

Stilettoed Damsels in Distress: the (un)changing depictions of gender in a business English textbook

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Abstract

Appropriate gender representation in textbooks is crucial for socially educating professionals who use English for work-related communication. It is further important to longitudinally understand how these textbooks keep up with changes in gender equality taking place in the real world. This study critically analyses two editions of a popular international business English textbook for equality of gender representation. Improvement in the visibility and portrayal of women and men was found between the older and newer editions. Results suggested that gender bias has reduced in the newer edition of the textbook, especially at the level of images. However, much more change is needed to bring them to the level of current equality guidelines published by government and independent organizations. The study recommends that, instead of imitating the realities of the world, textbooks developers must consider presenting scenarios that societies aim to achieve. Furthermore, in the absence of gender equality in textbooks, stereotypical depictions of gender need to be discussed critically in classrooms.

Keywords: Textbooks, English Language Learning, Business, Gender

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1.0 Introduction

Literature published on gender bias in textbooks across the world has reported unrealistic and stereotypical depictions of both women and men irrespective of the date and place of publication, subject, target audience, country of use and its level of development (Blumberg, 2007). Since textbooks have been found to construct and validate social structures (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009), prejudiced representation of the people in textbooks might not only constrain male (M) and female (F) students' relationships with people of the other gender but could also restrict the conceptualization of their present and future identities including selection of academic subjects and career (Gray, 2000; Lee, 2014; Samadikhah & Shahrokhi, 2015). Despite publication of several guidelines to depict both the genders equally, textbooks have continuously been reported to underrepresent F.

While there have been studies of gender representation in textbooks, there is a scarcity of research tracing change in textbooks over a period of time. This is particularly important in terms of gender in business textbooks, as important changes have taken place in the role F and M play in the business world (Blumberg, 2007) including a dramatic growth in women entrepreneurship (Brush, 1992). This study examines representation of F and M in the first and latest editions of the business English textbook *Market Leader Course Book: Intermediate Business English* (Cotton, Falvey & Kent, 2000) and *Intermediate Market Leader: Business English Course Book* (Cotton, Falvey & Kent, 2010). The aim is to explore changes within a span of 10 years in this textbook, which is popularly used to teach a subject that could be considered male-dominated because of its involvement with money and power (Robinson & Dechant, 1997). It aimed to evaluate whether changes in these books reflected the recommendations of reports advocating for gender equality, which were released during the period between the two editions (e.g. Blumberg, 2007; Brugeilles and Cromer, 2009).

1.1 Gender stereotypes and educational materials

Gender stereotyping, or the propagation of fixed notions about masculinity and femininity, leads to allocation of a dichotomous set of standards about verbal and social behaviour to M and F

without much scope for ambiguity or difference (Christie, 2000). Common examples of F stereotyping are portrayals of F either as objects of desire (Bronfen, 2004; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009; Sully, 2010) or as virtuous angels who are homely, loving, nurturing, modest and self-sacrificing (Bakhtiari & Saadat, 2015; Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Beauvoir, 1982; Filak, 2002; Ghorbani, 2009). Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) assert that such stereotypical representations are harmful for both M and F as they restrict people's vision of their possible future identities and relationships with people of the other gender. For example, stereotypes of macho M (Cole, 2000; Thompson & Pleck, 1994) might make boys indulge in "social behaviour associated with masculinity" such as "drinking, smoking, speeding", while the feminine stereotype of the house-bound angel might govern F's academic choices (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009, p. 27).

Since ideological discourses have been considered instrumental in the creation of stereotypical identities (Foucault, 1977; 1998), several researchers have scrutinized these discourses from a gender perspective. Numerous scholars have also drawn attention to the influence of educational discourses, within which gender is manifested in classrooms and textbooks (Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Blumberg, 2007; Brugeilles and Cromer, 2009; Gray, 2000; Sunderland, 1992). Brugeilles and Cromer (2009: 42) observed that printed textbooks are of "paramount importance" because they are the basic tools for education and carry great power of legitimation, which makes students imbibe the behavioural models, collective identities and gender-sensitive values in the textbooks. A report by Blumberg (2007, p. 5) argues that stereotypical representations of gender in textbooks might constrain "girls' and boys' vision of who they are and what they can become". Taking the argument forward, Baldwin and Baldwin (1992), Barton and Sakwa (2012) and Sadker and Zittleman (2007) suggested that the impact of textbooks on students becomes even more significant not only because 70-95% of the classroom time is spent on textbooks but also because students often use textbooks outside the classroom to engage in independent language learning, homework activities, and review.

Several studies have been conducted to explore representations of gender in English language textbooks. Ansary and Babaii (2003) studied two ELT textbooks in Iran and observed that M appeared almost 1.5 times more frequently than F in both text and illustrations. M enjoyed firstness in gender pairs and were also depicted in diverse roles and contexts, whereas, F's roles were mostly restricted to indoor activities. Similarly, Fatemi, Pishghadam and Heidarian (2011)

analysed three high school and one pre-university ELT textbooks used in Iran and noticed that F were largely underrepresented in both verbal and pictorial elements and were in weak and subordinate roles, while many M were in positions of power. Moreover, images of M were more frequently accompanied by captions naming or identifying them than images of nameless F.

Otlowski (2003), on the other hand, analysed an English language textbook used in Japan. He also found that F were twice less visible than M in illustrations and performed stereotypical roles as homemakers and mothers in contrast to M who mostly worked outside their homes. Barton and Sakwa (2012) evaluated an ELT textbook used in Ugandan secondary schools and discovered that the books predominantly featured M characters: 64% in text and 79% in images. Also, 73% of the professional positions were held by M. After carrying out lesson observations and conducting semi-structured interviews with the teachers, the researchers found that teachers dealt with gender stereotypes in the texts uncritically and focussed only on developing language skills of the learners.

Samadikhah and Shahrokhi (2015) studied two series of ELT textbooks, *Top Notch* and *Summit*. It was found that M occupied significantly more subject positions, while F indulged more in social activities. Both series were biased in favour of M regarding firstness in dialogues and titles held. Adel and Enayat (2016) examined images and text in four ESP textbooks from the *Oxford English for Careers* series for commerce, nursing, technology and tourism, revealing considerable bias. Both technology and tourism books represented significantly more active images of M than F. All the books depicted F as more lightly clothed than M. Also, M were present in outdoor spaces more frequently than F in three of the books—tourism being an exception. The researchers found the technology book to be the most biased and nursing the least, leading the researchers to conclude that more discrimination was found in fields which are dominated by M in real life.

1.2 Gender guidelines

In view of the social impact of textbooks, and the major influence they have on students, many government bodies in Europe, America, and Asia have published guidelines for establishing

gender equality in learning materials. Noteworthy steps have been taken by UNESCO's human rights programmes to accomplish gender equality in textbooks such as commissioning research reviews (Blumberg, 2007) and publishing guidelines such as Brugeilles and Cromer's (2009) *Promoting Gender Equality through Textbooks: A Methodological Guide*. These guidelines made important recommendations for studying and achieving gender equality in textbooks such as "ensuring that all representations further equality" by maintaining equality in the "casting of hero characters", "distribution of roles" and highlighting the contribution of F to "politics, science, literature, sport, the arts and economics" (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009, pp. 35-44). Publishers such as McGraw Hill (*Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes*, 1974) and other independent professional and academic groups such as American Psychological Association (Warren, 1986), National Council of Teachers of English (*Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE*, 1976, pp. 23-25) and Women in EFL Materials (Florent, Fuller, Pugsley, Walter & Young, 1991) also published guidelines for avoiding trivialization, objectification and stereotyping of F in instructional materials.

1.3 Gaps in previous research

Though many researchers have studied gender representation in textbooks, there is a paucity of studies comparing old and new textbooks for evidence of change. One of the few studies to compare changes (Lewandowski, 2014) has reported shifts towards more balanced, and less stereotypical, representations of F and M in newer textbooks. However, the textbooks in Lewandowski's (2014) study were produced by different authors and publishers, so a temporal effect cannot be confirmed as the driving force of the difference, and more research is needed on newer editions of the same textbook to eliminate confounding variables of authorship.

Another gap in literature is the lack of studies on textbooks related to fields dominated by M. The world of business is M dominated due to the historical exclusion of women from domains associated with money and power, thus a study of business English textbooks allows for a good temporal comparison of gender roles in this domain. Robinson and Dechant (1997, p. 25) observed that in the corporate world, F are "placed in unchallenging jobs" and "limited by sexual bias in promotion opportunities". Babock, Laschever, Gelfand and Small (2003, p. 1) found that F are not only under-represented in "top-jobs" but are also paid less than M for the same job.

Thus, achieving better gender representation in business educational textbooks is one way to ensure positive images are available for future businesspeople and leaders. The first step, however, is understanding what representations currently exist and what the recent trends are.

2.0 Materials and methods

2.1 Research questions

In order to explore trends in gender representation in business English textbooks, analysis was carried out at the levels of images, text, and speech with focus on visibility, importance, power positions, stereotypical representation of M and F in the books. The research questions were as follows, each focussing on a different element of the textbooks:

1. How have visual representations of F and M in textbooks changed over time?
2. How have M and F representations in the textual elements of the textbooks changed over time?
3. How have F and M representations in the audio materials of the textbooks changed over time?

2.2 Sample

In order to sample a suitable textbook for analysis, the researchers consulted with an expert panel of 20 experienced teachers working in 19 different global contexts. The panel were asked to consider the popularity of the textbook, its level, its global reach, its impact on business students, and availability of multiple editions, when making recommendations. After engaging in an online discussion surrounding available business textbooks, the panel agreed that *Market Leader* was the most appropriate series to conduct analysis of gender due to its longstanding global popularity in the business English domain of language teaching. As a result, *Market Leader Course Book: Intermediate Business English* (Cotton, Falvey & Kent, 2000) and *Intermediate Market Leader: Business English Course Book* (Cotton, Falvey & Kent, 2010) were selected as the first and third editions of the same text—referred to as 1stEd and 3rdEd in analysis. Both editions have 175 pages, were written by the same authors, and were published 10 years apart,

during which time a number of reports had been commissioned to advocate for better equality in English language textbooks (e.g. Blumberg, 2007; Brugeilles and Cromer, 2009).

When initially comparing the two editions it was apparent that four units in first edition were dropped in the third edition (Globalization, Innovation, Strategy, and Quality). Thus these chapters were excluded from the analysis. Two additional sections in the third edition were also excluded due to their absence in the first edition. Two units called “Employment” and “Trade” whose titles were changed to “Human Resources” (HR) and “International Markets” (IM) in the third edition were retained for analysis, as the content remained the same across editions. Table 1 presents those sections which are common in both editions and were thus analysed in the present study.

Table 1 Sections of the Books Analysed

S. No.	1 st Ed	3 rd Ed	Selected for Study
1	Globalization	-	X
2	Brands	Brands	✓
3	Travel	Travel	✓
4	Advertising	Advertising	✓
5	Employment	Human Resources (HR) (title changed)	✓
6	Trade	International Markets (IM) (title changed)	✓
7	Innovation	-	X
8	Organization	Organization	✓
9	Money	Money	✓
10	Ethics	Ethics	✓
11	Change	Change	✓
12	Strategy	-	X
13	Cultures	Cultures	✓
14	Leadership	Leadership	✓
15	Competition	Competition	✓
16	Quality	-	X
17	-	Working Across Cultures	X

18	-	Revision Units A, B, C, D	X
19	Audio Scripts	Audio Scripts	✓

2.3 Coding and data analysis

Analysis was conducted at multiple levels, including analysis of images, text and audio. Within the textbooks themselves, illustrations and textual parts were analysed separately in line with Brugeilles and Cromer's (2009) recommendation that such analysis might reveal pieces of information which either complement or contradict each other. Images and text were studied at chapter and textbook level to explore differences based on themes of the chapters. Named and unnamed images were separately counted in keeping with the practices of Fatemi, Pishghadam and Heidarian (2011). Text was analysed according to the social and business roles assigned to M and F in line with previous studies, with special consideration of those in senior positions (e.g. Otlowski 2003, Ansary and Babaii, 2003, Samadikhah and Shahrokhi, 2015, Bataineh, 2017). In addition to total frequency counts M and F representation, four units of analysis were conducted for greater nuance: subject of profile feature article (SPFA); 'expert giving opinion'; 'authors of epigraphs'; and 'writers of authentic news articles'. These were created in line with Brugeilles and Cromer's (2009, p. 144) guidelines which advise that, when studying gender representation in textbooks, "hero characters" should be counted separately due to their relative importance. Upon inspection of the textbooks these people were featured more prominently or powerfully than others, thus deserving of additional scrutiny in analysis.

The reading section in every chapter included one or two profile articles from newspapers or magazines. These articles sometimes told stories of successful business personalities, coded as SPFA, and included big images and detailed descriptions of the attitudes, opinions, likes and dislikes of the protagonists (or business 'heroes'). Similarly, the books prominently featured business experts, who were coded as 'expert giving opinion'. These experts gave sage-like advice in the audio files, which the students listened and responded to in the listening section of the textbook. All of the chapters began with an epigrammatic statement or epigraphs serving as anchor for the chapter, and authentic news articles in the reading section of each chapter also featured prominently, necessitating the need to study gender representation in these privileged

and authorial ‘hero’ roles. Accordingly, text was analysed in terms of the number of in-text references to F and M, classified into three sub categories: authors of epigraphs of chapters (epigraphs), writers of authentic news articles (news articles) and characters in professional roles including senior roles.

Speech was analysed according to talk time (measured by words spoken and average length of turn). As male firstness in speech has been shown in previous studies as an indication of power, we also further explored counts of who initiated the dialogues in the audio. We focused particularly on dialogue initiation in audio in keeping with a focus of previous studies which analysed firstness in explicit social interaction (Samadikhah and Shahrokhi, 2015), rather than in terms of linguistic analysis of the text itself. Data from the audio tracks were analysed according to number of speakers in total tracks, as well as single gender (M-M; F-M) and mixed-gender (F-M) dialogues. Thus, we explored social power provided to each gender according to speech initiation (who starts the conversation), number of words spoken (who speaks more) and turn length (who speaks longer).

Our analysis adopts a predominantly quantitative approach in terms of frequency counts of M and F representativeness, which is a practice that has been criticized in textbook research. Weninger and Kiss (2013), for example, state that such analysis “assumes that meaning is fixed within the text or image and therefore can be counted” (p. 699). To partially combat this, and to provide further scope to understand the quality of gender representation in the text and images, an additional layer of qualitative analysis was added to the image, text and audio level. This allowed additional scope to conduct *some* critical analysis of gender roles, although this layer was not conducted to the extent of critical discourse analysis. Table Two outlines the categories of analysis in the study.

Table 2. Types and units of analysis

Research Focus	Analysis type	Unit of analysis
Images	Quantitative analysis	Frequency of gender in all images
		Profile image accompanying SPFA

Textual elements		Image of expert giving opinion
		Images of named people
		Images of unnamed people
		Critical analysis of gender roles in images
	Quantitative analysis	Frequency of in-text references to F and M
		Writers of epigraphs of chapters
		Writers of authentic news articles
		Representation in professional roles
	Qualitative analysis	Critical analysis of gender roles in text
Speech elements		Total F and M speakers
		Single gender tracks
		Number of F and M speakers in mixed gender tracks
		Dialogue initiation in F-M tracks
	Quantitative analysis	Average F and M words
		Average turn length in all tracks and mixed gender tracks
	Qualitative analysis	Critical analysis of gender roles in audio materials

2.4 Procedure

Data analysis was done manually for images and text, using the original source material, and involved counting and categorisation. Data for evaluating speech were created from audio scripts provided by the publisher using Optical Character Recognition software and converted to

editable text documents. These documents were then manually checked for accuracy. One researcher did all of the coding for consistency, and the second researcher was consulted throughout the process. As the quantitative coding involved frequency counts of M and F, rather than interpretative value judgements, the use of multiple coders during data analysis was not deemed necessary, but nonetheless could be viewed as a limitation of this process.

Since the sample sizes were small and the variables were categorical, the binomial exact test of goodness-of-fit was used to explore significance of differences in the representation of F and M in images and text in the two editions. The test is used to find the probability of data sets matching a theoretical expectation of a 1:1 ratio of F to M visibility based on the guidelines discussed above. Since this test determines exact probability (p values), the test is considered more accurate than other tests such as chi-square test which use statistical approximations to determine the p values. P values lower than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

Data for speech transcripts were tested for normality to evaluate if parametric or non-parametric tests should be applied to examine statistical significance of difference between the presence of F and M in the two editions. Tests for skewedness and kurtosis fell outside the acceptable range for some of the data, especially in the first edition, and box plots and Q-Q plots gave mixed results with some data sets appearing normal and others appearing non-normal. Accordingly, the Mann-Whitney U test was considered more appropriate than t-tests for analyses that compared differences between the two editions. This test was two-tailed to test the probability of either M or F being significantly more than the other. This test was used to explore differences between the two editions of the textbook in order to statistically show whether these differences represented significant change, rather than being by chance.

3.0 Results

This section analyses and summarises differences in F and M representation in images, text and speech. For ease of interpretation, the data with higher gender representation have been marked with an asterisk in tables. All statistically significant differences in findings are marked with double asterisks.

3.1. Images

3.1.1. Quantitative analysis of images

Images were analysed for significant differences in the number of F and M images appearing in each chapter and in the overall books. Table 3 presents the frequency of occurrence of F and M images in each edition according to four levels of importance associated with the images, namely, images of subjects of profile feature articles (SPFA), experts giving opinion (expert), named images and unnamed images.

The overall difference in gender representation in the first edition (F=27; M=68) was significant ($p<0.001$). In the second edition, while F images ($n=29$) were still fewer than M ($n=39$), this difference was not significant. Significant differences were found in F and M images in the first edition for both SPFA images ($p=0.03$) and unnamed images ($p=0.00$) but not in the third edition in any of the categories.

Table 3. Representation of F and M in Images

Edition	Overall			Relative Power Position of Images							
	F	M	Total	SPFA		Expert		Named Images		Unnamed Images	
				F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
1 st Edition	27	68*	95	0	5**	1	6*	2	4*	24	53**
3 rd Edition	29	39*	68	1	3*	3	9*	8*	6	17	21*

*higher gender representation; **statistically significant difference at $p<0.05$

3.1.2 Qualitative analysis of images

Further qualitative evaluation of images brought to light several instances of stereotypical representations of gender in both textbooks. In the third edition, of the four head-to-toe images of single characters, three were M and one F. The three M images included a tycoon in a business suit and tie sitting in a swivel chair with a commanding look on his face (p. 59), a muscular

person working out in a gym (p. 80) and a bald muscular athlete (p. 110). The single F head-to-toe image was of a traveller in business skirt suit with an anxious look on her face. In the image she is pulling wheeled luggage with one hand and fixing her stiletto heel with the other (p. 12). This image is reminiscent of the notion of F wearing heels at work in order to appear pleasant and feminine (Adomaitis & Johnson, 2005; Linder, 1997), and also calls to mind the ‘damsel in distress’ stereotype. The three M images vis-à-vis that of the F traveller reinforce the stereotypes of M as athletic, muscular, and powerful and F as struggling and in need of help. Likewise, in the first edition, an article in the ‘Brands’ chapter, features an F image accompanying a section about ‘fashion victims’ (p. 16), suggesting that F are more foolishly drawn to fashion brands. ‘Advertising’ includes numerous stereotypical images of the two genders, such as a macho cowboy with cigarette in mouth, rope on a shoulder and lighter in one hand (p. 30) and F either as an object of gaze, in a revealing dress with curlers in hair, spoon in mouth and cup in hand (p. 32) or in stereotypical roles as that of flight attendants serving M travellers (pp. 24-26).

3.2. Textual elements

3.2.1. Quantitative analysis of textual elements

Text was analysed in terms of the number of in-text references to F and M occupying various social roles, classified into three sub categories: authors of epigraphs of chapters (epigraphs), writers of authentic news articles (news articles) and characters in professional roles including senior roles. Table 4 shows the total number of in-text references to F and M in the two editions.

Table 4. Representation of F and M in Three Categories in Text

S. No.	Category	1 st Ed			3 rd Ed		
		F	M	Total	F	M	Total
1	Epigraphs	1	10**	11	0	12**	12
2	News Articles	2	5*	7	5	6*	11
3	Professional Roles	34	72**	106	17	57**	74
3b	<i>Senior roles</i>	7	32**	39	7	32**	39
	TOTAL	37	87*	124	22	75*	97

*higher gender representation; **statistically significant difference at $p < 0.05$

Analysis revealed F to be significantly underrepresented ($p=0.00$) in both first and third editions at overall textual level. Likewise, epigraphs (1stEd, $p=0.01$; 3rdEd, $p=0.00$), professional roles in general (1stEd, $p=0.00$; 3rdEd, $p=0.00$) and senior roles (1stEd, $p=0.00$; 3rdEd, $p=0.00$) all had significantly less F representation in both textbooks. There were no significant differences in news articles .

Table 5 shows the total number of in-text references to F and M in each chapter of the two editions. At an overall level, in first edition all the 12 chapters represented more M than F. In the third edition, 10 chapters out of 12 represented more M than F. Chapters with significant differences in gender representation were on the themes of money and employment in first edition, and brands, advertising, money, international markets, and competition in the third edition.

Table 5. In-Text References to F and M

	Chapter Title	1 st Ed				3 rd Ed			
		Observed No.		Total	P Value	Observed No.		Total	P Value
		F	M			F	M		
1	Brands	3	5*	8	0.36	3	10*	13	0.046**
2	Travel	4	5*	9	0.50	3	3	6	0.66
3	Change	9	13*	22	0.26	3	7*	10	0.17
4	Organization	5	9*	14	0.21	1	4*	5	0.19
5	Advertising	-	3*	3	0.13	-	5*	5	0.03**
6	Money	1	8*	9	0.02**	-	7*	7	0.01**
7	Cultures	2	7*	9	0.09	1	4*	5	0.19
8	Employment / HR	1	7*	8	0.04**	5*	4	9	0.50
9	Trade/ IM	3	8*	11	0.11	2	10*	12	0.02**
10	Ethics	5	11*	16	0.11	2	8*	10	0.055
11	Leadership	2	6*	8	0.14	2	8*	10	0.055
12	Competition	2	5*	7	0.23	-	5*	5	0.03**
	TOTAL	37	87*	124	0.00**	22	75*	97	0.00**

*higher gender representation; **statistically significant difference at $p<0.05$

3.2.2. Qualitative analysis of textual elements

Analysis of the textual elements also revealed discrimination in representation of the two genders. For example, M were much more frequently depicted as competent and well-educated and descriptive phrases used for M included approbations such as “took a firm from bankruptcy to success” (p. 9), “graduate[d] from Harvard Business School” (p. 28), “genius” who “single-handedly ran a company” (p. 106) in the third edition; and “trained at Harvard University” (p. 92) and “successfully led General Electric through a period of great change” (p. 87) in the first edition. Although descriptive phrases suggesting competence were also used sometimes for F such as “successful” (p. 76) in the third edition; and “clever and successful” (p. 45) and “America’s most powerful businesswoman” (p. 115) in the first edition, these descriptions were less frequent and less detailed.

As far as stereotypical representation of gender is concerned, a notable finding was the presence of the negative stereotype of corrupt and abusive men. In the first edition, several descriptions of unethical M were found such as an abusive M traveller who when “frustrated by a delayed flight”, “stormed onto the runway, took out a pistol and shot out the aircraft’s front tyre” (p. 26), and one M who leaked confidential information (p. 85) and was blamed for harassing an F colleague (p. 84). Likewise, in third edition there was a salesman who bribed doctors (p. 100), another M who was a “real problem” because he sent out false sales reports and was “a nightmare to work with” (p. 163), and a third who was jailed for six months (p. 116). There was only one F who engaged in unethical practices (in the third edition only), which was to lie on her CV to get a job (p. 99), but she was not described in as much detail as her M counterparts.

3.3. Speech

3.3.1. Quantitative analysis of speech elements

Table 6 summarises the distribution of F and M speakers in each edition of the book along with statistically significant differences in gender representation. Counts included raw number of speakers in single gender (M-M; F-F) and mixed-gender (F-M) dialogues. In both the editions, the number of M speakers is more than double the number of F speakers with highly significant differences ($p < 0.001$). A significant difference was also found between the total number of M-only tracks and F-only single gender tracks in both the editions (1stEd, $p = 0.01$; 3rdEd, $p < 0.01$).

As shown in Table 6, the number of single gender tracks were 27 and 44 in first and third editions respectively with the ratio of M-M tracks significantly ($p<0.001$) outnumbering F-F tracks (7 to 20 in the first edition and 6 to 38 in the third edition). Table 6 also shows data for speech initiation in mixed gender tracks. It was found that M initiated dialogue much more frequently than F in both the editions, but the difference reached significance only in the first edition ($p=0.04$). However, differences between the average turn length of F and M speech in mixed gender tracks were found to be significant in both the editions in favour of F, indicating that in mixed gender tracks F speak significantly longer in each turn than M in both editions. This difference, in opposition to findings in other categories, warranted further qualitative investigation.

Table 6. Gender counts in speech materials and differences

Unit of analysis	1 st Ed			3 rd Ed		
	F	M	p value	F	M	p value
Number of speakers	29	61*	0.00**	60	130*	0.00**
Number of single gender tracks	7	20*	0.01**	6	38*	0.00**
Number of speakers in mixed-gender tracks	18	21*	0.37	51	59*	0.25
Average number of words	138	182*	0.16	114	168*	0.21
Speech initiation in mixed gender tracks	4	12*	0.04**	15	23*	0.13
Average Turn Length in all tracks (secs)	55	65	0.94	56	85	0.54
Average Turn Length in mixed gender tracks (secs)	51**	34	0.01**	63**	28	0.02**

*higher gender representation; **statistically significant difference at $p<0.05$

3.3.2 Qualitative analysis of speech

A closer examination of the speech samples revealed that the shorter mean length of turn by M may have been due to the positioning of M in the more prominent role of ‘interviewer’ in many dialogues, since the questions asked by the interviewers tended to be shorter than the response to those questions. Positioning of M in this role reinforced the findings of the images and text analyses where M were in more powerful positions than F. For example, in the first edition speech tracks, 13 out of 14 interviewers were M. Similarly, in the third edition, 13 out of 16 interviewers were M.

The power dynamic between M and F was further reinforced in other positionings of M and F in the audio samples. For example, only F were positioned as receptionist characters in dialogues found in both editions. Moreover, an example of portrayal of F as object of gaze was also found in 1stEd speech:

I liked the French Connection ad where this really pretty girl walks into the Tube with her French Connection bag and then begins to undress, and she’s looking really cheeky, you know, sort of mischievous. Everyone in the Tube is staring at her and she changes into her French Connection clothes in front of everyone, and there’s this really great playful music, and she ends up walking out of the Tube at the next stop leaving everyone behind her. It was a really sexy ad, it was great. (p. 159)

Though an example of M as object of gaze was also present (as shown below), the one with F appears much more detailed than the one with M, using far fewer words:

The one I liked was Levi Strauss, when a very good looking boy dives into a pool. And everyone thinks he looks marvellous. And there’s a great tune they play — ‘Mad about the boy’ (p. 159)

Thus, power relationships between M and F exhibited in the speech samples may explain why M spoke in larger numbers, using a greater number of words, and initiated more conversations.

3.4. Summary of statistical differences

Table 7 summarizes the significant findings of the present study. All significantly higher representations have been marked with a tick. We can see improvement in some areas between the first and third editions in some areas; however, many elements of the texts still show a statistically significant gender imbalance in favour of M (with the exception of average turn length in mixed gender conversations).

Table 7. Summary of Statistically Significant Results

			1 st Ed		3 rd Ed	
			F	M	F	M
Images	Relative Power Position	Total Representation		✓		
		SPFA		✓		
		Expert				
		Named Images				
		Unnamed Images		✓		
Text	Representation in	Total Representation		✓		✓
		Epigraphs		✓		✓
		Authentic News Articles				
		Professional Roles		✓		✓
		Senior Titles		✓		✓
Speech	Overall	Number of Speakers		✓		✓
		Number of Speakers in Mixed				
		Gender Tracks				
		Speech Initiation in Mixed		✓		
		Gender Tracks				
		Number of Single Gender Tracks		✓		✓
	Average Words	Single Sex Tracks		✓		
		F-M Tracks				

Overall		
Average	Turn	Length
		All Tracks
		F-M Tracks
		✓
		✓

4. Discussion

4.1. Gender imbalances and stereotypes

Our finding of significantly higher representations of M in the total number of images in the first edition concurs with findings of previous research on other textbooks (Ansari and Babaii, 2003; Aydınoğlu, 2014; Barton and Sakwa, 2012). The imbalance of gender representation within textual elements in these textbooks also concurs with conclusions of previous studies, which have shown a disproportionate portrayal of M characters (Adel & Enayat, 2016; Ansari & Babaii, 2003; Barton & Sakwa, 2012; Otlowski, 2003). Audio files in both editions were densely populated with M voices, and the significantly higher number of M-M tracks highlighted an excessive focus on M speech at the cost of F speech. We also found a significant imbalance in terms of M speech initiation, which concurs with other textbook research (Ansary and Babaii, 2003; Samadikhah and Shahrokhi, 2015).

Our findings also highlighted power imbalances between M and F, with M being placed in more senior professional roles than F. Unequal representations of F and M at higher levels of power, such as being positioned as experts or subjects of focus in the textbooks, corroborates previous observations that gender discrimination increases with levels of power in business (“Gender Imbalance”, 2016). Our results also indicated that the textbooks placed M in the privileged authorial role much more than F. Similarly, in both the editions, the gap in F and M visibility was larger in ‘senior professional roles’ as compared to overall ‘professional roles’, a finding which resonates with the conclusions drawn by Ansari and Babaii (2003), Aydınoğlu (2014), Barton and Sakwa (2012), Lewandowski, (2014) with regard to gender representation in other textbooks. This imbalance was also found in the audio materials, where M were placed in positions such as interviewer, and women as receptionists. Excerpts also revealed M to overtly sexualise F to a greater extent than F did to M.

Despite several guidelines lobbying for the elimination of gender-stereotypical roles (Blumberg, 2007; Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009; Florent et al., 1991), instances of stereotypical representations of F and M were found in both the editions, such as images of M tycoons or athletes. However, stereotypical depictions of M and F appeared to be less intense in the third edition as compared to those in the first edition. Furthermore, the negative stereotypical representation of M in the first edition as aggressive and abusive was not found in third edition, marking some degree of improvement. However, in light of Lafky, Duffy & Berkowitz's (1996) argument that even brief exposure to stereotypical depictions can reinforce gender stereotypes, it could be said that stereotypical representations in third edition, though milder, still need further improvement.

4.2 Impact of real-world prejudices

One possible reason for the persistence of gender bias in business textbooks could be the presence of gender bias in the real business world where M dominate F (Robinson & Dechant, 1997). According to Bloomberg's (2018) *Gender-Equality Index Survey*, which studied 104 companies across all work sectors, F still hold only "26% of senior leadership positions and 19% of executive officer roles". Competitiveness and pursuit of money have commonly been described as traits which are not only stereotypically prescribed for M but are also considered somewhat undesirable in F (Gneezy, Niederle & Rustichini, 2003; Niederle & Vesterlund, 2007 and Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Interestingly, the chapter comparison revealed a larger bias in chapters "Competition" and "Money", which seems to corroborate the above assumption. This is similar to the conclusion of Lewandowski's (2014) study which found that financial status of M was described nine times more than that of F in the corpus analysed. The findings also support Adel and Enayat's (2016) claim that women face a greater likelihood of discrimination in contexts and fields that are considered to be male-dominated. While some people may argue that the textbooks are a reflection on the realities of the M-dominated business world, it is important to understand that the representations girls encounter in textbooks can affect their academic achievement and their academic and professional choices (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009). Thus, improving F depiction in business textbooks, particularly in senior executive roles, might assist in breaking the status quo and in creating a virtuous circle between textbooks and the world of business.

5. Implications and conclusions

Even though gender imbalances persist across editions of *Market Leader*, our analysis has shown a decrease of M dominance in many of the image elements, and some of the speech elements, we investigated over the span of 10 years. Such evidence is a positive sign of some improvement in gender representation in business textbooks. However, the results also highlight areas in the speech and textual elements of textbooks that require future improvement, especially in terms of placing women in senior roles. Thus, it could be concluded that much remains to be done to meet the standards of gender parity proposed in guidelines such as those published by UNESCO (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009) and Women in EFL (Florent, Fuller, Pugsley, Walter & Young, 1991).

Moreover, although symbiotic relationship between textbooks and the real-world has been suggested by Brugeilles and Cromer (2009), this need not indicate that textbooks should uphold the status quo. This paper takes a critical view of depictions of the world *as it is* in favour of depictions of the world *as it should be*. We argue that it should be the responsibility of textbook developers and publishers to avoid reflecting the biases of the real-world and to use textbooks as agents of “social reform” by “counter[ing] the prejudices which students bring with them into the classroom” (Barton and Sakwa, 2012, p. 187) and “promot[ing] the kind of social situation to which our communities aspire” (Lee and Collins, 2010, p. 134). As business textbooks are in a unique position to inform large cohorts of future businesspeople around the globe, the responsibility of textbook authors in this realm is even more important.

5.1 Recommendations

To disrupt the status quo in gender representation in business, publishers should encourage textbook developers to critically reflect on F and M representation. The current imbalance may be the result of an implicit bias of many textbook writers, and if these writers are made to be more cognizant of current inequalities, it may help to remedy the situation at the writing source. Publishers should also encourage more critical reflection of the roles that M and F are given in textbooks, in not only the images used in the books, but also the textual and audio elements where bias can be more concealed.

With regard to *Market Leader*, a more balanced representation of F and M in future editions should ensure visibility of F in important positions such as writers of epigraphs for chapters and subjects of profile feature articles. F should also be more frequently shown as experts giving opinion and as professionals at senior executive levels, especially in chapters related to M dominated fields such as “Competition” and “Money”. More images of F leaders should be shown in key leadership positions, and more F speakers should be included in audio tracks. The number of F-F tracks should also be increased to show that F can (and do) engage in business without a need for M to be present.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

If textbooks fall short of gender representation, teachers are in a unique position to use them critically and make up for these shortcomings. Teachers should carefully inspect textbooks and choose those which have less gender bias. Furthermore, when using a textbook with gender bias, teachers may wish to critically discuss the social impact of such depictions with the learners directly (Ansari & Babaii, 2003; Fairclough, 1992; Giaschi, 2000), and supplement inequities with additional materials or critical discussions to strengthen representations of women in business. For example, overrepresentation of M characters in certain roles could be critically examined and ideas about appropriateness of F in those roles in different socio-cultural contexts could be discussed. Teachers could try replacing M names with F ones particularly while discussing gendered roles such as those related to leadership or subordinate positions and talk with students about the suitability of such role-reversals. Likewise, while role playing or reading out loud, teachers can make girls play the part of boys and vice versa to foreground the prevalence of stereotypical notions about gender. Such exposure, explanation and deliberation about existing gender bias might be beneficial for the students in real-world scenarios.

To make teachers more critically aware of the hidden curriculum in textbooks and to enable them to prepare their own checklist for evaluation of gender equality, methods of textbooks analysis could be made a part of teacher training. Indeed, more and more masters-level language education programs are including modules on materials research and writing, which is a positive step to address the issue of gender. Via teacher education on materials development, teachers can

be given the necessary tools to evaluate textbooks on dimensions such as gender to ensure appropriate textbook selection for various curricula they might teach in the future.

5.3 Limitations of the present study and call for further research

The predominantly quantitative approach to our analysis has helped to provide empirical evidence to show gender imbalance in textbooks, which may methodologically inform future research. To improve on these methods, future research into gender and textbooks could aim to replicate this methodology with a greater number and range of texts. This would facilitate more nuanced statistical tests to be conducted, as the small sample size at various levels of analysis in this paper could have led to Type II errors by showing an absence of significance when one actually exists. Future studies, which draw on a bigger sample of business English textbooks, might reveal more reliable findings about changes in textbooks. ESP textbooks related to other gender-stereotyped fields such as technology and nursing where F and M are the most underrepresented respectively could also reveal important findings in terms of whether the same gender biases are equally apparent in wider disciplines.

Future research would also benefit from the use of alternative frameworks for analysis. The present study conducted analysis of images, text and speech related to F and M representativeness in a rather ad hoc manner, drawing on the methods of a range of previous studies, rather than a unified framework. Other methods of analysis such as those drawing on critical discourse analysis (e.g. Gulliver, 2010), semiotic approaches (e.g. Weninger & Kiss, 2013), or using feminist theory might reveal different results, and this is a potential avenue of future research into textbook evaluation.

Finally, we call for future research to not only analyse the content of textbooks, but investigate how these books are used in the classroom. The present study neither evaluated teachers' attitudes towards the textbooks nor the effect of gender representation on students. It could be argued that the assumptions about the possible impact of textbooks on students could not be generalized (Harwood, 2014). For example, in Kiss and Weninger's (2017) investigation of students' meaning-making of images in EFL textbooks, they conclude that "it is the learners who

create cultural meanings in the language classroom and that such meanings are not predetermined by the materials that they use” (p. 195). Thus, there is a need to examine the use of textbooks in action, as the books themselves offer just one perspective of the language taught to students, and the messages that they interpret. Further to this, the reality of English language teaching is that commercial textbooks are often at the core of a programme (McDonough, Shaw & Matsuhara, 2013), but they are often not taught without adaptations, omissions, and additions by teachers (Rose & Galloway, 2019). A future study, therefore, might aim to look at the role textbooks play in wider pedagogical practices, and whether biases in gender representation are observable in other areas of the curriculum in which the books are used. Future research on how discriminatory texts are used and adapted in classrooms by teachers and learners could provide important insights into how imbalances are, or are not, addressed in pedagogical practices.

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