A Comparative Study of Gender Representation in English and Arabic Language Textbooks Taught in Egyptian Schools

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By

Rana K. El Kholy

Teaching Assistant
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University

Under the supervision of

Prof. Amal Ibrahim Kary

Professor of Linguistics
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts
Ain Shams University

Dr. Nadia Abdul Galil Shalaby

Associate Professor
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts
Ain Shams University

Dr. Nahla Helmy Nadeem

Assistant Professor
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts
Cairo University

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Abstract

This study is an investigation of gender representation in English and Arabic language textbooks published by the Egyptian Ministry of Education and used in primary and preparatory stages in both public and private schools in Egypt in the academic year of 2010/2011. To reveal whether there is gender imbalance in these textbooks, two methods of data analysis were employed: content analysis and critical discourse analysis as proposed by feminist stylistics. The study was conducted in two phases: the first phase used content analysis to examine seven criteria: male and female names, female and male mentions, male and female social roles, female and male domestic relations, adjectives associated with males and females, firstness in gender binary terms, and male, female and both genders illustrations, while the second one used critical discourse analysis to look at five categories: male and female Actor roles, female and male Actor roles materializing with a goal, male and female Senser roles, female and male Possessor roles, and male and female Sayer, Receiver and Target roles. The findings showed gender imbalance as males were overrepresented in most of the categories while females were stereotypically depicted and underrepresented. Throughout the textbooks, males were shown as more powerful and more dominant

than females who were illustrated as inferior to males. This underrepresentation of females needs to be addressed in the textbooks and awareness against gender bias should be raised.

Keywords: Gender Representation, Education, Textbooks, Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis

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