an ideology that controls people for its own interests. Females are an oppressed group who carry negative features such as passiveness, emotionality, weakness, and dependence while males are dominant group who carry positive features such as strangeness, rationality, and independence. These features are not natural but are supported by society and culture.

Esmaeili and Arabmofrad (2015) used Van Leeuwen's (1996) representational framework and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) transitivity theory model to examine the ideology behind the textbooks. The results were in favor of male social actors. This research confirmed gender inequality in the textbooks with avoiding certain stereotypes on girls.

Javani and Tahriri (2018) revealed females were less visible than males. There were embedded injustices found in the study such as number of visibilities of the two genders, and overrepresentation of males' images. These results are based on ideology found in Iranian culture because the authors showed why neoliberalism happened as a western ideology. Persian cultural ideology and social roles of both genders were reflected correctly in these textbooks.

Parham (2013) examined the representation of gender in conversations, illustrations and graphic design of the cover in nine packages to teach English to young children in Iran. Parham demonstrated in her results that females and males were equal in visibility in conversations. On the other hand, the findings revealed the under-representation of female characters in illustrations of the textbooks. Parham mentioned children are in phase of developing their way of thinking, and they are active observers of the experiences and ideas that they meet daily through textbooks and other materials. The under-representation of female characters affects the children's way of thinking negatively while the balanced representation of the two genders in EFL textbooks will allow students to get equal opportunities in their life as human beings.

Shahrokhi and Samadikhah (2015) discovered gender representation in conversation and discourse. They analyzed and compared gender representation in Top Notch and Summit Series to uncover gender representation in these two

textbooks if they are just or not. The results displayed in most cases that gender representation is more balanced in Top Notch series than in Summit series. However, Top Notch has stereotypes that are hidden in the textbook.

Jordan. Al Kayed et al. (2020) examined discursive practices within the Jordanian cultural and social structures. The EFL textbooks they examined revealed bias towards males in specific activities and roles. For instance, males occupied certain career positions such as a craftsman, a fitness trainer in contrast to those jobs aligned more with females. However, they found the textbooks displayed equality to some degree between the two genders such as pictorial representation, visibility, and some activities and roles, but there were some stereotypical activities and gender roles between females and males.

Mexico. Aguilar (2013) analyzed female and male representation in three EFL textbooks taught in early elementary grades in public schools in Mexico. There were occupational gender stereotypes found in the researched textbooks. Aguilar also revealed the existence of bias in the three EFL textbooks used for early elementary grades. Males had a higher number of illustrations than females, and occupational gender stereotypes happened in the three textbooks. However, the results showed there was equality regarding the images of the textbooks. Overall, Aguilar found the manifestation of gender bias in EFL textbooks for young English learners.

Philippines. Curaming and Curaming (2020) showed that gender inequality remained in favor of males. However, there are some positions that females were more favorable such as showing females as professionals, scientists, entrepreneurs, heroines, and other jobs. There were some areas where the two genders were displayed as equal. Curaming and Curaming stated that the textbook discussed issues such as poverty, inequality, special needs, cultural diversity and rights of indigenous people, and other issues, but did not include gender inequality.

Saudi Arabia. Aljuaythin (2018) revealed gender bias in favor of males. Results presented females as marginalized and had a bias displaying a lower social and professional position than males. For example, males were more favored regarding the activities as they were in positions considered powerful, reliable, and intelligent. Whereas females were appeared doing stereotypical activities such as shopping, being nurturer, and doing housework. These results indicate that females were portrayed to care about superficial things, and they are not as intelligent as males.

Sulaimani (2017) examining three categories a) dimension of gender relations presented between speakers such as friend-friend or student-teacher, b) subject positions that each gender was grouped in four categories, such as friends, societal,

occupational, and other subject positions, and c) content which was the topics of conversation in how the course book was organized. All information were gathered from the conversations and divided into seven categories based on different aspects. These categories were selected to discover injustices that happened between the two genders. In each category, the number of occurrences between females and males were counted in the course book. The findings showed that the textbook is biased towards males, while females were underrepresented as they are passive, weak, dependent, and physically charming, but males are active, strong, and independent.

Hazaea (2020) uncovered ideologies of discourse and lead to emancipation, difference, and opposition. Students in his study utilized CDA models to help them in their reading and writing intercultural texts. Hazaea gathered information from reflective writings in students' portfolios. Students thought critically, learned independently and were able to minimize stereotypes of other cultures. Results showed an efficient way of teaching wherein students became active instead of passive by making decisions on which textbooks to read and giving their opinions on the texts. Lastly, the students wrote about what they read using CDA to make clearer the involvement via social and political contexts within the textbooks they read.

Although each of the studies reviewed for this paper explored the role of language use in EFL courses, we have chosen to utilize Fairclough's (2015) CDA three stages approach because of the potential to analyze any text in relation to social and cultural perspectives.

## **Methodology**

### **Data Sources**

The research question for this study centers on the ways gender bias is represented in two EFL textbooks used at UAME because they are the core textbooks for the EFL orientation program. We focused on these two EFL textbooks, Pathways Foundations by Chase (2013) and Pathways I Fettig and Najafi (2014), because both contain different activities, exercises, audios, videos, and presentations designed to develop students' English levels and for their academic journey in the university.

### **Data Analysis**

Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional CDA framework allowed us to interpret the data by focusing on the description of the content of the textbooks, interpretation via understanding the relation between the texts and communication, and an explanation emerged by analyzing the data in relation to the social context. In the description stage, we focused on the following aspects: pictorial representation, language use, frequency and types of activities, and social roles of the two genders. In the interpretation stage, the focus was on the analysis of texts to study the connection between these texts and the productive and interpretative discursive practices. The explanation stage connected the analysis of social contexts and its relationship with discursive processes to explore how embedded power can be implemented to separate people into groups designated as superiors and inferiors.

### **Description Stage: Pictorial Representation**

Description provided us with the appropriate framework to analyze the data content of both UAME textbooks based on the aspects of gender representation. Pictorial representation is one of the basic aspects when analyzing textbooks because it attracts students' attention to the images existing in textbooks. In Pathways Foundations, the results displayed that 68% of the images were for male-only while 20% were female-only, and 12% of the images included both genders. While in Pathways 1, the results displayed that 59% of the images were male-only and 19% of images were female-only, and 22% of the images included both genders. Simply put, the results show a significant preference for representing male-only images in both textbooks.

### **Description Stage: Language Use of Females and Males**

The visibility of females and males moved the analysis to look for the representation of females and males in terms of nouns, pronouns, and proper nouns. The language use in Pathways Foundations showed that 56% of nouns, pronouns, and proper nouns were for male visibility while 44% of nouns, pronouns, and proper nouns were for females. Moreover, language use in Pathways 1, revealed 61% of nouns, pronouns, and proper nouns were associated with male visibility and 39% nouns, pronouns, and proper nouns were for females. The two textbooks used language showing favor for males in terms of pronouns that also outnumbered the female pronouns. The two textbooks used masculine pronouns such as he and his which are related to the photos and topics of the textbooks. Males are the core of the society and earning process which reflects how a negative way of thinking will spread among females and males which may lead to negative stereotypes towards

females. These results indicate how society may perceive females as listeners, not as participants, and not being part of the learning process. Furthermore, the reinforced stereotype may affect the way males interact with females, and how females perceive themselves in relation to not being as successful in their different fields of study.

### Description Stage: Frequency and Types of Gender Representation Activities

Frequency and types in activities helped researchers to examine different activities distributed between females and males. Pathways Foundations and Pathways I showed bias towards males and marginalization towards females regarding the frequency and types of activities presented in images, text, and activities.

Table 1  
Frequency and Types of Activities in Pathways Foundations

| Gender        | Images            | # | Text              | # | Listening Activity | # |
|---------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| <b>Male</b>   | Biking            | 1 | Adventure Seekers | 4 | Adventure Seekers  | 3 |
|               | Bungee Jumping    | 1 | Biking            | 3 | Biking             | 2 |
|               | Cliff Jumping     | 2 | Highlining        | 1 | Highlining         | 1 |
|               | Highlining        | 1 | Kayaking          | 2 | Kayaking           | 2 |
|               | Hiking            | 2 | Mountain Climbing | 3 | Mountain Climbing  | 3 |
|               | Kayaking          | 1 | Paragliding       | 2 | Paragliding        | 2 |
|               | Kickboxing        | 2 | Scuba Diving      | 1 |                    |   |
|               | Mountain Climbing | 1 | Swimming          | 1 |                    |   |
|               | Playing tennis    | 1 |                   |   |                    |   |
|               | Rock Climbing     | 1 |                   |   |                    |   |
|               | Scuba Diving      | 1 |                   |   |                    |   |
|               | Skateboarding     | 1 |                   |   |                    |   |
|               | Snowboarding      | 1 |                   |   |                    |   |
|               | Surfing           | 2 |                   |   |                    |   |
|               | Swimming          | 1 |                   |   |                    |   |
| <b>Female</b> | Biking            | 1 | Biking            | 1 | Forest Explorer    | 2 |
|               | Forest Explorer   | 1 | Explorer          | 3 | Kayaking           | 1 |
|               | Hiking            | 1 | Hiking            | 1 | Rock Climbing      | 1 |
|               | Kickboxing        | 1 | Kayaking          | 1 | Scuba Diving       | 1 |
|               | Playing Tennis    | 1 | Rock Climbing     | 1 | Explorer           | 1 |
|               | Scuba Diving      | 1 |                   |   | Skiing             | 1 |
|               | Explorer          | 1 |                   |   | Snowboarding       | 1 |
|               | Skiing            | 2 |                   |   | Surfing            | 1 |

In Pathways Foundations, the chapter titled Taking Risks showed males were skateboarding, snowboarding, kickboxing, cliff jumping, kayaking, biking, paragliding, hiking, and adventure seekers. In addition, the textbook also included more males playing tennis, climbing mountains, surfing, swimming, rock climbing, bungee jumping, scuba diving, and highlining. Whereas the representation of females participating in sports was much less. The chapter showed a few females kickboxing, rock climbing, cycling, kayaking, playing tennis, hiking, swimming, skiing, snowboarding, and paragliding. Finally, the Taking Risks chapter showed three females who are described as explorers, two of them travel to various forests and the third one is a scuba diver named ‘shark lady’. The results present how males are described with many more high-risk types of sports. However, the textbook shows a limited number of more adventurous activities that females practice. These types of presentations show females as less participatory in adventure wherein a potentially more negative or weak stereotype can prevail regarding females.

Table Two displays the different sports both genders practiced in the Taking Risks chapter in Pathways Foundations. Low-static sports refer to swimming, tennis, and hiking, moderate-static sports refer to skateboarding, snowboarding, and skiing, high static sports refer to surfing, kayaking, kickboxing, cliff jumping, climbing and other sports.

Table 2  
Summary of Activities in Pathways Foundations

| Kind Of Activity         | Female<br>Frequency | Male<br>Frequency |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Low-risk activities      | 3                   | 5                 |
| Moderate-risk activities | 6                   | 12                |
| High-risk activities     | 11                  | 29                |

In the Pathways I textbook, the Exploring Space chapter, a male astronaut is shown to be moving himself through space with a guidance gun. The chapter presents seven astronauts and most all of them were males with only one female. Being an astronaut is not an easy job and one needs courage to pursue such a career. This image provides the readers with a visual bias related to females not participating in jobs considered more courageous or with a lack of participation in such challenging

careers. The Exploring Space chapter discussed different tools people invented and showed males using technology to have a better future by using space shuttles, telescopes, exploring space, and going out into the solar system. Included in this chapter is a segment related to intellectual developments in space exploration and how one man has been instrumental in defining the next steps for humanity. Overall, these images and texts reinforce how females are not considered in the process of inventing tools that alter human history while reinforcing how their abilities are considerably limited.

### Description Stage: Social Role Representation of Females and Males

Table Three shows the aspects of gender representation and the social roles females and males participated in and the trends in gender roles perspectives. Pathways Foundations displayed many adventurous sports that males practice more frequently than females. Pathways Foundations has a chapter called Facing Challenges that discusses challenging jobs. The chapter showed males doing unusual jobs, and how they challenge themselves and others with such jobs while readers do not see the same jobs are performed by females. For example, males in this chapter were presented in many unusual and respected careers such as pilots, repairman working in a dangerous setting, a blind man successfully achieving many unusual tasks, a male zoo director, doctors, astronauts, marine biologists, veterinarians, and chefs. Other representations include male mountain climbers, an outdoor adventurer, and a wildlife photographer. Whereas there were only two pictures of females in more challenging careers, one as a pilot and another as a deaf musician. There is a listening exercise describing a female taxi driver, however the associated photograph includes only a picture of the taxi, and a short segment of text presenting the female author J.K. Rowling.

Table 3

Social Roles of Males and Females in Pathways Foundations

| Social Role          | Female<br>Frequency | Male<br>Frequency | Trend                                  |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Doctor               | 0                   | 2                 | <i>Inequality<br/>against females</i>  |
| Pilot                | 1                   | 2                 | <i>Biased towards<br/>males</i>        |
| Special needs person | 1                   | 1                 | <i>Female negative<br/>stereotypes</i> |

In Pathways 1, the Living for Work chapter also has social activities for males that contain stereotypical activities. For example, the image in the textbook shows a male construction worker climbing up a crane in a dangerous situation. This is a hard job, and the image presents a stereotype that males are strong and do more high-risk labor. Furthermore, the chapter shows images and written contexts of males as firefighters, farmers, doctors, waiters, a film maker, job applicants, chefs, fishermen, reporters, construction workers, computer programmers, teachers, butlers, engineers, a male writing in a daily journal, and male students. The chapter's written scripts portrayed males in activities such as a chef, a computer programmer, police officers, a professor, an engineer, job applicants, and a business presenter. While females are portrayed, via images and written contexts, in fewer roles, typically as mothers who take care of their children, a police officer, teachers, photographers, a film maker, a reporter, a nurse, a female doctor, and a hotel housekeeper. The chapter's written scripts portrayed females in activities such as waitresses, a real estate agent, a nurse, photographers, and, specifically, one of the photographers also moved offices and managed five employees.

A wife and a husband who are creative people presents more equality between both genders. As shown in Table 4, there is a big difference between females and males in the frequency of fishermen and students. Fishing is a job requiring strength, patience, and hard work. Moreover, the big number of males as students while one female student mean that females are less educated, and their main place is at home. These social roles present males as smart, powerful, and nothing can stop their ambitions while females nurture babies and take care of people, while they have limited abilities to do different types of jobs.

Table 4

Social Roles of Males and Females in Pathways 1

| <b>Social Role</b>  | <b>Female Frequency</b> | <b>Male Frequency</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Student             | 2                       | 9                     |
| Chef                | 0                       | 7                     |
| Fishermen           | 0                       | 4                     |
| Construction Worker | 0                       | 3                     |
| Engineer            | 0                       | 3                     |
| Farmer              | 0                       | 2                     |
| Computer Programmer | 0                       | 2                     |
| Butler              | 0                       | 2                     |
| Firefighter         | 0                       | 1                     |
| Police Officer      | 1                       | 2                     |

Table 4 (Continued)  
Social Roles of Males and Females in Pathways 1

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Writing a Journal  | 0 | 1 |
| Professor          | 0 | 1 |
| Business Presenter | 0 | 1 |
| Childcare taker    | 2 | 0 |
| Nurse              | 2 | 0 |
| Photographer       | 2 | 0 |
| Real Estate Agent  | 1 | 0 |
| Making Films       | 1 | 1 |
| Reporter           | 1 | 1 |
| Job Applicant      | 1 | 1 |
| Teacher            | 2 | 2 |
| Waiter             | 1 | 1 |
| Doctor             | 1 | 1 |

Being that interpretation is Fairclough's (2015) second stage and explanation completes the process, our analysis further describes the data by linking it to the social contexts on both the micro- and macro-levels. The results displayed gender bias of males, and false stereotypes towards females.

### **Gender Inequalities and Stereotyping in the Two Textbooks.**

The results from our analysis made it apparent that both textbooks were positively biased towards males, and females were marginalized. In pictorial representation, most of the images were in favor of males, whereas females were shown in limited cases. This type of representation may make females feel a sense of low self-esteem, and low confidence because the images represent stereotypical images of females while building a false perspective of females in middle eastern society. As shown in Pathways Foundations, a blind man who can do several unusual jobs while a deaf woman did just one unusual job of composing music. Composing music also reinforces a stereotypical perception that females can be limited in perception as mostly emotional, caring, and sensitive while males are bold, strong, and have nearly unlimited abilities. These perceptions reflect the culture and society in a negative way regarding how females have a limitation to certain job options. As a result, females themselves may come to believe in these negative stereotypes. However, males in the textbooks conducted many activities, jobs, and

dangerous sports indicating their physical strength, and the courage they have. For example, the activity of highlining increased the perception of gender inequality between females and males because of the over-representation of males participating in such an extreme activity. Such inequalities can create a bigger gap between female and male students' self-perception. Male students can tend to believe in themselves and may devalue females' skills as weak, passive, and working limited job opportunities. On the other hand, some male students may feel they have the responsibility to appear to align with a certain image in society otherwise they may be considered as failures. As shown in Pathways 1, females are presented as nurses while there are no cases of males displayed as nurturers in the same work role commonly designated for females. This perpetuation of the stereotype implies females are weak and care for others while males are powerful and energetic. Subsequently, female EFL students may also repeat negative assumptions about themselves as they perceive themselves in a lower position in comparison to males.

The text, Pathways 1, displayed two cases of farmers and three cases of construction workers as males while zero cases for females. These types of representations displayed males as strong and patient, who work under hard circumstances such as in hot or cold weather and from dangerous heights. Moreover, Pathways 1 showed nine male students while only two female students were presented. This representation of more male students indicates a bias against females to study because they may not need to be educated while males are studying, improving their academic skills, and have plans for good careers in the future. However, according to Aljuaythin (2018), 51% of all graduate students in Saudi Arabia are females who have completed undergraduate programs from many different universities and have succeeded in their academic fields to further their education. A comparison of the reality of females in higher education and the images portrayed in both of these EFL textbooks reveals a sharp contrast between presented bias and reality.

### **False Stereotypes**

The two textbooks showed inequalities between the two genders which is an indication to power relations and their impacts on people. When students learn from these types of textbooks that contain many negative stereotypes about females and the opposite about males, they may see such inequalities as basic and believable images about females (Amerian & Esmaili, 2015). However, language plays an important role in revealing asymmetrical gendered language in textbooks which show negative aspects of social reality. For instance, Pathways Foundations in the

Facing Challenges chapter shows a lesson about a blind man who achieved many jobs such as skiing, mountain biking, mountain climbing, and he climbed the tallest mountains in all seven continents. Moreover, he is an elementary school teacher, he guided blind teenagers to 21,500 feet on Mount Everest, and he led blind and sighted students on hikes through the Andes. Finally, he is a motivational speaker who encourages people to improve their lives and have a better future. On the other hand, the same chapter shows a deaf female who worked in one job, composing music. The false stereotypes lead females to believe that they have limited abilities to achieve professional goals, activities, jobs, and dangerous sports which may affect their societies in a negative way. This potential for negative perception is founded on the concepts of marginalized self-perception through cultural reproduction.

Moreover, the two textbooks in this study were developed by a Western publishing company which may manifest negative stereotypes related to middle eastern countries based on a bias about perceptions of female marginalization related to a lack of worker status, or employment only as teachers and nurses. These negative stereotypes are practiced on groups who are oppressed to keep them down and in the margins of one society while it keeps dominant groups in the center of the same society. Moreover, negative stereotypes affect groups who are oppressed physiologically, psychologically, and academically in a negative way. Negative stereotypes reflect on how racism, capitalism, and other systems of oppression are embedded in social institutions, and how those systems form our daily experiences. However, females in the Middle East enjoy practicing the same careers as males do. They can take high responsibility positions as males such as being ministers, scientists, school principals, directors, and other leadership roles.

The research achieved triangulation by conducting research analysis within CDA across different methods of analyses. Our study examined pictorial representation, language use, activities, and social role of females and males. The results obtained from using the three-dimensional model (Fairclough, 2015) revealed the existence of bias against females and a perpetuation of stereotyping them.

## **Discussion**

After examining the two EFL textbooks Chase (2013) and Fettig and Najafi (2014), using Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model, our results indicate significant variations in gender representations as favoring males. Based on the description stage, pictorial representations aspect revealed that most of the pictures represent males only and few pictures represented females. Females were almost invisible

and had stereotypical activities such mothers and nurses. These representations create a negative perception about females in middle eastern countries where a belief persists that females are passive and have no major role in contributing to their communities. On the other hand, males in both EFL textbooks seem ambitious, powerful, and have main role in improving their communities.

Visibility of females' and males' discursive aspects showed the representation of females and males in terms of nouns, pronouns, and proper nouns is biased towards males. Frequency of females and males in activities showed also bias in favor of males. Finally, the social roles of the two genders showed males' social roles outnumbered females' social roles, and there were stereotypical activities that show that nothing can stop the ambitions of males while females have limited abilities, and they do superficial activities.

The Fairclough model (1995, 2015), below, with our additional analysis reveals the breakdown of the description, interpretation, and explanation and how they interact to create a more clear understanding of the role of the EFL textbooks and uncover any injustices encountered in the EFL textbooks.

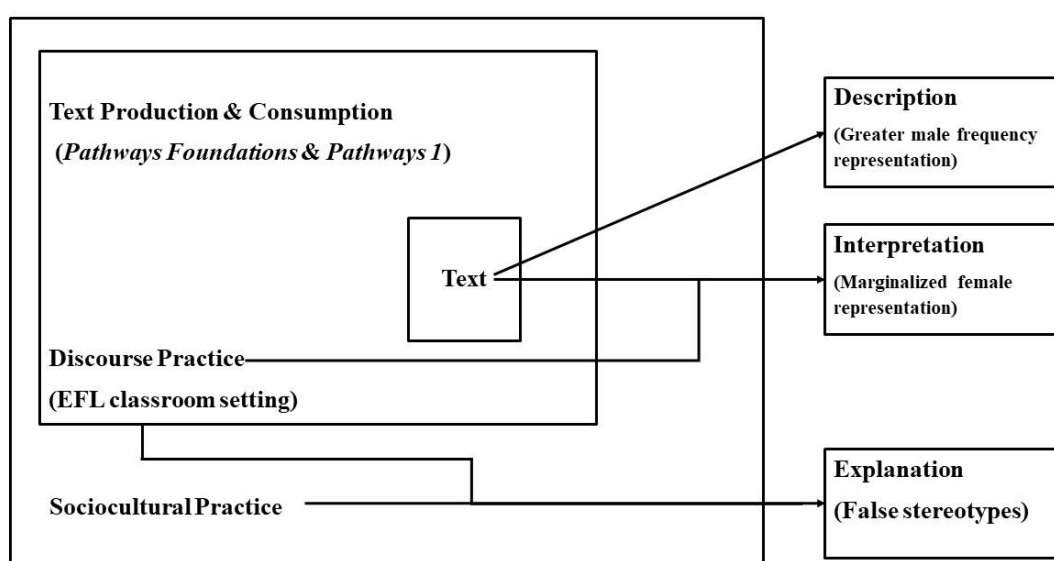


Figure 2

Critical Discourse Analysis Dimensions of Pathways Foundations & Pathways 1

Our study navigates the gender representation in two EFL textbooks using a CDA model, where we found embedded ideologies within the textbooks. CDA was implemented in the analysis of these two textbooks to reveal oppressions based on gender representation and revealed a gender gap. These models assisted us in analyzing the texts and the discourse in a critical way to uncover inequalities embedded in both textbooks. Overall, based on our findings, these textbooks may make female students feel unworthy, develop negative images about themselves which can negatively affect their academic achievement and their social life. When university female students face any kind of discrimination, they may lose self-confidence, and self-esteem, and may believe that they have limited potential. Female students should be treated equally to male students and should not be marginalized or oppressed by any male colleagues.

After analyzing the description aspects, the analysis moves to the second and third analyses of interpretation and explanation. These stages help us connect the results with micro-and macro-levels of social, and political contexts. The comparison between the two genders may reinforce people to build negative stereotypes about females and even the females may have negative feelings about themselves from the images that societies have created for them. In addition, when females become aware of what they studied in textbooks is acceptable within their societies, they may become less productive and may be considered a burden on others. In the end, we posit that when providing students with textbooks, it is fundamental for educators to take into consideration how the textbooks need to teach students to be creative, critical thinkers, strong, while empowering them to fight the status quo. Another aspect regarding our analysis, the two textbooks were written by females who may have certain stereotypes about the middle eastern cultures. Ironically, the female authors should consider creating EFL textbooks with better gender representations as they seek social justice for themselves and others.

## **Recommendations**

As a solution to the inequalities among females and males, Freire (2005) calls for education that emphasizes students' cultures and backgrounds. In addition, liberatory education allows students to be active instead of passive. Second language learners need high levels of critical awareness about gender representations and social gender roles to practice with the language as other students who are enthusiastic to participate in the learning process. When students are actively participating in social collaborations, they tend to do well academically. Educational engagement is enhanced within a collaborative environment accompanied by student-centered learning while preparing EFL

learners to be democratic; to make decisions; to speak out with their voices; and to look at issues with a critical eye. As a result, EFL students will have a more authentic learning situation that will benefit them in their social, and occupational life by learning the word and the world (Freire, 2005). On the other hand, students who are not encouraged to change the stereotypical realities may be oppressed more, not enjoy freedom, and have an ambiguous future. EFL students who become more sociable and collaborative with others, regardless of gender bias, can co-create successful projects, assignments, and become well-informed citizens.

Hazaea (2020) documented some findings of critical intercultural awareness among English-as-a-foreign-language students of a critical reading course for students in the preparatory year at a Saudi university. Students are asked to use critical discourse analysis to analyze intercultural texts, and then to write an assignment by reading a text about a dinner invitation. Hazaea (2020) collected the data from the reflective writings in the participants' portfolios. They showed a balanced intercultural awareness connected with the discourse of food diversity. They appreciated their own and others' cultures and showed intercultural knowledge of the self and others. CDA (Fairclough 2015) displayed in both the Chase (2013) and Fetting and Najafi (2014) textbooks a bias in favor of males and compared to females. Stereotyping activities, social roles, and injustices regarding pictorial representation and language used in both textbooks underestimates females and may influence their self-perception related to academic success leading to low self-esteem and low self-confidence.

Subsequently, concerns arise in relation to companies selling EFL textbooks because of a lack of content in the images, activities, texts, and stories displaying women who fight against oppression. Textbook publishers may inadvertently include negative stereotypes towards middle eastern countries, in order to sell textbooks containing oppressive ideas related to genders. Such publishers may purposefully perpetuate the false stereotypes. In the pursuit to gain an audience and the fiscal benefit they want from selling such textbooks to middle eastern students, publishers may minimize contexts related to women in gender defying roles.

## **Conclusion**

CDA (Fairclough, 2015) has been applied in this study to analyze the language of textbooks based on three-dimensional methods: description, interpretation, and explanation. Interpreting language allows people to realize oppressions that are embedded in such language. Therefore, CDA helps in connecting social frameworks with discursive practices which expose the abuse of power on people who are marginalized. Inequalities are continuing in different aspects of modern

societies, in addition to the practices in EFL contexts (Hammond, 2006). Therefore, institutions of higher education are one of the central locations to implement social justice for all students, and the textbooks schools and universities provide students should be a primary source to develop students understanding of social justice. Furthermore, EFL educators need to regularly re-examine their professional development regarding the best practices and strategies to empower students through studying their second language.

English as foreign language textbooks include ideologies that perpetuate certain stereotypes contributing to significant gaps between students based on their gender. Females in the English textbooks are often displayed as weak, devalued, and underestimated while males are displayed as strong, powerful, and bold. These ideologies affect societies' ways of thinking towards both genders. As a result, females may perpetuate feelings of low self-esteem, worthlessness, and could affect how they engage effectively in the learning process. Therefore, EFL educators need to be conscious of such stereotypes and have the pedagogical skills to teach students how to think critically and change bias ideologies. Moreover, it is essential for EFL educators to develop their teaching skills by joining academic workshops, meetings, and discussions regarding students' issues about the challenges and problems in society that need to be changed by working together. Our research displays the importance of the use of CDA tools in the EFL learning process and reveals how CDA can bring to light the power and hegemony affecting individuals and societies.

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