

تحليل نقدي للخطاب حول تمثيل النوع الاجتماعي في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender Representation in Libyan EFL Textbooks

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الملخص

:

تلعب كتب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية دورًا هامًا في اكتساب اللغة لأنها لا تعلم الطلاب القدرات اللغوية فقط، بل تؤثر أيضًا في القيم الثقافية والمعايير الاجتماعية لديهم. تُستخدم كتب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جميع المراحل الدراسية في ليبيا، ولها تأثير كبير على تصورات الطلاب حول الأدوار الاجتماعية والجنسوية. تستخدم الدراسة نموذج نورمان فيركلاف الثلاثي الأبعاد لتحليل الخطاب النقدي وتحليل الأنماط المتعددة لكريس و فان لاووين لفحص تمثيل النوع الاجتماعي في صفحات معينة من كتب "الإنجليزية لليبياء: الصف التحضيري الأول والثاني. تستخدم الدراسة منهجاً مختلطاً يجمع بين الكمي والنوعي. من خلال الأخذ في الاعتبار البنى اللغوية (المستوى النصي) وكذلك السياقات الاجتماعية والخطابية، تكشف الدراسة كيف تسهم الصور واللغة في مواد الدورة التعليمية في تعزيز الصور النمطية التقليدية للنوع. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن التحليل النصي للكتاب المدرسي يكشف عن أنماط من التفاوت المعجمي، وتوزيع الأدوار الكلامية، وتخصيص الأدوار في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا، حيث يتم عادة تصوير الشخصيات الذكورية على أنها طموحة مهنيًا وموجهة نحو العمل، بينما تظهر الشخصيات الأنثوية في أدوار منزلية أو داعمة. تعزز العناصر متعددة الوسائط هذه الأيديولوجيات، مما يدعم الافتراضات الأبوية ويبنى هويات جنسانية لدى المتعلمين. تتطلب الدراسة مراجعة نقدية للكتب المدرسية وممارسات تربوية تراعي الحساسية تجاه قضايا النوع الاجتماعي لتصحيح عدم المساواة في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا. .

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحليل النقدي للخطاب - تمثيل النوع الاجتماعي - الخطاب التعليمي - الأيديولوجيا - اللغة - النوع الاجتماعي

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Abstract

EFL textbooks have a significant role in language acquisition because they not only teach students about linguistic capacities but also influence cultural values and social norms on them. EFL textbooks are used on all school levels in Libya, and they have a profound impact on students' gender and social roles perceptions. The study uses Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Kress & van Leeuwen's multimodal analysis to examine the representation of gender on certain pages of the English for Libya: Preparatory One and Two textbooks. The study uses a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative. By taking into account linguistic structures (textual level) as well as social and discursive contexts, the study reveals how photographs and language in course materials contribute to reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes. The study concludes that textual analysis of the textbook reveals patterns of lexical asymmetry, speech distribution, and role allocation in Libyan EFL learning, with male characters usually projected as professionally ambitious and professionally oriented, and female characters in home or supportive roles. Multimodal elements reinforce these ideologies, reinforcing patriarchal assumptions and building learners' gendered identities. The study requires critical textbook revision and gender-sensitive pedagogical practices to rectify inequality in Libyan EFL instruction.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) - Gender Representation – Educational Discourse - Ideology - Language - Gender

1. Introduction

EFL Textbooks play a very important role in language teaching since not only do they teach students about linguistic ability, but also, they add cultural values and social norms to students (McGrath, 2002; Tomlinson, 2013). Their dual purpose is especially important in (EFL) classrooms, where textbooks usually teach students foreign cultural and social ideas side by side

with language grammar. EFL textbooks are an important teaching material in Libya at every stage of education and thus have a significant impact on students' perceptions of social and gender roles. With the ongoing international gender equality debate and the socio-cultural forces in Libya, the critical examination of the way gender is constructed in these textbooks is central to an understanding and potential reversal of the reinforcement of gender stereotypes in education (Lazar, 2007; Sultana, 2012).

Extended research across various context indicated that EFL textbooks tend to reproduce stereotypical and traditional gender roles, excluding or under-representing female characters while promoting male dominance in occupational, social, and domestic spheres (Cameron, 1992; Sunderland, 2000; Shohamy, 2006). Gender portrayal in Arabic textbooks has been criticized for strengthening patriarchal cultural frameworks, limiting feminine agency, and perpetuating unequal gender power structures (Al-Subhi, 2015; Alsharif & Alqahtani, 2017).

However, most studies in Libya, and most of only focus verbal content and ignore the important visual and multimodal dimensions of textbook discourse (Amin, 2017). To be so focused is to risk missing the entire picture of how gender belief is represented and propagated within textbooks.

This study investigates Libyan EFL textbooks' representation of gender using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, and 2001). Fairclough's framework is particularly relevant in that it views discourse as a type of social practice that represents and re-generates power relations and ideologies. His three-dimensional model textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice—enables a methodical examination of how language contributes to constituting and reproducing gendered meanings. His method enables the investigation of both the language features and the wider sociocultural contexts in which the texts are created and consumed, showing the ways in which male and female identities are discursively constructed and ideologically positioned within educational texts.

Alongside this, the study goes further than traditional text analysis in applying multimodal discourse analysis methods (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) to examine written text alongside visuals, drawings, and textbook layout. The visual mode is a highly effective carrier of meaning with the

potential to support or counter textual gender messages, shaping learners' interpretations in subtle but important ways (Jewitt, 2009). By including this dimension, the study provides a more complete explanation of how gender is multimodally portrayed in Libyan EFL textbooks. This study's multidimensional method, which combines van Dijk's CDA with multimodal analysis and reception insights, intends to add new vision to the subject of gender and language education in Libya. It aims to reveal the ideological mechanisms by which textbooks impact gender attitudes and to make recommendations to help produce more egalitarian educational materials and teaching practices. Finally, this research addresses the critical need for educational resources that promote gender equality in a culturally sensitive yet transforming manner, in line with global goals such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality (UN, 2015).

2. Literature Review

Recent advances in the study of discourse have emphasized multimodality, the concurrent use of language, images, layout, and other semiotic resources—as a central aspect of meaning-making (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Jewitt, 2009). Visual representations like photographs, photography, and graphic design are important in textbooks as they reinforce or subvert gendered representations (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). Hamdan (2010) conducted content analysis to determine whether the EFL textbooks "the Action Pack Series" used in Jordanian public schools were biased towards a specific gender. The study focused on the types of jobs held by males and girls in these texts. Multimodal analysis studies have shown that images tend to reinforce stereotypical gender roles, even when the language is considered neutral or progressive.

A number of studies have discussed the representation of gender in EFL textbooks. For example, Jannati (2015) constructed gender roles in Iranian EFL textbooks through content and semiotic analysis. The questionnaire discovered that textbooks had a gender imbalance in favor of males. Women are linked with less dominant, conventional roles in society. Women, for example, are typically linked with household work. In their own study, Shahrokhi and Samadikhah (2015) used Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model of CDA to explain, interpret, and describe gender representations in such textbooks. The research demonstrated that textbooks

are gender-biased toward men in characters, pictorial representations, titles, activities, and status. Al-Subhi (2015) investigated Yemeni EFL textbooks and discovered women to be drastically under-represented, and stereotypically portrayed, reinforcing patriarchal ideologies.

Alsharif and Alqahtani (2017) pointed out gender-biasing language and pictures in Saudi textbooks, ranking women's roles and liberty below those of men. These findings parallel more widespread criticisms of Arab pedagogical materials reinforcing conventional gender roles and depriving women of empowerment. Sulaimani (2017) used the CDA approach to analyze Saudi Arabian EFL textbooks. The study analyzed gender frequencies in three areas: gender relationships, subject positions, and content. Based on the findings, the study established that textbooks had a biased bias against men. Women were under-represented in the textbook and are less frequently described than men. Bataineh (2017) investigated gender representation in a business textbook that was being taught at Sohar University. The study investigated gender visibility, gender firstness, and occupations using content analysis. The conclusions of the study were that men and women were equally visible in the textbook. The study also illustrated that women played a greater number of occupation-al roles than men. At the gender-first level, males' names and pronouns were discovered to come before females' names and pronouns.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis

This study is based on Norman Fairclough's (1992, 1995, 2001) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which views discourse as both a linguistic and social practice. Fairclough's paradigm is especially well-suited for studying educational resources like textbooks because it gives a framework for evaluating how language is used to reproduce or question social ideas, including those linked to gender. His paradigm allows the researcher to examine discourse on three interconnected levels: text (description), discursive practice (interpretation), and social practice (explanation).

3.1.1 Textual Analysis (Description)

Fairclough (1995) begins by focusing on the language in the text. This entails vocabulary, grammar, transitivity, modality, and textual structure. This level will be used in this study to investigate how gender is constructed linguistically in Libyan EFL textbooks, i.e., what gender is identified with active or passive roles, what type of occupation or activity is assigned to which gender, and with what lexis males and females are characterized. This phase also takes into account the employment of pronouns, collocations, agency assignment, and speech acts, thereby allowing the researcher to recognize language patterns that reinforce as well as subvert gender stereotypes.

3.1.2 Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

The second level focusses on how texts are created, distributed, and consumed. It covers the text's intertextuality and interdiscursivity—how it draws on other discourses and how institutional procedures and reader perception create meanings (Fairclough, 1992). This study's discursive practice analysis will take into consideration: Gender roles are normalized or challenged through repeated patterns. How textbook content reflects or challenges prevalent educational discourses in Libyan culture. Libyan EFL teachers provide insights about how they perceive and interpret gendered signals in the materials they utilize, bringing a reception perspective to the analysis. This dimension is crucial for understanding how the book fits into teaching practices and how meanings are negotiated in the classroom.

3.1.3 Social Practice (Explanation)

The third level analyzes the social and ideological context in which the discourse occurs. Fairclough (2001) affords privilege to discourse as social practice that constructs and is constructed by broader power relations and ideologies. The analysis here bridges textbook content with broader Libyan cultural norms, gender ideology, and institutional power relations.

This level of analysis includes:

- National education policy informs textbook structure.
- The influence of religious and cultural customs on gender representation.

- How the textbooks can reproduce or challenge gender inequalities within a patriarchal, traditional context.
- This socio-critical dimension is crucial to Fairclough's CDA since it enables the researcher to take into account the broader social effects of discourse for education change and social justice.

3.2 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The study also uses Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to examine how meaning is generated in the interaction between words, images, layout, typography, and other semiotic elements. MDA derives from the recognition that communication is multimodal in nature, and that graphics and images in textbooks are as ideologically invested as language (Jewitt, 2009). Visual representations are able to normalize certain gender roles, for instance, through depicting males in leadership or action-oriented roles and females in domestic or passive roles. Such semiotic choices construct learners' meanings in significant yet often unrecognized manners (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Through this multimodal approach, the study looks at:

- Image position (who is where and with what salience)
- Gestures and stance (active or passive body language) ,
- Visual salience (size, colours, and brightness)
- Social distance and gaze (how characters look at the audience),
- Text–image relations (reinforcement or contradiction of the message).

While Fairclough's original framework was language-dependent, the present research uses multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) to broaden his focus to include visual aspects of texts like photographs, graphics, and page layout. This is significant for textbook analysis because images tend to fill in ideological resonance that bolsters or combats textual statements (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Including multimodal analysis serves to further Fairclough's overall goal of determining how discourse functions in social settings.

4. Methodology

The study uses a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach based on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (1992, 1995, 2001) and supplemented with

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) guidelines by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). This mixed methodological focus was drawn upon to investigate the textual and pictorial representation of gender roles in Libyan EFL textbooks and the ways these representations reflect, reinforce, or challenge prevailing gender notions in Libya's sociocultural environment.

Data consists of selected Libyan EFL textbooks currently taught at the preparatory levels of school (English for Libya prep one unit 2 and 5. Prep two units 1,3). The selection of these texts was based on the following criteria: They are widely taught in public education, the Ministry of Education in Libya has officially adopted them, their impact on the perceptions of students about language and gender.

Data analysis involves coding texts and images of gender roles according to the three levels of Fairclough: describe, interpret, and explain. Visual MDA analysis is employed to map gender representation beyond text. Results are triangulated to deduce patterns of reinforcement, contradiction, or resistance within gender ideologies. The findings are depicted through thematic categories and qualitative examples.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Fairclough Three-Dimensional Theory

1. English For Libya Coursebook Preparatory One (Units 2,5)

1.1. Textual Analysis (Description)

1.1.1 Lexical Choices and Vocabulary

The textbook utilizes simple, common words suitable for beginning or intermediate-level EFL students. The professions in unit two for example, "doctor," "teacher," "nurse," and "farmer" are chosen because they are familiar and simple. They are gender-neutral grammatically in English, that is, they do not unambiguously encode gender. Such lexical neutrality can superficially imply an egalitarian or inclusive approach. But the neutrality of language is undermined by visual prompts that equate each occupation with a gendered stereotypical picture (doctor = man, nurse = woman).

Some of the verbs are thematic with regard to labour, routine, and helping (e.g., "I help people," "I read books," "I work with animals"). These lexical spaces are associated with social roles and activities, and they build discursive identities through repetition and co-occurrence. For examples:

"I help sick people" is synonymous with caring and nurturing. "I work with animals" is about physical work and outdoors. These options are not merely linguistic direction but also social value creation, implying that caring jobs are defined through caring (more commonly assigned to women) and do/fix jobs through doing or fixing (more commonly assigned to males).

In unit 5 Words like "trousers," "skirt," "belt," "tie," "jumper," "blouse," "shoes," "socks," "dress," "shirt," "sandals" are used to differentiate men's and women's clothing. The words follow culturally accepted gender stereotypes, strengthening them: boys' trousers and belts; girls' skirts and dresses. Phrases like "Ali's shoes" and "Fatima's jumper" emphasize ownership, personalizing the items and establishing individual identity based on gendered attire. Words such as "white," "blue," "grey," "yellow" are referring to colors of garments, culturally assigned to gender roles, blue to boys in the past, others for women. Expressions such as "belt," "tie," "socks," "shoes" are definite and familiar, linking naming of gender roles to common clothing.

1.1.2 Sentence Structure and Grammar

The grammatical structures on both sides are largely straightforward present simple tense declarative sentences. This is pedagogically correct for EFL learners, but it gives fixed and generalized ideas of identity.

They are:

"I work in a hospital all day."

"I always get up early."

"I go to university every day and I read books."

These sentences are very repetitive in structure, creating expected subject + verb + complement patterns. While this is helpful to language learners, it makes established roles static, invariant, and normative. The use of the habitual tense ("I always," "I sometimes," "I never") embeds the implication that these identities are fixed, essentialized traits of the characters represented. Also, no modal verbs, conditionals, or possibility language (i.e., "might be," "could become") are employed, which would allow for imagining alternative futures or flexible roles. The lack of such structures indirectly implies that roles and identities are predetermined and unchanging.

The sentences in the dialogues in unit 5 (p.38) are predominantly simple, such as "Ali's shoes are..." "His socks are..." "It's a red tie," which makes the

information clear and accessible for learners. The application of the present tense ("are," "is," "wears") to state customary, continuous actions or conditions highlights the idea that gendered dress is habitual and gender-related. Choosing words like "Have you got a tie?", "What are they like?", and "Who is she?" which include auxiliary verbs and are formulated to secure simple, direct answers; this emphasizes informativeness and strengthens gendered clothing knowledge.

1.1.3 Pronouns

The employing only first-person singular pronouns ("I") in autobiographical-like sentences emphasizes individual identification with some role:

"I work with children."

"I take care of the sick people."

"I go to university every day."

This gives a highly strong identification between the individual speaker as a person and their profession, indicating that the job is not just work but a defining part of who they are. As these lines are also linked with gendered images, the text does work to make the gender-role identification seem natural. It is no longer just that this woman works as a nurse, but that to be a woman is to work as a nurse—a highly subtle but highly potent ideological move. The use of the possessive pronoun in the latter half ("Whose is this? It's the teacher's.") is also reflective of assumptions regarding ownership and entitlement. Conjunction of objects with specific roles signifies that equipment, like work, is "belonging" to specific gendered selves (lipstick belongs to the shopkeeper, stethoscope belongs to the doctor).

unit 5 page 38 makes extensive use of "he," "she," "his," and "her" when talking about children, marking gender differences explicitly. The unit use pronouns following gendered nouns consistently, which aids clarity e.g., "His socks are..." when talking about boys and "She is wearing..." when talking about girls. Pronouns are key linguistic markers that serve to reinforce gender identity, aid clarity in communication, and allow students to mark gender differences linguistically.

1.1.4 Cohesion and Collocation

The lines are structured according to thematic parallelism, where the speakers list what they do daily, where they are employed, and things

associated with their job. There is a persisting pattern: women's jobs involve helping, studying, or selling, but men's work involves working with tools, leading, or teaching. The collocations pull stereotypical associations, such as "help the sick" being collocated with "nurse" (a woman), "tend to animals" being collocated with "farmer" (a man), and "attend university and read" being collocated with "student" (a woman). Repetition of common lexical items in unit 5 creates cohesion and topical coherence. Pronouns like "he," "she," "his," and "her" link sentences, while conjunctions like "and" enhance smoothness. Descriptive collocations like "white socks," "blue trousers," and "red tie" create predictable patterns, reinforcing connections among colors and types of clothes with gender. Action-oriented collocations "wears," "has got," and "is wearing" describe wear, clearly relating action verbs to objects. The attire collocation with "gender" reinforces social stereotypes, making it easier to understand and remember.

1.2 Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

The text book is clearly a part of an English language teaching curriculum in Libya, for preparatory students as indicated by visual cues like dress code (e.g., headscarves, classic male headwear) and names like "Aisha." The text book's aim, as stated by its own preface, is to teach basic English words and sentence structures using everyday relevant conditions, but, like every educational book, it is ideologically situated. The choice of professions and the way they are portrayed are culturally oriented. Curriculum writers, illustrators, and ed consultants may have employed "familiar" or "socially accepted" images in creating the content. This desire to render the content familiar may perpetuate erroneously (or purposely) the prevailing gender stereotypes prevalent in the local community or in the broader society. The creative process is thus subject to an ideological tension between pedagogical simplicity and social conformity. The simplicity of language is useful for learning language, but it also leaves room for more deeply, richer ideologies—particularly gender norms to be encoded uncontestably and uncomplicatedly.

According to Fairclough (1995) texts are rarely isolated; rather, they are formed by several overlapping discourses. In these textbook pages, we may distinguish numerous overlapping discourses:

The pedagogical discourse focusses on clarity, simplicity, and classroom involvement. The gender discourse perpetuates binary and stereotyped gender roles. The cultural discourse is based on local perceptions of what jobs are "appropriate" for men and women are structured by various intersecting discourses, such as educational discourse, gender discourse, cultural discourse, and professional discourse. These discourses support each other, with educational goals like English learning supported by salient gendered jobs and dominant cultural narratives. This interdiscursivity makes the textbook appear "natural" or "commonsense," but it actually chooses to include and exclude some world views. For example, that there are no women in technical or physical tasks and no men in care tasks makes gender roles not only normal but desirable is a discursive convergence of education and culture. The convergence of discourses makes gender difference look natural and therefore invisible to learner and teacher unless critically problematized.

Textbooks not only teach pupils but also position them in firmly delineated subject positions within gendered professional identities. Girls are depicted as nurses, shop assistants, and pupils, and boys as doctors, teachers, firemen, and farmers. These positionings are highly socializing, particularly for children's early-adolescent construction of ideas of their futures and possibilities. The lack of counter-stereotypical models, i.e., female firefighters or male nurses, further consolidates this positioning. Despite neutral written text, the visual and discursive context does not allow learners to imagine other subject positions, as their roles are already determined by gender and visual markers.

The text is primarily organized through repetition, and repetition is not only beneficial to language acquisition, but it is also discursive consolidation. Repeating the names of occupations with gender-coded pictures results in a discursive fixation, a fixity, a rigidity of gender-occupation connection. Each time a student says, "She is a nurse," or "He is a fireman," they are not just practicing English; they are practicing ideology. Formal question and answer sessions ("Who is this?" "It's the teacher.") may look interactive, but are actually tightly controlled. There can be only one correct response: the one that matches the image. This constrains freedom of interpretation and makes students passive receivers of language and identity

norms. In this paradigm, discursive practice underpins a closed system of gender representation.

The repetitive pairing of some colors, dress styles, and gender in books serves to reinforce gender stereotypes at a very young age. In depicting children stereotypically dressed and asking about gender identification, these books subtly convey that difference by gender is natural and absolute. This ensures internalization, because kids are likely to associate gendered dress and behavior as ever-so-hardwired to their sense of themselves and social role. This can reinforce gender binaries and circumscribe perceptions of gender flexibility.

1.3 Social Practice (Explanation)

With respect to social practice, the text supports and reflects prevailing patriarchal ideologies in how it depicts gender roles as being static, essential, and cultural. It abides by traditional social norms whereby men are associated with power, toughness, and visible professions, and women are associated with nurturing, service, and home or teaching work. This gendered construction is neither openly stated but embodied in visual and textual forms and becomes the informal or hidden curriculum of the textbook. The absence of gender diversity, non-traditional roles, or other identities helps to reinforce a binary, heteronormative worldview. As a result, the textbook does not simply teach language, it serves as a tool for ideological reproduction, forming young learners' comprehension of gender and limiting their conception of possibility in work and social life.

1.4 Multimodal Analysis

The illustrations in unit 2 show conventional gender-occupation pairings, with men depicted in power, technical, or manual roles, and women shown as nurse, student, and shop owner. Despite the presentation of gender-neutral occupational titles, the images perpetuate a clear association of these professions with males, thereby affecting students' mental mappings of gender and occupation. This depiction reflects conceptual models, more specifically "classificational structures," wherein people are sorted into types, suggesting static categories, i.e., men as professionals and women as caretakers or assistants.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) describe that direction of the gaze is at the heart of the way that participants speak to the viewer: Male characters

(e.g., the doctor, fireman, and teacher) look straight forward and make eye contact with the viewer directly, producing authority, confidence, and professionalism. Female characters produce softer or indirect looks, with more passive, friendly facial expressions implying helpfulness or accessibility, but not authority.

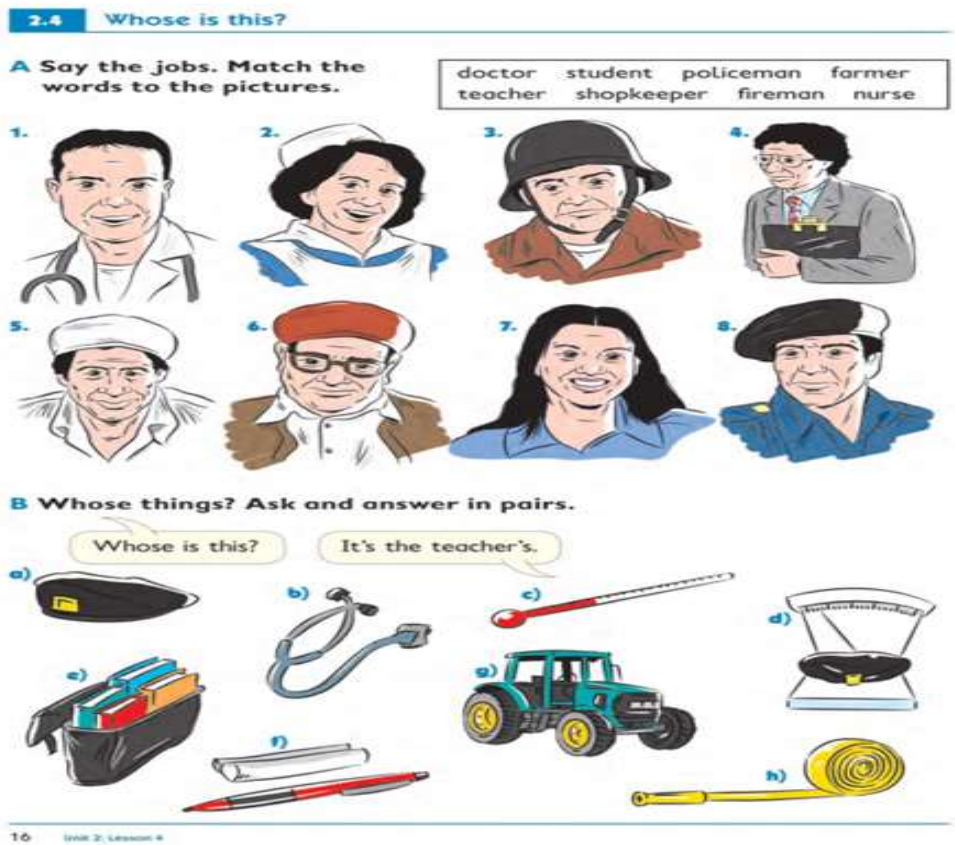


Figure 1: English for Libya Textbook (unit 2)

Clothing is a powerful semiotic tool used to represent identity (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). Occupation-specific work attire or professional business attire is donned by male characters, while female characters wear

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nurse's uniforms or modest culturally specific clothing. The pen, tractor, stethoscope, and fire hose are assigned to male-coded professions, symbolizing activity, control, and production. Conversely, the book, and apron are associated with femininity, study, and service rather than leadership or control. These pictorial elements come together to denote symbolic attributes, in which clothing, tools, or items become signs of identity that construct and constrict gendered meaning.

3.2 He's wearing blue trousers.



Look! Ali's shirt is white. He's wearing a white shirt.
His trousers are blue. He's wearing blue trousers.

A Complete the sentences.
Ali's shoes are ... He's wearing ...
His socks are ... He's wearing ...

B Describe Fatima's clothes.

C Who is it? Read the descriptions and decide.
He is wearing a grey shirt, black trousers, white socks and black shoes. *Who is he?*
She is wearing a blue skirt, a white blouse, black shoes and white socks. *Who is she?*



Ali Hasan Ahmed



Fatima Hala Alia

Look! He is wearing a blue shirt.
He is wearing white socks.
He is wearing black shoes.
He is wearing a blue shirt, white socks and black shoes.

D Describe someone in the class.

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Figure 2: English for Libya Textbook (unit 5)

Grey and black for shirts and pants (traditionally associated with boys); white or other colors for blouses and dresses for girls—these color choices are visual gender indicators. Traditional styles, shirts and pants for boys, dresses and skirts for girls are visually reinforced, adhering to social stereotypes. Accessories and details: Footwear, sandals, socks, and belts are utilized to continue to define gendered appearance, contributing to visual stereotypes.

Spatial arrangement in images can signify value and rank, with the upper rows of male professionals suggesting leadership and worth, and females towards the bottom indicating secondary role. Visual design's vertical axis also typically represents value, while horizontal arrangement can represent "given vs. new" or "familiar vs. unfamiliar," with male characters typically being placed first to establish their superiority. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) argue that a refined visual hierarchy of gender roles is paramount in visual design.

2. English For Libya Course Book Preparatory Two (Units 1,3)

2.1 Textual Analysis (Description)

2.1.1 Lexical Choices

The three pages of vocabulary employ straightforward and relevant vocabulary concerning holidays, free time, and housework. However, word selections unwittingly reinforce gender roles.

Boys employ action words, outdoor words, or knowledge words:

Faisal says, "I swam daily."

Adam says, "I would like to be an airman. I am fascinated with aeroplanes and flight."

Jamil talks about football and sits to watch games.

Adel speaks about wild animals and how he takes them.

Women, in contrast, employ more passive, home-based, or detail-focusing words:

Muna: "Not very much."

Huda responded: "We stayed home... lots of things."

Amna says, "I love the colours and shapes" (of flowers).

The song "I've cleaned the windows, washed the floor..." features an unnamed girl character listing cleaning and gardening duties.

Though both are of the same grammatical nature, the language portrays masculine speech as dynamic and adventurous and feminine discourse as quiet and domestic.

2.1.2 Sentence Structure and Grammar

Grammatical constructions are primarily present simple and present perfect, which indicate routine action and actions recently accomplished. The structures are neutral in fact, but their use reinforces gender stereotypes.

The woman who is performing the domestic chores uses present perfect (e.g., "I've cleaned," "I've swept") to emphasize the completion of task. The present simple is employed to report on boys' activities (e.g., "I play football," "I go to matches," "I enjoy learning about birds"), denoting persistent interests and identity. This distinction suggests that girls are goal-directed and home-focused, whereas boys are goal-directed and mentally or physically engaged.

2.1.3 Pronouns

The textbook used the first-person singular pronoun "I" throughout, giving learners a voice and the opportunity to speak for themselves. But who talks and for what?

Boys use "I" to talk about agency, identity, and desire.

"I want to be a pilot."

"I love wild animals."

"I play football."

Girls use the word "I" to talk about cooperation, domesticity, or affective interest:

"I stayed at home."

"I enjoy stamp collecting."

"I like the colours and the shapes."

This shows that, while boys and girls do communicate, the semantic meaning of their talk is in line with the traditional gender stereotypes.

This contrast suggests that girls are task-oriented and home-concerned, whereas boys are goal-oriented and intellectually or physically active.

2.1.4 Cohesion and Coherence

The textbook emphasizes repetition as a key feature in language development, with action verbs and nouns being repeated across different units to guarantee associative meaning. Female speakers of Unit 3, for example, repeat action verbs and nouns to build an involvement theme, while

Units 1 & 3 find most male speakers using action verbs to undergird a caregiving schema. Girls' talk ellipsis and incompletely expressed clauses can undermine narrative strength and marginalize female voices.

Coherence refers to the way ideas are related to each other logically within the text, such that it is simple for readers to infer meaning. Male-dominated conversations shift from simple to more elaborate content, while female-dominated conversations remain static or task-framed, but form a coherent but unbalanced narrative. Activity progression in Unit 3's song has overt coherence, yet each activity is achieved by a girl, maintaining a gendered ideology of labor. Men are given cause-effect or goal-oriented logic, while women possess listing logic, resulting in readers valuing male speech as rational and forward-thinking, and female speech circular or static.

2.2 Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

The textbook is a conservative educational material that teaches the children in English but also sustains gender ideology. The language and the pictures are chosen to be suitable for the age, in line with national values, and language-learning accessible but based on social norms. This creates a binarized model of gender identity where the boys are depicted as adventurers, doers, and achievers and the girls as helpers, home-based characters, or caretakers. This reader positioning is neither fluidity nor overlap but of a binary model of gender identity.

The textbook integrates different types of discourse, creating a tiered effect through which learning English also means learning gendered behavior. It refers passively to prevailing social and cultural narratives, reproducing real-life models in the one's household or society. Male characters occupy the discursive space, taking fuller, longer, and more deliberate turns of speech and initiating conversations. Female characters respond or appear in cameo roles as background figures, using less articulate speech, shorter or more evasive responses, and topics latched onto service, care, or beauty rather than ambition. This restricted discursive power allows girls to approve or contrast boys' experience.

2.3 Social Practice (Explanation)

Interdiscursivity is also a characteristic of the text as it blends a number of different types of discourse: educational discourse (learning English, grammar, vocabulary), ordinary discourse (disciplinary talk about holidays, free time, household tasks), and cultural discourse (traditional masculine and female roles, modest attitude). Interdiscursivity creates a layered impact where learning English is equivalent to learning gendered conduct. The text does implicitly draw upon already present discourses of social and cultural models, such as male ambition and female responsibility and passivity, which are real models that are already known and part of students' own families or society. Male characters occupy the space of discourse, creating longer, fuller, more deliberate turns of speech, whereas female characters respond or appear in the background.

The textbook also covers the third stage, Social Practice (Explanation), in which the text is situated within its wider sociocultural, political, and educational context and how discourse is tasked with reproducing or challenging social structures and ideologies, in this instance, gender roles.

The textbooks are officially sanctioned tools of state-approved cultural transfer, in which boys are trained up as public actors and girls socialized as private actors. This is suiting to what Fairclough identifies as hegemony, insidious and habitual domination of one's worldview through everyday discourse.

The social practice of these pages in the textbook is based on binary thinking, with no other gender expressions being present, reducing the social imagination and relegating the non-conformist to margins. Fairclough's model points out that discourse is a site of struggle, i.e., classroom discourse can confront stereotypes introduced by teachers, educators, curriculum can be changed to accommodate counter-discourses, and successive changes in textbooks can reflect more equal and multiple representations of gender.

2.4 Multimodal Analysis

Throughout the three pages, gender roles given to female and male characters have distinct patterns: Boys (Ahmad, Faisal, Adel, Jamil, Adam) are linked with mobility, outside, technical interests (airplanes, animals), and ambition (e.g., "I would like to be a pilot"). Women (Huda, Muna, Rasha, Amna, and Maysam) are associated with domestic life, home-based interests (plants, stamp collection), home confinement, and housework. Most notably in Unit 3 ("I've Finished My Work"), the woman completes all the work of the home: washing windows, painting, sweeping, and watering flowers. No man is seen doing any type of labor, establishing the visual association between femininity and domestic work.



Figure 3: English for Libya Textbook (unit 3)

All the characters dress in modest and clean clothes, consistent with local cultural tradition. Women, on the other hand, don headbands, bows, or long skirts, modestly validating femininity and aesthetic concern, while men don functional or neutral clothes (T-shirts, shirts), putting functionality and mobility over beauty. The choice of the colors pink, blue, and red complies

with the traditional colour coding of gender, with femininity being represented by pink and masculinity and activity by blue/red.

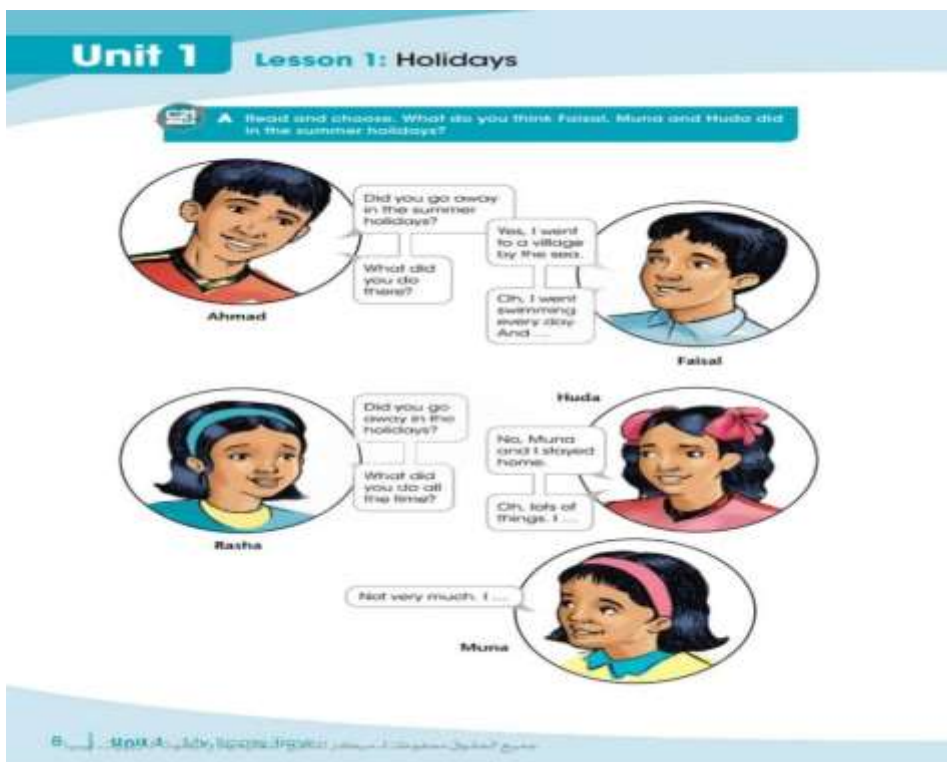


Figure 4: English for Libya Textbook (unit 1)

Boy characters are depicted as traveling, playing sports, studying animals, and wanting to be pilots. They are linked with ambition, leisure, and adventure. Women characters are housecleaning, collecting stamps, remaining at home, or taking care of plants less action-oriented, more domestic, and nurturing activities. In visual grammar, this resonates with an actional model in which men are presented as dynamic actors in pursuit of objectives, whereas women enact habitual, passive, or relational action. The single female character who performs manual work (Unit 3) does so in a private/domestic setting, as opposed to the male heroes' public, professional, or adventure domain.



Figure 4: English for Libya Textbook (unit 1)

These pages physically and textually normalize gender difference by associating boys with mobility, curiosity, and desire, and girls with domesticity, care, and conformity. The textbook works to create a hidden curriculum through frequent use of format, facial expression, stance, and activity to instruct young people about what is normal or acceptable for their gender. Despite being situated within a context of language learning, these multimodal choices aid in the reproduction of gender inequality in society.

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender Representation in Libyan EFL Textbooks

Category	Male Characters (n = 10)	Female Characters (n = 9)	Ideological Effect
Active Roles	90% (9/10)	22% (2/9)	Males shown as leaders and actors; women as passive observers
Passive Roles	10% (1/10)	78% (7/9)	females mostly shown in supporting, non-initiating roles
Professional/Public Jobs	70% (7/10)	22% (2/9)	Public identity male; females are absent from professional sphere
Speech Quantity (2+ clauses)	80% (8/10)	33% (3/9)	Male figures dominate discourse and information exchange
Ambition/Desire Statements	100% (10/10)	11% (1/9)	Boys discuss future plans; girls discuss chores or hobbies
Use of “I” + Agency Verbs	100% (10/10)	22% (2/9)	Males linked with choice and action; females with duty

Table (1) Gender Representation

Men dominate visibility, voice, agency, ambition, and professional symbolism. Women: Focus on domestic imagery, limited discourse power, and subordinate layout tasks. These are not random trends; they form a

systematic ideological representation of gender as binary, unequal, and naturalized.

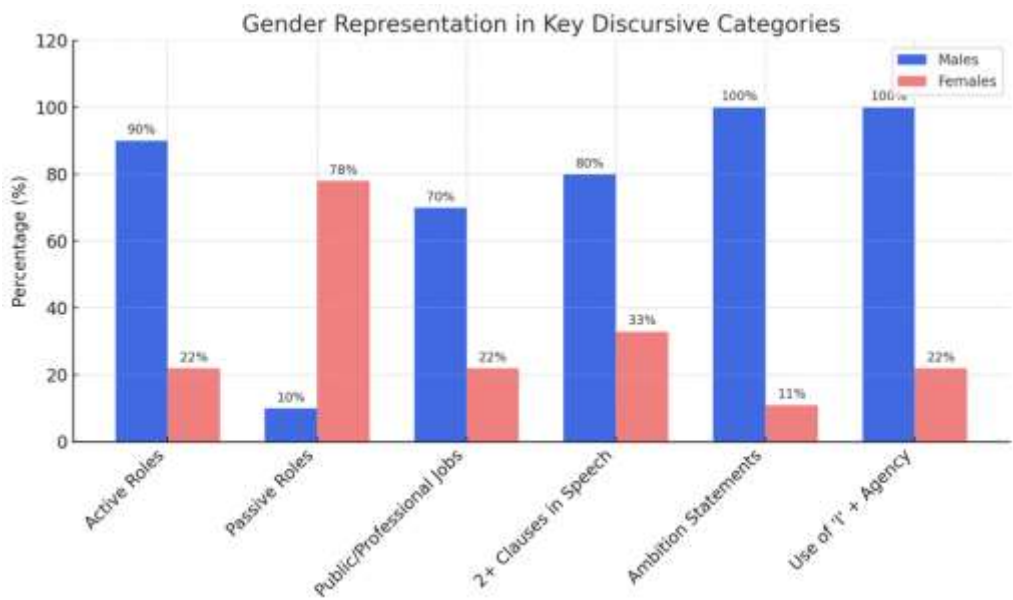


Figure (5) Gender Representation

6. Conclusion

This study evaluated gender representation in four units of the textbook (English for Libya) using Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model and multimodal analysis principles. The findings show that gendered beliefs are strongly integrated in both the verbal and visual components of the text, helping to promote traditional, hierarchical gender roles. At the textual level, a clear asymmetry emerges in the distribution of agency, speech, and lexical fields: male characters are consistently portrayed through action-oriented verbs, ambitious self-expressions, and professional aspirations, whereas female characters are predominantly associated with domestic routines, emotional expression, and supportive roles. These language patterns are not accidental but politically motivated, portraying men as mobile, mentally active, and authoritative,

whereas women appear bound, obedient, and confined to domestic or decorative places.

At the discursive level, the units replicate and construct broader society narratives around gender roles based on culturally accepted knowledges of masculinity and femininity. The discourses are constructed as normal and unproblematic but operate quietly to exclude non-conforming or alternative identity, reinforcing a binary and essentialist view of gender. In addition, multimodal choices overtly encode male characters' power and visibility, with females constructed as secondary, compliant, or invisible.

From a social practice point of view, the textbook is an instrument for reproduction of hegemonic ideology, naturalizing patriarchal norms into language education form. This supports Fairclough's contention that discourse is an arena of social conflict where dominant concepts get institutionalized by repetition and exclusion. The educational consequences are widespread: learners are not just learning a language, but are being socialized into a worldview that limits gendered possibilities and perpetuates existing inequities.

Finally, findings reinforce the importance of critical literacy and gender-sensitive pedagogical models towards textbook preparation. Unless there is purposeful revision and open construction of discourse, the texts could construct an invisible curriculum that dismantles gender equality, stifles multiple identities, and constricts the educative potential of transformation.

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