

Gender Stereotypes in Moroccan EFL Textbooks' Illustrations: Content and Critical Image Analysis

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Abstract

Textbooks have always been influential in transmitting knowledge and values in modern education systems. However, they may transmit various gender-based stereotyped roles that could negatively affect learners in shaping their worldview. Accordingly, this study investigates gender stereotypes in the visual discourse of one English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook currently used in Moroccan secondary schools. It does so by looking at male/female appearance in the textbook illustrations. It also considers gender differences in occupations and roles. Moreover, the study employs a qualitative critical image analysis to selected images based on Giaschi's (2000) model analysis. To this end, the research comprises quantitative content analysis and qualitative critical image analysis. The findings show less visibility of female characters in illustrations, ascribing them to gender-based traditional occupations and subordinate roles. Besides, the qualitative critical image analysis reveals that women still suffer from misrepresentation by depicting them as dependent, submissive, and needing help. The study contains, in the end, recommendations for promoting gender equality through textbooks in Morocco.

Keywords: critical image analysis, Moroccan EFL textbooks, gender stereotypes, illustrations, visual discourse

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Introduction

Before embarking on gender stereotypes in textbooks, defining “gender” and “stereotypes” is helpful. According to the Online Oxford Dictionary, gender designates the condition of being male or female, usually referring to social and cultural variations rather than biological factors. In essence, unlike “sex,” which refers to biological variations between the two sexes, “gender” describes social and cultural features that are masculine or feminine. These gender categories determine the roles of men and women in a given society or culture, which may foster many stereotypes affecting the two genders in the learning process and go beyond embracing social life matters.

As for the second term, a stereotype is a “fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality.” (The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary). These erroneous generalizations about particular groups based on fixed ideas or images result in several stereotypes, including gender stereotypes. For example, in education, there is a common gender stereotype in school subjects that the best place for male teachers is in math and science classrooms. In contrast, female teachers are best suited to teach languages or the belief that female teachers are more encouraging and warmer than male teachers (Calvanese, 2007). These two examples of gender stereotypes in the school context, among others, pave the way to build and construct identities that are either masculine or feminine. Bearing this in mind, the question that needs to be asked now is: how are these gender stereotypes constructed?

To answer the above question, Lindsey (2003) states that the different socialization agents, from the family, peer groups, media, and school, shape boys’ and girls’ roles. For her, “from the moment a girl infant is wrapped in a pink blanket and a boy infant in a blue one, gender role development begins” (p.53). In schools, Stromquist (2007) points out that many gender stereotypes are constructed through various forms, such as the classroom space arrangement and the school uniform, which reinforce the notion of “difference” for boys and girls. These practices inside the school atmosphere also create a sense of hegemonic masculinity, and thus schools become agents in making masculinities and femininities (Connell, 1996). Besides, segregation in the classroom is aided by teacher-student interactions and practices in which males and females may be treated differently, either intentionally or unintentionally (Slater, 2003). In this context, Sadker et al. (1991) identify different forms of sexist practices against female students in the classroom, including allotting less time for girls to talk and receiving less praise, attention, and correction from teachers.

Additionally, the formal curriculum plays a prominent role in the identities and lives of boys and girls and remains one of the most important sources of gender stereotypes (Taylor, 2003). These gender stereotypes may have several effects on girls’ achievements (Blumberg, 2008; Denga et al., 2018; Good et al., 2010; Hussain, 2012; Shapiro & Williams, 2012) and their aspirations and future careers (Hurtado, 2015; Mburu & Nyagah, 2012). As Benattabou (2020b) states, “sex stereotyping may continue to be a hindrance, and a stumbling block for the development and enhancement of learners’ ambitions and vocational aspirations.” (p. 57). Therefore, analyzing textbooks to investigate gender stereotypes is extremely important to unveil them and raise awareness about the issue to ensure equal representation for both genders.

In this light, the present study explored one secondary school textbook (Visa to the World) that is still used in Moroccan classes. The aim was to analyze gender stereotypes in its illustrations by adopting content analysis and critical image analysis to investigate overt and implied messages of pictures by combining quantitative and qualitative means. The quantitative analysis dealt with the frequency of male/female appearances, while the qualitative means encompassed a critical image analysis of twenty images. The study is significant because uncovering gender stereotypes opens the door to challenging and deconstructing them, aiming to promote non-stereotyped representation, which is crucial for creating a fair learning atmosphere. However, before considering all these, let us consider what the literature review says about the topic.

Literature Review

Recently, gender representation in EFL textbooks has piqued the interest of a growing number of researchers. These researches have shown the dominance of men and the stereotypical images of women (Al-Saleem, 2011; Aljuaythin, 2018; Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Ansary & Babaii, 2003; Blumberg, 2008; Cheung & Yang, 2010; Pesikan & Marinkovic, 2006; Taylor, 2003; Yaghoubi-notash & Nariman-jahan, 2012). Seemingly, one typical result and feature that could be deduced from the findings of these studies is the fact that women and female characters suffer a lot from low visibility, ascribing female characters to traditional gender roles, and the use of sexist language against them, such as prioritizing male adjectives and nouns.

Similarly, in Morocco, some researchers have investigated the issue focusing on the gender depiction in dialogues along with their related illustrations (Jaafari, 2016; Karima, 2017). Others worked on male and female representation in texts, exercises, dialogues, and illustrations (Bouzid, 2019). Benattabou, in two recent studies, combined a quantitative content analysis of illustrations (Benattabou, 2021) and a qualitative content analysis alongside a critical image analysis (Benattabou, 2020a). Benlaghrissi (2022), in a recent study, examined the representation of males and females in a Moroccan textbook's conversations by employing both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods. Overall, all the researchers have concluded that gender inequalities persisted, and many gender ideologies were embedded in the studied textbooks.

In summary, it has been shown from the literature review that data from either past research or present in Morocco and elsewhere suggest that gender bias in English textbooks is still present nowadays. However, the focus of previous studies has tended to be on sexist language rather than visual portrayal. Indeed, the existing accounts even examine visuals but adopting a critical image analysis has yet to be extensively addressed. Thus, one crucial area that still needs more investigation is visual discourse. In this respect, the present investigation aimed to fill that missing gap, determine if the findings represent the traditional discrimination of women, and confirm what is suggested in most literature.

Method

Materials

The present study randomly examined one EFL Common Core textbook officially approved by the ministry of education and still used in public secondary schools in Morocco, "Visa to the World" (2006). Unlike first or second-year Baccalaureate textbooks, common

core materials are full of illustrations that best serve the study objectives. According to Giaschi (2000), there has been a shift in textbook design toward visual elements rather than linguistic or textual content. Consequently, more images are included, and their analysis to ensure a fair representation is equally necessary.

Procedures of analysis

In analyzing gender stereotypes in *Visa to the World*, the study used content analysis and critical image analysis. In the first stage of the study, the total number of pictures in all the textbook units was counted. Then, the number of male pictures and figures, female pictures and figures, and pictures including both males and females were counted. The second stage of the study looked at gender differences in occupations, roles, and activities. The third stage of the study dealt with a critical analysis of selected illustrations. With this go-getting purpose, twenty pictures were chosen out of the total number to be analyzed critically following Giaschi's analytical framework that contained the following seven questions: (1) what is the activity of the image(s)? (2) who is active (the "protagonist") in the image(s)? (3) who is passive (the "receiver") in the image(s)? (4) who has status in the image(s)? (5) what does body language communicate? (6) what does the clothing communicate? (7) where are the eyes directed? (Giaschi, 2000, p.37). However, to avoid repetitive conclusions, questions two and three have been condensed into one question: who is active (the "protagonist") and who is passive (the "receiver") in the image(s)?

Results: Content Analysis and Discussion

The Frequency of Male/Female Appearance

The results of the first question are reflected in table (1). It shows the total number of pictures in the textbook from unit 1 to 10, the number and percentage of male pictures, female pictures, and the number and percentage of pictures including both males and females:

Table 1. *The Frequency of Male/Female Appearance in Visa to the World's Illustrations*

Unit	Number of Pictures	Male Pictures	%	Female Pictures	%	Both Genders	%
Unit 1	43	25	(58%)	15	(35%)	3	(7%)
Unit 2	46	17	(37%)	25	(54%)	4	(9%)
Unit 3	9	3	(33%)	3	(33%)	3	(34%)
Unit 4	7	4	(57%)	1	(14%)	2	(29%)
Unit 5	6	2	(33%)	1	(17%)	3	(50%)
Unit 6	15	8	(53%)	4	(27%)	3	(20%)
Unit 7	25	19	(76%)	6	(24%)	0	(0%)
Unit 8	11	8	(73%)	3	(27%)	0	(0%)
Unit 9	3	1	(33%)	1	(33%)	1	(34%)
Unit 10	1	1	(100%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)
The Total Number of Pictures	166	88	(55,00%)	59	(27%)	19	(18%)

In tune with the above table, the first evident point is that illustrative pictures in *Visa to the World* are higher for males than females. In the textbook, there are 166 pictures, 88

(55%) for males compared to 59 (27%) for females, and 19 mixed pictures with a percentage of (18%). What stands out in the table is that the number of male pictures outnumbers that of females in almost all the units except unit 2. In effect, to better understand male/female visibility, it was necessary to delve into the content of each unit in particular by counting the number and the percentage of male/female figures in all the textbook pictures.

Consequently, the analysis of male/female figures in all the units reveals that the total number of figures is 206. Out of the 206 figures, 113 (66%) are for males compared to 93 (34%) for female figures, as reflected in table (2):

Table 2. *Male/Female Figures in Visa to the World Illustrations*

Units	Male Figures	Percentage	Female Figures	Percentage
Unit 1	29	57%	22	43%
Unit 2	17	27%	47	73%
Unit 3	5	56%	4	46%
Unit 4	7	78%	2	22%
Unit 5	14	87%	2	13%
Unit 6	12	71%	5	29%
Unit 7	19	76%	6	24%
Unit 8	8	73%	3	27%
Unit 9	1	33%	2	67%
Unit 10	1	100%	0	0%
Total	113	66%	93	34%

A closer inspection of table (2) illustrates that male figures also outnumber female figures in individual pictures. As we have seen earlier, just like male/female pictures, the number of male figures outnumbers that of female figures in all the units except unit 2 and unit 9. For further discussion, in unit 1, for instance, which covers issues like "Sporting life," "Famous scientist people," and "Personal relations," male figures are 29 (57%), and female figures are 22 (43%). However, if males are more than females, it is because of the topic of this unit that it is still considered more appealing for males than females, and this again shows the stereotype that sports and science are the domains of men.

The most shocking findings can be found in unit two, "Education." Only 17 (27%) male and 47 (73%) female figures. At first glance, it seems that girls are more engaged in school activities than boys but looking into the type of activities female characters are involved in, we come to understand that females are depicted either going to school or coming in or out of school (pictures p. 30); only four pictures out of 22 describe female students studying inside the classroom or reading a book. According to Pesikan (2006), this portrayal shows quantitative progress, but no intellectual activities related to school are found. Further, according to the analysis of unit three, which is concerned with "Food," the number of male figures is 5 (56%), whereas the number of female figures is 4 (44%). In this unit, there is not much difference between the two genders. Still, what is surprising is that while women are portrayed in the kitchen wearing aprons and doing household chores, men are always seen at snacks eating or sitting in cafes. That being the case, this unit also promotes the stereotype that the right place for women is to be at home. In discussing "Famous scientist people," there are no pictures of women inventors in this unit, which reinforces the stereotype that scientific inventions and math-related fields should be in the

hands of men. So far, in this textbook, there is only one picture of a woman inventor, Marie Lukie.

As it can be analyzed, the most prominent finding to emerge from male/female appearance in *Visa to the World* illustrations is that the given examples from the different units of the textbook show a poor and unfair representation of women in pictures. Therefore, the answer to the first question is so clear that the frequency of male/female appearance is not equal and that male figures outnumber female ones in almost all the units, leading to the conclusion that women's representation in the illustration of this textbook supports the review of the literature and past researches, and this pushes us to go further in the analysis of occupations and jobs.

Gender Stereotyping in Occupations and Jobs

So far, this paper has focused on the extent to which the two genders are visible in illustrations, this part of the study deals with the type of occupations and jobs ascribed to each gender. Table (3) describes male/female occupations and jobs:

Table 3. *Male/Female Occupations and Jobs in Visa to the World Illustrations*

Unit	Male Occupations and Jobs	Female Occupations and Jobs
Unit 1	Boxer, singer (3), actor (4), scientist (6), student (2), athlete, cricket player, footballer	Housewife (3), actress (8), student (2), tennis player (2)
Unit 2	Student (4), teacher, doctor, photographer, bus driver, mason, cook, police officer, painter, mechanic, dentist, carpenter, butcher, pilot	Student (6), teacher
Unit 3	Student, waiter	Student (2), cook
Unit 4	Bookseller, cook, seller, buyer	Buyer
Unit 5	Footballer, teacher, student	Housewife, student
Unit 6	Doctor, dentist	Receptionist, secretary (2)
Unit 7	Comedian, artist (5), painter (4), musician (2), singer (4), student (5), pianist	Singer, painter, student
Unit 8	Scientist, chemist, inventor, physician, musician, businessman, chairman	Physician, secretary
Unit 9	Student, king	Student
Unit 10	Manager, farmer, hunter	-

Interestingly, the data in this table shows that both men and women are engaged in various jobs and occupations with more focus on professional and leadership ones for men. However, male jobs account for 81 of all jobs (69%), whereas female jobs account for only 37 (31 %). Thus, this difference between the two genders demonstrates how female characters are biased and underrepresented in occupations. Moreover, in most textbook pictures, men are depicted more in public roles and jobs, such as singing, teaching, selling items, painting, or being portrayed as doctors, dentists, pianists, and farmers. On the contrary, women are predominantly depicted as housewives, cooks, secretaries, or receptionists.

In unit 1, for example, male occupations are mentioned 19 times (56%) against 15 jobs (44%) for females. Looking at the types of jobs, it should be noted that higher positions are

mostly given to men, such as boxers (1), singers (3), actors (4), scientists (6), students (2), athletes (1), cricket players (1), and footballers (1), while women are depicted as housewives (3), actresses (8), students (2), and tennis players (2). In unit 2, male jobs are mentioned 17 times (71%) compared to 7 times (29%) for females. Most jobs show men as teachers, doctors, photographers, bus drivers, masons, police officers, painters, dentists, carpenters, butchers, or pilots. Women are presented as students (6) or teachers (1). This frequency suggests that men are better suited to high positions than women. Indeed, this presence of men in different types of jobs in society may imply that they are more productive than women.

To conclude this section, female characters are depicted with traditional gender-based occupations in almost all the units. However, out of 37 female jobs in the textbook, only 4 presented women in advantageous positions in society with a percentage of 11 % in contrast to 89 % of stereotypical female jobs, as the following graph shows:

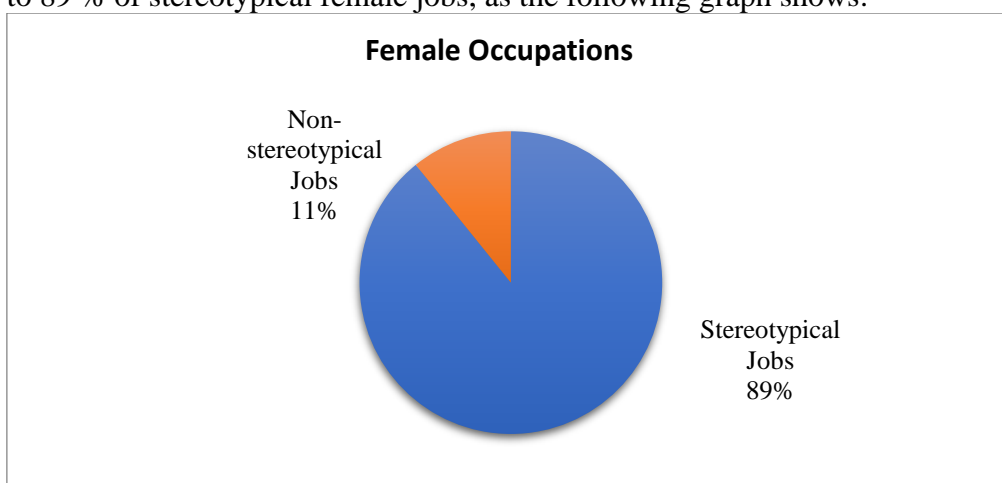


Figure 1. Female Occupations and Jobs in Visa to the World Illustrations

These non-stereotypical occupations include a female tennis player, teacher, painter, and physician. On that account, male/female occupations and jobs are stereotypical and unfair; a fact that makes our study goes hand in hand with the previous ones. In the following chapter, male/female roles and activities are presented.

Gender Stereotypes in Male/Female Roles and Activities

Male/female roles and activities can be classified into three main categories: productive activities, done mostly outside the home, and paid for. Second, reproductive activities are performed at home, unlike the first; these activities are not paid for. Third, community activities are done for the community services, such as protecting the environment or funeral activities (Kabira & Masinjila, n.d., 1997). However, the study focused mainly on the first and second categories, while the third was not included as there is only one picture of community service (picture p. 123). Therefore, the activities attributed to each gender in this textbook are shown in table (4):

Table 4. *Male/Female Productive and Reproductive activities in Visa to the World Illustrations*

Units	Productive Activities		Reproductive Activities	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Unit 1	-	-	-Greeting each other (4)	-Welcoming visitors (2), playing with children, birthday celebrations, reading
Unit 2	-Teaching, bus driving, house construction, cooking, electrical fitting, a doctor treating his patient	-Teaching mathematics, teaching geography	-Drawing	Playing the piano, watching TV, shopping, playing tennis, celebrating, reading, sleeping
Unit 3	-Working as a waiter	-	-Setting in the coffee, setting in a snack	-
Unit 4	-Selling items (3), book shopper (2)	-	-	-Buying items
Unit 5	-Teaching	-	-Watching TV (2)	-Inviting a friend
Unit 6	-A dentist removing teeth, a doctor treating a patient	-Secretarial duties, receptionist	-	-
Unit 7	-Singing (2), playing with the guitar	-Singing, painting	-	-
Unit 8	-Advertising	-Secretariat duties	-Using the computer	-Eating
Unit 9	-A king delivering a speech	-	-	-
Unit 10	-Protecting the environment	-	-	-

Data in table (4) reveals the various activities ascribed to both genders. The table shows that more men (77%) than women (23%) are engaged in productive activities. These activities shown in the table include teaching, selling items, advertising, house construction, and others. On the other hand, the data also reveals that more women (63%) than men (37%) are depicted in reproductive activities. These activities are birthday celebrations, shopping, watching TV, buying items, and inviting friends. Therefore, it seems clear that females are still suffering from stereotypical practices in activities, too, as diagram (2) shows:

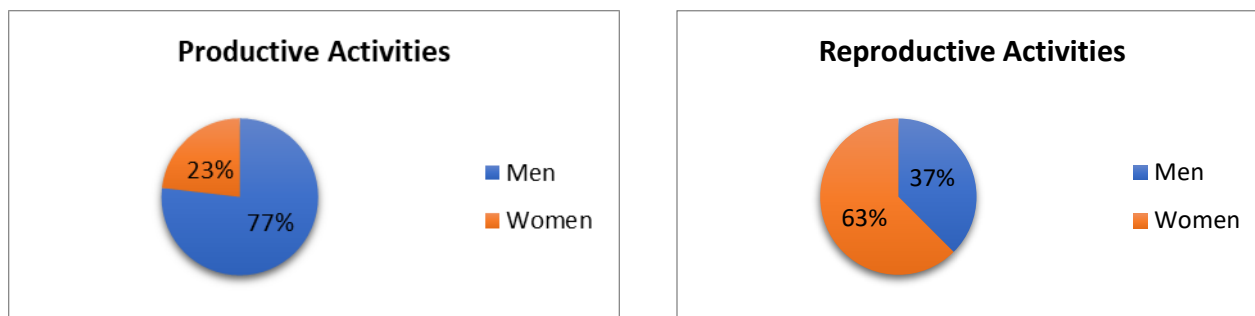


Figure 2. Male/Female Activities in Visa to the World Illustrations

Diagram (2) illustrates that men participate in productive activities at a higher rate than women, with 77 percent compared to 23 percent for women. Conversely, in reproductive activities which are not paid for and are less valued in society, women are more visible, with a percentage of 63%. However, this gender imbalance in paid productive activities shows that men's roles are more valued than women's. Men also contribute more to the community by doing productive activities such as house construction, electrical fitting, driving passengers, protecting the environment, teaching, advertising, and others.

In short, similar to occupations and jobs, women are also misrepresented in activities and roles. This low visibility of women in the professional sector and ascribing them to traditional roles and activities such as secretarial duties, buying items, inviting friends, and watching TV while portraying men in intellectual activities such as teaching, using the computer, or playing the role of a doctor would undoubtedly socialize female students to accept these passive roles and also to accept the division of labor that is discriminatory against women (Benattabou, 2020a). Therefore, to better understand this female misrepresentation, the following section goes too further to include a critical image analysis of twenty images.

A Critical Image Analysis of Selected Illustrations

In line with the third objective of the study, twenty pictures were chosen in different units of the textbook to be examined. The choice of pictures was based on the researcher's perception of pictures that contain any stereotypes either in the activity of the picture, the status of the two genders, the roles ascribed to them, body language, or even in their clothes. Eleven pictures are mixed, five are female, and four are male. All these pictures were analyzed in seven questions following Giaschi's critical image analysis framework.

What is the activity of the image?

The illustrations reviewed are primarily focused on four areas: domestic activities, work environments, leisure, and school activities. Home activities have the highest percentage (40%), followed by the work environment (25%), entertainment and free activities (20%), and school activities (15%). Not surprisingly, in the first category, women are more focused than men, eight of the twenty images are of home activities, and all of them depict girls and women involved in household work, such as in the kitchen (figure 3) or taking care of the household or the children (figure 4).



Figure 3. A mother is in the kitchen (p. 42)



Figure 4. A mother takes care of her daughter (p. 15)

As for the work environment, the emphasis is on males rather than females. Almost all images show men in higher-ranking positions, such as doctors, engineers, butchers, or bus drivers (figure 5), or in leisure activities sitting at a snack table or having coffee with friends.



Figure 5. Examples of male jobs (p. 27)

In the third area dealing with entertainment, males and females participate in various spare-time activities, but more focus on girls watching TV, shopping, or sleeping (figure 6). This representation, indeed, shows the stereotype of female passivity. Besides, even girls outnumber boys in pictures in school activities, but they are presented more outside the classroom. Therefore, the analysis of images reinforces stereotypes about women and girls who are often associated with home activities. At the same time, men are mostly portrayed outside the home, either at work or with friends having good times. This depiction promotes the binary opposition of the active male versus the passive female, as we will see in the next question.



Figure 6. Examples of female spare-time activities (pp. 29-30)

Who is active, and who is passive in the image?

Males and females take part in various activities and positions. On the one hand, men are demonstrated to be more active than women, particularly outside the home. On the other hand, more women than men are depicted in non-valued tasks. Welcoming visitors, playing with youngsters, and inviting friends are just a few of these activities. Girls are typically seen at home, engaged in hobbies and leisure activities such as watching TV, sleeping, shopping, or celebrating.

Equally remarkable, even girls are occasionally depicted in public spaces, but they are portrayed chiefly in passive roles associating them with activities requiring no high educational level. There are pictures of girls reading books, using computers (figure 7), playing tennis, and playing the piano, but they are rare. Men are more frequently seen participating in culturally significant events that require advanced social skills and a high educational level. A doctor treating a patient, a bookshop team member doing his job, and three men safeguarding the environment (figure 8) are just a few examples.



Figure 7. Girls use the computer (p.29)



Figure 8. Three men protect the land (p.127)

Who has status in the image?

Almost all the images examined point to a single fact: males are given higher status and positions than females. Six supporting examples are offered. The first depicts a doctor treating a female patient, the second depicts a dentist removing a woman's teeth, and the third depicts a female as a doctor's receptionist. These three images demonstrate a conventional gender-based labour distribution. The fourth image depicts a young man and a lady sitting in a coffee shop, with the waiter addressing the man, not the woman, to make the order (figure 9). The fifth image depicts a group of women purchasing products, with one male paying; this indicates that men work and get money while women rely on them (figure 10). The final image is a family portrait. The grandfather is shown in the centre of the image, implying the high status within the family, surrounded by two females. The grandmother is pictured next to him without much interest.

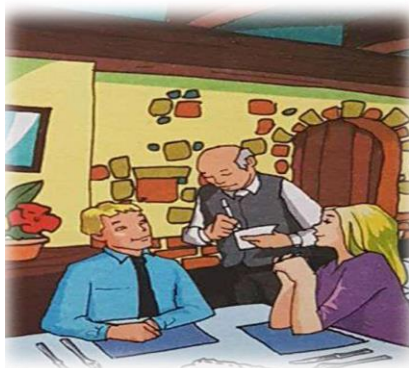


Figure 9. The waiter is addressing the man to order (p. 39) Figure 10. The male character is paying (p. 54)

What does body language communicate?

The body language in images directly or indirectly expresses distinct impressions. It becomes evident from the images studied that the way both genders are shown is fundamentally different. While men's images often bear self-confidence and seriousness, women's images convey an interchange of emotions. Men have more power and look more self-confident, both within and outside of the home. For example, in unit 3, a father sits in a relaxed, confident position in front of the television, while a wife sits at the side of the sofa with her hands crossed (figure 11). Giaschi (2000) argues that this image depicts the man's dominance as the breadwinner and the wife's submission (as cited in Berger, 1972). Another example is unit 4, where the husband is represented paying for his wife's clothing needs, which she has chosen; here, the husband is depicted in his parental position, which necessitates his presence to pay.

The illustration on page 127 (figure 8) above, which displays three men striving to save the land, one clutching a pickax, the other a rifle, and the third appearing to be an engineer, is an excellent example of male characters' seriousness and active involvement in the community. Many pictures show males in relaxed situations with their friends or at home. What is fascinating about these images is that even when males are displayed at home, they are dressed in suits and ties, indicating that men have control and that their place is not at home but outside working. Female figures, on the other hand, communicate emotional interchange. Boys are never seen in cases involving emotional exchanges, which appears to be a female-only attribute. This element is well shown in the textbook's first illustration in unit 1, which depicts a housewife welcoming a new neighbour with open arms (figure 12).



Figure 11. The man is sitting confidently (p.61) Figure 12. A woman welcoming a new neighbour (p. 14)

What does clothing communicate?

In addition to body language, the clothing worn by figures in photographs is essential to their appearance and can send sexist connotations. For example, women in skirts and dresses appear in 71% of female images, while women in pants appear in only 29% of female photographs. When women are depicted in the kitchen, they are sometimes shown wearing aprons (figure 13). These outfits are out of date and gender-stereotyped. They also transmit the old-fashioned method of female dressing (Giaschi, 2000). The majority of male figures, on the other hand, are dressed in suits and ties. As seen in the illustration (figure 14), men are usually dressed up in suits and ties, even for family dinners, to display authority, power, and leadership.



Figure 13. Females wearing aprons (p. 42)

Figure 14. A man is dressed in a suit and a tie (p.29)

Where are the eyes directed?

Analyzing the selected images in terms of the seventh question dealing with the eyes' direction reveals that most characters direct their eyes toward each other or the camera. Images containing only female characters usually look at each other with a smile as a sign of comfort; the same for images containing a male and a female. In contrast, female submission and dependence can be detected in other cases. A family photograph, for example, includes a grandfather, a grandmother, a husband, a wife, and three children, all of whom are looking at the camera except the grandmother, who is looking submissively toward the grandfather (figure 15). Another example is a couple at a restaurant where the waiter and the man are looking at each other while the lady is looking in turn at the man to make their order.



Figure 15. A family portrait (p. 18)

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The study of Visa to the World's illustrations resulted in significant conclusions. First, there is an evident and unfair representation of female characters as far as appearance is concerned. Also, one can realize a wide gender gap in occupations, roles, and activities. Both men and women are depicted in numerous occupations and roles, with a greater emphasis on men's professional and leadership ones, while women are always depicted as mothers and homemakers. Similarly, female characters are usually connected with reproductive activities, whereas male characters are always associated with productive ones.

Equally important, the critical image analysis resulted in fundamental conclusions. First, women still suffer from misrepresentation, which opens no door to social change. It also reveals that women are still presented in traditional roles as housewives. On this basis, the way women are depicted as dependent, submissive, and needing help would also unconsciously socialize female students to believe in such binary oppositions in the real world. In this case, at all levels, strategies to promote gender equity in education need to be implemented. This implementation starts with textbooks free of gender stereotyping and sexist attitudes. Gender issues should also be included in every curriculum, and presenting this issue to students, teachers, and textbook designers will help create awareness of the topic.

As for the limitations, the scope of this study was limited to examining only one textbook, so to have more reliable results, more textbooks should be studied. In addition, it concerns mainly with illustrations, but other angles should be investigated, like dialogues, reading texts, and exercises.

All in all, since textbooks, as powerful educational tools, reproduce gender stereotypes, as the study shows, much work should be done in this area to help erode this phenomenon. Thus, more research must be done to increase the awareness of textbook designers, teachers, and students. After all, nowadays, in Morocco and elsewhere, women hold different leadership positions in different domains, which must be supported in textbooks. Undoubtedly, all these stereotypical images of women go against the fundamental value of gender equity.

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