

## Gender Issues in Select Moroccan ELT Textbooks: A Review

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### Abstract

This paper aimed to explore the ways in which three Moroccan ELT textbooks currently used in second year Baccalaureate public high schools represent gender. It also aimed to identify the extent to which these textbooks succeeded in avoiding instances of biased and stereotypical gender representations of female and male figures. The study was conducted based on the theoretical framework of the Standards-Based Approach. It adopted content analysis as the main instrument for data collection and analysis that combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The findings indicated that these textbooks contain instances of biased gender representations regarding frequency of appearance, visibility, space, firstness and occupations attributed to female and male characters in texts, dialogues, exercises and images. The paper concluded with a set of implications suggesting ways in which gender inequalities could be avoided in future Moroccan ELT textbooks.

**Keywords:** Content analysis, ELT, Gender representation, Morocco, Textbook evaluation

## **1. Introduction**

The textbook is undeniably an essential material in the teaching learning process in the Moroccan English language teaching classroom. Despite the development of new information communication technologies, teachers still feel the growing need for textbooks because they present, organize and illustrate the curriculum. However, the acclaimed prestigious status textbooks occupy in the teaching-learning process remains unjustified as textbooks themselves are not perfect. They may appear sound and coherent on the surface but they often lack many of the criteria that could make them perfectly suitable for teaching right. Professional systematic scrutiny of their content would reveal deficiencies in the most appreciated textbook. Textbooks remain, like any other human product, subject to bias, inappropriateness, unauthenticity and / or incorrectness that could impair not only what and how students learn but also their perceptions of the world around them. These potential defects that are inherently attributed to textbooks can only be identified and overcome by evaluating their content. Textbook evaluation is therefore a central practice that is essential to the success of the teaching learning process.

Research maintains that textbook evaluation is a reflective practice that has the potential of boosting the quality of ELT textbook. This practice is essential in improving the quality of the teaching learning process as it allows for refining the quality of the textbooks and materials used as teaching-learning tools in the classroom. It helps teachers, school inspectors, textbook designers and educational policy makers to reveal the strengths and weaknesses that underlie these textbooks and which could not effectively be identified, analyzed and solved otherwise.

The practice of textbooks evaluation has been employed and recommended by various researchers to investigate social, cultural, linguistic and pedagogical issues within ELT textbooks. Therefore, several problems related to gender, age, social class, grammar, vocabulary, functions, gradation, recycling, appropriateness and suitability have been investigated and ways in which they could be overcome have been suggested. There is also evidence that the practice of textbook evaluation gears teachers' professional development as it requires using a set of reflective thinking strategies that allow teachers to reflect upon the content of the textbooks to determine the extent to which it is authentic, appropriate and effective (see Agnaou, 2004; Cisar, 2000; Cunningsworth, 1995; Jibreel, 2015; Litz, 2005; Lu & Lin, 2014; McDonough & Shaw, 2003). Nevertheless, textbook evaluation is

not merely an intuitive day-to-day passive activity which individual teachers use to superficially skim over the textbook to determine which activities to use and which ones to discard; textbook evaluation benefits both teachers and textbooks if it is employed as a systematic, collaborative and reflective longitudinal practice that seeks to uncover the hidden curriculum that is often obscured by structures, texts and images.

The present paper was an evaluation of the representation of gender in three second year Baccalaureate ELT textbooks. It aimed to investigate the extent to which these textbooks present an authentic image of both female and male characters in texts, dialogues, examples and images. It drew the attention of Moroccan ELT practitioners to the importance of textbook evaluation as a reflective practice that serves for fostering gender equality and equity among learners. To this end, the present study examined the extent to which select Moroccan ELT textbooks succeed in avoiding various instances of gender stereotypes and inequalities with regard to frequency of appearance of female and male nouns and pronouns, the space allocated to female and male characters in texts and dialogues, the visibility of these characters in pictures and image as well as their firstness in dialogues, texts and examples.

The study was situated within the framework of the Standards-Based Approach [SBA] (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 1995). This choice was dictated not only by the English Language Guidelines for Secondary Schools (Ministry of National Education [MNE], 2007) which officially designates the SBA as the official framework for ELT in Morocco, but also by the opportunity this approach offers to study, juxtapose and understand the components of foreign and local cultures. The SBA aims to foster foreign language education through designing a framework that targets attaining eleven content standards included in five main goal areas: Communications, Cultures, Comparisons, Connections and Communities. While the goal area of Communications fosters interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes of Communication, the goal areas of Cultures and Comparisons allow for discovering, juxtaposing and comparing local and foreign languages and cultures. The goal area of Connections encourages learners to use English to learn new information that could only be accessed through English about other school subjects, whereas the goal area of Communities seeks to equip learners with lifelong learning skills that enable them to face the ever-changing realities of the modern communities and prepare them for global citizenship (ACTFL, 1996; Cisar, 2000; MNE, 2007).

The SBA offers an insightful perspective for investigating gender issues in Moroccan ELT textbooks. It allows testing the authenticity of the textual and contextual content of ELT textbooks by providing an inclusive paradigm that rests on combining teaching and learning communicative, cultural and strategic competencies. The attainment of these competencies depends to a great extent on the authenticity of social, cultural, linguistic and pedagogical content including the representation of gender. The approach considers textbooks as susceptible of containing biased representations of both female and male images as these materials could exhibit instances of stereotypes regarding domestic, occupational and social roles of female and male characters identified in texts and images of these textbooks.

## **2. Literature Review**

Researchers have investigated the representations of gender bias in various ELT textbooks. Their findings revealed different instances of gender bias, stressing the dominance of male characters over female characters in several aspects. For instance, various studies explored gender stereotypes in texts, dialogues and exercises of ELT textbooks and identified instances where females' characters were mainly associated with indoor domestic activities that portray them as housewives, care-takers, nurses, babysitters and teachers (Aagnaou, 2004; Arikan, 2005; Benatabou, 2010; Jaafari, 2018; Laabidi, 2014; Lu & Lin, 2014; Otlowski 2003; Su, 2008). In addition, Ghorbani (2009) observed that female characters were often described using adjectives that portray their emotional and physical appearance, while men were represented using adjectives depicting their performance and personality. Moreover, Yilmaz (2012) and Amin and Birjandi (2012) found that ELT textbooks tend to present male characters in the first position in texts, dialogues and exercises. They also observed that male characters were given more space in texts and dialogues as male characters uttered more words than female characters.

Other studies investigated the visibility of male and female characters in illustrations. Their findings indicated that male characters are more frequently identified in pictures and images throughout several ELT textbooks (Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Huang, 2009; Kim, 2012; Zhu, 2011). These studies demonstrated that men appeared more in outdoor activities associated with sports, hobbies and work, while women were often pictured in domestic activities such as household chores and care-taking activities. By contrast, a study

conducted by Kazimi, Aidinlou, Savaedi and Alaviniya (2013) revealed that men are invisible in some ELT textbooks and that women are represented as first class citizens. Yaghoubi-Notach and Nariman-Jahan (2012) and Cunningsworth (1995) revealed that the textbooks that were investigated presented a balanced gender representation both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The studies above suggest that EFL textbooks are subject to different forms of gender bias. Systematic evaluations of EFL textbooks led to uncovering biased representations of gender in terms of visibility, firstness, social roles and jobs associated with each gender, stereotypical representations, space allotted to males and females in conversations and most importantly in the division of household activities. In short, ELT textbooks, the literature shows, are fertile grounds where instances of gender bias germinate and grow through maintaining and propagating biased stereotypical misrepresentations of the social realities of both local and foreign communities. It is the task of textbook evaluation studies to expose such biases and present alternative practices that improve the quality of the gender content of ELT textbooks. In this line of thought, the importance of the present study lies in its endeavor to examine the ways in which gender is represented in Moroccan ELT textbooks.

Therefore, cautious and in-depth evaluation of these textbooks would undoubtedly contribute to revealing instances of gender bias and suggest ways in which they could be alleviated, and that is the ultimate objective of the present study which tried to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the select Moroccan ELT textbooks succeed in presenting authentic representations of gender with regard to frequency of appearance of male/female characters, their visibility in pictures, the space allotted to each one of them in texts and dialogues as well as their firstness in texts, dialogues and exercises?
2. How do these textbooks represent male and female characters in texts, dialogues and images?

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Design and Context of the Study**

The present study adopted a mixed-methods design that combined both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques with equal priority. The objective of such a design

was to determine whether the two techniques converged into an understanding of the problem being investigated. In addition, a mixed-methods design allowed for using the strengths of quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques complementarily in a way that reduced each other's weaknesses. It was a one-phase design that allowed for analyzing the two sets of data separately only to merge them at the interpretation stage. Thus, the two sets of data analysis were merged into one overall interpretation which related the quantitative results to the qualitative findings of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013).

### **3.2. Materials**

This study aimed to evaluate the content of three Moroccan ELT textbooks currently used in teaching second year Baccalaureate students in public schools, namely *Gateway to English 2* (Hassim, Blibil & Rasmy, 2007), *Insights into English 2* (Najib & El Haddad, 2007) and *Ticket to English 2* (Hammani, Ahssen & Tansaoui, 2007).

These three textbooks, which are currently used in teaching second year Baccalaureate level in Moroccan public high schools, were introduced to Moroccan public schools in 2007. They are intended to essentially assist the implementation of the shift to the SBA adopted by the MNE (2007) in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. They are designed by Moroccan male English language practitioners including high school and university teachers, supervisors and teacher trainers. The textbooks are designed to cater for the needs of second year Baccalaureate learners' through preparing them for the final national Baccalaureate examination. Thus, each book contains 10 units with similar themes but in different order.

The choice of these textbooks was basically motivated by a desire to uncover whether and how they help EFL teachers and students to meet the same curricular and pedagogical objectives. It was observed that, in comparison with common core and first year Baccalaureate levels, teachers and students at the second year Baccalaureate level pay more attention to the content of the textbooks as it is a terminal year when English as a school subject plays a decisive role in the learners' attempt to pass the high school national exam. Also, at this level the learners accumulate cognitive and strategic competences that enable them to be more sensitive to what the textbook presents and how it presents it. Therefore, textbooks used at this level should be given special interest and careful evaluation.

### **3.3. Instrument**

This study used content analysis as a data collection technique best known “for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2013, P. 18). It allowed for creating coding categories that enable effective identification of gender contents in the three textbooks based on two main categories, namely female and male. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), content analysis also offers the opportunity to formulate coding units that consist of textual units such as pronouns, nouns and names referring to either female or male characters or pictures that feature female and male figures. Another coding unit that was formulated is that of words uttered by female or male characters to measure the space allocated to each category. The validity of the instrument lied in creating coding units that actually measure gender contents included in the three textbooks. Thus, the study used female pronouns as she, her, hers and male pronouns as he, him and his as coding units. Other pronouns including I, me, mine, my, you, your, yours, us, our, ours, they, their, theirs, were also taken into account with regard to gender of the nouns to which they referred. In cases where these pronouns referred to an unidentified or a gender-neutral noun, they were not taken into consideration. A good coding of categories and units of data collection promotes the objectivity and validity of the research and facilitates the replication of results with no possible disagreement. Concerning reliability, the coding categories and units ensure a high degree of inter-coder reliability because different coder will certainly obtain the same results if they use the same coding categories and units that have been defined for this study.

### **3.4. Data Collection Procedure**

The procedure of data collection was based on the pre-determined coding categories and units described above. The three textbooks were scrutinized to identify and count the frequency of appearance the various units relevant to the female-male categories including pronouns, names and nouns referring to people, occupations and relationships. Concerning the collection of data of the visibility criterion, images were examined to count the number of female and male figures they feature. As for data related to space allocated to female and male characters, texts, dialogues and exercises included in the three textbooks were scanned to count the number of words that are uttered by females and males. In the same

token, data related to firstness was collected by studying various texts, dialogues and exercises to identify which gender character spoke first or which gender name, noun, or pronoun is mentioned first. In short, data collection procedures consisted of mainly making frequency counts that would facilitate the data analysis and interpretation procedures.

### **3.5. Data Analysis Procedures**

#### **3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis Procedures**

To perform the frequency counts related to the female-male attributes, the study developed a set of coding units that comprises words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, texts, activities, exercises and pictures found in the three textbooks under analysis. These textbooks were thoroughly investigated to measure frequency of occurrence, visibility (or omission), space, firstness and personality traits of each of the categories whenever appropriate. In an attempt to analyze the gender content of the three textbooks, the following procedures are followed. First, the three textbooks were examined for frequency counts that measure the number of occurrences of male-female characters through counting the frequency of appearance of pronouns, nouns and names referring to each male-female character to identify the dominant one. Second, textbooks were scanned to investigate the frequency of appearance of these characters in pictures and determine whether characters belonging to the same category are equally visible. The third step consisted in measuring the space allotted to male-female characters in dialogues and conversations through measuring sentence length by counting the number of words in conversations and texts where different characters within the same category appear. The following task was that of identifying and counting the number of (un)conventional personality traits attributed to each one of these characters concerning jobs, household roles, leisure activities and emotions. To this end, adjectives, phrases and pictures describing them at work, at home or in outdoor activities were counted along with the emotions these characters' express. The final step in analyzing gender content aimed at identifying the firstness of male-female characters, and this was achieved by counting the number of times when they appear first in dialogues, conversations and texts.

#### **3.5.2. Qualitative Analysis Procedures**

The process of qualitative analysis adopted in this study involved interpreting the female-male characters and their properties through making inferences and reconstructing

meanings derived from the tabulated data. To perform this task, the researcher explored the properties and dimensions of female-male characters, identified relationships between them and uncovered patterns along with testing categories against the whole range of data. Principally, this stage required an in-depth evaluation (Cunningsworth, 1995) based on a critical analysis of the data that was guided by the researcher' reasoning ability (Bradley, 1993).

The qualitative analysis of the gender content aimed at uncovering instances of bias, prejudice, stereotypes and misrepresentations of female-male characters within the three textbooks. The process was guided by the principles of the SBA to English language teaching in Morocco (MNE, 2007) and examined whether the nature and manners in which the social content was presented was in accordance with the social context in which the textbooks were used. The frequency counts of occurrence, visibility, space, personality traits and firstness offered interesting insights into realistic aspects of the social content of the textbooks and helped to establish relationships between different categories while exploring properties attributed to gender.

A semiological content analysis was also adopted to analyze the content of images identified in these textbooks (Kordjazi, 2012; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2006). Through exploring the gender modality of characters identified in pictures, the analysis allowed identifying different characters portrayed in the pictures throughout these textbooks and coding them with reference to their gender. In this regard, activities, occupations and settings were considered as indicators that were used to determine social positions and occupational background of the elements visible in these pictures. The semiotic approach, therefore, allowed classifying the people identified in pictures across the three textbooks according to their gender to determine which categories were dominant and which ones were marginalized (if any). The reliability of the analysis was supported by concrete examples of textual and contextual evidence taken from the textbooks to attest for the validity of the claims.

## **4. Result**

### **4.1. Findings Related to Frequency of Appearance**

Table 1 presents findings related to the frequency of appearance of female and male figures in the three textbooks. It shows the dominance of males over females according to

frequency counts of nouns and names referring to each gender. The total number of nouns and names referring to female or male characters was found to be 915, with 484 (53%) referring to male characters and 431 (47%) referring to female ones. Generally, there is a noticeable difference between female and male nouns that reaches 6%. In Ticket 2 English, the difference of 1% is barely visible though still significant of a gender imbalance being maintained in these textbooks. Gateway to English 2 and Insights into English 2 contain 28 (8%) and 21 (16%) more male nouns than female nouns, respectively.

Table 1.

*Frequency and Percentage of Female-Male Nouns and Names in Textbooks*

	Female nouns		Male nouns		Total	
Gateway 2	162	46%	190	54%	352	100%
Insights 2	55	42%	76	58%	131	100%
Ticket 2	214	49.5%	218	50.5%	432	100%
Total	431	47%	484	53%	915	100%

The quantitative analysis of gender in terms of the number of nouns and names identified in the three textbooks revealed a noticeable imbalance between females and males. The observed dominance of male nouns and names was actually due to the fact that a number of common nouns that are normally gender neutral like teacher, doctor, journalist, friend, boss, employee, driver, interviewer and student are used mostly to refer to male characters because they are either referred to later in the sentence or texts as ‘he’ or accompanied by pictures that featured only male figures. The investigated textbooks continued to use generic masculine nouns such as firemen, businessman, spokesman, chairman, to refer to both females and males, but they have included a number of gender specific female nouns like businesswoman, chairwoman, policewoman and headmistress. Nevertheless, some nouns were stereotypically employed to refer only to female characters despite their gender neutrality namely nurse, secretary and feminist. Other nouns like soldier, minister, ambassador, friend, classmate, football player, scientist, worker, employee and boss were exclusively used to refer to male characters. This state of affairs has significantly affected the use of pronouns in these textbooks as indicated in Table 2 below:

Table 2.

*Frequency and Percentage of Female and Male Pronouns in Textbooks*

	Female pronouns		Male pronouns		Total	
Gateway 2	94	36.4%	164	63.6%	258	100%
Insights 2	41	20.8%	156	79.2%	197	100%
Ticket 2	11	5.5%	188	94.5%	199	100%
Total	146	22.3%	508	77.7 %	654	100%

Table 2 reveals the distribution of pronouns referring to female and male characters in the textbooks being studied. A total of 654 gender specific pronouns are identified; 508 (77.7%) of them refer to male characters and only 146 (22.3%) refer to females. Gateway to English 2 contained 258 pronouns, but only 94 (36.4%) of them refer to female characters, while 164 (63.6%) belonged to male characters. Male-referenced pronouns in Ticket 2 English and Insights into English outnumber female-referenced pronouns; the differences between male and female pronouns in these textbooks reach 177 (89%) and 115 (58%), respectively. The distribution of pronouns maintained a tradition of gender imbalance that quantitatively purports males' superiority over females.

The dominance of masculine pronouns over feminine pronouns in the three studied textbooks was due to various factors. It is a logical outcome of the abundance of masculine nouns and names because many exercises examples, dialogues and texts use the pronoun 'he' to refer to an antecedent masculine noun or name. The overuse of typically gender neutral nouns to refer exclusively to male-characters contributed to the dominance of masculine pronouns especially in Ticket 2 English. In Gateway to English 2 and Insights into English 2, however, the overuse of the pronoun 'you' and the dichotomies 'he/she', 'his/her' and 'him/ her' has to a great extent reduced the number of masculine pronouns contained in these textbooks. Finally, the number of masculine and feminine pronouns was presumably influenced by the number of female and male voices identified in the three textbooks.

#### **4.2. Findings Related to Visibility**

Table 3 below illustrates the visibility of female and male characters in textbooks. Pictures were analyzed throughout the three textbooks to identify the number of female and male figures that appear in these pictures. The preeminence of male gender in these

textbooks is further maintained through the number of male-female characters that can be seen in the pictures, photographs and images present in these textbook as illustrated in Table 3:

Table 3.

*Gender of Characters Visible in Textbooks*

	Female figures		Male figures		Total	
Gateway 2	106	43.8%	136	56.2%	242	100%
Insights 2	137	36.5%	238	63.5%	375	100%
Ticket 2	111	45.1%	135	54.9%	246	100%
Total	354	41%	509	59%	863	100%

Table 3 illustrates the dominance of male characters portrayed in pictures throughout the textbooks. In total, 863 human figures were observed in the three textbooks; 509 (59%) of which portray male characters, while only 354 (41%) represent females. In general, the three textbooks feature 18% male figures more than female figures. The rate of male characters featured in *Insights into English 2* notably exceeded that of female characters with a difference of 27.5%. *Gateway to English 2* and *Ticket 2 English* continue to maintain the male dominance with a difference of 12.4% and 9.8% respectively. The number of characters that were visible in Moroccan second year Baccalaureate textbooks show an imbalanced distribution of female/ male characters that slightly maintains the male dominance in varied degrees.

There was a major imbalance between pictures that featured only female characters and those that featured only males not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality. Female-centered pictures tended to portray women in a variety of roles that are stereotypically associated with women such as fighting illiteracy, household activities, cooking, nursing, caretaking, handcrafting and shopping. A few pictures, however, featured women in unconventional roles such as state-president, a prime-minister, an astronomer and a successful athlete mainly in the unit revolving around ‘Women and Power’ throughout the three textbooks. On the other hand, male-centered pictures presented a variety of conventionally accepted male images of soldiers, politicians, sportsmen, clerks, businessmen, criminals, activists, musicians, scientists, adventurers and emigrants. In effect, the three textbooks contained stereotypical images related to both

female and male characters despite their efforts to portray both genders in unconventional roles. In mixed-gender pictures, there are instances when women are presented in secondary or subordinate roles, while men are identified in positions of power and authority. Men were often depicted as bosses, businessmen, important and knowledgeable interviewees and doctors. Women, on the other hand, were seen in subordinate roles such as a secretary, an employee, poor clients and a patient.

### 4.3. Findings Related to Firstness

Table 4 below deals with the order of mention of female/male names, nouns, pronouns and voices in texts, dialogues and sentences of exercises where both female and male characters were sequenced. The objective was to identify which gender frequently came first in these sequences.

Table 4.

*Firstness of Female and Male Characters in Textbooks*

	Female firstness		Male firstness		Total	
Gateway 2	33	43.4%	43	56.6%	76	100%
Insights 2	15	41.6%	21	58.4%	36	100%
Ticket 2	48	40.3%	71	59.7%	119	100%
Total	96	43.2%	126	56.8%	222	100%

Table 4 demonstrates that out of 222 sequences, male characters appeared or were mentioned first in 126 (56.8%) instances, which significantly exceeds the 96 (43.2%) instances in which females came first. The three textbooks maintained the dominance of the male-first order since males were mentioned first in 56.6%, 58.4% and 59.7% in *Gateway to English 2*, *Insights into English 2* and *Ticket 2 English*, respectively. Females occurred in the pole position only in 43.4% of sequences in *Gateway to English 2*, 41.6% in *Insights into English 2* and in only 40.3% in *Ticket 2 English*.

The male dominance in the three textbooks was extended to include firstness. Male characters usually appeared first in exercises and texts, while female characters often spoke first in conversations. For instance, vocabulary and grammar exercises usually started with examples that referred to male characters either by names or pronouns. In conversations and dialogues, female characters usually initiated the conversation by asking questions to

or greeting the male-character. In some journalistic texts found in the textbooks, female characters appeared as interviewers and thus spoke first to ask the male-interviewee a question. In most cases where various characters gave their opinion about a specific subject, male opinions were usually presented first, while female opinions were listed second or third.

In general, it appeared that the criteria of firstness, visibility and frequency were in harmony as the findings attributed to each one of them reinforce the dominance of males over females all over the three investigated textbooks. The next section offers a discussion of the space allotted to each gender and identifies the extent to which the criterion of space aligns with those of visibility and firstness.

#### 4.4. Findings Related to Space

Table 5 illustrates the amount of space allotted to both females and males in the textbooks. It presents counts of words that have been uttered directly by females and males throughout the texts, dialogues and sentences of exercises.

Table 5.

##### *Distribution of Space Between Female and Male Characters*

	Space of Females		Space of Males		Total	
Gateway 2	639	20%	2551	80%	3190	100%
Insight 2	365	25.2%	1082	74.8%	1447	100%
Ticket 2	973	33.9%	1898	66.1%	2871	100%
Total	1977	26.3%	5531	73.7%	7508	100%

As could be observed in Table 5, the space allotted to males highly outweighs that allotted to females. In total, men occupy 73.7% of the space in textbooks because they spoke 5531 words, while women occupy only 26.3% as they spoke only 1977 words. This wide gap between the two genders translates the actual situation in each textbook. In *Gateway to English 2*, females uttered 1912 words less than males with a difference of 60% in space. *Insights into English 2* allocated 74.8% of space in written conversations and dialogues to male characters who spoke 1082 words as compared to female characters who were allotted only 25.2% of space uttering only 365 words in written conversations and dialogues. This constitutes the least space allotted to females among the three

textbooks. *Ticket 2 English* gives women more space than the other two textbooks (33.9%), but it is not enough to dethrone men from their dominant position (66.1%). In general, the criterion of space maintains the male quantitative superiority over females in the three textbooks that were analyzed.

It is observed that males reign over the space allotted to gender over the three textbooks. The fact that males are often presented as interviewees who present elaborate answers allows them to speak more than the female interviewers who often ask concise questions. In accordance with Table 5 which shows that male voices outnumbered female voices in the three textbooks, it is also expected that male characters occupy more space as they had more opportunities to speak than their female counterparts. Another factor contributing to the male dominance of space was that, in exercises, female speeches were often reported indirectly while males spoke in direct speech, which makes female voices less audible and thus the space they were allotted was reduced. In addition, most texts that featured male characters are autobiographical, whereas the female-centered texts are usually biographical.

**4.5. Findings Related to Occupations**

Table 6 shows that the three textbooks represented gender occupations rather unequally. In terms of variety, they presented females in 30 different occupations, while males were portrayed in 38 different occupations. In terms of quantity, 116 (35.3%) female characters were depicted in various occupations throughout the three textbooks as opposed to a visibly higher number of 212 (64.7%) male figures that were observed in various occupations.

Table 6.

*Occupations Attributed to Female and Male Characters in Textbooks*

Occupations	Gateway 2		Insights 2		Ticket 2	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Housekeeper	2	0	4	0	3	0
Worker	6	2	0	0	1	1
Secretary	1	0	0	2	1	4
Police officer	1	0	0	0	0	0
Businessperson	1	1	0	0	2	3
Artist	1	5	0	2	5	10

Author	1	2	2	8	2	3
Astronomer	3	0	4	0	2	0
Tourist	1	0	0	2	2	1
Student	1	3	2	8	5	8
Teacher	3	7	0	2	2	4
Doctor	1	7	0	1	0	7
Journalist	0	2	0	3	2	3
Headperson	0	3	2	2	0	3
Activist	0	1	9	1	4	5
Sociologist	0	0	1	4	1	0
Filmmaker	0	0	1	1	0	0
Ambassador	0	0	1	0	0	0
Humorist	2	5	0	2	3	9
Interviewer	2	0	5	0	2	0
Interviewee	0	3	0	5	0	2
Scientist	1	2	2	7	0	8
Singer	0	0	0	0	1	0
Fashion model	0	0	0	0	2	0
Nurse	1	0	1	0	2	0
Athlete	0	2	0	4	1	6
Cook	0	0	0	0	1	0
TV presenter	0	0	0	0	1	0
Professor	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lawyer	0	0	0	0	1	0
Politician	3	0	0	3	5	5
Anthropologist	0	0	0	1	0	0
Engineer	0	0	0	0	0	2
Soldier	0	0	0	0	0	1
Farmer	0	4	0	0	0	0
Expert	0	0	0	1	0	0
Technician	0	1	0	1	0	0
Boss	0	4	0	0	0	0
Firefighter	0	2	0	0	0	0
Coach	0	1	0	2	0	0
Clerk	0	0	0	1	0	1
Manager	0	1	0	1	0	0
Actor	0	1	0	0	0	1
Spokesperson	0	0	0	0	0	1
Inventor	0	1	0	0	0	2
Total	31	58	34	63	51	91

*Gateway to English 2* represented 31 (34.8%) female characters actively engaged in 17 different occupations as compared to 58 (65.2%) males who were associated with 23 various occupations. *Insights into English 2* presented 34 (35%) female figures associated with only 12 different occupations, which, in contrast with the 63 (65%) male figures identified with 24 different occupational activities, makes females notably underrepresented in terms of occupations. *Ticket 2 English* maintained the discrepancy between female and male characters at the level of occupations as it presented more women in more occupations than the two other textbooks. In fact, 51 (35.9%) female characters involved in 24 different occupational activities could be recognized throughout this textbook. This constituted the highest rate both in number and in variety of female occupations among the three textbooks. However, the textbooks unfortunately failed to reduce the gender-gap as male characters were noticed to dominate occupations in quantity though not in terms of variety. 91 (64.1%) male characters could be identified with 24 different occupations. The male dominance was forcibly maintained in quantitative terms as shown in the analysis of representation of social roles and occupations in the three textbooks.

## 5. Discussion

Concerning the first research question, the quantitative analysis of gender in terms of the number of nouns and names identified in the three textbooks revealed a significant noticeable imbalance between females and males. The observed dominance of male nouns and names was actually due to the fact that a number of common nouns that were normally gender neutral like teacher, doctor, journalist, friend, boss, employee, driver, interviewer and student were used mostly to refer to male characters because they were either referred to later in the sentence or texts as 'he' or accompanied by pictures that featured only male figures. The investigated textbooks continued to use generic masculine nouns such as firemen, businessman, spokesman, chairman, to refer to both females and males, but they have included a number of gender specific female nouns like businesswoman, chairwoman, policewoman and headmistress. Nevertheless, some nouns were stereotypically employed to refer only to female characters despite their gender neutrality, namely nurse, secretary and feminist. Other nouns like soldier, minister, ambassador, friend, classmate, football player, scientist, worker, employee and boss are exclusively used to refer to male characters.

The dominance of masculine pronouns over feminine pronouns in the three studied textbooks was due to various factors. It is a logical outcome of the abundance of masculine nouns and names because many exercises, examples, dialogues and texts used the pronoun 'he' to refer to an antecedent masculine noun or name. The overuse of typically gender neutral nouns to refer exclusively to male-characters contributed to the dominance of masculine pronouns especially in *Ticket 2 English*. In *Gateway to English 2* and *Insights into English 2*, however, the overuse of the pronoun 'you' and the dichotomies 'he/she', 'his/her' and 'him/her' has to a great extent reduced the number of masculine pronouns contained in these textbooks. Finally, the number of masculine and feminine pronouns was presumably influenced by the number of female and male voices identified in the three textbooks.

The male dominance in the three textbooks was extended to include firstness. As stated by Amini and Birjandi (2012) and Yilmaz (2012), male characters usually appeared first in exercises and texts, while female characters often spoke first in conversations. For instance, vocabulary and grammar exercises usually started with examples that referred to male characters either by names or pronouns. In conversations and dialogues, female characters usually initiated the conversation by asking questions to or greeting the male-character. In some journalistic texts found in the textbooks, female characters appeared as interviewers and thus spoke first to ask the male-interviewee a question. In most cases where various characters give their opinion about a specific subject, male opinions were usually presented first, while female opinions were listed second or third.

As for the second research question, the qualitative analysis demonstrated that the three textbooks presented men and women in stereotypical occupations. In line with Agnaou (2004), Arikan, (2005), Laabidi, (2014), Lu and Lin, (2014), Otlowski (2003), Su (2008), women are frequently associated with indoor occupations as they are portrayed as housewives, secretaries, fashion models, nurses and interviewers. Males, however, were portrayed, as in Amin and Birjandi, (2012), Huang (2009), Kim (2012), Zhu (2011), in more masculine outdoor occupations such as farmers, sportsmen, soldiers, scientists, engineers and bosses. It is noticed that female occupations were more oriented towards the traditional view of women as caring, curious, soft and emotional beings, whereas male occupations are physical, intellectual and less emotional. Males also occupied decision-making positions in contrast with women who often had passive and dependent

occupations. Nonetheless, textbooks included some instances where both genders were portrayed in unconventional occupations. For instance, there were examples of men working as secretaries and women working as scientists, businesswomen, policewomen, politician, authors and athletes.

There was a major imbalance between pictures that featured only female characters and those that featured only males not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality. Female-centered pictures tended to portray women in a variety of roles that were stereotypically associated with women such as fighting illiteracy, household activities, cooking, nursing, caretaking, handcrafting and shopping. However, in line with Yaghoubi-Notach and Nariman-Jahan (2014) and Cunningsworth (1995), a few pictures featured women in unconventional roles such as state-president, a prime-minister, an astronomer and a successful athlete mainly in the unit revolving around 'Women and Power' throughout the three textbooks. On the other hand, male-centered pictures presented a variety of conventionally accepted male images of soldiers, politicians, sportsmen, clerks, businessmen, criminals, activists, musicians, scientists, adventurers and emigrants. In effect, the three textbooks contained stereotypical images related to both female and male characters despite their efforts to portray both genders in unconventional roles. In mixed-gender pictures, there are instances when women were presented in secondary or subordinate roles, while men are identified in positions of power and authority. Men were often depicted as bosses, businessmen, important and knowledgeable interviewees and doctors. Women, on the other hand, were seen in subordinate roles such as employees, poor clients, interviewees and patients.

In short, although the investigated textbooks featured a considerable number of stereotypical occupations regarding females and males, they succeeded in providing some unconventional images especially about females that alleviate to a great extent the negative effects of the allegedly negative stereotypes.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper presented a study of gender issues in three Moroccan ELT textbooks currently used to teach second year Baccalaureate Level in public high schools. The aim was to investigate the extent to which these textbooks include textual and visual gender content that provided an unbiased representation of both female and male characters. The

study was informed by the theoretical framework of the Standards-Based Approach and used content analysis as a mixed data analysis. The findings related to the representation of gender in the three textbooks revealed an overwhelming imbalance in terms of frequency of appearance of names, nouns and pronouns, visibility in pictures, space in dialogues, exercises and texts, firstness in dialogues, exercises and texts, social roles and occupations. Male names, nouns and pronouns appeared more frequently than females. Also, there were more visible male characters in pictures and images than female ones. In addition, the space allotted to male speeches was greater than that allocated to female voices.

Moreover, male characters usually came first in dialogues, exercises and texts. Finally, social roles and occupations attributed to male characters dominated those attributed to females not only in quantity but also in quality and variety. Therefore, the three textbooks were to a great extent sexist because they maintain a patriarchal hegemony favoring males over females. It is therefore crucial for future Moroccan ELT textbooks to present a balanced representation of gender by adhering to the set of recommendations listed below: (a) textbooks should provide a balanced number of nouns and pronouns referring to both female and male characters, (b) textbooks should include balanced visual representations for both female and male that feature both female and male characters equally in terms of both quantity and quality, (c) textbooks should avoid textual and visual content that features women in stereotypical roles related to domestic, indoor and household activities such as cooking, nursing, caretaking, babysitting and cleaning, (d) textbooks should include textual and visual content that features men in unconventional roles related to domestic, indoor and household activities such as cooking, nursing, caretaking, babysitting and cleaning, (e) textbooks should avoid including textual and visual content that features women in stereotypical occupations related to subordinate functions such as nurses, secretaries, kindergarten teachers and shop assistants and feature them in conventionally male-governed occupations such as doctors, scientists, policewomen, soldiers, architects, taxi-drivers, bosses etc., (f) textbooks should ensure that female and male characters are given equal space in dialogues, texts and exercises, and (g) textbooks should ensure that female and male characters are equally featured in first position in dialogues, texts and exercises.

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